



## **Information Sheet for Case Managers: How Couple Relationships Impact Family Health**

Couple relationships influence and drive many aspects of our everyday lives. The success or failure of these relationships can positively or negatively impact self-esteem and personal achievement, and can even have a profound effect on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of families and children. All of these areas ultimately impact the success of the individuals and families with which you regularly work and are attempting to help.

The following provides specific information regarding the impact of couple relationships on individuals, families, and children:

1. People in healthy relationships tend to live longer and recover faster from sickness. According to research, stressful or negative relationships can increase a person's risk of heart disease .
2. Research suggests that marital happiness or unhappiness can have positive and negative long-term effects on physical health .
3. Sex is an important part of all healthy couple relationships. People who are satisfied sexually in their couple relationship may even live longer.
4. Children that are raised with fathers who are involved, nurturing, and playful have higher IQ's and better linguistic and cognitive abilities . If the parents have a healthy relationship, the chances are increased that children will have closer relationships with both parents, whether living together, married, separated, or divorced.
5. Self-esteem affects the overall quality of life. When people have a healthy self-esteem, they feel good about themselves and see themselves as deserving the respect of others. When people have low self-esteem, they tend to put little value on their own opinions and ideas .
6. Happiness is associated with, and comes before, success.
7. The relationship between parents is strongly linked to a child's overall well-being. Among children in two-parent families, those living with both biological parents in a low-conflict marriage tend to do better on a host of outcomes than those living in step-parent families.
8. Children whose parents are divorced tend to have lower academic performance, social achievement, and psychological adjustment than children with married parents.

9. The experience of violence can lead to lasting physical, mental, and emotional harm, whether the child is a direct victim or a witness. Children who are exposed to violence are more likely to suffer from attachment problems, regressive behavior, anxiety, and depression, and to have aggression and conduct problems. Other health-related problems, as well as academic and cognitive problems, delinquency, and involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are also associated with experiences of violence
10. Children exposed to violence are more likely than those not experiencing violence to become victims or perpetrators of further violence. “feet”; “take two steps sideways”; “walk backwards two steps,” and so on.

## Sources

De Vogli R., Chandola T, Marmot M. (2007; 167: 1951-1957). Negative aspects of close relationships and heart disease. *Arch Intern Med*. Retrieved from <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/167/18/1951>

Robles T.F., Kiecolt-Glaser J.K.. (2003, August). The physiology of marriage: pathways to health. *Physiology and Behavior*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12954435>

Smith D.G., Frankel Sm, Yarnell J. (1997, Dec 20-27). Sex and death: are they related? Findings from the Caerphilly Cohort Study. Retrieved from [http://longevity.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=longevity&cdn=health&tm=14&gps=159\\_329\\_1113\\_768&f=00&su=p284.12.336.ip\\_p1026.30.336.ip\\_&tt=11&bt=1&bts=1&zu=htp%3A/www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/q](http://longevity.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=longevity&cdn=health&tm=14&gps=159_329_1113_768&f=00&su=p284.12.336.ip_p1026.30.336.ip_&tt=11&bt=1&bts=1&zu=htp%3A/www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/q)

Rosenberg J, Wilcox B.W. (2006) The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children. Retrieved from <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/chaptertwo.cfm>

Self-esteem check: Too low, too high or just right? (2011, July). Mayo Clinic. Retrieved from <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/self-esteem/MH00128>

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L. & Diener, E. (2005) The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success? *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 803-855.

Amato, Paul R., (2001). “The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children.” In Robert M. Milardo (ed.), *Understanding Families into the New Millennium: A Decade in Review*. (Lawrence, KS: National Council on Family Relations): 488-506.

Child Trends (2011). Family Structure. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/231>

Child Trends (2011). Children’s Exposure to Violence. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrendsdatabank.org/?q=node/358>