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Among Young and Midlife Adults:
Longitudinal Effects on Psychological Well-Being**

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NSFH Working Paper No. 71



A National Survey of
FAMILIES
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NOTE

Paper to be presented at the National Council on Family Relations annual meeting in Kansas City, MO, in November 1996. Support for this research was provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Midlife Development and a FIRST Grant Award to the first author from the National Institute on Aging (AG12731). The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) was funded by CPR-NICHHD grant HD21009. NSFH was designed and carried out at the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the direction of Larry Bumpass and James Sweet. We gratefully acknowledge Larry Bumpass' helpful input to this study.

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Abstract

This study examines longitudinal (5-year) effects of remaining in varying marital statuses (separated/divorced, widowed, never married vs. continuously married) or experiencing a marital transition (e.g., married to separated/divorced, married to widowed, never married to married, formerly married to remarried vs. continuously married) on multiple positive and negative dimensions of psychological well being. Data come from National Survey of Families and Households 1987-1993 respondents aged 19-65 (N=6,948). Differences between men and women as well as between young and midlife adults are investigated. Multivariate analyses reveal a complex pattern of effects depending upon the contrast and the outcome examined. The effects of continuity in single status are not very different for women in contrast to men. The transition to divorce or widowhood is associated with somewhat more negative effects for women. Remaining single or becoming single is associated with less negative impact on the mental health of midlife adults than younger adults. Overall, results support the social causation hypothesis and a persistent life strains model for explaining marital status effects.

Key words: psychological well-being, depression, gender, marital status, midlife, longitudinal

Marital Status Continuity and Change Among Young and Midlife Adults: Longitudinal Effects on Psychological Well-Being

The social institution of marriage and its influence on adult well-being remains an enduring interest of family researchers. Historically, marriage has been quite consistently associated with better psychological well-being than being single, particularly among men (e.g., Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983; Gove & Shin, 1989; Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990; Lee, Seccombe, & Shehan, 1991; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990). Yet there continues to be an ongoing reassessment of the role marriage plays in determining well-being as dramatic changes in the norms, meaning, and dynamics of marriage and marital stability have swept across Americans during the last several decades. Now that about one in every two new marriages ends in divorce (Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989); sexuality and even parenthood are increasingly less tied to marriage (Bumpass, 1990); gendered aspects of marital, parenting, and employment roles have come under increased scrutiny and influence in marital choice and satisfaction (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991); and the prevalence of single adults and the proportion of the adult lifetime spent single has increased to make it a statistically less “deviant” adult social status (Schoen, Urton, Woodrow, & Baj, 1985), it might be hypothesized that the importance of marriage for contemporary adults’ psychological well-being is changing (Glenn & Weaver, 1988).

Most of the evidence for the positive effects of marriage on psychological well-being is based on cross-sectional evidence and/or samples with limited generalizability. A few longitudinal studies of marriage have been used to confirm that divorce has negative effects on well-being (e.g., Booth & Amato, 1991; Doherty, Su, & Needle, 1989; Mastekaasa, 1995; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986). Similarly, the psychological distress accompanying the adjustment to widowhood has been confirmed longitudinally (Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987; Wortman, Silver, & Kessler, 1993; see Kitson, Babri, Roach, & Placidi, 1989, for a review). However, no large-scale

national longitudinal analysis has examined *changes* in well-being over time associated with a *continuation in varying marital statuses*. Longitudinal population analyses comparing the well-being effects of the transition from being never married to first married, formerly married to remarried, and married to widowed with being continuously married do not exist. A systematic examination of gender differences in the effects of these different marital statuses and transitions has never been undertaken. Additionally, multiple well-being contrasts among persons remaining continuously in a marital status or making transitions in young adulthood in contrast to middle adulthood have never been carefully examined, even though a considerable number of marital transitions occur during both periods (Uhlenberg, Cooney, & Boyd, 1990). Taking a life course developmental perspective, it might well be hypothesized that differential timing over the life course of such transitions will make a difference in effects (Neugarten, 1979; Hagestad, 1990; Hagestad & Smyer, 1982).

Limited outcome measures of psychological well-being plague most studies of gender, marital status, and psychological well-being. Depression, life satisfaction, and/or global happiness are the most common outcomes examined. However, the multiple dimensions of psychological well-being are becoming increasingly well-mapped and well-measured (Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Ryff, 1989, 1995; Ryff & Essex, 1991; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). For a more differentiated and comprehensive understanding of the contemporary effects of the marital role on well-being, it is desirable to consider several dimensions of psychological well-being, since marriage may be associated with well-being constraints as well as well-being enhancement.

The focus of this research was to use recent longitudinal national survey data, which included measurement across a wide range of positive and negative psychological well-being dimensions, to examine the effects of marital status continuity and marital status transitions on psychological well-being, and to examine gender differences and age (young adult vs. midlife

adult) differences in these effects.

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

The Multiple Dimensions of Psychological Health

Bradburn's (1969) analyses of positive and negative affect provided some of the first empirical evidence that positive and negative well-being were related, yet distinct, components of psychological well-being. Empirical evidence for the legitimacy of differentiating positive aspects of psychological well-being and psychological distress was further supported by factor analytic work done pooling national survey items by Bryant and Veroff (1982). The results of their analysis led them to conclude that psychological well-being, as measured in the national surveys of recent decades, included three distinct components: positive affect, psychological distress, and self-evaluation.

Ryff (1989, 1995), a lifespan developmentalist, questioned the adequacy of existent positive measures of psychological well-being like one-item assessments of happiness and life satisfaction, which have no solid developmental or theoretical basis to cover the range of positive mental health and wellness. Drawing from several human development theories she and her colleagues developed and validated (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) six new measures of distinct components of psychological wellness: positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life (Self-Acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development as a person (Personal Growth), the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (Purpose in Life), the possession of quality relations with others (Positive Relations with Others), the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world (Environmental Mastery), and a sense of self-determination (Autonomy). Examining a more complete array of measurement of psychological wellness as well as psychological distress offers the potential to reveal a more comprehensive and enlightening understanding of the complex psychological effects stemming from involvement in significant and

often conflictual social roles, including marriage and parenting (see Umberson & Gove, 1989, for an illustration of this point in relation to parenthood status). Therefore, these six dimensions of psychological well-being were examined in this analysis along with the more familiar dimensions of positive affect (Global Happiness), self-adequacy (Self-esteem [distinct from Self-Acceptance, see Ryff, 1989], Personal Mastery [distinct from Environmental Mastery, see Ryff, 1989]) and psychological distress (Depression, Hostility).

Marital Status and Psychological Well-Being

Most studies examining marital status and psychological distress have concluded that married men and women have a mental health advantage in contrast to their unmarried peers (Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Gore & Mangione, 1983; Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983; Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990; Mirowsky & Ross, 1989). Among the single, formerly married persons—divorced and widowed—typically report poorer well-being and give evidence of more distress than never-married persons (Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Gove & Shin, 1989).

Research examining whether the psychological benefits of marriage are greater for men or women has yielded mixed results. Gove and Tudor (1973) found that marriage protected the mental health of men more than women. Yet Fox (1980) found contrary evidence, suggesting that women are benefitted more by marriage. A recent analysis by Ross (1995) found no gender differences. However, all of these investigations investigated psychological distress or other psychological dysfunction as outcomes. There is less evidence about potential gender differences in positive psychological well-being associated with marriage.

Better reports of global happiness—the most commonly employed measure of positive well-being in the literature—have also been consistently associated with being married (Glenn, 1975; Glenn & Weaver, 1979, 1988; Lee, Seccombe, & Shehan, 1991). However, national trend data from the General Social Survey (GSS) spanning the 1970s and the 1980s examined by Glenn

and Weaver (1988) revealed a “narrowing of the happiness gap” between the married and the never-married. This trend was noted particularly for men and for younger adults (ages 25-39). The proportion of never-married men indicating they were “very happy” increased between 1972 and 1982 while the proportion of younger married women indicating such high levels of positive well-being decreased (Glenn & Weaver, 1988). Lee, Seccombe and Shehan (1991) extended the analysis of the GSS to 1989 and found that the gap increased somewhat during 1987 and 1988, but then diminished again in 1989. As before, the changes found in happiness by marital status were most pronounced among young adults; specifically, younger never-married men and women reported more happiness in the 1980s than in the 1970s and younger married women reported less happiness in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Anderson and Stewart (1994) and Gordon (1994) have also reported evidence from their recent qualitative studies that mature single women report advantages to single status over marriage in terms of personal autonomy and growth.

Harding-Hidore and her colleagues (1985) in a meta-analysis of studies of marital status and well-being found evidence of only a small positive association of marriage with subjective well-being. The effects were smaller for older persons, and they were also smaller for younger cohorts. The results of this meta-analysis suggest that it is important to examine age differences in the importance of marriage and marital transitions, and that it is important to continue to periodically evaluate these relationships at different points in time.

Marital Status Transitions and Well-Being

A few longitudinal population-based studies on the mental health effects of the transition from marriage to divorce have been conducted. Menaghan and Lieberman (1986) used a probability sample of over 1,000 adults from the Chicago area followed over four years (1972 to 1976) to examine the impact of divorce on change in depressive affect. These researchers found that, in fact, divorce led to an increase in depressive affect; greater economic problems,

unavailability of confidants, and a reduction in living standards accounted for a substantial amount of the decline in well-being. No difference in change was found for men in contrast to women. A major strength of this study was its prospective design. Yet, it was limited to an examination of one measure of psychological well-being (depressive affect), it investigated only one type of marital transition, and it is now a story two decades old.

Doherty, Su, and Needle (1989) conducted a five-year (1982-1987) longitudinal study of 402 predominantly White, middle-class, middle-aged couples with teenage children randomly selected from the enrollment of a Minnesota Health Maintenance Organization in 1982. They found that women who were separated or divorced during the study period experienced a decline in psychological mood and an increase in substance abuse. The transition to dissolution did not result in declines in well-being for men (although men who separated or divorced rated lower than continuously married men on psychological mood, self-esteem, mastery, and substance abuse both before and after dissolution).

Booth and Amato (1991) analyzed data from a American national sample of over 2,000 married people aged 55 and younger in 1980 who were followed-up longitudinally in 1983 and 1988. Their analysis of patterns from three time periods led them to conclude that divorce was associated with a short-term (less than two years postevent), but not long-term (more than two years postevent) increase in psychological distress and unhappiness (each outcome measured with a single-item indicator), and that these patterns were similar for men and women. They concluded that their results provided evidence for a “crisis model” fitting the transition from being married to being divorced—i.e., short term negative effects, but not long-term negative effects.

Mastekaasa (1995) recently examined national Norwegian data for 930 persons married in 1980 or 1983, who were also reinterviewed at least twice subsequent to their initial interview. He found that persons who separated or divorced over the longitudinal follow-up period experienced

a significant increase in psychological distress (measured with two items), both short-term (less than four years postevent) and long-term (four to eight years postevent). This led him to conclude, in contrast to Booth and Amato (1991), that the “persistent life strains” model (i.e., long term and ongoing effects) explained differences between married and divorced Norwegians better than the “crisis” model.

The transition to remarriage has received less attention. Cross-sectional evidence suggests that remarried men may be somewhat happier than once-married men (White, 1979), but remarried women are less happy than once-married women (White, 1979). Spanier and Furstenberg (1982) examined the transition to remarriage longitudinally (1977-1979) for their sample of 180 Pennsylvania respondents. They found that remarriage alone did not account for well-being differences between the group that remarried in contrast to the group that remained divorced during the period they studied.

The first few months after the death of a spouse have been consistently associated with higher levels of depressive symptomology (Harlow, Goldberg, & Comstock, 1991; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987; Wortman, Silver & Kessler, 1993). Although not totally consistent, evidence to date suggests that widowhood may be more psychologically stressful for men than for women (e.g., Gove, 1972; Siegel & Kuykendall, 1990; M. Stroebe & Stroebe, 1983; W. Stroebe & Stroebe, 1987) and for younger widows in contrast to older widows (e.g., Ball, 1977; Sanders, 1981). Longitudinal evidence indicates that postbereavement depression effects may be short-lived (one to two years), and that long-term differences in depression between widows and married persons may be minimal; this suggests that the “crisis model” may also fit the transition to widowhood (Harlow et al., 1991; Sanders, 1981; McCrae & Costa, 1993). However, research on widowhood is often limited to convenience samples, longitudinal studies beginning only after widowhood, few measures of well-being, limited age range (e.g., only the elderly), and/or

limitation only to women making gender comparisons impossible (Kitson et al., 1989). By examining changes in well-being for those who remain separated/divorced or widowed over a period of five years, this analysis was designed to help provide additional evidence regarding whether these single statuses are plagued with “persistent life strains” influencing well-being, or whether it was only the transition period (“crisis”) that has a significant short-term effect on well-being. This research also seeks to add to the literature on the effects of widowhood by examining a young adult vs. midlife adult contrast for women; in much of the existing literature “young” widows are actually midlife women.

Explaining Marital Status Differences in Well-Being

As already noted in this review, most research on marital status differences in well-being has been cross-sectional. Cross-sectional analyses do not allow reliable inference regarding the direction of causality. This has led to a continuing debate about whether the observed differences in psychological well-being that have been documented between marital statuses are due to *social selection* or *social causation*. The social selection hypothesis suggests that there is a differential selection into marriage (first marriage *and* remarriage)—i.e., psychologically healthier persons are more likely to be desirable marriage partners and therefore get chosen into marriage than psychologically unhealthy people, and therefore show better psychological profiles than never married (and formerly married) persons in cross-sectional research as a result. The social selection perspective would also argue that formerly married persons evidence poorer mental health than married persons because the psychological unwell who do get married are more likely to experience dissolution and less likely to make a transition into remarriage.

There is mixed support for the social selection hypothesis. Menaghan’s longitudinal analysis of divorce (1985); Glenn and Weaver’s (1988) cohort and trend data; Gove, Hughes, and Style’s (1983) analyses controlling for childhood problems; Booth and Amato’s (1991)

prospective divorce study results; Doherty, Su, and Needle's (1989) prospective divorce study; and Mastekaasa's (1995) prospective study of dissolution in Norway suggest that there is limited evidence for social selection into single status.

Mastekaasa (1992), however, using data from approximately 9,700 Norwegians, found that subjective well-being and overall life satisfaction helped predict the probability of marrying over a period varying between 22 and 47 months. This led him to conclude that social selection processes were at work in producing marital status differences in well-being. White (1992) analyzed data from a 1985 Canadian national sample of over 11,000 respondents and found a positive relationship between life satisfaction and marriage. Since White found more evidence of marital status differences in the middle range of the age range (25-59 for women; 20-70 for men), he suggested that selection might be a factor in creating the patterns of difference.

There are limitations in the way support has been garnered for the social selection hypothesis in some of this recent research. For example, either inferences have been made from cross-sectional age comparisons (Glenn and Weaver, 1988; White, 1992), a limited "proxy" measure like childhood problems has been used (Gove, Hughes, and Style, 1983), or a potentially unstable measure of psychological well-being from an only slightly earlier time of measurement has been the basis for the "test" (Mastekaasa, 1992, 1994). This study sought to conduct an additional contemporary test of the social selection hypothesis among American adults 1) by examining marital status continuity and transition differences in 1) *stability* over 5 years for three outcomes—global happiness, self esteem, and psychological distress, and 2) by examining marital status continuity and transition differences in six Ryff Psychological well-being outcomes, as well as hostility and personal mastery, controlling for mental health selection by holding constant the level of psychological distress (or in the case of personal mastery, a one-item measure of personal mastery) reported by respondents five years earlier (prior to the marital transition, if one

occurred).

The social causation hypothesis suggests that there are aspects of being married that make it advantageous to mental health in comparison to single life. If social selection is ruled out, this becomes the most likely explanation for marital status differences in well-being. Various specific mechanisms of social causation have been suggested—e.g., declines in income, life strains, and reduced social support (Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990). While we do not examine evidence for specific mediators in this analysis, if our longitudinal examination confirms changes in well-being over five years time while remaining in a single marital status or experiencing a marital transition in contrast to remaining married over this time period, we will, in fact, be adding substantial support for the social causation hypothesis regarding marital status effects on well-being. Additionally, evidence of effect differences between the continuously married and the continuously separated/divorced, widowed, and never married would provide support for the “persistent life strains” or “role” model in contrast to the “crisis” model for explaining the negative effects of separated/divorced and widowed status.

Research Questions

In short, this study was designed to address the following questions:

- 1) Are there differences in psychological well-being changes that are due to remaining over time in a nonmarried status (separated/divorced, widowed, or never married) in contrast to remaining married?
- 2) Are there differences in psychological well-being changes that are due to making a marital transition (i.e., from never married to married, married to separated/divorced, married to widowed, formerly married to remarried, unmarried to married to unmarried, married to formerly married to married) in contrast to remaining married?
- 3) Are there gender differences in the psychological well-being effects of differential marital status

continuity or change?

4) Are there adult age (that is, young adult vs. midlife adult) differences in the psychological well-being effects of differential marital status continuity or change?

METHODS

Data

The data for these analyses came from the first and second waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), which includes information from personal interviews conducted in 1987-88 (Time 1) and in 1992-93 (Time 2; five years later) with a nationally representative sample of 13,008 noninstitutionalized American adults, 19 years old and older. This survey included a main sample of 9,643 respondents, with an additional oversample of 3,374 African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, single parents, stepparents, cohabitators, and recently married persons. The response rate at Time 1 (1987-88) was about 70%. The response rate at Time 2 was about 85% of first wave respondents. This yielded national population coverage at a rate of about 60% for data from both waves. Sampling weights correcting for selection probabilities and nonresponse allow this sample to match the composition of the U.S. population on age, sex, and race (see Sweet, Bumpass, & Call 1988, for more design details). The analytic sample for this study consisted of NSFH primary respondents ages 19-34 or 40-60 in 1987-88, who also responded in 1992-93, and who had complete and consistent marital status information for the period between the two waves of the survey (N=6,948). Respondents ages 35-39 in 1987-88 were excluded from these longitudinal analyses so we could make a clear differentiation in the age group contrast analyses between persons experiencing marital status continuity and change prior to age 40 and after age 40. (The group aged 35-39 between 1987-88 and 1992-93 would overlap into their 40s during the five-year period investigated; thus, we felt including them in the analyses would make this distinction less clear.)

Measures

Outcome measures included a 12-item modified version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies *Depression* (CES-D) index (Radloff, 1977) ($\alpha=.93$), a 3-item measure of *hostility/irritability* ($\alpha=.85$), a standard one-item measure of global *happiness*, a 3-item version of Rosenberg's (1965) *self-esteem* index ($\alpha=.65$), a 5-item *personal mastery* index consisting of 4 items from the Pearlin Mastery Scale (Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, Mullan, 1981) along with a single item of control/mastery also used in Wave 1 of the NSFH ($\alpha=.66$), and 3-item versions of Ryff's (1989, Ryff & Keyes, 1995) six psychological well-being scales: *autonomy* ($\alpha=.45$), *personal growth* ($\alpha=.54$), *positive relations with others* ($\alpha=.53$), *purpose in life* ($\alpha=.37$), *self-acceptance* ($\alpha=.54$), and *environmental mastery* ($\alpha=.56$) (see Appendix A for descriptives for all variables used in the analysis; see Appendix B for a list of scale items). For three measures—the CES-D, global happiness, and self-esteem—Time 1 assessment of the measures were available and were controlled in the respective analyses. For the personal mastery scale, responses to one item measuring personal mastery that was included at Time 1 of the NSFH was included as a Time 1 control (the correlation of this one item at Time 2 with the other 4 items of the scale at Time 2 is .57). The hostility index and the six Ryff measures were not included at Time 1, so the CES-D assessment from Time 1 was entered as a control for group selection on well-being in all analyses of these measures to better estimate the likely longitudinal *change* in well-being over time due to marital status continuity or transition.

Marital status contrasts were classified into ten mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories depending upon respondent reports of their marital history over the 5 year period between Time 1 and Time 2 of the NSFH (see Table 1). Respondents who were continuously married during this period were classified as *married* and used as the contrast category in all analyses; respondents who were continuously separated and/or divorced were classified as

separated/divorced; respondents who were continuously widowed were classified as *widowed*; respondents who were continuously never married were classified as *never married*; respondents who were married at Time 1 and separated or divorced at Time 2 were classified as *married-separated/divorced*; respondents who were married at Time 1 and widowed at Time 2 were classified as *married-widowed*; respondents who were separated, divorced, or widowed at Time 1 and married at Time 2 were classified as *remarried*; respondents who were never married at Time 1 and married at Time 2 were classified as *first married*; respondents who were married at Time 1 and who experienced *both* a dissolution of that marriage and a remarriage by Time 2 were classified as *married-unmarried-remarried*; and respondents who were never married, separated, divorced, or widowed at Time 1 and who experienced *both* a marriage and a dissolution by Time 2 were classified as *unmarried-married-unmarried*.

Respondents were also classified into two age status categories: *young adults*—respondents who were ages 19-34 at Time 1, and *midlife adults*—respondents ages 40-60 at Time 1. Several additional demographic statuses were also controlled in all analyses to reduce the amount of confounding influence that might appear in the marital status effects. These include race/ethnicity (dichotomously coded 1=African-American vs. 0=all others), education (in years), household income (continuous measure totalled across all types of earned and unearned income for all household members at Time 1), missing on household income at Time 1 (a dichotomous flag variable to include all respondents missing on income in the regression analyses), having a child age 18 or younger in the household at time 2 (dichotomous, 1=has child vs. 0=no child), and employment status at Time 2 (dichotomous, 1=employed vs. 0=not employed) were all controlled in all models. Ordinary least squares regression models were estimated throughout using SPSS 6.0.

RESULTS

Gender Differences in Marital Status Effects on Well-Being

Table 2 reports the results of models that estimated the effects of multiple marital status contrasts and Gender X Marital Status interactions on well-being. Tables 3 and 4 provide estimates for models that examined both genders separately for each well-being outcome and also added Age X Marital Status interaction terms (further details about the analyses by age follow in the next section).

There are several significant differences in evidence between the different categories of singles as well as the different categories of marital transition displayed in Table 2. The continuously separated/divorced did evidence a decline in well-being in comparison to continuously married adults in terms of depression (at a trend level), global happiness, personal mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance, and environmental mastery. These patterns did not appear to be significantly different for women in contrast to men.

Being continuously widowed over a five year period (note: almost all respondents in this category were ages 40-59) was associated with an increase in depression over time in comparison to being married, but there were no other well-being differences for this group. No gender differences in the effect of being continuously widowed were found for women in contrast to men.

The never married became more depressed and less happy over time; however, a significant gender interaction effect (confirmed by subsequent results provided in Table 3) indicated that never-married status led to less unhappiness for women. Never married respondents also reported more hostility, less positive relations with others, and less self-acceptance than their continuously married counterparts. A significant gender interaction effect indicated that never married women reported even less self-acceptance than never- married men.

Although these results replicate, overall, the general picture we have had from previous

research that the nonmarried are at a well-being disadvantage in comparison to the married, an examination of additional seldom-included well-being outcomes suggests that the story is yet more complex. The continuously never married men and women concurrently rated themselves as *more* autonomous and as experiencing *more* personal growth than their married peers. A trend level gender interaction effect (also confirmed by subsequent analyses reported in Table 3) indicated that never married women rate themselves lower on personal growth than never married men (but still not significantly lower on personal growth than the continuously married). These interesting contrasting results confirm that taking a multidimensional approach to well-being is important in accurately understanding the determinants of psychological well being, and, as lifespan developmental theory (Baltes, 1987) and structural analyses of well-being have suggested (Bradburn, 1969; Bryant & Veroff, 1982; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), that multidirectional effects for different well-being dimensions can occur simultaneously (Baltes, 1987).

The transition from marriage to separation/divorce was associated with an increase in depression and a decline in reported happiness in comparison to remaining married. Those who separated or divorced also reported less personal mastery, less positive relations with others, less purpose in life (at a trend level of significance), and less self-acceptance. Women who experienced marital dissolution reported significantly more of an increase in depression, more hostility, more of a decline in self-esteem, less personal growth (at a trend level), less self-acceptance and environmental mastery than men experiencing marital dissolution (all but the personal growth trend were confirmed in subsequent analyses shown in Table 3).

The transition to widowhood in this sample was associated with lower ratings of hostility, personal mastery, and purpose in life. Gender interactions indicated that becoming widowed was associated with significantly more depression (trend level effect), more hostility, less self-esteem, and more purpose in life for women than for men. Subsequent analyses reported in Table 3

confirm that women, but not men, who were widowed within the last five years report more depression. Men, but not women, who were recently widowed report significantly less hostility than continuously married men. Self-esteem differences between the recently widowed and the continuously married do not reach significance for men or women in separate analyses by gender. Lower reports of purpose in life are in evidence for both men and women in comparison to the continuously married, but for midlife women purpose in life does not appear to be as compromised as it is for younger women or men.

Becoming married for the first time within the last five years led to more of an increase in well-being than remaining continuously married on *all* outcomes except hostility and personal mastery for men (a significant gender interaction confirmed by subsequent results shown in Table 3 indicated personal mastery was also increased by first marriage for women). The clear contrast of these consistent beneficial effects among the newly first married with the consistent negative effects experienced by those who recently dissolved a marriage provides considerable support for the social causation hypothesis regarding marital status effects on well-being.

Becoming *remarried*, however, led to fewer positive effects (similar to the pattern reported by Spanier & Furstenberg, 1982); yet remarriage was also associated with higher reports of autonomy, personal growth, and purpose in life than those reported by the continuously married. This transition did not appear to have different effects for men in contrast to women.

Respondents who experienced *both* a dissolution or loss of spouse and a remarriage during this five-year period were not ultimately very different in well-being from the continuously married, except they did report lower self-acceptance. Respondents who went from single to married and back to single again across this five year period showed clear evidence of poorer well-being in all dimensions other than autonomy and personal growth when contrasted with the continuously married. Several significant gender interaction effects for this group, however,

suggest that women actually experienced less negative impact from making these multiple transitions than did men.

Age Differences in Marital Status Effects on Well-Being

Since there was at least one significant Gender X Marital Status interaction effect in each of the combined gender models estimated (at least at the trend level), it was deemed appropriate to examine separate models for men and women to confirm the gender differences in marital status effects. For these models, additionally, in order to answer the question—“Does age status (that is young adult vs. midlife adult) make a difference in the effects of marital status continuity and change on well being?” we included Age 40+ X Marital Status interaction variables for each marital status contrast where there were enough cases to examine contrasts across age groups. We did not create age interactions 1) for continuity in widowhood status, because there were so few continuously widowed men and women under age 40, 2) for the transition from never married to first married for men or women, because so few cases of this transition were reported for persons aged 40 and older, 3) for the transition from married to widowed for men, because so few cases of this transition were reported by persons under age 40, and 4) for the multiple marriage transitions—unmarried→married→unmarried and married→unmarried→married, since so few of these cases occurred at older ages.

A number of interesting age differences in the effects of marital status continuity and change emerged from these analyses (see Tables 3 and 4). Midlife men evidenced significantly less of an increase in depression and less hostility (at a trend level) over a five-year period of remaining separated or divorced than did younger men. Continuously separated or divorced midlife men also reported significantly more self-acceptance than younger men in this marital category. Yet these same separated or divorced midlife men also reported significantly *less* personal growth than did younger separated or divorced men.

Continuously separated or divorced as well as continuously never married midlife women reported significantly *more* positive relations with others and (at a trend level) more autonomy than did younger women of the same marital status. Never married midlife women also rated their personal mastery higher than younger never married women. Continuously never married midlife men, however, reported significantly *less* self-acceptance than never married younger men.

An examination of the effects of marital status transitions on well-being at varying age periods reveals that midlife women report experiencing *less* increase in depression and hostility due to a marital separation or divorce than younger women do. Women aged 40 and over who experienced marital separation or divorce also reported significantly *better* relations with others, and more personal mastery than younger women. Midlife men experiencing a separation or divorce reported significantly more self-acceptance than did younger men.

A trend level effect indicates that midlife women who experience a transition to widowhood may experience more of a decline in global happiness than younger women. Yet midlife women who were widowed, as noted previously, reported significantly *more* purpose in life and (at a trend level of significance) *more* positive relations with others than younger recent widows. Additionally, the transition to remarriage was associated with significantly *less* depression for midlife women than younger women.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

These results from longitudinal data provide considerable support for the *social causation* hypothesis regarding the importance of marital status for well-being. In numerous cases we found evidence for significant change or difference in psychological well-being occurring as a result of remaining in a particular single status over a period of five years. We note also that a cross-sectional analysis of marital status differences would have clustered the newly married together with the continuously married. Our results suggest that the newly married are making a

significant contribution to an inflation of the mean for psychological well-being among the married in most cross-sectional studies. By distinguishing between the newly married and the continuously married, this study actually conducted an even more rigorous test of the social causation hypothesis, since only “veterans” of marriage (with somewhat lower psychological well-being) were included in the continuously married comparison group.

Well-being differences between the continuously married and the continuously single would not be found if the social selection hypothesis were correct. Our findings of difference also argue against adopting solely a “crisis” model to explain the distress following divorce and widowhood (e.g., Booth & Amato, 1991; McCrae & Costa, 1993), and suggest, instead, that “persistent life strains” associated with the single role are also operative in affecting well-being beyond an initial transition period.

The evidence from contrasts between those who experienced a marital transition out of marriage and those who remained continuously married also provides considerable support for the social causation hypothesis. We found the transition to separation/divorce or widowhood to be associated with negative effects across a number of dimensions of well-being.

However, if marriage was always a positive robust influence on all dimensions of well-being, we would not expect to find any cases where contrasts between the married and the nonmarried were not significant, or where the unmarried evidenced better well-being than the married. And, indeed, in this analysis of multiple dimensions of well-being, there are many cases when there are *no* differences between the continuously married and those who are unmarried or transitioning out of marriage. There are also a few cases when the unmarried report better well-being than the married—e.g., in autonomy and personal growth. These inconsistencies in patterns across outcomes suggest that marriage is not a universal beneficial determinant of all dimensions of psychological well-being. It appears wise, therefore, to continue evaluating the effects of

marriage on well-being with a multidimensional lens whenever possible, so we can obtain a more precise understanding of how and when marriage is important for mental health.

Likewise, this complex analysis does not yield a clear and simple pattern of gender differences in the effects of marriage on psychological well-being. The effects of continuity in single status are not very different for women in contrast to men. Yet in evaluating the effects of recent marital transitions to single status (i.e., married to separated/divorced or widowed) we found that women are somewhat more negatively impacted by such transitions than men (except in the infrequent case of unmarried to married to unmarried in five years).

Additionally, these analyses reveal a number of interesting differences in the effects of marriage on well-being for midlife adults in contrast to younger adults. In most cases (the two robust exceptions being personal growth for separated/divorced men and self-acceptance for never-married men) age group differences suggest greater adaptability (evidenced by higher psychological well-being) among midlifers facing singleness or transitions to single status—i.e., separation, divorce, or widowhood. This is a noteworthy developmental finding, since marital transitions after age 40 are actually less statistically normative (Uhlenberg et al., 1990), and usually nonnormativeness is hypothesized to be associated with greater stress (Neugarten, 1979). In the case of marital status, however, it may be that a certain degree of expertise in handling life problems and self management (wisdom?, cf. Baltes & Staudinger, 1993; Brim, 1992) may be developed by midlife, allowing for significantly greater maintenance of psychological well-being while handling the “persistent life strains” of remaining single or experiencing a transition to single status.

We acknowledge several limitations to this analysis. While we have described more marital status contrasts than any previous study, we still have been forced to omit additional contrasts that might have been further enlightening—e.g., cohabitor status and additional duration

in status measures. These differentiations are surely important (e.g., Mastekaasa, 1994) and would better describe the “continuum” of attachment that we agree characterizes contemporary marriage in the United States (Ross, 1995). To add these contrasts to the already lengthy list we had seemed to overtax the analysis. A more finely-tuned examination of select differences, looking more closely at duration and other potential mediating effects, including marital quality, using the richness of the NSFH data is certainly in order. For example, this unique prospective study of the transition into first marriage, with its unusual contrast to the continuously married, yielded interestingly strong evidence for the well-being “boost” that a first marriage provides for well-being. By comparison, remarriage did not provide nearly so much psychological benefit. What is tempering the “rush” here? These intriguing results deserve further “unpacking” by subsequent study.

We found it valuable to make distinctions between the transition to first marriage and transition to remarriage, as well as between the separated/divorced, widowed, and never married adults and we recommend similar distinctions to future researchers in this area. We also recommend continued attention to both positive psychological outcomes as well as negative psychological outcomes to further a more complete understanding of the ways in which marital status continuity and change influences mental health.

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Table 1
 Weighted Percentage Distribution (Unweighted n) of Five-year Marital Status Continuity and Change,
 National Survey of Families and Households 1987-1993, Primary Respondents (n=6,948)

Marital Status	Total Sample		Women		Men	
	Unweighted N	Weighted Percent	Unweighted N	Weighted Percent	Unweighted N	Weighted Percent
<u>Continuity</u>						
Married (omitted)	3219	51.0	1822	50.4	1397	51.6
Separated/Divorced	867	7.2	647	9.5	220	4.8
Widowed	184	1.8	166	3.1	18	.4
Never Married	1019	17.0	552	14.3	467	19.9
<u>Change</u>						
Married→Separated/Divorced	430	5.8	240	5.9	190	5.6
Married→Widowed	92	1.6	82	2.7	10	.4
Never Married→First Married	515	9.2	264	7.6	251	10.9
Separated/Divorced/Widowed→Remarried	386	3.3	242	3.3	144	3.4
Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	121	1.7	74	1.9	47	1.5
Unmarried→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	115	1.3	77	1.3	38	1.3
Valid Cases	6,948		4,166		2,782	

TABLE 2
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of
Marital Status Continuity and Change on Psychological Well-Being

<u>PREDICTORS</u>	Depression	Hostility	Global Happiness	Self Esteem	Personal Mastery	Autonomy	Personal Growth	Positive Relations	Purpose in Life	Self Acceptance	Environmental Mastery
Female	.14***	-.05	-.06	-.08***	-.39***	-.12	.44***	1.04***	.27**	.38***	-.04
Age ≥ 40	-.08*	-.35**	.00	-.04*	-.46***	.29**	-.58***	.03	-.51***	-.19*	.07
Marital Status											
<u>Continuity</u>											
Married (omitted)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Separated/Divorced	.15+	.48	-.50***	-.01	-1.00***	.30	-.08	-1.12***	-.96***	-.97***	-.47*
Widowed	.62*	.83	-.24	-.20	-.27	.79	-.39	-.92	-.95	-.19	-.37
Never Married	.19***	.55*	-.40***	.03	-.25	.47***	.57***	-.69***	-.22	-.32*	-.08
Female* Separated/Divorced	.13	.29	.19	-.02	.47	-.01	-.02	-.16	.31	-.29	.27
Female* Widowed	-.53	-1.06	.02	.25	-.38	-.88	-.04	-.02	-.02	-.56	.42
Female* Never Married	-.06	.08	.26**	-.00	.33	-.27	-.27+	-.00	.24	-.36*	.17
<u>Change</u>											
Married→Separated/Divorced	.29***	.23	-.51***	-.01	-.76**	-.17	.25	-1.04***	-.39+	-.91***	-.18
Married→Widowed	.21	-2.38*	-.54	.22	-2.10*	-.81	-.18	.16	-2.49***	.04	-.38
Never Married→First Married	-.25***	-.03	.21*	.11**	.06	.51**	.69***	.52**	.80***	.56***	.64***
Separated/Divorced/Widowed→Remarried	-.16	.59	.21	.11*	.13	.66**	.52*	.23	.57*	.01	.55*
Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	-.28+	-.23	-.01	-.13	-.23	-.30	.31	-.16	.31	-.91*	-.07
Unmarried→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	.43*	2.23**	-.49*	-.27**	-1.73**	-.43	-.62	-1.98***	-1.87***	-1.91***	-1.01*
Female*Married→Separated/Divorced	.25*	1.58***	-.01	-.16**	-.37	-.45	-.46+	-.28	-.21	-.83**	-.72**
Female*Married→Widowed	.48+	2.91**	-.19	-.42*	1.33	1.08	.48	-.61	2.49***	-.44	.15
Female*Never Married→First Married	.13	-.23	.11	.05	.77**	-.00	-.18	.05	-.40+	.07	.34
Female*Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.24+	-.72	-.03	-.05	.53	-.06	.25	-.25	-.28	-.05	.02
Female*Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.51**	.38	.30	.19+	.32	.80+	.24	.24	-.10	.57	.50
Female*Unmarried→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	-.20	-.55	.34	.44***	1.76**	.84	.84	1.22+	1.92**	1.00+	1.58**
<u>Time 1 Well-Being</u>											
Depression	.35***	.91***				-.27***	-.22***	-.41***	-.23***	-.52***	-.50***
Global Happiness			.23***								
Self-Esteem				.37***							
Personal Mastery					.83***						
Constant	1.47***	2.04***	4.30***	4.46***	12.74***	14.46***	12.86***	12.76***	10.92***	13.37***	13.57***
R ²	.20	.10	.09	.18	.14	.03	.10	.09	.13	.12	.09

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, primary respondents (N=6,948)

+ p ≤ .10 * p ≤ .05 ** p ≤ .01 *** p ≤ .001 (two-tailed test)

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, years of education, household income, and presence of a child ≤ age 18 in household.

TABLE 3
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of
Marital Status Continuity and Change on Psychological Well-Being by Gender

<u>PREDICTORS</u>	Depression		Hostility		Global Happiness		Self-Esteem		Personal Mastery	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Age ≥ 40 (time 1)	-.03	-.08	-.14	-.29	-.06	.06	-.01	-.06+	-.95***	-.14
Marital Status										
<u>Continuity</u>										
Married (omitted)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Separated/Divorced	.21+	.57***	1.08*	1.59**	-.29+	-.56*	.04	-.09	-.69*	-1.48**
Widowed	.03	.62+	-.39	.76	-.18	-.25	.05	-.20	-.46	-.35
Never Married	.12	.28***	.51	1.02***	-.14	-.44***	.07	-.02	-.15	-.25
Age ≥ 40* Separated/Divorced	.04	-.55**	-.72	-1.41+	.02	.03	-.07	.10	.40	.63
Age ≥ 40* Never Married	-.24	.10	-.05	-1.05	.27	-.04	-.01	-.00	1.16*	-.57
<u>Change</u>										
Married→Separated/Divorced	.63***	.26*	2.19***	-.04	-.54***	-.45**	-.16**	-.05	-1.52***	-.63+
Married→Widowed	.71*	.21	.29	-2.40*	.23	-.62	-.19	.22	-2.73**	-2.24
Never Married→First Married	-.14+	-.16+	-.35	.37	.32**	.18+	.19***	.07	.69**	-.01
Separated/Divorced/Widowed→Remarried	.20	-.01	.03	.98	.05	.16	.03	.09	.50	.19
Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.22	-.24	.12	-.08	.26	-.01	.07	-.15	.02	-.21
Never Married→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	.20	.54**	1.52*	2.68***	-.12	-.55*	.20*	-.32**	-.02	-1.81**
Age ≥ 40*Married→Separated/Divorced	-.42*	.16	-1.75*	.97	.02	-.12	.02	.06	1.20*	-.16
Age ≥ 40*Married→Widowed	-.07	----	.14	----	-1.04+	----	-.00	----	2.39*	----
Age ≥ 40*Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	-.44*	-.18	-.77	-.36	.37	.03	.14	.00	.32	-.28
<u>Time 1 Variables</u>										
Depression	.39***	.31***	1.05***	.76***						
Global Happiness					.24***	.21***				
Self-Esteem							.39***	.34***		
Personal Mastery									.83***	.83***
Constant	1.51***	1.59***	1.40**	2.56***	4.30***	4.18***	2.03***	2.39***	12.35***	12.69***
R²	.20	.17	.11	.10	.10	.10	.18	.17	.15	.13

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, primary respondents (N=6,948).

+ p ≤ .10 * p ≤ .05 ** p ≤ .01 *** p ≤ .001 (two-tailed test)

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, years of education, household income, and presence of a child ≤ age 18 in household.

TABLE 4
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of
Marital Status Continuity and Change on Psychological Well-Being (Ryff Scales) by Gender

<u>PREDICTORS</u>	Positive Relations		Purpose in Life		Self-Acceptance		Environmental Mastery		Autonomy		Personal Growth	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Age ≥ 40 (time 1)	-.09	-.20	-.57***	-.51***	-.15	-.28+	.09	.06	.28+	.12	-.56**	-.58***
Marital Status												
<u>Continuity</u>												
Married (omitted)	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
Separated/Divorced	-1.86***	-1.72***	-.62*	-.63	-1.15***	-1.86***	-.15	-.84+	-.09	.35	.08	.73+
Widowed	-.68*	-1.05	-.85*	-1.04	-.61*	-.30	.12	-.41	-.10	.88	-.43+	-.43
Never Married	-.74***	-.86***	.01	-.33	-.53**	-.53**	.14	-.18	.19	.36+	.25	.64***
Age ≥ 40* Separated/Divorced	1.12**	.73	.10	-.61	-.03	1.06*	.01	.46	.62+	-.03	-.25	-1.15*
Age ≥ 40* Never Married	1.06*	-.80	.72	-.03	.32	-1.07*	.40	-.33	.22	-.15	.56	.51
<u>Change</u>												
Married→Separated/Divorced	-1.74***	-1.39***	-.49+	-.76*	-1.77***	-1.45***	-.86***	-.03	-.59*	-.41	-.13	.11
Married→Widowed	-1.87+	.04	-1.90*	-2.59***	-.97	-.10	-.01	-.42	-.30	-.71	-.75	-.26
Never Married→First Married	.54*	.36	.39+	.73***	.73***	.35+	1.07***	.52**	.55**	.36+	.53**	.68***
Separated/Divorced/Widowed→Remarried	-.27	-.02	.30	.29	-.06	-.20	.52	.55	.49	.54	.65*	.56
Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.07	-.25	.41	.30	-.34	-.98*	.46	-.08	.53	.38	.57+	.32
Unmarried→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	-.71	-2.20***	-.11	-1.98***	-.79+	-2.19***	.63	-1.11*	.42	-.55	.25	-.66
Age ≥ 40*Married→Separated/Divorced	1.62***	.56	-.43	.79	.16	1.13*	-.18	-.42	-.14	.54	-.17	.46
Age ≥ 40*Married→Widowed	1.80+	----	2.23*	----	.66	----	-.22	----	.70	----	1.18	----
Age ≥ 40*Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.77	.34	-.01	.42	.03	.15	.26	-.08	.48	.16	.39	-.12
<u>Time 1 Variables</u>												
Depression	-.36***	-.46***	-.22***	-.23***	-.51***	-.52***	-.47***	-.54***	-.30***	-.24***	-.21***	-.24***
Constant	12.77***	13.87***	10.90***	11.11***	13.39***	13.67***	13.09***	13.90***	14.41***	14.48***	12.78***	13.25***
R²	.11	.07	.14	.13	.14	.11	.09	.09	.04	.03	.12	.10

Source: National Survey of Families and Households, primary respondents (N=6,948).

+ p ≤ .10 * p ≤ .05 ** p ≤ .01 *** p ≤ .001 (two-tailed test)

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, years of education, household income, and presence of a child ≤ age 18 in household.

APPENDIX A

Descriptive Statistics for Analysis Variables

	Total Sample Mean (s.d.) n=6,948	Women Mean (s.d.) n=4,166	Men Mean (s.d.) n=2,782
Demographic Characteristics			
Female	.52		
Age \geq 40 (time 1)	.43	.44	.42
Black	.11	.12	.10
Employed	.73	.64	.82
Years of Education	13.03 (2.78)	12.81 (2.64)	13.27 (2.90)
Household Income (in thousands)	33.37 (41.52)	32.39 (39.58)	39.17 (44.52)
Missing on Income Data	.32	.30	.33
Child \leq 18 in Household	.42	.45	.39
Psychological Well-Being			
Depression	2.18 (1.16)	2.32 (1.11)	2.04 (1.19)
Depression (time 2)	2.12 (1.13)	2.28 (1.11)	1.95 (1.12)
Global Happiness	5.41 (1.32)	5.39 (1.36)	5.44 (1.28)
Global Happiness (time 2)	5.36 (1.31)	5.33 (1.35)	5.39 (1.26)
Self-Esteem	4.12 (.59)	4.12 (.60)	4.12 (.58)
Self-Esteem (time 2)	4.10 (.63)	4.04 (.67)	4.16 (.59)
Personal Mastery (1-item)	3.6 (.96)	3.56 (.98)	3.65 (.94)
Personal Mastery (time 2)	18.16 (3.4)	17.87 (3.48)	18.46 (3.28)
Hostility	3.22 (4.21)	3.42 (4.41)	3.01 (3.97)
Autonomy	14.48 (2.50)	14.36 (2.56)	14.61 (2.43)
Environmental Mastery	13.79 (2.74)	13.64 (2.81)	13.94 (2.65)
Personal Growth	15.13 (2.45)	15.16 (2.48)	15.10 (2.42)
Positive Relations	13.70 (3.11)	14.02 (3.11)	13.35 (3.07)
Purpose in Life	13.74 (2.87)	13.68 (2.89)	13.82 (2.84)
Self-Acceptance	13.84 (2.74)	13.78 (2.78)	13.90 (2.70)

APPENDIX A

Descriptive Statistics for Analysis Variables (continued)

	Total Sample Mean (s.d.) n=6,948	Women Mean (s.d.) n=4,166	Men Mean (s.d.) n=2,782
<u>Marital Status</u>			
Continuity			
Separated/Divorced	.07	.10	.05
Widowed	.02	.03	.004
Never Married	.17	.14	.20
Age ≥ 40* Separated/Divorced	.05	.06	.03
Age ≥ 40* Never Married	.02	.02	.02
Female* Separated/Divorced	.05		
Female* Widowed	.02		
Female* Never Married	.07		
Change			
Married→Separated/Divorced	.06	.06	.06
Married→Widowed	.02	.03	.004
Never Married→First Married	.09	.08	.11
Separated/Divorced/Widowed→Remarried	.03	.03	.03
Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.02	.02	.02
Never Married→Married→Sep/Div/Wid	.01	.01	.01
Age ≥ 40*Married→Separated/Divorced	.02	.02	.02
Age ≥ 40*Married→Widowed	.01	.02	----
Age ≥ 40*Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.01	.01	.02
Female*Married→Separated/Divorced	.03		
Female*Married→Widowed	.01		
Female*Never Married→First Married	.04		
Female*Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried	.02		
Female*Married→Sep/Div/Wid→Remarried		.01	
Female*Unmarried→Married→Sep/Div/Wid		.01	

Source: National Survey of Families and Households

Note: Descriptive statistics calculated using weighted data. Dichotomous variable means are proportions.

APPENDIX B

Scale Items

I. RYFF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING SCALES

Autonomy

I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.*
I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think.
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.

Positive Relations with Others

Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.*
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.*
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.

Purpose in Life

I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.*
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.*

Self-Acceptance

I like most parts of my personality.
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased how things have turned out.
In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.*

Environmental Mastery

The demands of everyday life often get me down.*
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.
I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.

Personal Growth

I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.*
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.

II. SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

On the whole I am satisfied with myself.
I am able to do things as well as other people.
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

APPENDIX B
Scale Items (continued)

III. PERSONAL MASTERY

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I can do just about anything I really set my mind to.
- Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life.*
- There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.*
- I have little control over things that happen to me.*
- I have always felt pretty sure my life would work out the way I wanted it to.

IV. CENTER FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES DEPRESSION SCALE (CES-D)

On how many days during the past week did you....

- Feel you could not shake of the blues even with help from your family and friends?
- Feel bothered by things that usually don't bother you?
- Feel lonely?
- Feel sad?
- Feel depressed?
- Have trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing?
- Not feel like eating, your appetite was poor?
- Feel everything you did was an effort?
- Feel fearful?
- Sleep restlessly?
- Talk less than usual?
- Feel you could not "get going"?

V. HOSTILITY SCALE

On how many days during the past week did you....

- Feel irritable, or likely to fight or argue?
- Feel like telling someone off?
- Feel angry or hostile for several hours at a time?

* Item reverse-coded.

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