Adjustment to Separation and Divorce: Evaluation of a Community Group Intervention Program

Dragica Vukalovich

James Cook University

Thesis submitted by Dragica Vukalovich for the Degree of Master of Social Sciences in the School of Psychology, James Cook University – Cairns Campus, Australia.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

October 2004
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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a group intervention program offered by a community organization to people adjusting to separation and divorce. Adjustment outcomes were examined longitudinally using a pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention follow-up. The research sample comprised permanent and temporary residents of the Cairns region. Due to a high transient population, a high attrition rate was experienced post- and six-months post-intervention. Two studies were conducted. For study one, 29 participants were randomly assigned to the intervention or delayed intervention groups. Both groups participated in a six-week intervention program. The aim of this study was to investigate gender and group differences in adjustment to separation and divorce following group intervention. For study two, 15 participants were randomly assigned to the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. The aim of this study was to use a clinically oriented applied investigation of psychological intervention to assess adjustment outcomes. The adjustment measures used to explore gender and group differences for both studies were Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, Social Support Appraisal scale, Levenson's Locus of Control scale and Fisher's Divorce Adjustment scale. Relationship status, relationship number and decider of separation and divorce helped to determine additional group differences. The social context variables: emotional, psychological, social, financial adjustment, property division and satisfaction provided an opportunity to address other aspects of adjustment. Most participants indicated some adjustment differences following intervention with reduced adjustment gains six-months post-intervention. The results indicate some benefits of group intervention. Furthermore, implications for future group intervention programs, gender and group specific information for the enhancement of future programs are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> "Few events in life are more traumatic than divorce. Families are torn apart, lives are disrupted, and wounds linger long after the final papers are signed. The future that once appeared so bright now looms like a dark cloud. You wonder if you'll ever get over the hurt, the grief, the anger. You wonder if you can ever love again.
> You can."
>
> *- Pat Hudson, 1998*

This chapter provides an overview of divorce rates in Australia, cohabitation trends and the stressors of separation and divorce. Also, this chapter briefly reports on the impact of separation and divorce on men and women in relation to the social, psychological, emotional and financial aspects of relationship dissolution. There are many aspects to separation and divorce. Specifically, the focus of this research is to explore the usefulness of a community-based program to separated and divorced individuals seeking better adjustment outcomes.

1.1 Historical Overview of Separation and Divorce

From 1900 to 1970 divorce rates in Australia remained at a low level. For example, in the mid 1960s, 10% of marriages ended in divorce. Since the 1970s there has been a dramatic increase in divorce rates. Once the Family Law Act of 1975 was introduced, the divorce rates increased by threefold (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Divorce was finally out of the arena of criminal law which allowed divorce if there were irretrievable differences between spouses (Weston, Stanton, Qu & Soriano,

2001). In the first year of the Family Law Act of 1975, a dramatic increase in divorce occurred and peaked by the end of the 1970s. Due to economic recessions, other peaks in divorce rates occurred in 1982-83 and again in 1991 (Family Matters, 1993). By the late 1990s, 40% of marriages ended in divorce.

Overall, the divorce rate had varied marginally over two decades. The divorce rate in 1978 was 2.8 per 1000 population. This declined to 2.4 in 1987, increased to 2.9 in 1996 and declined to 2.7 in 1998 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). In addition to marriage dissolution rates, the statistics show that there has been a significant increase in the number of people cohabiting prior to marriage. In 1978 only 22% of couples had cohabited prior to marriage whereas in 1998 this had increased to 67%. Although there is no register to identify specifically the number of people who had cohabited for a significant period and separated, the 1996 Census of Population and Housing reported 55% of people lived in couple relationships. Of these, 5.3% lived in de facto relationships and 49% in registered marriages. With an increase in cohabitation rates, there has been some speculation about the advantages of cohabitation. Some researchers have argued that cohabitation tends to be more of a temporary arrangement (Qu & Weston, 2001) and not considered as an alternative to marriage (Sappington, 1989). Others claim that cohabitation may act as a pre-marriage filter or a preventative measure of divorce (Hill, Rubin & Peplau, 1979) and also increases the risk of marriage instability (Teachman & Polonko, 1990).

Historically, divorce trends and marriage patterns in Australia have been similar to other countries in the Western world during the twentieth century. Divorce has been an option for European society for centuries (Scanzoni, 1979). Prior to the sixteenth century, the Roman Catholic courts granted divorce only when adultery,

cruelty or heresy was cited. The legal dissolution of marriage was difficult to obtain and the consequences of divorce for either spouse was that remarriage was forbidden. Then, during the eighteenth century, divorce was dealt with in the civil courts, but the continuing difficulties and stringent laws motivated people (mainly women) to resort to desertion, hence affecting the notion of marital stability.

The difficulties of obtaining a divorce were encountered by both sexes until the latter part of the eighteenth century when women more so than men started petitioning and citing adultery as their main grounds for divorce. With the emergence of feminism, changes in social norms shifted dramatically during the nineteenth century and women's bargaining power in a marriage was strengthened. As a result of women's improved positioning in society during the latter part of the nineteenth century, divorce rates increased steadily (Scanzoni, 1979). It is evident from the literature that divorce trends continued to rise in Western society and reached a peak in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly, due to the continual rise in divorce rates over the centuries it appears that Australian cohabitation and divorce trends are not likely to reduce significantly during the early part of the twenty-first century. As a direct consequence of the increasing rates of relationship dissolution over time, research has contributed significantly to separation and divorce adjustment outcomes.

If divorce trends continue at the present rate of 2.8 per 1000 population in Australia this suggests that approximately 40% of all marriage will dissolve (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Similarly, if defacto relationships prior to marriage keep increasing significantly, it is likely that society will become more accustomed to these social changes and become more experienced at adjusting

physically, emotionally and socially. Although considerable distress may be experienced as a result of ending a relationship, if the current trend continues, people will gain more experience at dealing with the consequences, and society more accepting of separation and divorce as a common occurrence. This was evident in the research conducted by Burns and Dunlop (2000) where they suggest intergenerational transmission of divorce in some cases. Such results further highlight the need for effective intervention. To assist with the adjustment process, community based programs and services have been available. Future programs would need to modify interventions according to the present social norms. As society becomes more experienced at dealing with the consequences of separation and divorce, adjustment to the changed circumstances may not be hampered by so many problems in the future.

1.2 Interventions and Adjustment to Separation and Divorce

Whether married or living in a de facto relationship, couples may experience similar difficulties of uncoupling (Mastekaasa, 1994; Levinger, 1979) and adjusting to separation (Mika & Bloom, 1980). Although considerable attention has been devoted to the consequences of marital dissolution (Kitson & Morgan, 1990; White, 1990), the end of a marriage or de facto relationship involves significant change that results in various disruptions, difficulties (Kitson, 1992), loss (Harvey, 1982), decline in physical and mental health (Wu & Hart, 2002) and negative consequences for the former partners and children (Fenell & Weinhold, 2003; McNamara & Morrison, 1982). The pre-separation (Federico, 1979), post-separation, post-divorce periods are quite traumatic (Avery & Thiessen, 1982), stressful (Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Bloom, White & Asher, 1979; Chiriboga & Pierce, 1981; Chiriboga, Roberts & Stein, 1978; Counts & Sacks, 1985; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Weiss, 1976; Wertlieb,

Budman, Demby & Randall, 1984) and may have an impact on the person's identity (Gold, 1988).

In 1967, Holmes and Rahe's research rated the divorce experience as the second most stressful life event and marital separation as the third most stressful life event on the social readjustment rating scale. In considering the separation stressors, whether an individual was in a heterosexual or homosexual relationship (Kurdek, 1997), the relationship dissolution process is considered by some researchers as the most stressful and disruptive life event (Counts & Sacks, 1985; Ladbrook, 1982). It has been suggested that there is the possibility of long-term post-separation effects continuing for a period of up to 10 years for some individuals (Wallerstein, 1986). Specifically, the post-divorce period has been described as distressing where post-separation attachment between some former spouses has continued for a seemingly endless amount of time (Berman, 1988).

Thus, the post-separation, post-divorce period is a time of change, confusion and transition (Bonkowski & Wanner-Westly, 1979; Chiriboga, 1982). Numerous losses are experienced (Weiss, 1976; Kessler, 1976) while trying to adapt to the social, financial, emotional and psychological changes as a newly separated person (Brown, Felton, Whiteman & Manela, 1980; Spanier & Casto, 1979). Although the social costs have decreased in recent years due to less stigmatization of people choosing separation and divorce, both parties experience changes in self-concept and both are economically disadvantaged. According to Myers (1989), the standard of living decreases more so for women than for men, but the psychological costs of separation seem to be greater for men as the morbidity and mortality rates are higher. Women tend to be more financially disadvantaged because they are more likely to

compromise and make more concessions, whereas men tend to be more coercive and insensitive to the interpersonal and emotional dynamics during negotiations. Overall, men seem to be more bewildered and stressed by the dissolution of the relationship and have a higher rate of admissions to psychiatric hospitals, whereas women attempt suicide more often during the separation period (Bloom, White & Asher, 1979). It is evident that individuals experience the various components of separation and divorce differently (Hartin, 1982).

Because the long-term consequences of separation and divorce are high (Amato & Keith, 1991; Williams, 1988), a considerable body of research has been devoted to exploring adjustment outcomes for individuals and groups. Emotional adaptation is part of the course of experiencing a significant life change (Healy, 1988), and developing an understanding of the stressful circumstances can influence coping and new levels of functioning (Wiseman, 1975). Specifically, achieving some resolution regarding the emotional impact is important (Funder, 1992). Community agencies offer individual, couple, family and group counselling, support programs and psycho-educational sessions. Specifically, the psycho-educational programs are designed to provide participants with information about the separation and divorce process and to encourage participants to make use of the information in order to gain a greater understanding of their resolution process (Elliott, 1997; Nicholson Callahan, 1979). To facilitate adjustment, most intervention programs aim to provide participants with a number of opportunities: (1) to normalize the stressors of separation and divorce, (2) to provide information about the grief and loss process, (3) to encourage the creation of support networks, and (4) to develop greater self awareness, and explore ways of progressing through the adjustment process.

Generally, participants are motivated to attend group intervention programs because of adjustment difficulties, coming to terms with changed circumstances and to resolve some of the emotional aspects of separation (Huppert, 1982).

A number of intervention programs have been evaluated to determine the benefits for participants' adjustment to separation and divorce (Byrne, 1990; Byrne & Overline, 1991). Some of these include: the Beginning Experience (Stewart, Lay & Gau, 1984); the Treatment Seminars (Granvold & Welch, 1977); Communication Skills Training (Avery & Thiessen, 1982); Building Skills in Divorce Adjustment Groups (Kessler, 1978); and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Seminars (Fisher, 1976). Although there is a body of research that has evaluated separation and divorce adjustment outcomes following group intervention, research has not investigated the adjustment differences for married and de facto attendees of an intervention program for the separated and divorced in a remote region. Therefore, this study intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the Lifeline Cairns Region six-week *Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce* psycho-educational intervention program in addressing adjustment to separation for married and de facto participants.

Specifically, the *Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce* intervention program seeks to assist participants increase their awareness, knowledge and coping skills during the post-separation period. The adjustment process involves the disruption of roles, patterns and social interactions (Raschke, 1977) that were an integral part of the person's life during their relationship. The group intervention sessions focus on assisting participants' deal with the emotional, physical and psychological aspects of relationship breakdown and separation. The emotional levels individuals experience has been described as being akin to the stages of grief and loss

(Fisher, 1981). Therefore, the aims of the intervention program are: (1) to assist participants integrate their experience; (2) support their quest for personal growth; (3) foster awareness and personal responsibility; and (4) to assist individuals explore ways of progressing through the adjustment process in a supportive environment.

In conclusion, the purpose of this study will be to determine the effectiveness of the group treatment program in facilitating adjustment in the short-term and in a six-month follow-up. The study intends to examine a number of personality variables such as self-esteem, social support and locus of control to evaluate post-separation adjustment. Also an adjustment measure will be utilized to examine the emotional and social aspects of post-separation such as: social self-worth, grief and loss, separation anger, disentanglement, self-worth and social trust. A range of demographic variables including situational variables will be examined to ascertain their influence on the degree of adjustment to separation and divorce.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW – INTERVENTION GROUPS

In the previous chapter, divorce rates and the impact of separation were briefly discussed. In this chapter, particular attention will be on research focusing on adjustment outcomes post-separation. Specifically, short- and long-term intervention programs, their usefulness and limitations in assisting adjustment will be considered.

2.1 Group Intervention Facilitating Separation and Divorce Adjustment

Individuals experiencing the difficulties of separation and divorce often seek professional support. Various interventions are available for separated and divorced people trying to adjust to their new circumstances. These can range from individual, couple and family counseling to group intervention. The response to group intervention programs that has been offered over time has been mostly positive. According to Bonkowski and Wanner-Westly (1979) the important elements of separation and divorce group-intervention programs are group support, psycho-educational and psychotherapeutic input. Some group intervention programs may focus mainly on only one of these elements whereas others may include all three elements.

Other important elements of group intervention are interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness, universality (Øygard,Thuen & Solvang, 2000) and the group size. Yalom (1995) claims that small groups comprising five to eight individuals provide the greatest opportunity for group members to participate fully and work through personal issues. Attending a smaller group allows more time for interaction and expression. Often participants are able to build rapport quickly and feel more comfortable in expressing their concerns about separation and adjustment. In larger

groups, the opportunities for getting to know each other and share personal experiences and coping strategies are reduced.

Although most intervention programs are designed to facilitate adjustment, there is a large variation amongst them. Some focus on a range of aspects regarding the relationship termination (Byrne, 1990; Byrne & Overline, 1991) while others concern themselves with the process of adaptation to a single life (Fisher, 1995). The aim of most group intervention programs is to provide participants with a number of opportunities: (1) to normalize the stressors of separation and divorce; (2) to provide information about the grief and loss process; (3) to encourage the creation of support networks; (4) to develop greater self awareness, express feelings and explore ways of progressing through the adjustment process; and, (5) to maximize the adjustment benefits. Often short-term benefits are reported. However, whether various intervention programs improve adjustment outcomes in the long-term still remains a contentious issue to date.

Several studies have explored the effectiveness of specific group intervention programs in facilitating adjustment to separation and divorce. Some of these group intervention programs are: the group marathon design of the Beginning Experience (BE) workshop (Stewart, 1976); the group process model of the Fisher Seminars (Fisher, 1976); group therapy model (Huppert, 1982; Morris & Prescott, 1975); divorce adjustment and transition groups (Bonkowski & Wanner-Westly, 1979; Kessler, 1976; Prescott & Morris, 1979; Salts & Zongker, 1983); the communications training model (Kessler, 1978; Thiessen, Avery & Joanning, 1980); the crisis-intervention model (Davidoff & Schiller, 1983); seminars for the separated, a short-term psycho-educational group intervention (Wertlieb, Budman, Demby & Randall,

1984); and, the cognitive-behavioural model (Granvold & Welch, 1977). Despite the limited number of sessions offered by each model, all claim to be effective in facilitating better adjustment outcomes for some participants in the short-term. Most of these studies did not focus on group size, group cohesion or previous experience of separation as a contributor to adjustment, although most of the intervention models were of similar length and were conducted weekly (from five to ten weeks) for a number of hours per session. Only one intervention model offered weekly sessions for six months and the BE workshop was conducted over a single weekend.

2.1.1 Differences in Group Intervention Models

There has been substantial research that has contributed to addressing the variations in intervention models for separated and divorced groups (Addington, 1992; Bloom, Hodges, Kern & McFaddin, 1985; Byrne, 1990; Davidoff & Schiller, 1983; Fisher, 1978; Graff, Whitehead 111 & LeCompte, 1986; Kessler, 1978; Kaslow, 1981; Salts & Zongker, 1983; Thiessen, Avery & Joanning, 1980; Vera, 1990). This research has contributed to the comparison of a multitude of design differences such as: the effectiveness of a therapy model to an information and support group model; a structured to a semi-structured and an unstructured group intervention format; intervention groups to control groups; variations in length of treatment; pre- and post-group comparisons; single-case designs and qualitative observations. Quite clearly, it is difficult to say anything meaningful regarding the efficacy of the individual intervention models while there continues to be such variations within models and outcome measures. However, some research effort has been directed at addressing this issue and this will be presented next.

One model, the Beginning Experience (BE) two-day workshop, was examined to measure the effectiveness of treatment in facilitating adjustment. Byrne (1990) compared the outcomes of the BE group marathon design to a support group and an information group. All workshops were conducted over a single weekend to compare the difference in intervention outcomes over time. The BE workshop consisted of a series of discussion subjects (encounter with self; spiritual death; trust in self, others and God; and, guilt), personal experience presentations, journal writing and small-group meetings. The format for the support group workshop consisted of lectures, a group session, small group meetings and encouragement to participate in the social activities. The main topic of discussion in this group was 'forgiveness'. The format for the information group workshop comprised of two information sessions focusing on the stages of grief and divorce recovery.

In comparing these group formats, the results showed that greater adjustment was evidenced ten weeks after pre-test for the BE group than the support or information groups. All groups showed some adjustment during the pre to post-test period with the BE group showing the greatest adjustment. The adjustment measures used in this study were the Personal Information Form, the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale, the Engebretson Interpersonal Distance Measure and a self-report form indicating energy in a new relationship. The results showed that gains at the ten-week follow-up period continued for the BE group and the support group while a significant decline in adjustment was evident for the information group (Byrne, 1990). Although the results were not significant for the support group it appeared that encouragement of social interaction and support in a group can facilitate better separation and divorce adjustment outcomes.

In contrast, research conducted by Addington (1992) examined the value of an eight-week psycho-educational and support group program on fifty men and women over four years in six separate groups. The aim of this group program was to assist outpatients who presented at a general hospital with post-divorce adjustment difficulties in the short-term. Group members met once a week for 90 minutes to focus on the emotional impact and emotional response to separation and to share their problems with others experiencing the same stressors. The main objective of this program was to assist group-participants increase their coping strategies and reduce the stress of separation. Session one focused on the group rules and an overview of the topics for the eight-week program. The topics covered were: the grief process and the stages of grief; anger; loneliness; review of the relationship; self-concept and self-esteem; sexuality and intimacy pre- and post-separation; and, self-evaluation of progress. An evaluation of the program by participants revealed that the topics covering the grief process and the emotional stages of grief, anger and self-esteem were most helpful. Although this study reported participants' statements of the benefits of participating in the group program no comparisons were made between groups. However, a measure to assess between-groups comparisons would provide additional information about the effectiveness of the group process.

Using a post-test design, Graff, Whitehead 111 and LeCompte (1986) compared the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral therapy group to a supportive insight-oriented group for women. Twelve women were assigned to each treatment group and compared to two control groups each comprising eleven women. The cognitive-behavioural group met for three hours in the initial session and two and a half hours for the second session held a week later. During the second phase, group

meetings were held for 30 to 40 minutes four days per week for two and a half weeks. Overall, approximately twelve hours of treatment were offered. On the other hand, the format for the supportive insight group was to meet for two and a half hours twice a week for four weeks. In order to gain a better understanding of divorce and an insight into their circumstances, group discussions and self-disclosures were encouraged. The overall results of this study indicated that the cognitive behavioural therapy group was the most effective treatment in assisting divorced women. The supportive insight oriented group was also reported to be useful as an effective treatment for divorced women. Therefore, both therapeutic and support elements were considered helpful.

Davidoff and Schiller's (1983) research involved a 30-month post-program follow-up design to assess the value of a community-based divorce program using a crisis intervention model of group work. A series of six weekly two-hour sessions with a lecture/discussion format were offered on the realities of divorce to five hundred women over a five-year period. The first two sessions dealt with the emotional impact of separation and relationship breakdown, loss, mourning the loss, and grief reactions. The topics for subsequent sessions included: coping as a single person, single parenting, divorce law and overcoming the crisis of divorce to dream a new future. A follow-up telephone research study of eighty of the 500 original participants two and a half years later showed that sixty participants were satisfied with the group work program (Davidoff & Schiller, 1983). Considering the lack of information provided for the follow-up sampling procedure, it is evident that this does not contribute to a clear indication of the benefits of the crisis intervention model. However, this study claimed that the participants that responded to the follow-up

survey acknowledged an improvement in personal feelings, which facilitated better adjustment outcomes.

Three different treatment modalities utilized by Kessler (1978), Salts and Zongker (1983) for divorce adjustment were: the structured group, the unstructured group and the control group. The purpose of the eight-week structured format was to provide divorced individuals with opportunities to build their personal and social skills and deal with divorce-related feelings. The aim of the eight-week unstructured group program was to provide a supportive environment so that participants could share and explore their concerns. On the other hand, the control group was on a wait-list for treatment for eight weeks. The Salts and Zongker (1983) study and the Kessler (1978) study obtained similar results, whereby the structured group had greater adjustment outcomes than the unstructured group and the unstructured group showed greater adjustment outcomes than the control group. Kessler (1978) argued that the successful outcome of the structured group may be attributed to participants being actively engaged in theme-based sessions aimed at skill building and attaining goals. In comparison, the reduced adjustment gains for the unstructured group may have resulted from a less active approach of sharing of concerns and strengths rather than goal attainment. It is evident from comparing the structured and unstructured groups to the control group results that the passive approach of waiting for involvement does not enhance adjustment outcomes in the short-term.

The intervention strategy utilised by Thiessen, Avery and Joanning (1980) to measure adjustment outcomes was a communication skills training approach. The experimental group completed a five-week treatment program comprising fifteen hours in total while the control group received no treatment or contact during that

time. Both groups were assessed pre- and post-treatment on their communication skills and measures of self-esteem, social support and divorce adjustment (Thiessen et. al., 1980). Although it seemed as though the communication training intervention program had a positive effect on adjustment outcomes, participants' levels of social support remained unaffected post-intervention. Hence, it is suggested that the intervention program may have enhanced participants' basic communication skills but did not encourage the development of new social support systems due to the lack of time.

Shelton and Nix (1979) provided an account of the development and implementation of a group-counselling program for separated and divorced individuals offered by a social service agency. Six weekly sessions of two hours in length were offered. Seven groups involving 58 men and women participated. The group counselling program objectives were: (1) to provide information, resources and a supportive environment; (2) to encourage the integration of new coping skills, the attainment of an independent identity; and, (3) opportunities to discuss issues specific to the separation and divorce experience. Participants were encouraged to discuss the stages of emotional divorce and explore feelings of grief and loss, helplessness, guilt, anger and ambivalence associated with separation and divorce. The group-counselling program incorporated concepts of rational emotive therapy. The format included crisis intervention in the beginning stage to relieve negative feelings and focus on the grief process. Communication training and problem solving techniques were introduced in the middle stage to offer participants an opportunity to develop new skills. In the final stages of the program, participants were provided with information on how to challenge their negative thinking and deal with their issues. Although no qualitative

or quantitative evaluation of adjustment outcomes was provided, the researchers concluded that intervention programs were valuable in the provision of support during adjustment to divorce.

To monitor treatment effects for individuals participating in a ten-week semi-structured treatment program with an educational, supportive and therapeutic component, Vera (1990) used a combination of pre- and post-group comparisons, single-case design and qualitative observations. The treatment program was an adaptation of the Fisher Divorce and Personal Growth Seminar (Fisher, 1978). A total of eleven subjects participated in two adjustment groups. Following group comparisons and considering single case variations in adjustment this study claimed that eight participants' well being improved following treatment. This result was achieved through the comparison of baseline and treatment outcome scores. Vera (1990) claimed that the adjustment process of individual participants seemed to be affected by the following factors: the passage of time, social support, life events, stressors and who initiated the separation.

According to Vera (1990), the benefit of conducting a multi-methodological approach was that it provided a rich source of information about individual variations following intervention. Vera conducted a similar study in 1993 to assess treatment outcomes for twenty-five separated and divorced individuals who participated in five adjustment groups. Pre- and post-intervention comparisons showed that twenty-three participants reported improved adjustment scores and four of the five groups had improved adjustment outcomes. Although Vera (1993) acknowledged the methodological shortcomings of these studies it was argued that the results provided a rich source of information regarding individual adjustment to separation and divorce.

Utilising a different intervention format, Fisher (1976) claimed the ten-week divorce adjustment seminar was effective in assisting people work through the difficulties of separation and divorce. This study measured divorce adjustment outcomes by dividing 60 participants into two groups, an experimental and control group. The experimental group attended a three-hour divorce adjustment seminar weekly for ten weeks. The control group was not offered the adjustment seminars during the research period. A pre-test was administered to the experimental and control groups, the experimental group was administered a post-test in week ten of the seminars and experimental and control groups were administered a three-month post-test. The results showed that individuals with good self-concept had better divorce adjustment outcomes. Also, improvement was noted in the following areas: total divorce adjustment; self-acceptance of divorce; disentanglement from the relationship; and, rebuilding social relationships.

In contrast to short-term intervention, Bloom, Hodges, Kern and McFaddin (1985) developed a six-month community-based preventive intervention program with an aim to provide participants with social support and confidence building. The topics covered over that period were legal and financial issues; child rearing and single parenting; career planning and employment; housing and homemaking; and, socialization. Outcomes for the intervention group were compared to an untreated control group at six-months, eighteen-months and thirty-months. Results showed that all participants from both the intervention and control groups showed improvement during the six to eighteen month period. In particular, the intervention group showed superior adjustment when interviewed eighteen-months post-treatment. Interestingly, women showed greater scores in personal growth dimensions throughout the four-

year study. Although multiple benefits were reported for participants of this study, Bloom et al. (1985) state that one of the limitations of the intervention was that the program appeared to have less impact for men than women. To improve adjustment outcomes for men perhaps community-based intervention programs could develop and offer more specific intervention sessions on confidence building and support.

In conclusion, most of the research that was reviewed on the effectiveness of intervention programs showed that intervention improved adjustment outcomes for separated and divorce individuals. Both short- and long-term intervention programs seemed to contribute to beneficial adjustment outcomes for some participants (Addington, 1992; Bloom, Hodges, Kern & McFaddin, 1985; Davidoff & Schiller, 1983). Specifically, it seems that programs providing social support (Bloom et al., 1985; Vera, 1990; Vera, 1993; Byrne, 1990), information on social and emotional adjustment (Fisher, 1976), coping strategies and how to reduce the stress of separation (Addington, 1992) are helpful during the separation and divorce period. Interestingly, it appears that individuals that do not participate in any intervention program also adjusted to their circumstances but at a slower rate (Bloom et al., 1985; Spivey & Sherman, 1980).

Overall, it appeared that all intervention programs were helpful in improving adjustment outcomes although some researchers state that there were greater adjustment outcomes for some participants attending specific group interventions. The three main group intervention models are the educational group, the therapy group and the support group. Some researchers have utilized one group model only while others have utilized a component of each model in one intervention program and claimed success. Although there have been numerous comparisons between different

group intervention models, this study intends to utilize an existing intervention program which includes the educational and support components. For the last five years, Lifeline Cairns Region has offered the community their structured psycho-educational group format program entitled the *Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce* course. Given that anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that it is a successful program, it is timely to empirically test such assertions.

2.1.2 Group Intervention using the Educational Format

Intervention group programs have been developed to assist individuals seeking treatment during the separation and divorce adjustment process. One of these is the structured educational format. The aim of an educational group format is "to educate those facing a potential threat or a developmental life event" (Brown, 1998, p.1). The most important element is to provide the opportunity for new learning. The *Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce* course has a significant educational component. The primary focus for participants is on the presentation of specific information regarding the relationship decline process and adjustment to separation and divorce. The focus moves from the past to the present and then onto the future (Prescott & Morris, 1979). All sessions are topic driven and given that participants choose to attend such a group their motivation to learn tends to be high (Jacobs, Masson & Harvill, 1997).

The group dynamics in an intervention group can often be challenging when participants are at different stages (Scott & Mitchell, 1976) or at different levels of understanding (Jacobs, Masson & Harvill, 1997) of the separation process. In other words, if participants join an educational group program a couple of weeks following separation their extreme distress may interfere with their ability to focus on the

information presented. Whereas, participants who have been separated for at least two months have usually passed the stage of extreme bewilderment and are at a different level of understanding of their circumstances. Although interaction between participants is considered secondary, as the group progresses, participants tend to become more comfortable, hence, during the middle stage of the group program, they are invited to interact more and discuss the material presented in dyads or triads. Considering that the aim is to increase participants' knowledge and awareness of their circumstances and the discussion of ideas becomes paramount (Brown, 1998), educational groups aimed at adjustment for separated and divorced individuals appear to be helpful (Sprenkle & Storm, 1983).

In essence, an educational component of a group intervention program offers participants information about the separation and divorce process and coping strategies in dealing with their separated status and in relating as a separated person. An important component of the adult learning model is to invite participants to share information about their circumstances and personal resources. Information dissemination is the most important element (Brown, 1998). Specifically, the information that is offered is designed to increase the individual's understanding of stressors and emotions, improve problem solving skills, self-esteem and communication. According to Jacobs et al. (1997) the advantages of the group learning process are in the sharing of ideas and discovering new ways of dealing with difficulties to improve personal circumstances.

2.1.3 Group Intervention - the Support Group Element

Although the main component of the *Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce* course is educational, the support process remains as an important key element of the

group program. Characteristics of support are defined by the: “emphasis on similarities of members around a common concern; interaction with other members who have similar conditions and have benefited; an underlying theme that unites members; and support for accomplishing personal goals” (Brown, 1998, p. 238). The support group process may involve professionals facilitating the group process by providing participants with information and skills training (Helgeson & Gottlieb, 2000). In addition to the expectation of mutual support between members, the group facilitator’s focus is to create an environment where participants will have the opportunity to express their experiences, concerns and feel safe to share these with group members (Brown, 1998; Jacobs, Masson & Harvill, 1997).

The most important dynamics during the beginning stages of a group are to assist participants in creating a common bond and encourage the development of trust, genuineness, commitment and caring between group members (Brown, 1998). Generally, during the middle stage of the group, support is extended through encouragement and participants get to know each other better with sharing becoming more intimate (Huppert, 1982). Often, when strong support networks have developed in a group, the closing stage where group reliance is about to cease tends to be an emotional time for participants (Jacobs et al., 1997). Consequently, in closing the group, it is paramount that the group facilitator takes the opportunity to address group needs to allow members the opportunity to process the loss of the intervention group, identify existing support systems and ways of developing new support systems.

Similar to other intervention programs the support component of the Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce course is seen as an integral part of the program. The common themes help unite members in forming supportive

connections, increase hopefulness and reduce alienation and isolation during separation. Other benefits of participating in a support group format is that it "exposes people to varied ways of reacting to and coping with stressful demands, theoretically leading to a sense of belonging and validation of participants' needs and feelings" (Helgeson & Gottlieb, 2000, p. 223). The support elements are considered as complementary to the strong educational component of the program. The educational component identifies the changes needed and provides the information to achieve the changes whilst the support component is designed to provide the emotional support systems to practice new ways of relating and behaving (Brown, 1998). Consequently, the group facilitator of a psycho-educational group program assists in the process of imparting information helpful in learning new skills as well as helping the group achieve a common purpose.

The supportive elements in a group intervention program are different from the type of support received from individual members of a family and friendship group. Helgeson and Gottlieb (2000) state that "it is much more difficult to discount or dismiss collective opinion than the views or experiences of an individual" (p. 223). The benefits of participating in a group intervention program with support elements may vary for each individual who chooses to attend. Participants who have limited emotional support from family, friends and other social networks are more likely to seek support and benefit from the group interactions. Additionally, participants who require specific information regarding stressors and alternative coping strategies may find the group facilitator more supportive. Hence, it is difficult to determine which specific elements of intervention foster support (Cutrona & Cole, 2000). Consequently, the type of intervention group accessed is important when determining

which personality variables would provide valid measures of intervention outcomes. This next section will address this concern.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW – PERSONALITY VARIABLES

In the previous chapter, a variety of intervention programs and adjustment outcomes post-separation were considered. In this chapter, the impact of personality variables such as self-esteem, social support and locus of control will be examined to discriminate their impact in personal adjustment post-separation and divorce. In addition, sampling methods, gender and other adjustment factors affecting adjustment to separation and divorce will be discussed in order to outline hypotheses relevant to this study. Given the lack of longitudinal studies in adjustment to separation and divorce research, it was proposed that this study focus on the short- and long-term adjustment outcomes for separated individuals from a rural and remote region.

3.1 Personality Variables in Relation to the Separation and Divorce Experience

The personality variables that have been looked at in isolation in the literature in relation to adjustment to separation and divorce have been too numerous to recount. Of these, the dependent variables selected for this study are self-esteem, perceived social support and locus of control. Current research has focused mainly on the difficulties of adjustment. Specifically, findings from previous studies relevant to this study will be presented to enable an identification of changes that may occur following participation in an intervention program.

3.1.1 Self-Esteem

Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) describe self-esteem as a measure of one's worth, value, or importance, and the attitudes one has towards one's self. Rosenberg (1965) elaborates the term by providing a positive and negative aspect to the concept

(see Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31). For the purpose of this study, self-esteem, one of the dependent variables of the study, was defined as attitudes towards self, specifically the extent of positive or negative evaluation of self in relation to the separation and divorce experience pre- and post-intervention using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale.

Although global self-esteem is considered a relatively stable attribute (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991), levels of self-esteem may vary according to one's life experiences. Undoubtedly, self-esteem levels of individuals going through marital dissolution are affected. According to Sappington (1989), individuals in relationships tend to define themselves in relation to the other. As a consequence, when the relationship is over, self-esteem suffers. In their study, Marks and Lambert (1998) found that women more so than men were likely to experience more of a decline in self-esteem following marital dissolution. Therefore, according to Raschke (1977), for many research participants, lower self-esteem was associated with poorer separation adjustment.

Bisagni and Eckenrode (1995) used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to assess women's divorce adjustment and the role of work identity. The results showed that high work identity scores were significantly correlated with high self-esteem scores. Hence, the role of work identity in women's adjustment to divorce was linked positively to self-esteem. This lends support to the notion that a strong work identity fosters psychological adjustment to separation and divorce. Other research has shown a positive correlation for self-esteem and education, suggesting that divorced women with higher education reported higher levels of self-esteem (Buehler, Hogan, Robinson & Levy, 1985). To measure women's long-term divorce adjustment, one of the instruments Thabes (1997) utilised was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The

sample consisted of women who were divorced at least five years and had not remarried. Results showed that current self-esteem scores for divorced women were similar to self-esteem scores for married women therefore suggesting successful adjustment outcomes.

To examine the effects of intervention on adjustment, Thiessen, Avery and Joanning (1980) utilized self-esteem scales to measure adjustment outcomes of separated and divorced women. The results showed that the difference between the control group and experimental group scores was found to be significant for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Self-Worth Subscale ($p < .01$) but not for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ($p = .09$). It appeared that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale lacked the sensitivity needed to record the changes in self-esteem following a brief intervention period. To measure the long-term effects of divorce, Thabes (1997) also utilized Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale to measure adjustment. Participants were asked to report current and retrospective levels of self-esteem so as to assess the difference that may have resulted from the divorce process. The results showed that participants' current mean was slightly below the normal mean for married women. Therefore, no significant differences in self-esteem were noted for divorced participants.

To assess the value of group counselling, Mackeen and Herman (1974) used the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale to measure self-esteem levels of three groups pre- and post-intervention. The group with the lowest self-esteem scores pre-intervention had the majority of separated and divorced participants. It appeared that this group made significant changes in their post-intervention self-esteem scores while the comparison group made minimal improvements. Mackeen and Herman (1974) claim

that this group may have been more receptive to group intervention because the majority had been separated longer and seized an opportunity to explore their need for change. According to these results it appears that the group intervention program catered to the group needs consequently improving self-esteem levels post-intervention.

Not all researchers have offered group intervention programs when assessing self-esteem in separated and divorced samples. Some provided group intervention programs to measure self-esteem levels pre- and post-intervention while others evaluated self-esteem levels pre- and post-divorce without the offer of group intervention. Nonetheless, limited research has assessed self-esteem levels in separated and divorced samples to guide intervention. Daly and Burton (1983) reported a relationship between self-esteem and irrational beliefs for an exploratory investigation with implications for intervention. They contended that irrational beliefs "are symptomatic of low self-esteem and will be dispelled as the individual's feeling of personal worth is enhanced" (p.364). Four irrational beliefs were identified as the central beliefs that may change following intervention. These are: demand for approval; high self-expectations; problem avoidance and anxious over-concern. Hence, the aim of therapeutic intervention would be to repeatedly present information and review any evidence that would help disconfirm any irrational beliefs.

Daly and Burton (1983) claim that the helping relationship is very important for the individual seeking intervention. Clients are more likely to experience a change in self-concept if the helping relationship is perceived as favourable. It has been suggested that intervention by skilled helpers may assist individuals seeking to change their concept of self in the development of new self-attitudes in adjusting to

separation and divorce (Mackeen & Herman, 1974). Therefore, additional research to assess self-esteem levels during the separation and divorce process in a group intervention program would help identify the specific issues and aspects of intervention that could improve self-esteem.

3.1.2 Social Support

Social support is another important variable (Cutrona & Cole, 2000; Henderson & Argle, 1985) in addressing adjustment outcomes to stressful life events. The term "social support" has two components: social and support (Lin, 1986). The term social implies links with individuals, communities and society whereas support suggests that emotional nourishment, resources and assistance will be provided in times of need (Caplan, 1976). Encouragement, guidance and providing an opportunity for integration can assist the person in adjusting to their stressful circumstances (Kitson, 1992). For the purpose of this study, both the support resources and support processes are important (Lin, 1986). Therefore, social support is defined as a linkage and interaction with family, friends and others during stressful times. Furthermore, it can provide individuals with opportunities to share aspects of their experience, assistance in enhancing coping abilities, and adjustment to the separation and divorce process.

Support systems are important to individuals during times of crises and transition (Caplan, 1976; Milardo, 1987). An individual's needs for belonging, approval, affection and security are met through interaction with others (Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams & Stewart, 1986; Lin, 1986). Support may be provided by close family members, relatives, friends, work colleagues, neighbours, community group members and professionals (Lin, Dumin & Woelfel, 1986). The

types of support needed may be emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal in the following areas: childcare, self care such as physical, emotional, social, spiritual, legal and financial concerns, employment issues and relational matters (Bloom, Hodges & Caldwell, 1982; Henderson & Argyle, 1985; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982). Post-divorce adjustment can be enhanced through greater involvement in social activities (Berman & Turk, 1981). More specifically, social relationships can influence health and well-being (Cohen, Gottlieb & Underwood, 2000).

According to some researchers, adequate social support networks during the separation and divorce period are helpful (Capalan, 1976) in facilitating adjustment to separation (Kunz & Kunz, 1995; Spanier & Casto, 1979). Stress levels may be reduced when support is provided or the individuals' subjective appraisal of their stressful circumstances may be less concerning when adequate support is received. Sansom and Farnill's (1997) study confirmed this hypothesis; they found that recently separated and divorced participants' stressors were related to the level of support received. Furthermore, adjustment outcomes were attributed to the quality of social support and reduced stress levels during adjustment to separation and divorce for those who had more support. Gottlieb (2000) differentiates between type of event and support needed. In other words, if it is an uncontrollable event there is a greater need for emotional support whereas if it's a controllable event the support required may be more instrumental.

To examine aspects of social support following intervention, a study by Thiessen, Avery and Joanning (1980) found that the communication training program designed to enhance post-divorce adjustment among women had little effect on the experimental group participants' perceived level of social support. It may be deduced

that the factors that could have contributed to similar results for the experimental and control groups may have been that: (1) the training program content did not focus on social support issues; (2) the time constraints in encouraging the development of new support systems among participants during the five-week training program; (3) the structured educational format of the training program did not allow for spontaneous interaction therefore inhibiting the possible development of social support systems; and, (4) the new and unrefined perceived social support scale may lack the sensitivity to report change following a short intervention period.

A study by Coleman, Ganong and Cable (1997) showed that family members felt obliged to help other family members. Particularly, parents have a greater obligation, although it may be conditional, to be helpful to adult children before and after divorce. It is during a crisis or transitional period that individuals are likely to feel most challenged. Caplan (1976) claimed that the family plays a crucial role in reminding them of their abilities and strengths. Family members tend to provide immediate feedback on their views of the situation and how they feel about what has happened. The family environment is where each member learns about change, the adjustment process and receiving immediate feedback for their behaviour. Usually the messages are easily understood and members are eager to be helpful and offer their opinions without request. According to Caplan (1976) the family is generally the place where members can freely relate their circumstances, their reactions, others' reactions and actions to receive some feedback and understanding to help them make sense of their experience.

To differentiate between the types of support provided by family and friends Gottlieb (2000) states that whilst family tends to provide emotional support, other kin

may provide practical help and personal care and friends encourage a sense of belonging. Raschke (1977) confirmed that post-separation adjustment was associated with the number of social interactions with friends and family. Women, more so than men showed lower social participation and poor separation adjustment. Therefore, it may be suggested that greater social interactions were needed for better separation adjustment outcomes for women. A study by Donohue-Colletta (1979) investigated family support, satisfaction and impact of support on functioning of single mothers post-divorce compared to married mothers. The results suggested that high levels of support are needed for families under extreme stress so as to counter the effects of post-separation adjustment on their relationships with their children.

Despite a strong sense of obligation by family members, a study by Henderson and Argyle (1985) found that friends were the most important source of support during the separation and divorce process. These findings also showed that professional and welfare agencies played a secondary role to friends and family in providing support (Henderson et al., 1985). However, a study by Kunz and Kunz (1995) reported that both family and organisational support facilitated adjustment to divorce. To assess the value of community and network support, Lin, Dumin and Woelfel (1986) examined participants' interaction and satisfaction in the use of organised services as well as their participation in activities offered by neighbourhood, community and voluntary organisations. They found that community and network support were a valid and reliable form of social support. This was also supported by Kitson's study (1992) where 33.3% of a divorced sample claimed that a support group for divorced individuals was helpful. This implies that organisational support may be of value to those seeking additional support.

In contrast, Friedman, Chiriboga and Catron (1991) found that the stress of life events was unrelated to social support. That is, social support can do little to alleviate the distress experienced during separation and divorce. According to Weiss (1976), social support appeared to be important during the transition phase, that is the first year of marital separation due to the loss of the spouse. Nelson (1981) claimed that for women the emotional divorce may take approximately two years and may be dependent on their relationship with their former spouse. In time, adjustment levels reduce as conflict escalates and support diminishes from the former spouse. Regardless of the quality of the relationship or the decision to dissolve the marriage, separation leads to emotional and social isolation (Weiss, 1976). The vacuum created by separation needs to be met with interpersonal and social interaction. Failure to meet the interpersonal and social needs may lead to distress. As a separated person experiences major changes in their social relationships during the transition phase of separation, various types of support appear to be important ingredients in the separation and divorce adjustment process.

Although there was limited research on the amount of support required from kin to aid transition (Donohue-Colletta, 1979), a study about women's beliefs in providing support showed that women had a stronger obligation to support genetic kin than in-laws (Coleman, Ganong & Cable, 1997). Generally, obligations to support in-laws are weakened or dissolved post-divorce. These results reinforced the notion that support provided by genetic kin is an important part of adjustment. It appeared that women tend to find emotional and social support more beneficial (Smerglia, Miller & Kort-Butler, 1999) while men tend to receive less socially supportive behaviours

(Waggener & Galassi, 1993). Overall, individuals with lots of social support are less susceptible to psychological disorders (Solomon, Mikulincen & Avitzur, 1988).

When individuals have experienced a stressful life event, others in their existing social network may experience constraints whereby they withhold support (Lin, Woelfel & Light, 1986), make harsh judgments, and express their disapproval (Gottlieb, 2000). Therefore, separated and divorced people may seek social networks that provide encouragement. Weiss (1976) reports that organisations for single parents such as Parents Without Partners that provide support to people coping with the loss of their relationship respond in a number of ways. The program has generally responded by providing opportunities for separated people to interact with a sustaining community and similarly placed individuals or families. Specifically, there are opportunities to seek support for improving one's sense of worth and possibly establishing emotional attachments to alleviate loneliness.

Some community organizations offer support through educational programs. According to Helgeson and Gottlieb (2000), beneficial outcomes can be gained from educational interventions because they provide not only information specific to the stressful life event but also raise questions and concerns that need to be addressed. The indirect benefits may be the emotional support received from peers and the sharing of information about community resources and other social networks. Specific benefits may be gained from attending a support group, which is often a source of emotional support and guidance. A study by Øygard and Hardeng (2001), investigating the influence of the support group on adjustment found that women's adjustment was linked to an emotionally supportive group. Hence, interactions with

other separated and divorced participants appear to be an important element with beneficial outcomes for some group members.

A recent review of the literature (Reis & Collins, 2000), pointed out that research is no longer questioning the relationship between social support and well-being. Instead, the focus should be on assessing the quality of the interactions in order to gain a better understanding of what occurs in the context of interactions that are helpful. This shift towards the dynamics of social interactions would require further investigations and comparisons to determine what aspects of the interactions may be helpful.

Additionally, a number of other factors need to be considered when determining the effectiveness of intervention programs in generating support. First, it has been reported that short-term interventions of 8 to 10 sessions are not as beneficial as long-term interventions of up to six months (Helgeson & Gottlieb, 2000; Cutrona & Cole, 2000). Second, attendance is another factor (Gottlieb, 2000). Irregular attendance can diminish program effectiveness. Third, if new sources of support have been attained such as individual, couple and family counselling or participation in some other intervention program during the same period then these can also affect outcomes. In short, determining the effectiveness of the support elements of intervention would require the comparison of participants with selective attrition and increased levels of support with those who attended all intervention sessions and maintained regular levels of support.

To demonstrate the relationship between social support, coping and adjustment, Valentiner, Holahan and Moos (1994) investigated individual appraisal of event controllability, coping and social support factors. Their findings indicated that

when individuals were dealing with a controllable event, the family social context was associated with adaptive coping and this in turn affected adjustment outcomes. Conversely, when individuals were faced with uncontrollable events, there was no association between coping and family social context. Coping was directly associated with psychological adjustment. Similarly, Donohue-Colletta (1979) claimed that having a sense of control of one's circumstances was supportive in facilitating coping responses. It is evident that the types of support required may be influenced by event controllability. According to Gottlieb (2000) an increase in emotional support is needed when uncontrollable events occur. Whereas, individuals tend to have a greater need for instrumental support when controllable events occur. Clearly, there can be many interacting factors between elements of support and event controllability.

3.1.3 Locus of Control

A need for control may be acted out in many facets of life interactions (Burger, 1990). To assess controllability, the locus of control construct was conceived from Rotter's social learning theory and is a generalized expectancy that results from a link between personality factors, actions and experienced outcomes. It relies on one's beliefs or perceptions about one's environmental conditions and the connection between actions and outcomes. According to Lefcourt (1991) "locus of control refers to assumed internal states that explain why certain people actively, resiliently, and willingly try to deal with difficult circumstances, while others succumb to a range of negative emotions" (p. 413). "Perceived control is positively associated with access to opportunity. Those who are able, through position and group membership, to attain more readily the valued outcomes that allow a person to feel personal satisfaction, are more likely to hold internal control expectancies" (Lefcourt, 1982, p.31). In order to

determine the effects an individual's orientation may have in helping them cope with their experiences, this study will follow Lefcourt's definition of locus of control.

Rotter's Internality-Externality scale was designed to assess control expectancies. This early scale tended to focus on locus of control as a trait or typology. Later, Lefcourt (1982) suggested that locus of control was a stable attribute and was fixed and intractable. Individuals could be categorized as being internal or external types. Internals were seen as effective individuals who were assertive and potent whereas externals were considered incompetent, helpless and retiring. Internals and externals were different in their response to situations and ways of coping (Parkes, 1984). Although this scale has been widely used, significant criticism has been reported in relation to its social desirability response bias, forced-choice response bias and supposed unidimensionality (Lefcourt, 1982). Since its early construction, the locus of control scales have evolved to determine if outcomes of tasks were perceived as a result of skill or chance.

According to Lefcourt (1982), individuals are not internals or externals. One may have internal or external control expectancies about various facets of one's experience. An individual's perception of control is a process that may determine how one will experience the life stressors. Lefcourt (1982) claimed, "some evidence has been found that resourcefulness and resilience in the encounters with stressful experience reflect the beliefs held by individuals that they are responsible agents who are at least partially responsible for what befalls them" (p.102). Therefore, it may be deduced that individuals with external control expectancies may not use their resources as effectively to reduce the impact of stressors whereas individuals with more internal control expectancies use their resources more effectively to cope with

the impact of stressors. Friedland, Keinan and Regev (1992) state that if the event is uncontrollable then that may undermine one's sense of control. Lefcourt, Miller, Ware and Sherk's (1981) research found no difference in mood disturbance between internals and externals following the experience of a recent negative life event.

In considering the physiological and psychological effects, Blankstein (1984) claims that negative outcomes may result from feelings of helplessness and perceived or actual lack of control. If there is a high desire for control and the situation is uncontrollable then one may experience a greater sense of helplessness (Burger & Cooper, 1979). To test the relationship between locus of control and post-divorce stress and adjustment, Smith-Barnet (1990) used Rotter's locus of control scale. The results showed that no gender differences were found in locus of control scores and that internals reported less social maladjustment and post-divorce stress than externals.

Levenson's (1974) Internal, Chance and Powerful Others subscales introduced another dimension into the different factors of control that could affect outcomes. Specifically, Levenson reconceptualised Rotter's Internality-Externality locus of control construct to comprise three dimensions: a belief in one's own ability to control events or a perceived mastery over one's own life; to believe in one's own efficacy while acknowledging powerful others may be in control; and, a belief in the power of luck or chance (Levenson, 1981). This scale differentiates between the two types of external orientations: a belief in the random nature of the world and a belief in the predictability of the world, expecting powerful others to be in control. Lefcourt (1991) argued that this scale was one of the earliest to develop usable dimensions of control.

Aspects of control that need to be considered when evaluating the relationships between personal control, actions and outcomes are: perceptions of control, multiple functions of personal control and adapted outcomes (Folkman, 1984). Additionally, Folkman claimed that perceptions of control "need to be examined in the context of specific stressful encounters" (p. 850) in order to gain a greater understanding of personal control's influence on stress-related adaptational outcomes. The multiple functions of control include situational appraisal (e.g., threatening or challenging) and general belief about control. That is, appraisal of an encounter can influence coping and therefore control may become an outcome or the cognitive mediator between encounter and outcome.

According to Lefcourt (1982), "perceived control can moderate the impact of potentially stressful experiences" (p.100) in that the perception of control can reduce stress (Litt, 1988). According to Wong and Sproule (1984) women appear to have a greater illusion of control than men. Although separation and divorce is an extremely stressful experience, Doherty (1980) proposed that personal development is enhanced and a greater sense of personal control is attained in time. Doherty's study showed that divorced women were more internal than separated women and thus inferred that the divorce process encourages an internal orientation. It is suggested that once post separation adjustment has been achieved, an outcome of the divorce experience is becoming more internal. Consequently, a sense of control may change over time when an individual is dealing with a major life event (Lefcourt, 1982). Therefore, to assess changes in personal control over time during the separation adjustment and divorce stages, repeated measures of locus of control should be applied.

In considering the effect of divorce on locus of control, Doherty (1983) proposed that marital disruption should for some individuals, temporarily lead to a more external orientation of control. For those individuals who see divorce as a way of taking control of their lives, they would be more internally oriented. Doherty rejected the notion that internals were more likely to divorce than externals. It was proposed that the individual's personal control and sense of personal autonomy is enhanced while undergoing the experience of adjustment to separation and divorce. A review of the research suggests that divorced individuals show a higher internal orientation than other groups, and that divorce may temporarily affect locus of control orientation. Hence, locus of control may be situation specific. According to Lefcourt (1982) locus of control scores alter with environmental and/or changing life events. Lefcourt (1982) quoted Ronald Smith's (1970) research where research participants' locus of control scores shifted from more external to internal locus of control following participation in a six-week treatment program. As the clients presented with an acute crisis, their locus of control orientation was more external due to feeling temporarily overwhelmed by negative influences. Following six weeks of intervention their locus of control scores shifted from external to internal. It was suggested that feelings of helplessness temporarily influenced locus of control scores (Lefcourt, 1982). Interestingly, Lefcourt, Martin and Saleh (1984) found that internal rather than those with external orientation gained greater benefits from social support.

Research reporting changes in personality, specifically individuals' perceptions of control during significant developmental stages in adulthood have been limited (Levenson, 1981). To assess the locus of control orientation of separated and divorced individuals it would be important to address the choice factor, of who

decided to terminate the relationship. It would be assumed that individuals who had no choice in their separated status would score higher on perceptions of control by powerful others and have greater expectations of control by others than those individuals who made the decision to end their relationship or marriage. Under these circumstances, a powerful-other orientation would reflect realistic perceptions of action undertaken by the other.

To gain a better understanding of adjustment, an assessment of individual beliefs in the external nature of their environment would be beneficial. However, perceptions of personal control for individuals who had no choice in initiating separation may not be affected in the initial stages of separation, but as individuals continue to adjust to their new status over time, beliefs about personal control may increase and external orientation may decline. In consideration of the limited research that has utilized the locus of control construct to measure adjustment outcomes during the separation and divorce process, it is evident that variations in environmental factors may influence changes in locus of control orientation following an adjustment to a significant life event.

3.2 Separation and Divorce Adjustment

Separation and divorce is a disruptive event creating unexpected turmoil for individuals and families (Bray & Hetherington, 1993). For each person, there are two concurrent processes, the physical and the psychological separation (Melichar & Chiriboga, 1988). Once attachment to the partner has been severed the individual needs to respond to the crisis and adjust to the loss (Kitson & Holmes, 1992). Consequently, adjustment to separation and divorce may hinge on many factors (Sappington, 1989), such as: the person's belief about the former relationship, their

social environment, their personality and the time period for the process to occur. The period immediately following the physical separation has been considered as the most difficult period. According to Goode (1956) and Raschke (1976) time and physical separation are associated with adjustment and levels of distress, in that, adjustment problems reduce as the period of time since physical separation extends.

Although time since separation was not a significant predictor of adjustment outcomes (Plummer & Koch-Hattem, 1986; Tschann, Johnston & Wallerstein, 1989), feelings of attachment continue indefinitely for the vast majority of separated and divorced individuals (Franzoni, Brack & Zirps, 1996; Rose & Price-Bonham, 1973; Weiss, 1975; O'Leary). According to Spanier and Casto (1979) three quarters of the research participants in their study showed signs of continuing attachment to the former spouse. An unwilling separation can induce an anxiety about isolation, which Bowlby (1977) claims is a normal and healthy reaction. Undoubtedly though, a lingering attachment to the former spouse interrupts individual development and the redefining of roles during separation. Seeking comfort and support from the former spouse interrupts the individual's pursuit of autonomy and adjustment (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Therefore, a time delay may be experienced in achieving resolution in the grief and loss process (Crosby, Gage & Raymond, 1983).

Significant social and emotional changes are experienced (Hensley, 1996) and embracing new roles is a necessary part of the transformation process. DeGarmo and Kitson's (1996) study found that both divorced and widowed women experienced an identity crisis and that identity transitions were a necessary part of the adjustment process. This was confirmed by Kitson and Raschke's (1981) statement "that adjustment to divorce means an ability to develop an identity for oneself that is not

tied to the status of being married or to the ex-spouse and an ability to function adequately in the role responsibilities of daily life–home, family, work and leisure time" (p. 16). In adapting to new roles and responsibilities following separation, the main areas of adjustment as identified by Bohannan (1970) are the physical, emotional, psychological, financial, legal, parental, and social or community aspects. Developing an independent identity unrelated to the status of the former partner takes time. The adaptation process varies for each individual. According to Bohannan (1970) it is the unresolved issues that contribute to the long-term effects of divorce. Therefore it is the long-term unresolved effects that require further investigation.

According to Kitson and Holmes (1992) "adjustment itself is seen as being relatively free of symptoms of psychological disturbance, having a sense of self-esteem, and being able to put the end of the marriage in enough perspective that one's identity is no longer tied to being married or to the former spouse" (p. 21). The sequences of events that signify divorce are the early stages of transition (Melichar & Chiriboga, 1985). That is, a decision is made to separate and divorce and the physical separation ensures till the legal separation is finalised. All these factors are seen as changeable over time. Modifiable factors that influence adjustment are education, occupation, social support and psychological resources. Factors that are generally not modifiable are gender, children, length of separation, the length of marriage, the legal system (Melichar et al., 1985) and the source of marital dissatisfaction (Bloom, Niles & Tatcher, 1985). The majority of research to date has focused on the latter factors. Hence, the main aim of this research will be to primarily focus on some of the modifiable factors.

Although education has been considered as a modifiable factor influencing adjustment, some studies have suggested that education has minimal effects on adjustment (Goode, 1956; Raschke, 1974), in that one's educational level has little or no influence on how one adjusts to the end of one's relationship or marriage. On the contrary, a study by Tschann et al. (1989) claimed improved adjustment outcomes for men with higher educational and vocational status. For these men, personal resources enhanced adjustment although they reported better pre-separation psychological functioning, which also enhanced adjustment. Due to the limited research that has focused on the effects of educational and vocational status on separation and adjustment outcomes, this study intends to consider these relationships.

In examination of women's adjustment during the different stages of transition, Melichar et al. (1985) found the best-adjusted group perceived greater control over the separation and divorce events. It became apparent that those who had greater levels of control and independence pre-separation took the most time to separate and divorce. Although a connection between timing and adjustment seemed evident, the authors argued that further exploration is necessary to tease out the psychological and physical factors needed to be resolved over time. Specifically, Melichar et al. (1985) claimed that personality and social support would need to be considered as antecedents and consequences of timing in future investigations of adjustment during the separation and marital dissolution process.

Two factors reported to have a significant influence on post-divorce adjustment are a subjective sense of well-being and social networks. According to Thiriot and Buckner's (1991) research, satisfactory divorce adjustment is achieved by those individuals who have a good sense of well-being. That is, they feel in control of

their lives, feel personally adequate, feel good about their life path and their emotional self. The other significant predictor of single-custodial parents' divorce adjustment was satisfaction with social networks, more so with friends and forms of intervention than family of origin (Thiriot & Buckner, 1991). This is because generally friends provide the opportunity for greater social integration and introductions to the wider community than family; and, intervention programs were seen as an additional option offering the opportunity for interaction.

3.3 Gender Differences in Adjustment

Relationship dissolution has been reported as distressing by both males and females. Varied reactions are experienced during the relationship termination process. There seem to be some gender differences during the adjustment process pre- and post-separation and divorce. According to Bloom, White and Asher (1979) marital disruption appears to be more stressful for women than men. Women have higher levels of distress and experience more difficulties in the pre-separation period while men experience higher levels of stress and difficulties several months post-separation (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981; Kitson & Morgan, 1990). A study by Diedrick (1991) found that during the pre-separation period, men reported less stress whereas women showed better coping post-separation (Diedrick, 1991). Overall, it has been noted that females find the pre-separation period more stressful and report better adjustment outcomes to separation and divorce than males (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981; Chiriboga, 1982; Kitson & Morgan, 1990; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Although greater stressors impair the adjustment process (Tschann et al., 1989), adjustment outcomes may also be dependent on who decided to terminate the relationship or marriage. It appears that in the last two decades, women are more often

the initiators of separation and divorce (Cogan, 1998) and women's personality attributes were found to be more predictive of divorce risk (Jockin, McGue & Lykken, 1996). According to Wallerstein's research (1986), both men and women who instigated the separation and divorce process experienced better adjustment outcomes and quality of life than those opposed to the relationship termination. In a review of the consequences of divorce, Kitson and Morgan (1990) claimed that a greater volume of adjustment to separation and divorce research has explored women's outcomes. Specifically, most of the research was based on psychological symptoms of separation and divorce and therefore, surveys may be less specific to men. Consequently, research would need to consider criteria relevant to both females and males with the inclusion of physiological and social functioning.

Research has identified other gender-linked differences during the separation and divorce adjustment process. These are situational stress, subjective stress and economic resources (Kitson & Raschke, 1981). Specifically, economic resources tend to affect separation and divorce adjustment differently for males and females (Diedrick, 1991). Women are more often economically disadvantaged by separation, as they tend to provide the majority of child support following separation. Despite the disadvantages, Erbes and Hedderson (1984) reported that following divorce, females showed a growth in self-esteem whereas males had low self-esteem prior to and after divorce. Although there are considerable gender differences, Tschann et al. (1989) found some similarities for gender, in that a higher educational and vocational status seemed to improve adjustment outcomes for both men and women.

In an investigation of gender differences to separation and divorce adjustment using the six subscales of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale, Hensley (1996) found

no significant differences for gender in adjustment to relationship termination between the divorced and non-marital group. This finding supports previous research by Weiss (1975) and Kitson (1992) who found no differences in men and women's experience of distress post-separation and divorce although women were more likely than men to seek help and obtain support from friends, family, co-workers and professionals. It was claimed that men and women seemed to differentiate the sources of help and support they were seeking. Additionally, greater social interaction and support is associated with distress reduction and improvements in adjustment. Furthermore, men tend to have less social support networks than women (Kitson & Raschke, 1981), consequently affecting their post-separation adjustment. However, it has been contended that men are less likely than women to seek social support (Steenbergen-Richmond & Hendrickson-Christensen, 2000). These findings indicate that men and women may have different ways of dealing with their circumstances, and therefore, gender differences may need to be considered when providing intervention programs.

Adjustment to separation and divorce has taken into account different types of relationships. In a study investigating women's adjustment, Fairchild (1988) compared women divorced from heterosexual husbands to women divorced from homosexual husbands and found similarities in psychological well-being. The differences noted were that women divorced from homosexual men had greater difficulties with disentanglement from the former partner than women divorced from heterosexual men. According to Fairchild-Smith and Allred (1990) other adjustment differences were also evident. Specifically, women divorced from homosexual men experienced greater levels of separation anger than women divorced from

heterosexual men. Apparently the anger was partner directed due to high levels of deceit and self-directed for trusting the partner and not noting the warning signs. Interestingly, greater differences were reported on the emotional rather than psychological levels of adjustment.

A study comparing separation through divorce to widowhood reported that both divorce and widowhood require major life adjustments (O'Bryant & Straw, 1991). Findings revealed that women who had previous experience with either divorce or widowhood showed better adjustment outcomes than women without previous experience. It appears that more women than men initiate the end of a relationship. As the initiators of terminating the relationship, women showed better adjustment than men (Diedrick, 1991). Gender differences appear to be evident pre-separation, post-separation and divorce and following the death of a spouse. Women seem to report greater gains, such as feelings of independence and greater self-esteem as a result of the separation and divorce (Tschann et al., 1989) while men tend to have less to gain when they lose their role in the relationship (Diedrick, 1991). Additionally, men have reported higher post-divorce attachment than women (Masheter, 1991) although men have been socialized to be more independent than women (Vannoy, 1995).

3.4 Hypothesis

This study will examine adjustment of men and women separated and/or divorced from a spouse. The goal is to investigate the relationship between each of the independent variables (gender and group differences) and the adjustment outcomes (as measured by Rosenberg's Self-esteem scale, Social Support Appraisal scale, Levenson's Locus of Control scale and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale), for

separated and divorced participants. Adjustment to separation and divorce has been selected as the dependent variable because it is an indicator of change and acceptance of the separated status. In adopting the view that adjustment is a multi-dimensional concept, (Kitson and Holmes, 1992) this study will explore the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscales measuring self-worth, trust, disentanglement, grief, social self-worth and anger.

Given that this study uses a longitudinal design, it is possible to measure the level of adjustment participants achieved at the pre-intervention, post-intervention, and the six-month post-intervention period. Therefore the following hypotheses will be examined:

1. In study one, there will be no gender or group differences in adjustment for the Self-esteem, Social support appraisal, Locus of control and the Fisher divorce adjustment scales for the six-week intervention group or the delayed intervention group pre-, post- or six-month post-intervention follow-up.
2. In study two, the six-week and two-day treatment groups will show greater adjustment outcomes for the Self-esteem, Social support appraisal, Locus of control and Fisher divorce adjustment scales, post- and six-months post-intervention than wait list controls.
3. In study one and two, research participants from de facto relationships will show lower adjustment outcomes for the Self-esteem, Social support appraisal, Locus of control and Fisher divorce adjustment scales, pre- and post-intervention than their married counterparts.
4. In study one and two, deciders of separation and divorce will show greater adjustment outcomes for the Self-esteem, Social support appraisal, Locus of

control and Fisher divorce adjustment scales, than non-deciders pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHOD

This chapter will outline the methodological issues of the study, which include specifics of the research sample, the selection process involved, the research instruments and their corresponding validity and reliability, the procedural components of pre- and post-intervention assessment, group intervention program structure, session evaluations and group intervention program evaluation.

4.1 Research Design

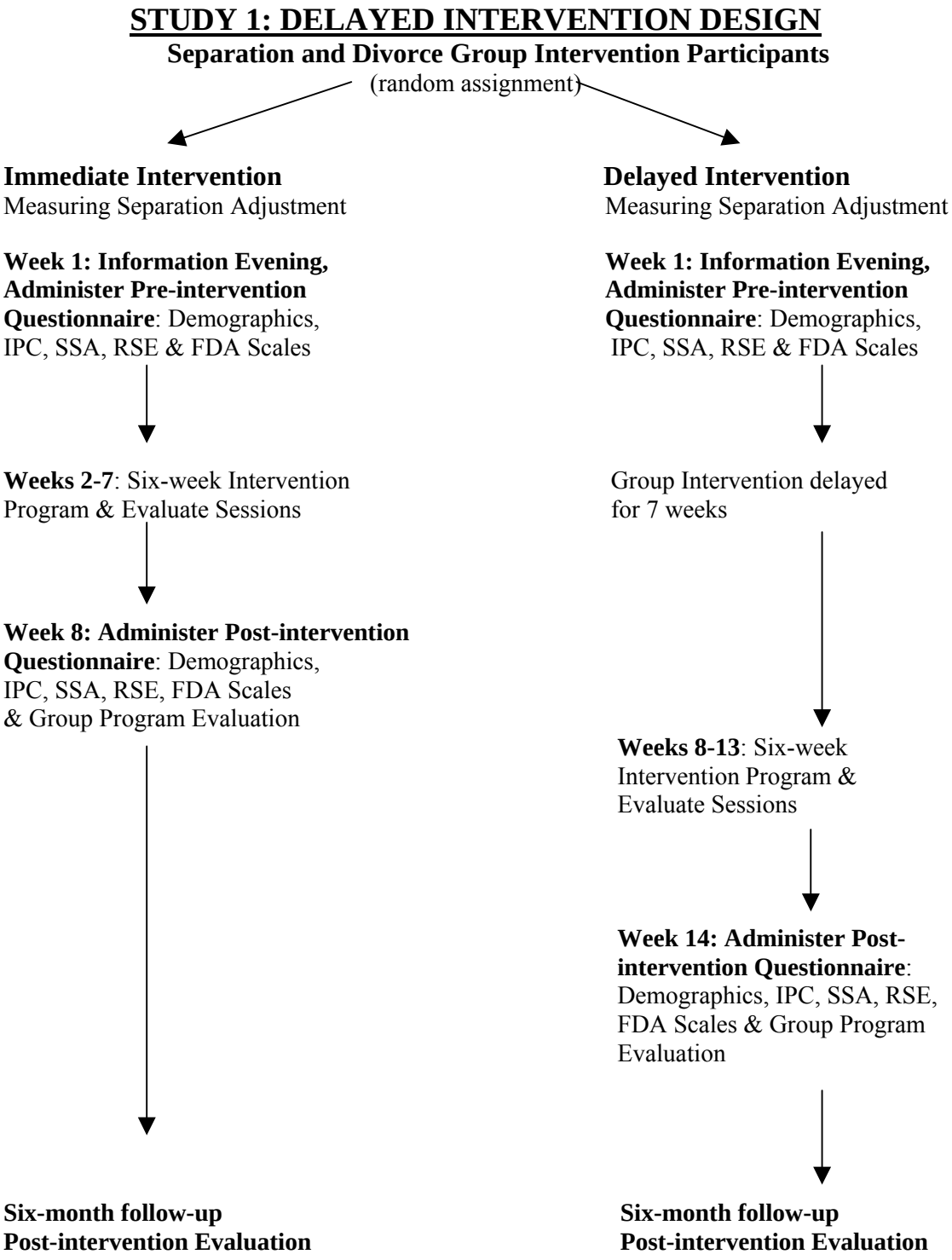
To assess adjustment to separation and divorce some previous studies have made intragroup comparisons or clinical assessments rather than comparing to a comparison or control group (Ahrons & Wallisch, 1987; Goode, 1956; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). Others have argued that a comparison group of married individuals with basic characteristics similar to the divorce group is needed to gain a more accurate measure of adjustment (Kitson & Holmes, 1992). Or, alternatively, a more appropriate control group would consist of never married individuals. The differences between these groups would provide more confirming results associated with separation and divorce adjustment. Specifically, in order to determine how well individuals adjust to separation and divorce over time, longitudinal research is needed to follow up on the changes that occur.

Considering the range of sampling methods that have been used in separation and divorce research to determine adjustment outcomes for individuals over a period of time, longitudinal research has been claimed as the most helpful (Ahrons & Wallisch, 1987; Bloom, Hodges, Kern & McFaddin, 1985; Hetherington, 1987). The analyses of initial adjustment scores compared to latter adjustment scores allowed for

the assessment of changes over time and identified individual improvement (Kitson, 1992). Intragroup comparisons were utilised by a number of studies to monitor individual adjustment outcomes (Ahrons & Wallisch, 1987; Goode, 1956; Wallerstein & Kelly 1980) and considered worthwhile. Taking into account what has been investigated in the adjustment to separation and divorce arena, this study will make intragroup and intergroup comparisons by assessing the longitudinal data.

Two studies were conducted for the purpose of this research. Study One entailed a pretest-posttest six-month longitudinal experimental design with two experimental groups, which were the immediate intervention group and the delayed intervention group (see Figure 3.1). The delayed intervention group was provided the group intervention program seven weeks after the immediate intervention group in order to determine effects of delayed intervention. Immediate versus delayed intervention outcomes were compared to assess short-term benefits of immediate intervention. Both groups were administered the five-part Adjustment to Separation Pre-Intervention Questionnaire package (see Appendix G) at an information evening prior to attending the group intervention program. Following intervention, both groups were administered the five-part Post-Intervention Questionnaire package (see Appendix H) with a modified demographics section.

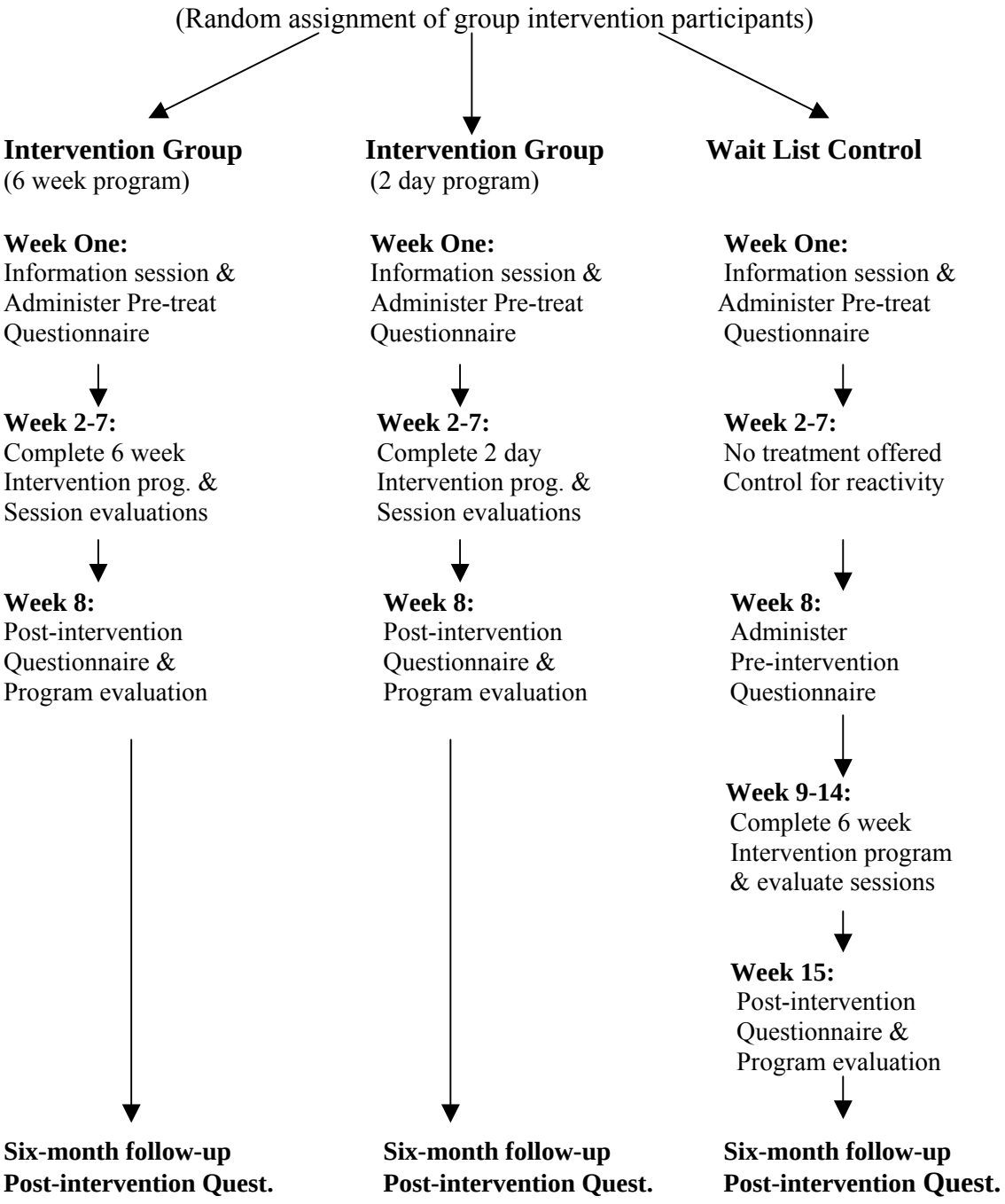
Study Two utilised a pretest-posttest six-month longitudinal experimental wait-list design comprising of three groups. These were the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group (see Figure 3.2). All groups were administered the five-part Adjustment to Separation Pre-Intervention Questionnaire package (see Appendix G) at an information evening prior to participation. The six-week intervention group and the two-day intervention group



Study 1: This pilot study is a Pre-Post Experimental Design. It will examine adjustment outcomes for research participants by comparing immediate and delayed intervention outcomes post-intervention and in a 6month follow-up.

Figure 3.1: Research Design of Study One

STUDY 2: PRE-POST EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



Study 2: This study is a Pre-Post Experimental Design. It will examine adjustment outcomes for research participants by comparing the six-week intervention program, the two-day intervention program and no intervention group outcomes post-intervention and in a 6-month follow-up. The same instruments were used in both studies.

Figure 3.2: Research Design of Study Two

started the group program the week following the information evening whereas the wait-list control group was offered the group program once the two intervention groups had completed the program. Following the completion of the intervention program, all groups were administered the five-part Adjustment to Separation Post-Intervention Questionnaire package while the wait-list control group was administered the Pre-Intervention Questionnaire package seven weeks later. Participants in the wait-list control group were offered the opportunity to complete the six-week group program and the post-intervention questionnaire package.

A six-month post-intervention follow-up was conducted for each group in Study One and Two. The Six-month Post-Intervention Questionnaire package was identical to the Post-Intervention Questionnaire (see Appendix H) and was administered to assess the long-term adjustment outcomes. Participation in this research was restricted by the following criteria: all participants must have been in a significant relationship (married or de facto) for more than 12 months and separated for more than 2 months.

4.2 Subjects

The research sample of twenty-nine subjects (21 females and 8 males) registered for Study One. The age range of these subjects was 31 to 60 years of age. Fifteen subjects were randomly assigned to the immediate intervention group and fourteen to the delayed intervention group. The length of relationship range for the immediate intervention group participants was 1 to 31 years. Nine subjects were adjusting to the loss of their first relationship; one subject was adjusting to the loss of a second relationship; and, five subjects were adjusting to the loss of their third relationship. Twenty percent of subjects stated they decided to leave the relationship,

twenty percent stated it was a mutual decision to end the relationship, fifty percent stated their spouse decided to end the relationship and ten percent did not respond to this question.

Similarly, the length of relationship range for the delayed intervention group was 1.7 to 31 years. Five subjects were adjusting to the loss of their first relationship; seven subjects were adjusting to the loss of their second relationship; and, one subject was adjusting to the loss of a third relationship. For this sample, fifty percent stated they decided to end the relationship, fourteen percent stated the decision was reached by mutual agreement, twenty-nine percent stated their spouse made the decision and seven percent of the sample didn't respond to this question.

For study two, fifteen subjects (9 females and 6 males) registered for the study. The age range of these subjects was 29 to 65 years of age. Five participants were randomly assigned to the six-week intervention group, five participants to the two-day intervention group, and five participants to the wait-list control group. The length of relationship range for the six-week intervention group participants was 9 to 21 years. Two participants were adjusting to the loss of their first relationship, two participants were adjusting to the loss of their second relationship and one participant was adjusting to the loss of a fifth relationship. Forty percent of this group claimed they initiated the separation while 60 percent claimed their former spouse initiated the separation.

For the two-day intervention group, the length of relationship range was 3 to 15 years. Of the five participants in this group, one claimed adjustment to the loss of a first relationship, two participants claimed they were adjusting to the loss of their second relationship and no response was recorded for the other participants. Twenty

percent of this group reported that they initiated the separation; sixty percent reported their former spouse initiated the separation and twenty percent provided no response.

For the wait-list control group, the length of relationship range was 8 to 36 years. Two participants were adjusting to the loss of their first relationship, one was adjusting to the loss of a second relationship and the other two participants reported no response. Twenty percent of subjects claimed their former spouse decided to end the relationship, forty percent claimed it was a mutual decision to terminate the relationship and forty percent reported no response. All subjects that participated in this study were recruited either by brochures, newspaper articles, advertisements or radio and television interviews.

4.2.1 Brochures

Information brochures (see Appendix A) that outlined the intent of the research were mailed out to 350 government and non-government community agencies, solicitors, psychologists and doctors in the Cairns region and Tablelands. Included in the mailout package was a covering letter (see Appendix C) inviting service providers to share this information with colleagues and clients. Community service providers were asked to display the information brochures on their community notice boards. Also they were informed that more brochures were available at the Lifeline Cairns Region Counselling and Administration Centre upon request. An additional 4000 brochures were included as inserts in the *Cairns Post* and distributed to randomly selected suburbs.

4.2.2 Newspaper Articles, Media Interviews and Advertising

Regional newspapers, radio and television media were utilized to advertise the research project. The Cairns Post, Barfly (two local Cairns newspapers), ABC Radio,

Seven Cairns, Ten Queensland and Win Television conducted interviews with the researcher. These articles covered the intention of the study and invited individuals who met the participation criteria to register their interest. Additionally, advertisements were placed in the public notice column of The Cairns Post on Wednesdays and Saturdays and The Cairns Sun on Wednesdays (see Appendix B) for several weeks prior to the information evening for both study one and two.

Subjects for this study were not randomly selected therefore this sample is not representative of the population and is limited to the group studied. Only separated and divorced people were invited to participate. Those who responded to the advertising were separated or divorced and the majority of individuals who inquired about the study volunteered to participate. Suitability for participation was assessed by telephone interview to ensure all subjects met the participation criteria. Most subjects lived in the Cairns region, others on the Atherton Tablelands and surrounding area. Two subjects informed the researcher they were in Cairns for only several months and intended to return to their place of residence. An incentive was offered to all subjects. Usually the cost of participating in the *Lifeline Cairns Region Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce Program* is $60. This fee was waived for all research participants.

4.3 Instruments

A five part pre- and post- and six-months post-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix G and H) was designed for the purpose of this study. The five instruments comprising the Adjustment to Separation Questionnaire package were: Part A, the Demographics Questionnaire; Part B, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSE) (Rosenberg, 1965); Part C, the Social Support Appraisal scale (SSA) (Vaux, Phillips,

Holly, Thomson, Williams & Stewart, 1986); Part D, the Internality, Powerful Others and Chance (IPC) Locus of Control scale (Levenson, 1984); and, Part E, the Revised Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale (FDAS) (Fisher, 1977). The details of each instrument are described next.

4.3.1 Demographics Questionnaire (Part A)

The Demographics Questionnaire (see Appendix G) consisted of thirty-three questions in the pre-intervention questionnaire and seventeen questions in the post- and the 6-month post-intervention questionnaire packages (see Appendix H). The questions in the pre-intervention demographic questionnaire were designed to extract information about the history of the relationship and separation. Similarly, the post- and the 6 month post-intervention demographic questionnaire was designed to elicit information about changes that may have occurred during and following participation in the group programs. Questions included were: age, gender, length of relationship, separation date, education level, employment status, occupation, number of children and parenting arrangements. Inclusive were questions about current emotional state, social interaction, present living arrangements, and financial, property and parenting arrangements with former spouse. Prior intervention for separation and divorce and benefits of intervention were assessed with questions about individual, couple and group counselling. These questions were designed to determine what factors precede and influence the separation and divorce process.

4.3.2 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (PART B)

Self-esteem levels were assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale (Rosenberg, 1965) pre-, post- and six-month post- group intervention. This scale consists of ten statements designed to elicit feelings, specifically to report feelings of

self-worth or self-acceptance (see Appendix G). Precisely half of these items were positively stated and half were negatively stated to avoid a "response set" where participants may develop a mode of responding to agree or disagree with all items. The reverse score items were 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9. Each item was scored on a four-point Likert-type response format (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). Scores ranged from 10 to 40 with lower scores indicating higher self-esteem (Johnston, Wright & Weinman, 1995).

The Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (1965) has good face and content validity as items measure levels of self-esteem. Validation of this instrument has been supported by considerable discriminant and convergent validity (Rosenberg, 1965; Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). Numerous correlations ranging from .10 to .72 with other self-esteem related constructs have been reported. Specifically, it has been reported to have a significant correlation of .60 with the Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory. Additionally, the Guttman-scale reproducibility coefficient of .82 reflects good internal consistency (Robinson & Shaver, 1973).

This questionnaire has a high reliability level with a test-retest correlation of .85 in a two-week period (Robinson & Shaver, 1973). In support of this claim, Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) state that this instrument has a high level of reliability with test-retest correlations of .82 and .85. Although a criticism of this instrument is that it may be prone to socially-desirable responding, many researchers have utilized this instrument to assess levels of self-esteem in different populations. For the last three decades, this scale has been well used with adults (Garber, 1991). Furthermore, it has often been used in divorce research (Waggener & Galassi, 1993; Kitson, 1982; Garber, 1991). Specifically, Waggener and Galassi (1993), Kitson (1982) and Garber

(1991) utilized this instrument to assess self-esteem levels pre- and post-intervention in separated and divorced samples. Despite these criticisms, this instrument was used for the purpose of this research to assess each participant's self-esteem levels pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention and to compare participant's self-esteem outcomes with previous separation and divorce adjustment research.

4.3.3 Social Support Appraisal Scale (PART C)

This instrument was used to assess psychological well-being and the degree of social support believed to be available in one's life. Responses determine the individual's perceptions of being loved and esteemed by, and involved with friends, family and significant others. The Social Support Appraisal scale (SSA) is a subjective measure of support and consists of 23 statements (Vaux, Phillips, Holly, Thomson, Williams & Stewart, 1986). The total score measures appraised emotional support received from family, friends and others (Wills & Shinar, 2000). The Family, Friend and the People or Other subscales consist of 8, 7 and 8 items respectively. All items are scored on a 4-point Likert scale (see Appendix G). Responses are scored 1 for "strongly agree" to 4 "strongly disagree". The reverse score items are 3, 10, 13, 21, 22. Low total scores indicate strong subjective appraisal of social support while low subscale scores indicate strong subjective appraisal of family support or support from friends (Vaux et al., 1987).

It has been reported that this instrument has a high internal consistency with subscale alpha scores over .80 (Wills & Shinar, 2000). In particular, the Family and Friends subscales and the total scale show high internal consistency across samples with alpha coefficients ranging from .81 to .90 (Vaux et al., 1986). For five community samples the coefficients were .81, .84, and .90. The association between

the Family and Friends subscales was moderate for the community samples (mean r = .52) therefore supporting the use of these subscales for independent assessment of support from family and friends. Scale validity has been established by convergent and divergent methods. Validity of the SSA was assessed in relation with other subjective support measures and showed predicted relationships with support appraisal, support network, supportive behaviour (psychological distress and well being), and personality. Validity data show comparisons and associations of a moderate to high range (.50 - .80). This measure was also adaptable across a variety of populations: adolescents, students, community adults and senior citizens (Vaux et al., 1986).

4.3.4 Levenson's Locus of Control Scale (PART D)

This instrument was selected to determine participants' beliefs of personal control during the post-separation period. The Levenson Internality, Powerful Others and Chance (IPC) Locus of Control scale is a 24-item instrument (see Appendix G) which measures the degree an individual believes to be personally in control of what happens (Levenson, 1974). It was designed specifically to assess three components of control. Each subscale consists of 8-items to identify beliefs of dimensions of control. Items are scored on a 6-point Likert format from –3 (strongly disagree) to +3 (strongly agree). The scores on each subscale can range from 0-48. The Internality subscale measures the beliefs one has in the degree of personal control one has in one's own life, the powerful others subscale measures one's beliefs in feeling controlled by external influences and the chance subscale measures beliefs of feeling controlled by chance or fate (Levenson, 1981; Dyal, 1984). High subscale scores indicate that the individual expects either one of the following: to have high personal

control over one's own life, powerful others to have control or chance forces to have control. Low scores indicate lower expectations or beliefs, such as: the individual does not expect to have control over one's own life, or that powerful others do not have control over one's life, or, that chance forces do not control one's life.

The Powerful Others and Chance subscales differentiate between two types of external orientations, the predictable nature of powerful others and the random nature of the world. Low scores on each subscale indicate low expectations of control or not to believe in that source of control whereas high scores suggest the participant has higher expectations of control. According to Levenson (1981) "personality changes over time have been studied extensively in the early developmental years. However, changes that occur in the adult years are less well documented or investigated" (p. 28). In terms of adjustment to life changes, perceptions of personal control are not affected but "poor levels of adjustment would be associated with more perception of control by others and by chance forces" (p.29).

Several studies (Levenson 1974; 1981) had comparable findings and suggest the "internal consistency estimates are only moderately high", the internality scale shows a range from .51 to .85, the powerful others scale from .66 to .91 and similarly the chance scale range was from .64 to .79 (Levenson, 1974; pp. 22-23). Test-retest reliabilities for one week showed a range from .60 - .79 and a 7-week test-retest range were from .62 to .73 for the three scales (Levenson, 1974). Other test-retest reliabilities using simplified scales with an elderly sample found a range from .65 to .91 (Levenson, 1981). Validation of the scales has been established by convergent and discriminant methods. The Powerful Others and Chance subscales have been found to correlate moderately with each other as both measure external orientations whereas

there has been minimal correlation with the Internality subscale that measures internal orientation. Convergent validity is supported by the positive correlation with the Powerful Others and Control subscales and Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control scale. Interestingly, the Internality subscale showed a negative correlation with Rotter's I-E scale. A factor analysis supports the assumption that the three subscales (the personal, powerful others and chance) are composed of entirely different control orientations and there appears to be no overlap of items between factors.

4.3.5 Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (PART E)

Adjustment to separation was assessed using the 100-item Fisher Divorce Adjustment (FDA) scale (see Appendix G). This instrument was selected because it was the only objective measure of divorce adjustment available at the time of developing the research design and that related to some of the areas of adjustment that were covered in the group intervention program. Items were scored using a 5-point Likert scale. The end points of the scale are 1 (almost always) to 5 (almost never). This instrument comprises 6 subscales: Social Self-Worth comprising 9 items, Rebuilding Social Trust comprising 8 items, Grief comprising 24 items, Anger comprising 12 items, Disentanglement comprising 22 items and Self-Worth comprising 25 items (Fisher, 1976). Subscale scores are gained by adding the items of that subscale. The total score is gained by adding up the subscale scores. The total score indicates the degree of adjustment the person has made through the separation process. The subscale scores indicate the degree of adjustment the person has made in the six specific areas of adjustment. Low subscale scores indicate a higher degree of

trauma in relation to the separation while higher subscale scores indicate the individual is progressively adjusting to the separation.

This instrument has been utilized in various studies and administered to a range of populations. The Kuder-Richardson Internal Reliability for this instrument has been reported at .92 (Thiriot & Buckner, 1991). According to Fairchild (1988) the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale has an internal reliability score of .98 with subscale scores ranging from .87 to .95. Hensley (1996) supports this by reporting a reliability coefficient of .98 and claims that this instrument seems to have face validity. Content validity using the Varimax Matrix Rotation has been reported by Fisher (1988) as being high (cited in Thiriot et al., 1991).

4.4 Procedure

An ethics proposal was submitted to the James Cook University Ethics Committee. The ethics proposal was approved 9th December 1999 and the ethics approval number was H984. Once approval was achieved, the process that proceeded was as follows: brochures were designed to advertise the research (see Appendix A), participants were recruited by running weekly advertisements in The Cairns Post on Wednesdays and Saturdays and the Cairns Sun on Wednesdays; radio and television interviews; sending advertising brochures to government and non-government agencies; and, having advertising brochures as inserts in The Cairns Post. Administration staff at Lifeline Cairns Region Counselling Centre was briefed on how to respond to inquiries related to the research. When respondents registered their interest in participating they were provided with details about the information sessions.

The information evenings and all group intervention sessions were conducted in the training room at the Lifeline Cairns Region Counselling Centre in Aumuller Street, Bungalow. Upon entry in attendance of each information evening, research participants were randomly assigned to an intervention group. Each person was provided a coloured folder that determined his or her group intervention status. Folders contained pre-intervention questionnaires, a timetable for group sessions, a consent form, the group rules (see Appendix F), an information sheet regarding purpose of research (see Appendix D) and a change of address form (see Appendix E).

The foci of the information sessions were: to provide participants with information about the research project and participation issues, such as, attendance, sobriety, confidentiality, anonymity and other group rules; to gain informed consent and to complete the pre-intervention questionnaire. A blind assessor gave all participants some details of the research methodology to ensure they were aware of the importance of staying in the group to which they were assigned. Prior to the information evening, a copy of the research proposal and training was provided to all research assistants (the blind assessor and the facilitators of the group program). Dr. Shirley Morrissey from James Cook University, Department of Psychology recruited three research assistants who were graduate psychologists and conditionally registered with the Queensland Registration Psychologist Board. The research assistants received formal supervision weekly from the researcher.

A total of 44 subjects volunteered to participate in this study. Twenty-nine individuals registered for study one and fifteen individuals registered for study two. For study one, participants were randomly assigned to two intervention group

programs. Fifteen were assigned to the immediate six-week intervention group and fourteen to the delayed six-week intervention group. For study two, participants were randomly assigned to three groups. Five participants were assigned to the six-week intervention program; five to the two-day intervention program and five to the wait-list control group who were also offered the opportunity to participate in the six-week intervention program at a later date. Of the 44 subjects that registered for study one and two, twenty-nine subjects completed the group programs. Attrition rates for study one and two were affected by the following: some participants were unable to organize care for their children while attending group sessions and the researcher was unable to provide child care facilities due to the high costs of registered care; the group assigned to some participants did not correspond well with work or other family commitments; and, the inconvenience of waiting seven weeks to participate in the assigned group program (some participants stated that they did not wish to wait as they were eager for immediate intervention).

4.4.1 Pre-Intervention Assessment

Study One: A pretest-posttest experimental design (see Figure 3.1) with two treatment elements was applied. This consisted of an immediate intervention group and a delayed intervention group to determine the degree of adjustment following immediate participation of a six-week group program compared to delayed participation. The immediate and delayed intervention group were administered the five part pre-intervention questionnaire at an information evening prior to attending the six-week group program. One week following the information evening, the immediate intervention group started the six-week group program. Once the immediate intervention group had completed the six-week group program, the

delayed intervention group commenced the six-week group program, seven weeks post-information evening.

Study Two: A pretest-posttest experimental wait-list design with three treatment elements was applied (see Figure 3.2). The six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group were all administered the five part pre-intervention questionnaire at an information evening prior to participation in the group programs. Additionally, the wait-list control group was administered the pre-intervention questionnaire again seven weeks later, prior to participating in the group program. Similar to study one, the two groups, the six-week intervention group and the two-day intervention group started their group programs one week following the information evening. The two-day intervention group completed the entire group program in two Saturdays. The wait-list control group started the six-week group program seven weeks post-information evening.

4.4.2 Post-Intervention Assessment

Study One: The immediate and delayed intervention group were administered the post-intervention questionnaire (see Appendix H), following the completion of the six-week group program. Six months later both the immediate and delayed intervention groups were invited to complete a six-month follow-up post-intervention assessment. The six-month follow-up questionnaire was identical to the post-intervention questionnaire. A letter of invitation (see Appendix I) was sent to all participants to attend the six-month follow-up assessment at Lifeline Cairns Region. Follow-up phone contact allowed for assessment of participants that were unable to attend due to work commitment, childcare or change of interstate or intrastate address.

Consequently, these participants were mailed out the six-month post-intervention questionnaires with a stamped return address envelope.

Study Two: Similarly, all participants in the six-week group and the two-day intervention group were administered the post-intervention questionnaire following the completion of the group program. On the other hand, the wait-list control group was administered the pre-intervention questionnaire seven weeks post-information evening to determine whether adjustment changes had occurred during the waiting period. Following completion of the six-week group program, the wait-list control group was administered the post-intervention questionnaire. Due to the smaller size of the intervention groups in study two, a mail out including the six-month follow-up post-intervention questionnaire and a stamped return address envelope was sent out to research participants from each group.

4.4.3 Group Intervention Program and Structure

The Lifeline Cairns Region six-week structured group intervention program *'Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce'* was utilized for the purpose of this research. This educational group intervention program was developed seven years ago based on information from '*Rebuilding: when your relationship ends'* (Fisher, 1981) and a range of articles in *New Beginnings* (Hartin, 1982; Ladbrook, 1982; Huppert, 1982; Harvey, 1982). Treatment focus was on the physical, psychological and emotional aspects of separation and relationship breakdown. Sessions were informative, supportive and provided an opportunity for personal awareness and growth. The original group program comprised 10 weekly sessions of two-hours. Within a two-year period, due to time restraints, the *'Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce'* group intervention program was reduced to six weekly two-hour sessions.

From the inception of this group intervention program the average number attending each program was between five to eight participants. On average, 4 to 5 programs were offered each year with approximately 25 to 35 separated and divorced people attending each year. With a population of approximately 120,000 people living in the Cairns Region and the divorce rate being 2.7 per 1000 population in 1998 it appears that each year 10% of the divorced population in the region attend the '*Rebuilding after Separation and Divorce'* group intervention program.

For the purpose of evaluating this community group intervention program aimed at separation and divorce adjustment, this study maintained the original content and format of sessions. In study one, the six-week group intervention program offered sessions for two-hours weekly for six weeks to both experimental groups. Study two offered the six weekly sessions to one experimental group, as well, the six-week program was offered over two-days to the second experimental group. The six two-hour sessions were conducted over two consecutive Saturdays. The activities for the six-week program and the two-day program were identical and were as follows: providing mini presentations on specific topics; presenting information on the overhead projector and whiteboard; brainstorming ideas; generating group discussions, role-plays; providing handouts; completing worksheets; demonstrating therapeutic techniques; facilitating a warm up, relaxation and visualization exercise; and, providing participants with take-home tasks to complete between sessions and share with the group members in subsequent meetings.

The format for each session was based on a specific topic. The objectives for session one were: to initiate group interaction to assist group members generate a supportive environment; and, to provide participants with information relevant to their

separated status. Session One focused on: 1) a brief review of the past relationship to recognize the factors that may have contributed to the relationship decline; 2) the pathways of separation and the maelstrom of feelings that are triggered; 3) areas of adjustment and the changes likely to occur post-separation; and, 4) individual reactions and responses to the stress of separation.

The topic for Session Two was separation grief. The aim of this session was to provide participants with information of the emotional reactions to grief and loss; and, to encourage participants to recognize and discuss their experience of separation grief. This session focus was on the loss of the relationship, the emotional, psychological, physical and social aspects of loss, possible reactions, prolonged reactions during the grief cycle, the five stages of grief, mourning the loss of the relationship, status and significant other, and effective ways of communicating during the grief process.

The topic for Session Three was guilt and rejection. The session objective was to inform participants of the emotional reactions to separation from both the leaver and leavee perspectives and to provide participants with a forum to share their emotional experience. Information was presented on the types of separation and the range of possible effects on individual adjustment. Additionally, discussion was stimulated regarding the language of separation and the emotional reactions of the leaver and leavee pre- and post-separation.

Session Four focused on the topic of separation anger. The objective for this session was to provide participants with information to acknowledge and appropriately express separation anger and to help participants gain a better understanding of anger as an emotion rather than a behaviour. Information was presented on anger as a secondary emotion, the difference between aggressive,

passive and assertive behaviours, positive ways of expressing separation anger and owning your own emotions. Additionally, participants are invited to participate in a 'letting go' visualization process.

The topic for Session Five was the family of origin. The session objective was to assist participants gain a better understanding of their family of origin, adopted beliefs and values, patterns of interacting and the effects on separation behaviour. Participants were provided information on how to construct a family of origin chart, the purpose of a family chart, the difference between beliefs and values and patterns of behaviour. Participants were asked to consider how emotions were expressed and how individuals behaved in their family. Additionally, roles, rules, patterns and standards maintained in their family and their former partner's family of origin were considered in relation to post-separation behaviours and the impact of these influences on the separation process. All participants were informed that this was not an exercise to blame family members for their present circumstances but to acknowledge the influences and to take responsibility if change is required by embracing new patterns of behaviour.

The topics for Session Six were self-esteem and social support. This session's objectives were to provide information to participants on building better self-esteem during separation and to encourage participants to build appropriate support networks. This session focused on defining self-esteem, barriers to self-esteem and the effects on separation adjustment, identifying the negative thinking patterns and how to change them, ten steps to building better self-esteem, self-care, the purpose of supportive relationships during separation, identifying support and building supportive networks.

4.4.4 Participant Evaluations

During the six-week and two-day group intervention program, participants were asked to provide some verbal and written feedback following the presentation of each session. Additionally, upon completion of each group intervention program, participants were asked to provide some verbal and written feedback of the entire group program. Although participant feedback was useful in providing the researcher with anecdotal information about program content, particularly what was most helpful and least helpful to participants in their adjustment to the separation and divorce process, it was nonetheless difficult to evaluate this information and incorporate into the research.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS FOR STUDY ONE

This chapter will identify the independent and dependent variables and the tests used to analyze the pre-intervention, post-intervention and 6-month post-intervention data for the immediate and the delayed intervention groups in study one. The results will be presented in relation to group intervention and adjustment outcomes. Additionally, this chapter will provide qualitative information of participant's assessments of intervention sessions and an evaluation of the group program.

5.1 Analysis of Data for Study One

For the purpose of this study, personality factors in the adjustment to the separation and divorce process of group participants will be analysed. The Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale, Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale and the Social Support Appraisal scale were the dependent measures of adjustment used to evaluate changes following group intervention. The independent measures include the following demographic variables: gender; relationship status; relationship number and decider of spousal separation. Other demographic variables are included in Appendix G. Means, standard deviations, *t*-tests and the Mann Whitney U test will be used to determine within group and between group differences for the demographic variables, self-esteem, social support appraisal, locus of control and divorce adjustment measures.

Data for Study One were analysed using independent sample *t*-tests to ascertain differences between male and female participants pre-intervention, post-

intervention and six-month post-intervention for the immediate and delayed intervention groups. Paired sample *t*-tests were used to compute differences between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention for the immediate and delayed intervention groups. Data were screened for violations of assumptions and checked for skewness. None of the assumptions were violated. For errors in data entry, the mode was used. To test normality, histograms, stem-and-leaf plots and box plots were utilized. Presented in Table 5.1 to 5.4 are the comparison of means, standard deviations, *t* values and two-tailed significance levels. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, the Social Support Appraisal scale total scores, Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control scale, and Fisher's Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention periods were computed for the immediate and delayed intervention groups. In reporting the result section, each adjustment measure will be discussed separately. However the reader is directed through from Tables 5.1 to 5.4 for each of the adjustment variables discussed. To reduce the number of tables presenting adjustment variables separately, these variables have been collated into one table for each intervention group, for gender and treatment times.

Presented in Appendix J, Figures J1 to J9 are subscale scores for the immediate intervention group. The differences in male and female mean scores are displayed for the Locus of Control and Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscale scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. Similarly, in Appendix K, the delayed intervention group mean scores for males and females are presented in Figures K1 to K9 for the Locus of Control and Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscale scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. Appendix L presents Figures L1 to L9 for the

mean scores comparing the immediate and the delayed intervention groups for the Locus of Control and Fishers Divorce Adjustment subscale scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention.

5.1.1 Analysis of Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Data – Study One

The sample for the immediate group pre-intervention consisted of twelve females and three males (see Table 5.1). Post-intervention, the sample size reduced to ten females and three males and six-months post-intervention the sample size comprised eight females and 3 males. The results showed that no significant differences were found pre-intervention between females ($\underline{M}$ = 19.7) and males ($\underline{M}$ = 22.0) although females showed higher self-esteem levels than males. Following the completion of the six-week group program, significant differences (t = -2.2; $p < 0.05$) were noted between females ($\underline{M}$ = 17.0) and males ($\underline{M}$ = 24.7) for self-esteem. That is, female self-esteem levels increased and male levels decreased following intervention. Six-month post-intervention, a comparison of means for gender showed no significant differences although self-esteem levels were higher for females ($\underline{M}$ = 18.6) than males ($\underline{M}$ = 24.0). The mean scores show that female self-esteem levels marginally improved from pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 19.7) to six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 18.6) whereas male self-esteem levels were somewhat reduced from pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 22.0) to six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 24.0).

The sample for the delayed group pre-intervention consisted of 9 females and 4 males (see Table 5.2). The sample size reduced to 3 males and 3 females post-intervention. The sample size was maintained six-months post-intervention. The results for the delayed intervention group showed significant differences in self-esteem levels between females and males pre-intervention (t = 2.3; $p < 0.05$), post-

intervention (t = 11.7; p < 0.001) and six-month post-intervention (t = 4.4; p < 0.001). Specifically, male self-esteem levels were higher pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 15.8), post- ($\underline{M}$ = 10.7) and six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 10.3) than female's self-esteem levels pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 21.0), post- ($\underline{M}$ = 21.0) and 6-months post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 18.7). While males developed high levels of self-esteem following intervention and maintained those levels over time, female self-esteem levels improved minimally between the post- and six-months post-intervention period.

The results in Table 5.3 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-intervention scores for self-esteem levels for the immediate intervention group. Similarly, there was no significant difference between post- and six-month post-intervention or pre- and six-month post-intervention. A closer examination of the means suggest a minimal increase in self-esteem levels from pre- to six-month post-intervention. In comparison, the results for the delayed intervention group in Table 5.4 show there was a significant difference between pre- and post-intervention (t = 2.7; p < 0.5), confirming self-esteem levels increased following intervention. Similarly, there was a significant difference between pre- and six-month post-intervention scores (t = 2.8; p < 0.5) for levels of self-esteem, suggesting long-term benefits of intervention for this group. No significant difference was noted between the post- and six-month post-intervention scores for levels of self-esteem although a comparison of means show a minimal increase in self-esteem levels from post- ($\underline{M}$ = 15.8) to six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 14.5).

5.1.2 Analysis of Social Support Appraisal Data – Study One

The immediate intervention group's pre-intervention scores in Table 5.1 show there was a significant difference between females and males in their subjective

Table 5.1

Study One: *T*-tests, Means and Standard Deviations Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for Adjustment to Separation Measures for the Six-Week Intervention Group by Gender.

		Pre-intervention					Post-intervention					Six-months post-intervention				
Adjustment Measures	Gender	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Female	12	19.7	5.1	-0.7	13	10	17.0	5.9	-2.2*	11	8	18.6	5.5	-1.5	8
	Male	3	22.0	4.4			3	24.7	1.2			3	24.0	4.6		
Social Support Appraisal	Female	12	45.4	11.3	-2.6*	13	10	40.2	10.6	-3.1**	11	8	47.1	15.9	-1.5	8
	Male	3	64.0	9.5			3	67.0	20.4			3	64.7	20.7		
Locus of Control	Female	12	85.2	15.7	0.1	13	10	87.7	8.7	-0.6	11	8	89.1	8.7	0.0	8
	Male	3	84.3	15.0			3	91.3	11.2			3	89.0	8.5		
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Female	12	358.7	49.3	3.2**	13	10	406.7	53.4	3.7**	11	8	379.9	57.6	1.6	8
	Male	3	256.7	46.5			3	265.3	73.9			3	318.3	45.6		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5.2

Study One: *T*-tests, Means and Standard Deviations Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for Adjustment to Separation Measures for the Delayed Intervention Group by Gender.

		Pre-intervention					Post-Intervention					Six-months Post-intervention				
Adjustment Measures	Gender	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Mean	SD	*t*	df
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Female	9	21.0	3.5	2.3*	11	3	21.0	1.0	11.7***	4	3	18.7	3.2	4.4***	4
	Male	4	15.8	4.2			3	10.7	1.2			3	10.3	0.6		
Social Support Appraisal	Female	9	48.7	5.4	0.3	11	3	49.7	3.8	1.6	4	3	49.0	2.6	0.7	4
	Male	4	46.5	17.7			3	35.0	15.6			3	44.7	3.6		
Locus of Control	Female	9	79.2	16.2	0.7	11	3	84.7	20.3	1.0	4	3	85.0	18.7	0.4	4
	Male	4	72.2	14.8			3	71.3	9.7			3	79.3	14.5		
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Female	9	339.3	44.5	-1.4	11	3	352.7	68.5	-2.7	4	3	395.0	67.3	-1.8	4
	Male	4	384.2	73.3			3	461.3	17.6			3	466.7	14.0		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5.3

Study One: *T*-tests, Means and Standard Deviations for Adjustment to Separation Measures by Treatment Times: Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for the Six-Week Intervention Group.

	Treatment Times																	
Measurement Measures	N	Time	Mean	SD		*t*	df	N	Time	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Time	Mean	SD	*t*	df
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	13	Pre	20.2	4.7		1.2	12	10	Pst	20.1	6.0	0.3	9	10	Pre	21.0	5.1	0.8	9
	13	Pst	18.8	6.2				10	6mPst	19.9	5.9			10	6mPst	19.9	5.8		
Social Support Appraisal	13	Pre	49.2	13.8		1.3	12	10	Pst	49.5	17.6	-0.9	9	10	Pre	52.8	12.9	-0.1	9
	13	Pst	46.4	17.1				10	6mPst	53.3	18.5			10	6mPst	53.3	18.5		
Locus of Control	13	Pre	88.9	11.2		0.1	12	10	Pst	89.6	9.8	0.1	9	10	Pre	90.1	12.3	0.2	9
	13	Pst	88.5	8.9				10	6mPst	89.4	8.6			10	6mPst	89.4	8.6		
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	13	Pre	331.5	64.9		4.3***	12	10	Pst	360.7	88.9	0.1	9	10	Pre	320.1	65.5	-3.2**	9
	13	Pst	374.1	83.0				10	6mPst	359.7	61.8			10	6mPst	359.7	61.8		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 5.4

Study One: *T*-tests, Means and Standard Deviations for Adjustment to Separation Measure by Treatment Times: Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for the Delayed Intervention Group.

	Treatment times																	
Adjustment Measures	N	Time	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Time	Mean	SD	*t*	df	N	Time	Mean	SD	*t*	df
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	6	Pre	18.0	4.9	2.7*	5	6	Pst	15.8	5.7	1.6	5	6	Pre	18.0	4.9	2.8*	5
	6	Pst	15.8	5.7			6	6mPst	14.5	5.0			6	6mPst	14.5	5.0		
Social Support Appraisal	6	Pre	48.3	14.9	2.1	5	6	Pst	42.3	12.9	-1.4	5	6	Pre	48.3	14.9	0.3	5
	6	Pst	42.3	12.9			6	6mPst	46.8	6.7			6	6mPst	46.8	6.7		
Locus of Control	6	Pre	81.2	18.4	0.9	5	6	Pst	78.0	16.0	0.9	5	6	Pre	81.2	18.4	0.3	5
	6	Pst	78.0	16.0			6	6mPst	82.1	15.3			6	6mPst	82.1	15.3		
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	6	Pre	370.5	69.2	-6.4***	5	6	Pst	407.0	74.4	-2.3	5	6	Pre	370.5	69.2	-4.9**	5
	6	Pst	407.0	74.4			6	6mPst	430.8	58.6			6	6mPst	430.8	58.6		

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

appraisal of social support (t = -2.6; $p < 0.05$). The results show that females (M = 45.4) reported stronger subjective appraisal of social support than males (M = 64.0) prior to intervention. Similarly, post-intervention results show a significant difference between females and males (t = -3.1; $p < 0.01$) in their subjective appraisal of social support. It is evident that females (M = 40.2) developed stronger subjective appraisal of social support than males (M = 67.0) following intervention. There was no significant difference six-months post-intervention for females (M = 47.1) and males (M = 64.7). For the delayed intervention group, no significant differences were found in Table 5.2 pre-, post- or six-month post-intervention for females and males. Further examination of the mean scores shows that males had stronger subjective appraisal of social support following intervention (M = 35.0) than at pre- (M = 46.5) or six-month post-intervention (M = 44.7).

The results for the immediate intervention group in Table 5.3 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention scores for subjective appraisal of social support. The mean scores show marginally stronger subjective appraisal of social support post-intervention (M = 46.4) when compared to pre-intervention (M = 49.2). The results for the delayed intervention group in Table 5.4 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention scores. Similarly, the comparison of mean scores show marginally stronger subjective appraisal of social support from pre- (M = 48.3) to post-intervention (M = 42.3).

5.1.3 Analysis of Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control Data – Study One

Table 5.1 presents the immediate intervention group total scores for females and males pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention. The results for the Locus of Control total scores show there was no significant difference between females and males in their beliefs of control at pre-, post- or six-month post-intervention. However, for the Internality subscale, the post-intervention mean scores (see Appendix J, Figure J1) show a difference between females and males. Specifically, females (M = 40.2) were more internal and reported higher expectations and beliefs in personal control in the separation process than males (M = 30.6) following intervention. For the Powerful Others subscale (see Appendix J, Figure J2), the mean scores show that males (M = 30.0) had a stronger belief in the control of powerful others and higher expectations of external influences than females (M = 23.0) at post-intervention. Similarly, for the Chance subscale (see Appendix J, Figure J3), the mean scores show that males (M = 30.6) had higher expectations of events occurring by chance and of a random nature of the world than females (M = 24.5) at post-intervention.

The results for the Locus of Control scale total scores for the delayed intervention group in Table 5.2 show no significant differences between females and males pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. Interestingly, the Internality subscale mean scores pre-intervention (see Appendix K, Figure K1) for males (M = 39.7) showed that males were more internal and had higher expectations and beliefs in personal control than females (M = 33.6). Six-months post-intervention, the mean scores showed that males (M = 45.5) increased their expectations and beliefs in

personal control while females' (M = 34.0) scores remained similar. The Powerful Others subscale (see Appendix K, Figure K2) mean scores show that males' (M = 12.3) expectations of external influences had reduced and females' (M = 25.0) expectations increased post-intervention. Additionally, males maintained lower mean scores at pre- and six-months post-intervention. Similarly, for the Chance subscale (see Appendix K, Figure K3), males had lower mean scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. Specifically, the mean scores show that males (M = 19.3) had higher expectations of events occurring by chance and of a random nature of the world than females (M = 24.7) at post-intervention. Expectations lowered for males (M = 16.0) six-months post-intervention.

The results for the immediate intervention group Locus of Control scale total scores in Table 5.3 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention. Similarly, the results for the delayed intervention group Locus of Control scale total scores in Table 5.4 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-months post-intervention. A comparison of the mean scores for the Internality subscale (see Appendix L, Figure L1) showed the delayed intervention group started with low expectations of control pre-intervention (M = 35.7), increased their expectations of control post-intervention (M = 37.3) and continued to increase their expectations of control six-months post-intervention (M = 39.8). On the contrary, the immediate intervention group maintained similar mean scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. For the Powerful Others subscale (see Appendix L, Figure L2), mean scores show the delayed intervention group had similar scores to the immediate intervention group pre-intervention, had lowered

expectations of external control post-intervention (M = 18.7) and increased expectations to pre-intervention levels (M = 21.8) at six-months post-intervention (M = 21.5). For the Chance subscale (see Appendix L, Figure L3), the delayed intervention group had lower mean scores pre- (M = 23.7), post- (M = 22.0) and six-months post-intervention (M = 20.8) than the immediate intervention group pre- (M = 28.0), post- (M = 25.9) and six-months post-intervention (M = 27.1). The immediate intervention group had higher expectations of events occurring by chance and of a random nature of the world pre-intervention than the delayed intervention group. Both groups progressively lowered their expectations of events occurring by chance at the post- and six-month post-intervention periods.

5.1.4 Analysis of Fisher Divorce Adjustment Data – Study One

Presented in Table 5.1 are the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for females and males pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention for the immediate intervention group. A significant difference was found between males and females pre-intervention ($t = 3.2$; $p = 0.01$) and post-intervention ($t = 3.7$; $p = 0.01$). At pre-intervention the mean scores show that females (M = 358.7) were further advanced in their adjustment to the separation and divorce process than males (M = 256.7). At post-intervention, the mean scores indicate that greater adjustment gains were experienced by females (M = 406.7) than males (M = 265.3). No significant differences were noted for gender six-months post-intervention. The results for the delayed intervention group presented in Table 5.2 show no significant differences for females and males pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention. Although the between gender differences were not significant, the scores indicate progressive adjustment to separation and divorce over time for females pre- (M = 339.3), post- (M = 352.7) and

six-month post-intervention (M = 395.0); and males pre- (M = 384.2), post- (M = 461.3) and six-months post-intervention (M = 466.7). Males showed greater progress in the adjustment process pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention than females.

The Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for the immediate intervention group in Table 5.3 showed a significant difference (t = -4.3; p = 0.001) between pre- (M = 331.5) and post-intervention (M = 374.1) suggesting considerable adjustment to the separation and divorce process immediately following intervention. No significant differences were evident between post- and six-month post-intervention. Additionally, a significant difference was noted between the pre- and six-month post-intervention scores (t = -3.2; p = 0.01) indicating continual progress in adjusting to the separation process. The results in Table 5.4 for the delayed intervention group show there were significant differences between pre- and post-intervention (t = -6.4; p = 0.001), pre- and six-months post-intervention (t = -4.9; p = 0.01) indicating progressive adjustment through the separation and divorce process. No significant differences were evident between the post- and six-month post-intervention results.

The Social Self-Worth subscale mean scores for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix J, Figure J4) were greater for females' pre- (M = 34.0), post- (M = 35.5), and six-months post-intervention (M = 35.8) than males pre- (M = 20.0), post- (M = 20.7), and six-months post-intervention (M = 23.7). Conversely, the mean scores for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K4) show the social self-worth levels for males were higher pre- (M = 33.7), post- (M = 40.3) and six-month post-intervention (M = 42.3) than for females, pre- (M = 30.7), post- (M = 33.0) and six-month post-intervention (M = 34.0). To compare outcomes for the

immediate intervention group and the delayed intervention group, the mean scores show no notable differences were evident between the two groups at pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention (see Appendix L, Figure L4). The mean scores suggest an improvement in levels of social self-worth and progressive adjustment to separation process post- and six-months post-intervention for both the immediate and the delayed intervention groups.

The Social Trust subscale mean scores for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix J, Figure J5) show that females had higher levels of social trust pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 25.3), post- (M = 27.9), and six-months post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 24.8) than males pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 18.7), post- ($\underline{M}$ = 19.0), and six-months post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 20.6). The results suggest short-term progress for females post-intervention. The six-month post-intervention results confirm no long-term adjustment gains in social trust. In contrast, the mean scores for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K5) show the social trust levels for males were higher pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 33.2), post- ($\underline{M}$ = 38.3) and six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 38.3) than for females pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 22.4), post- ($\underline{M}$ = 22.0) and six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 23.3) confirming that males gained higher levels of social trust post-intervention and maintained those levels six-months post-intervention. To compare outcomes for the immediate intervention group and the delayed intervention group, the mean scores show an improvement in levels of social trust for both groups at post-intervention (see Appendix L, Figure L5). The short-term progress of the immediate group at post-intervention was not maintained six-months post-intervention.

The Grief subscale mean scores for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix J, Figure J6) show females reported greater levels of adjustment in the grief

process pre-intervention (M = 82.4) and post-intervention (M = 96.2) than males pre-intervention (M = 58.0) and post-intervention (M = 63.0). The results suggest short-term progress for females post-intervention. The long-term adjustment gain in working through the grief process was only evident for males. Interestingly, the mean scores for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K6) indicate progressive adjustment to the grief process for females pre- (M = 83.0), post- (M = 89.3) and six-month post-intervention (M = 99.7); and for males pre- (M = 85.5), post- (M = 109.0) and six-months post-intervention (M = 111.7). When comparing outcomes for the immediate and the delayed intervention group, the mean scores indicate a progressive adjustment through the grief process for both groups (see Appendix L, Figure L6). The long-term progress of both groups was maintained six-months post-intervention.

The results from the Anger subscale mean scores were used to determine differences between females and males in the immediate intervention group in dealing with separation anger (see Appendix J, Figure J7). Improvements in scores were noted for females from pre- (M = 33.8) to post-intervention (M = 46.6), with reduced progress at the six-month post-intervention (M = 39.6). Alternatively, the mean scores for males showed continued adjustment in dealing with separation anger from pre- (M = 35.7) to post- (M = 37.3) to six-months post-intervention (M = 47.3) indicating some gender differences in dealing with separation anger. The mean subscale scores for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K7) show that females made no intervention gains in adjustment from pre- (M = 35.3) to post-intervention (M = 34.3) although progress in dealing with separation anger was noted at six-months post-intervention (M = 42.0). On the other hand, males reported greater gains

from pre- (M = 40.0) to post-intervention (M = 53.3) with reduced progress at six-months post-intervention (M = 49.3). This suggests that the adjustment gains were greater for males in dealing with their separation anger following intervention. The Anger subscale mean scores (see Appendix L, Figure L7) show some differences between the immediate intervention group pre- (M = 34.4), and post- (M = 42.9), and six-months post-intervention (M = 41.3), and the delayed intervention group mean scores pre- (M = 37.7), post- (M = 43.8) and six-month post-intervention (M = 45.7). The results suggest some group differences in dealing with separation anger.

The mean scores for the Disentanglement subscale for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix J, Figure J8) show a greater variation for gender post-intervention. Females showed greater levels of disentanglement from the former spouse pre- (M = 85.7), post- (M = 98.0) and six-months post-intervention (M = 96.4) than the male sample pre- (M = 60.0), post- (M = 61.3) and six-months post-intervention (M = 71.7). A comparison of mean scores for the immediate intervention group suggests males experienced a higher degree of trauma disentangling from the former partner at pre-intervention stage than at six-months post intervention. In comparison, the results for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K8) showed little variation between females and males in relation to the Disentanglement subscale in the pre-intervention, post-intervention or six-months post-intervention period. The mean scores indicate a higher degree of trauma was experienced disentangling from the former spouse over time for females pre- (M = 78.6), post- (M = 89.0) and six-month post-intervention (M = 96.3) than for males pre- (M = 86.5), post- (M = 102.7) and six-months post-intervention (M = 107.7).

The Disentanglement subscale mean scores for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix L, Figure L8) shows a difference between pre- (M = 79.0) and post-intervention (M = 89.5), suggesting short-term progress in working through the disentanglement process following intervention. The intervention gains were maintained by the immediate intervention group six-month post-intervention (M = 89.6). For the delayed intervention group, differences between pre- (M = 87.5) post- (M = 95.8) and six-months post-intervention (M = 102.0) indicate progressive adjustment through the disentanglement process over time.

To assess gender differences for the immediate intervention group (see Appendix J, Figure J9), the Self-Worth subscale mean scores revealed females reported higher levels of self-worth pre- (M = 97.4), post- (M = 102.5) and six-months post-intervention (M = 94.2) than males at pre- (M = 64.3), post- (M = 64.0) and six-months post-intervention (M = 75.3). The results show females reported greater levels of self-worth pre- and post-intervention than males. Interestingly, levels of self-worth reduced six-months post-intervention for females and increased for males. In contrast, the Self-Worth subscale mean scores for the delayed intervention group (see Appendix K, Figure K9) show that males reported higher levels of self-worth pre- (M = 105.3), post- (M = 117.7) and six-months post-intervention (M = 117.4) than females at pre- (M = 89.3), post- (M = 85.0) and six-months post-intervention (M = 99.7). Females reported lower self-worth levels post-intervention than males but progressively improved their self-worth levels at six-months post-intervention.

The Self-Worth subscale mean scores for the immediate and delayed intervention group (see Appendix L, Figure L9) show some difference between the

two groups. Additionally, the results suggest that there were adjustment gains in levels of self worth between intervention periods for both groups. For the immediate intervention group, difference between pre- (M = 82.1) and post-intervention (M = 88.9), suggests short-term progress in improving levels of self-worth following intervention. These gains were not maintained six-months post-intervention (M = 87.3). For the delayed intervention group, differences between pre- (M = 96.3) post- (M = 101.3) and six-months post-intervention (M = 108.5) indicate progressive adjustment and maintaining intervention gains over time. Therefore, these results suggest some long-term gains from intervention.

5.2 Social Context Variables for Study One

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 present the percentages for the social context variables pre-intervention, post-intervention and six-months post-intervention for the immediate and the delayed intervention group. The social context variables of adjustment include: emotional; psychological; social; financial; extent of property division; and satisfaction with property division. Pre-intervention for the immediate intervention group (see Table 5.5), 40% of participants reported to be in the anger and depression phase of emotional adjustment, whereas post-intervention this had reduced to 15.4%. For pre-intervention, 53.3% of participants reported to be in the resolution and acceptance phase and this increased to 76.9% post-intervention. For psychological adjustment, 46.7% of participants reported feeling separated and single at the pre-intervention stage but this increased to 61.5% post-intervention. Similarly, for financial adjustment, at the pre-intervention stage, 80% of participants reported to have separate finances but this increased to 92.3% at post-intervention. In relation to

property division, 40% of participants reported to have completed property division at the pre-intervention stage compared to 61.5% at post-intervention.

Table 5.6 shows the results for the delayed intervention group. Prior to intervention, for emotional adjustment, 46.2% of participants reported to be experiencing anger and depression and 53.8% of participants reported to be in the resolution and acceptance phase. However, immediately following intervention and six-months post-intervention, 100% of participants reported to be in the resolution and acceptance phase of emotional adjustment of the separation and divorce process. Similarly, for psychological adjustment, at the pre-intervention stage, 7.7% reported they still felt married, 38.5% had mixed feelings and 53.8% considered themselves to be separate and single. At the post-intervention and six-months post-intervention periods, 100% of participants reported feeling separate and single. For social adjustment, prior to intervention and six-months post-intervention, 100% of participants reported to have separate friends compared to post-intervention where 50% of participants reported occasionally sharing friends and 50% of participants reported having separate friends. Also, participants reported changes for financial adjustment, pre-intervention, 69.2% reported separate finances compared to 83.3% post-intervention. Differences were noted for property division, in that pre-intervention, 8.3% of participants reported completing the division of property compared to 33.3% post-intervention. Similarly, differences were reported for satisfaction with property division. Pre-intervention, 22.2% reported being completely satisfied compared to 67.7% post-intervention.

5.3 Relationship Status, Relationship Number and Decider

To ascertain differences between individuals from married and de facto relationships pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention for the immediate and delayed intervention groups, data from study one were analysed using the 2-tailed independent sample Mann-Whitney U-test. The results for the immediate intervention group indicate there were significant differences between married and de facto participants pre-intervention for the Locus of Control scale total score ($Z = -2.481$; $p < 0.05$), Powerful Others subscale score ($Z = -1.95$; $p < 0.05$); and, Chance subscale score ($Z = -2.225$; $p < 0.05$). Additionally, there was a significant difference between married and de facto participants post-intervention for the Locus of Control scale total score ($Z = -2.163$; $p < 0.05$). No significant differences were evident for the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, the Social Support Appraisal scale or the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores. For the delayed intervention group, no significant differences were noted between married and de facto participants for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, Social Support Appraisal scale, Locus of Control scale or the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention.

In assessment of differences between participants separating for the first time or from second and third relationships, the results for the immediate intervention group in study one show there was a significant difference in Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale scores pre-intervention ($Z = -2.363$; $p < 0.01$). Also, a significant difference was noted between these two groups for social support appraisal scores post-intervention ($Z = -2.025$; $p < 0.05$). Similarly, for the delayed intervention group, a significant difference was found for Rosenberg's self-esteem scores pre-intervention ($Z = -2.352$;

$p < 0.01$). Additionally, a significant difference was evident between these two groups for Fisher's divorce adjustment scores pre-intervention ($Z = -2.052$; $p < .05$).

To determine differences between self or former partner as the decider ending the relationship, the results for the immediate intervention group in study one show a significant difference between self and former partner for Fisher's divorce adjustment scores post-intervention ($Z = -2.046$; $p < 0.05$). No significant differences were noted for Rosenberg's self-esteem, social support appraisal or locus of control scores pre-, post-, or six-month post-intervention. For the delayed intervention group, no significant differences were noted between the deciders (self and former partner) for Rosenberg's Self-Esteem, Social Support Appraisal, Locus of Control or the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale scores pre-, post- or six-month post-intervention.

Table 5.5.

Study One, Percentage Distributions of Social Context Variables for the Immediate Intervention Group.

	Immediate Group					
Social Context Variables	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention		6 Month Post-	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emotional Adjustment						
Shock, Denial	1	6.7	1	7.7	1	10.0
Anger, Depression	6	40.0	2	15.4	2	20.0
Resolution, Acceptance	8	53.3	10	76.9	7	70.0
Psychological Adjustment						
Feel Married	2	13.3	1	7.7	1	9.1
Mixed Feelings	6	40.0	4	30.8	4	36.4
Separate, Single	7	46.7	8	61.5	6	54.5
Social Adjustment						
Shared Friends	—	—	—	—	1	9.1
Occasionally	1	6.7	1	7.7	2	18.2
Separate Friends	14	93.3	12	92.3	8	72.7
Financial Adjustment						
Joint Finances	1	6.7	—	—	1	9.0
Some Shared	2	13.3	1	7.7	—	—
Separate Finances	12	80.0	12	92.3	10	91.0
Property Division						
Not Divided	6	40.0	4	30.8	2	20.0
Mostly	3	20.0	1	7.7	3	30.0
Completely	6	40.0	8	61.5	5	50.0
Property Div. Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	1	10.0	2	22.0	2	28.6
Mostly	2	20.0	1	11.0	1	14.3
Completely	7	70.0	6	67.0	4	57.1

Table 5.6.

Study One, Percentage Distributions of Social Context Variables for the Delayed Intervention Group.

	Delayed Group					
Social Context Variables	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention		6 Month Post-	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emotional Adjustment						
Shock, Denial	—	—	—	—	—	—
Anger, Depression	6	46.2	—	—	—	—
Resolution, Acceptance	7	53.8	6	100.0	6	100.0
Psychological Adjustment						
Feel Married	1	7.7	—	—	—	—
Mixed Feelings	5	38.5	—	—	—	—
Separate, Single	7	53.8	8	100.0	6	100.0
Social Adjustment						
Shared Friends	—	—	—	—	—	—
Occasionally	—	—	3	50.0	—	—
Separate Friends	13	100.0	3	50.0	6	100.0
Financial Adjustment						
Joint Finances	1	7.7	1	16.7	1	16.7
Some Shared	3	23.1	—	—	1	16.7
Separate Finances	9	69.2	5	83.3	4	66.7
Property Division						
Not Divided	7	58.3	4	66.7	2	33.3
Mostly	4	33.3	—	—	1	16.7
Completely	1	8.3	2	33.3	3	50.0
Property Div. Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	6	66.7	1	33.3	1	20.0
Mostly	1	11.1	—	—	1	20.0
Completely	2	22.2	2	67.7	3	60.0

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS FOR STUDY TWO

This chapter provides the results for study two and compares adjustment outcomes for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group, pre-intervention, post-intervention, and 6-month post-intervention. The results of the two experimental groups will be compared to the no intervention group to compare adjustment outcomes. Additionally, other qualitative information regarding participant's evaluation of intervention sessions and the group intervention program will be assessed.

6.1 Analysis of Data for Study Two

Study two will focus on the relationships between personality factors and adjustment outcomes for research participants as a result of intervention. The Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale, Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale and the Social Support Appraisal scale were the dependent measures of adjustment used to evaluate change for the intervention groups. The independent measures include gender, relationship status, relationship number and decider of spousal separation. Means were used to assess between group differences, specifically how self-esteem levels, perceptions of control and subjective appraisal of social support influence participants' adjustment to separation and divorce.

Data for study two were analysed using independent sample *t*-tests to ascertain differences between male and female participants pre-intervention, post-intervention and six-month post-intervention for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. Paired sample *t*-tests were used to

compute differences between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. None of the assumptions for independent t-tests were violated. All data were screened and checked for data entry errors and skewness. To test for normality, histograms, stem-and-leaf plots and box-plots were used. Presented in Tables 6.1 to 6.5 are the total scores for scales, means, standard deviations, *t* values and two-tailed significance levels for the two experimental groups and the wait-list control group. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale, the Social Support Appraisal scale total scores, Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control scale, and Fisher's Divorce Adjustment scale total and subscale scores for pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention periods were computed for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. In reporting the results section, each adjustment measure will be discussed separately. However, the reader is directed through from Tables 6.1 to 6.5 for each of the adjustment variables discussed. To reduce the number of tables presenting adjustment variables separately, these variables have been collated into one table for each group, for gender and treatment times.

Presented in Appendix M is Figures M1 to M9 for the six-week intervention group. The mean scores are displayed for the Locus of Control and Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscale scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention for males and females. Similarly, in Appendix N, the wait-list control group mean scores for males and females are presented in Figures N1 to N9 for the Locus of Control and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscale scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. On the other hand, presented in Appendix O is Figures O1 to O9. The means for the

Table 6.1

Study Two: Means and Standard Deviations Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for Adjustment to Separation Measures for the Six-Week Intervention Group by Gender.

		Pre-intervention			Post-intervention			Six-months Post-	
Adjustment Measures	Gender	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Female	2	21.0	8.5	2	20.5	10.6	1	11.0
	Male	3	19.7	1.5	3	21.3	2.1	1	12.0
Social Support Appraisal	Female	2	43.5	19.1	2	40.0	21.2	1	26.0
	Male	3	57.7	8.6	3	54.3	12.5	1	54.0
Locus of Control	Female	2	100.5	30.4	2	94.0	22.6	1	73.0
	Male	3	83.0	16.8	3	89.3	4.9	1	84.0
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Female	2	308.5	116.7	2	347.5	118.1	1	460.0
	Male	3	324.3	45.8	3	363.3	43.2	1	324.0

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 6.2

Study Two: Adjustment to Separation Measures Means and Standard Deviations Pre-, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for the Six-week Intervention Group.

	Six-week Treatment Group											
Adjustment Measures	N	Time	Mean	SD	N	Time	Mean	SD	N	Time	Mean	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	5	Pre	20.2	4.4	2	Pst	16.0	4.2	2	Pre	17.5	3.5
	5	Pst	21.0	5.5	2	6mPst	11.5	0.7	2	6mPst	11.5	0.7
Social Support Appraisal	5	Pre	52.0	13.7	2	Pst	46.0	29.7	2	Pre	48.5	26.2
	5	Pst	48.6	15.9	2	6mPst	40.0	19.8	2	6mPst	40.0	19.8
Locus of Control	5	Pre	90.0	21.5	2	Pst	82.5	6.4	2	Pre	74.5	6.3
	5	Pst	91.2	12.1	2	6mPst	78.5	7.7	2	6mPst	78.5	7.7
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	5	Pre	318.0	67.3	2	Pst	420.0	15.5	2	Pre	365.0	36.8
	5	Pst	357.0	67.1	2	6mPst	392.0	96.2	2	6mPst	392.0	96.2

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 6.3

Study Two: Means for the Adjustment to Separation Measures Pre-1, Pre-2, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for Females and Males of the Wait-list Control Group.

		Wait-List Control Group									
		Pre-Intervention 1			Pre-Intervention 2			Post-Intervention		6M Post-	
Adjustment Measures	Gender	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	N	Mean
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Female	2	26.0	0.0	1	24.0	0.0	1	24.0	1	19.0
	Male	2	19.5	3.5	2	18.0	4.2	1	16.0	1	21.0
Social Support Appriasal	Female	2	52.5	0.7	1	46.0	0.0	1	46.0	1	41.0
	Male	2	64.0	8.4	2	50.0	4.2	1	53.0	1	47.0
Locus of Control	Female	2	93.0	4.2	1	96.0	0.0	1	95.0	1	95.0
	Male	2	93.0	16.9	2	100.5	4.9	1	87.0	1	90.0
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Female	2	249.5	20.5	1	266.0	0.0	1	295.0	1	353.0
	Male	2	363.0	11.3	2	373.5	16.2	1	397.0	1	400.0

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 6.4

Study Two: Adjustment to Separation Measures Means and Standard Deviations Pre-1, Pre-2, Post- and Six-Months Post-Intervention for the Wait-List Control Group.

	Wait-List Control Group															
Adjustment Measures	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Pre 1	3	21.6	4.5	Pre 1	2	21.5	6.3	Pst	2	20.0	5.6	Pre 2	2	19.5	6.8
	Pre 2	3	20.0	4.5	Pst	2	20.0	5.6	6mPst	2	20.0	1.4	6mPst	2	20.0	1.4
Social Support Appraisal	Pre 1	3	60.0	9.1	Pre 1	2	61.0	12.7	Pst	2	49.5	4.9	Pre 2	2	46.5	0.7
	Pre 2	3	48.6	3.7	Pst	2	49.5	4.9	6mPst	2	44.0	4.2	6mPst	2	44.0	4.2
Locus of Control	Pre 1	3	94.0	12.1	Pre 1	2	88.5	10.6	Pst	2	91.0	5.6	Pre 2	2	96.5	0.7
	Pre 2	3	99.0	4.3	Pst	2	91.0	5.6	6mPst	2	92.5	3.5	6mPst	2	92.5	3.5
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Pre 1	3	330.0	57.7	Pre 1	2	317.5	75.6	Pst	2	346.0	72.1	Pre 2	2	325.5	84.1
	Pre 2	3	337.6	63.1	Pst	2	346.0	72.1	6mPst	2	376.5	33.2	6mPst	2	376.5	33.2

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Table 6.5

Study Two: Adjustment to Separation Measures Means and Standard Deviations Pre-, Post-1, Post-2 and Six-Months Post-Intervention for the Two-Day Intervention Group.

	Two-Day Treatment Group															
Adjustment Measures	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD	Time	N	Mean	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem	Pre	3	28.0	5.2	Pst 1	3	23.6	3.5	Pst 2	3	23.6	2.8	Pre	3	28.0	5.2
	Pst 1	3	23.6	3.5	Pst 2	3	23.6	2.8	6mPst	3	22.6	1.1	6mPst	3	22.6	1.1
Social Support Appraisal	Pre	3	46.3	5.5	Pst 1	3	41.0	6.5	Pst 2	3	41.6	12.7	Pre	3	46.3	5.5
	Pst 1	3	41.0	6.5	Pst 2	3	41.6	12.7	6mPst	3	47.0	2.0	6mPst	3	47.0	2.0
Locus of Control	Pre	3	91.6	9.4	Pst 1	3	86.0	12.7	Pst 2	3	91.0	6.9	Pre	3	91.6	9.4
	Pst 1	3	86.0	12.7	Pst 2	3	91.0	6.9	6mPst	3	89.6	7.7	6mPst	3	89.6	7.7
Fisher Divorce Adjustment	Pre	3	252.0	52.7	Pst 1	3	327.3	52.1	Pst 2	3	349.6	47.7	Pre	3	252.0	52.7
	Pst 1	3	327.3	52.1	Pst 2	3	349.6	47.7	6mPst	3	348.3	44.0	6mpst	3	348.3	44.0

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Locus of Control and Fishers Divorce Adjustment subscale scores, pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention are displayed for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. The sample size for the six-week intervention group pre-intervention consisted of two females and three males. The two-day intervention group comprised four females and the wait-list control group comprised two males and two females.

6.1.1 Analysis of Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Data – Study Two

For the six-week intervention group (see Table 6.1) no significant differences were found for Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale pre-intervention between females ($\underline{M}$ = 21.0) and males ($\underline{M}$ = 19.7) although males showed slightly higher self-esteem levels than females. At post-intervention the sample size remained the same. Following the completion of the six-week group program, no significant differences were found between females ($\underline{M}$ = 20.5) and males ($\underline{M}$ = 21.3) for self-esteem. The post-intervention mean scores show that female self-esteem levels increased minimally and male levels decreased. At six-months post-intervention, the self-esteem score for the one female was ($\underline{M}$ = 11.0) and the one male participant was ($\underline{M}$ = 12.0).

The results in Table 6.2 show there were no significant differences in self-esteem levels between pre- and post-intervention, post- and six-month post-intervention or pre- and six-months post-intervention for the six-week intervention group. The means scores show a minimal difference in self-esteem levels pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 20.2) and post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 21.0). With the sample reduced to two participants at six-months post-intervention, some differences in self-esteem levels were noted between post- ($\underline{M}$ = 16.0) and six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 11.5). Similarly,

using the reduced sample size to compare the pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 17.5) and six-month post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 11.5) scores, higher levels of self-esteem were reported.

Following the assessment of results for the wait-list control group in Table 6.3, it was evident there were no significant differences in self-esteem between females and males pre-intervention 1 and 2, post- and six-month post-intervention. A total of two females and two males participated in this group. A closer examination of the means show that pre-intervention 1, males ($\underline{M}$ = 19.5) reported higher levels of self-esteem than females ($\underline{M}$ = 26.0). A minimal improvement in self-esteem levels was noted at the pre-intervention 2 period for females ($\underline{M}$ = 24.0) and males ($\underline{M}$ = 18.00) although the sample size had reduced to one female and two males. Evaluation of the results for the wait-list control group in Table 6.4 showed there was a significant difference in self-esteem between pre-intervention 1 and pre-intervention 2 periods (t = 5.0; $p < 0.5$). No significant differences were noted between pre-intervention 1 and post-intervention; post-intervention and six-months post intervention; pre-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention scores for levels of self-esteem.

Table 6.5 shows the results self-esteem for the two-day intervention group. A total of three females participated in this group. No significant differences were found between pre-intervention and post-intervention 1 scores; post-intervention 1 and 2 scores; post-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention scores; and, pre-intervention and six-months post-intervention scores. In a comparison of means, a minimal improvement in self-esteem levels was noted between pre- ($\underline{M}$ = 28.0) and post-intervention ($\underline{M}$ = 23.6) scores.

6.1.2 Analysis of Social Support Appraisal Data – Study Two

In assessment of the six-week intervention group in Table 6.1, pre-intervention scores for the Social Support Appraisal scale show there was no significant difference between females and males. The results indicate that females (M = 43.5) reported stronger subjective appraisal of social support than males (M = 57.7) prior to intervention. Similarly, post-intervention results showed no significant difference between females and males in their subjective appraisal of social support, although, females (M = 40.0) reported stronger subjective appraisal of social support than males (M = 54.3). At six-months post-intervention it was noted that the female participants' (M = 26.0) subjective appraisal of social support was considerably stronger than that of the male (M = 54.0) participants.

The results for the six-week intervention group in Table 6.2 show there was no significant difference between pre- and post-; post- and six-month post-; and, pre- and six-month post-intervention scores for subjective appraisal of social support. The means show that there were some differences in subjective appraisal of social support between pre- (M = 52.0) and post-intervention (M = 48.6); post- (M = 46.0) and six-month post-intervention (M = 40.0); and, pre- (M = 48.5) and six-month post-intervention (M = 40.0).

The results for the wait-list control group in Table 6.3 show there were no significant differences in subjective appraisal of social support between females and males pre-intervention 1 and 2, post- and six-month post-intervention. A closer examination of the means show that at the pre-intervention 1 period, females (M = 52.5) reported stronger subjective appraisal of social support than males (M = 64.0). It was noted at the pre-intervention 2 period there was minimal difference in mean

scores for females (M = 46.0) and males (M = 50.0). Additionally, the results for the wait-list control group in Table 6.4 show there was no significant difference in subjective appraisal of social support between pre-intervention 1 and 2 periods, pre-intervention 1 and post-intervention 1 periods, or pre-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention. A significant difference in subjective appraisal of social support was noted between the post-intervention and six-months post-intervention periods.

For the two-day intervention group, the results in Table 6.5 show a significant difference for subjective appraisal of social support (t = 6.0; p = 0.05) between pre- (M = 46.3) and post-intervention (M = 41.0) scores. No significant differences were found between post-intervention 1 and post-intervention 2 scores; post-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention scores; and, pre-intervention and six-months post-intervention scores.

6.1.3 Analysis of Levenson's Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Locus of Control Data – Study Two

Table 6.1 presents the Locus of Control scale total scores for females and males pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention for the six-week intervention group. The results show there was no significant difference between females and males in their beliefs of control at pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention. In considering the Internality subscale scores (see Appendix M, Figure M1), the means show that females (M = 39.5) had higher expectations of internal control than males (M = 36.6) pre-intervention and maintained expectations of control post-intervention (females: M = 40.0; males: M = 36.6). In contrast, the Powerful Others subscale mean scores (see Appendix M, Figure M2) show that females (M = 31.0) had higher expectations of the influences of powerful others than males (M = 26.7) pre-intervention, and females (M

= 24.5) had lower expectations of the influences of powerful others post-intervention than males (M = 27.0). Pre-intervention, the Chance subscale mean scores (see Appendix M, Figure M3) show that males (M = 19.6) were less likely than females (M = 30.0) to believe in the random nature of the world. At post-intervention, the mean scores increased for males (M = 25.6) indicating they had increased their expectations while levels for females (M = 29.5) remained within one unit of the pre-intervention score.

Table 6.2 presents the Locus of Control scale total scores pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention for the six-week intervention group. Once again, the results show there was no significant difference for the six-week intervention group between intervention periods: pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention. For the wait-list control group, Table 6.3 presents the total scores for the Locus of Control scale pre- 1, pre- 2, post- and six-months post-intervention for gender. No significant differences were found between females and males pre- 1, pre- 2, post- and six-month post-intervention. The Internality subscale means (see Appendix N, Figure N1) show that females (M = 35.0) had lower expectations of personal control than males (M = 37.5) at the pre-intervention 1 period. The mean scores for Powerful Others and Chance subscales show no variation in scores between females and males pre- and post-intervention. The results for the wait-list control group in Table 6.4 show there was no significant difference between pre-intervention 1 and 2 periods, pre-intervention 1 and post-intervention 1 periods, or pre-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention for the Locus of Control scale total score.

For the two-day intervention group, the results in Table 6.5 show that no significant differences were found between pre- and post-intervention 1 scores; post-

intervention 1 and post-intervention 2 scores; post-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention scores; and, pre-intervention and six-months post-intervention scores for the Locus of Control scale total score. In a comparison of mean scores for the Internality subscale (see Appendix O, Figure O1) for the three groups: the six-week intervention group, two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group; minimal variations were noted pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. For the Powerful Others subscale (see Appendix O, Figure O2) the wait-list control group reported higher expectation of the influences of powerful others at post-intervention (M = 38.0) and lowered their expectations at the six-month post-intervention period (M = 24.0). In a comparison of means for the Chance subscale, the results show some variations for the three intervention groups (see Appendix O, Figure O3). For the pre-intervention period, the six-week intervention group (M = 14.5) reported a lower mean score and lower expectations of events occurring by chance than the two-day group or wait-list control. For the post-intervention period, the six-week intervention group (M = 20.5) reported higher expectations of events occurring by chance than the two-day intervention group or the wait-list control group.

6.1.4 Analysis of Fisher Divorce Adjustment Data – Study Two

Presented in Table 6.1 are the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for females and males pre-, post- and six-month post-intervention for the six-week intervention group. The results show no significant differences between males and females pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention. Pre-intervention, males (M = 324.3) reported higher mean scores than females (M =308.5). The mean scores for males (M = 363.3) and females (M = 347.5) increased post-intervention indicating progressive adjustment to the separation and divorce process. Six-months post-

intervention the results show that the female subject (M = 460.0) made greater progress in the adjustment process than the male subject (M = 324.0).

The Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for the six-week intervention group in Table 6.2 show there was a significant difference (t = -3.3; p = 0.05) between pre- (M = 318.0) and post-intervention (M = 357.0), confirming adjustment gains in the separation and divorce process during this period. No significant differences were evident between post- (M = 420.0) and six-month post-intervention (M = 392.0), and pre- (M = 365.0) and six-month post-intervention (M = 392.0) scores on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total score.

Presented in Table 6.3 are the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores for females and males pre- 1, pre- 2, post- and six-month post-intervention for the wait-list control group. A significant difference was found at pre-intervention 1 (t = -6.8; p = 0.05) between females (M = 249.5) and males (M = 363.0). No significant differences were found between females and males pre-intervention 2, post-intervention and six-month post-intervention. To compare treatment times for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores, the results in Table 6.4 show there was a significant difference between the pre-intervention 1 and post-intervention period (t = -11.4; p = 0.05). There were no significant differences between pre-intervention 1 and 2 period, post- and six-months post-intervention, or pre-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention for participants. The results for the two-day intervention group in Table 6.5 show that no significant differences were found between pre-intervention and post-intervention 1 scores; post-intervention 1 and post-intervention 2 scores; post-intervention 2 and six-months post-intervention scores; and, pre-

intervention and six-months post-intervention scores for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total score.

The six-week intervention group Social Self-Worth subscale mean scores (see Appendix M, Figure M4) show some differences between females and males pre-intervention, post-intervention and six-month post-intervention. The pre-intervention results show that females (M = 34.5) reported higher levels of self-worth than males (M = 29.7). Similarly, females (M = 33.5) reported greater levels of self-worth than males (M = 31.7) post-intervention and males showing an increase in self-esteem following intervention.

The means for the wait-list control group Social Self-Worth subscale (see Appendix N, Figure N4) shows differences between females (M = 23.5) and males (M = 32.0) pre-intervention 1. At pre-intervention 2 the means show an increase in Social Self-Worth subscales scores for females (M = 30.0) and males (M = 34.5). In a comparison of the Social Self-Worth subscale means for the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O4): the six-week intervention group, two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group; some variations were noted pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. The two-day intervention group showed progressive gains in social self-worth from pre- (M = 25.3) to post- (M = 30.3) to six-months post-intervention (M = 32.0).

The Social Trust subscale results for the six-week intervention group (see Appendix M, Figure M5) show females (M = 24.0) to have marginally greater levels of social trust prior to intervention than males (M = 20.3). At post-intervention, males (M = 25.3) reported higher levels of social trust than females (M = 23.5). Six-months post-intervention, the female participant's (M = 40.0) score shows higher levels of

social trust than the male participant (M = 14.0). The means for the wait-list control group show females (M = 20.5) had lower scores for social trust than males (M = 25.5) at the pre-intervention 1 period (see Appendix N, Figure N5). At the pre-intervention 2 period, post-intervention and six-month post-intervention minimal variations in the mean scores were noted. In a comparison of the Social Trust subscale means for the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O5): the six-week intervention group, two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group; the two-day intervention group showed higher levels of social trust at the pre- (M = 21.8), post- (M = 24.6) and six-month post-intervention (M = 27.0) periods.

The Grief subscale means for the six-week intervention group (see Appendix M, Figure M6) show that males (M = 73.3) had greater levels of adjustment in the grief process pre-intervention than females (M = 67.5). Additionally, males (M = 89.0) showed greater progress in the grief process post-intervention than females (M = 72.5). Six-month post-intervention the female subject (M = 114.0) showed greater progress in the grief process than the male subject (M = 96.0). The Grief subscale means for the wait-list control group (see Appendix N, Figure N6) show that females (M = 51.0) reported a higher degree of grief than males (M = 89.0) at the pre-intervention 1 period. At pre-intervention 2 period the means show females (M = 59.0) reported higher levels of grief and males (M = 94.5) showing progressive adjustment to the separation. The mean scores comparing the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O6) show the two-day intervention group reported a higher degree of grief pre-intervention (M =61.3) than the six-week intervention group (M = 71.0) or the wait-list controls (M = 77.6). The means show the two-day intervention group progressively adjusted to separation grief post-intervention (M = 81.0).

To determine differences between females and males in the six-week intervention group for the Anger subscale (see Appendix M, Figure M7), the means revealed that females (M = 23.5) reported greater levels of separation anger than males (M = 46.0) prior to intervention. At post-intervention, the means show that females had greater levels of separation anger (M = 31.5) than males (M = 49.7). Six-months post-intervention, a minimal difference in anger scores was evident between females (M = 42.0) and males (M = 49.0).

The Anger subscale results for the wait-list control group (see Appendix N, Figure N7) show differences between females (M = 29.0) and males (M = 55.0) at the pre-intervention 1 period. Mean score differences were noted at the pre-intervention 2 period for females (M = 29.0) and males (M = 49.0) confirming greater separation anger levels for females than males. At post-intervention the female (M = 41.0) and male (M = 60.0) reported improved separation anger levels. The mean scores comparing the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O7) show the two-day intervention group reported greater levels of separation anger pre-intervention (M = 20.0) than the wait-list control group (M = 44.0) or the six-week intervention group (M = 37.0). The means at post-intervention show progressive adjustment to separation anger by the two-day intervention group (M = 35.6), wait-list control group (M = 50.5) and six-week intervention group (M = 47.5). Further adjustment to separation anger was reported by the two-day intervention group (M = 38.6) six-months post-intervention.

The mean scores for the Disentanglement subscale for the six-week intervention group (see Appendix M, Figure M8) show that females reported greater levels of disentanglement from the former spouse pre-intervention (M = 77.0), post-

intervention (M = 96.5) and six-months post-intervention (M = 104.0) than males pre-intervention (M = 67.3), post-intervention (M = 75.7) and six-months post-intervention (M = 42.0). The pre-intervention 1 mean score for the wait-list control group (see Appendix N, Figure N8) show that females (M = 45.5) reported greater trauma disentangling from the former spouse than males (M = 75.0). Minimal variation in the mean scores was reported at the pre-intervention 2 period for females (M = 46.0) and males (M = 73.0). Post-intervention the female (M = 56) and male (M = 89) reported higher mean scores. Six-months post-intervention the female participant (M = 77) reported additional gains in the disentanglement process.

The mean scores comparing the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O8) for the Disentanglement subscale pre-intervention show the two-day intervention group (M = 64.3) and the wait-list control group (M = 64.0) reported greater trauma than the six-week intervention group (M = 71.2) in dealing with disentanglement in the separation process. The results for the two-day intervention group show the greatest adjustment gains at post-intervention (M = 86.6). The wait-list control group also reported some gains post-intervention (M = 72.5). The Disentanglement subscale results for the six-week intervention group show a difference between pre- (M = 71.2) and post-intervention (M = 84.0) scores. The results suggest that greater levels of disentanglement were evident following intervention.

To assess gender differences for the six-week intervention group (see Appendix M, Figure M9) the Self-Worth subscale mean scores show that males had greater levels of self-worth pre-intervention (M = 87.7) and post-intervention (M = 92.0) than females pre-intervention (M = 82.0) and post-intervention (M = 90.0). On the contrary, six-months post-intervention, the female subject (M = 125.0) showed

greater levels of self-worth than the male subject (M = 94.0). For the wait-list control group the Self-Worth subscale mean scores (see Appendix N, Figure N9) increased for males from pre-intervention 1 (M = 86.5) to pre-intervention 2 periods (M = 95.5) and decreased post-intervention (M = 90.0). Minimal variation from pre-intervention 1 (M = 80.0) to pre-intervention 2 (M = 82.0) and post-intervention (M = 82.0) periods was noted for females. The mean scores comparing the three groups (see Appendix O, Figure O9) for the Self-Worth subscale pre-intervention show the two-day intervention group (M = 63.6) reported lower levels of self-worth than the wait-list control group (M = 85.6) or the six-week intervention group (M = 85.4). At post-intervention the two-day intervention group (M = 91.2) and the six-week intervention group (M = 84.0) reported higher levels of self-worth. A comparison of the mean scores for the three groups show that self-worth levels improved for the two-day intervention group and the six-week intervention group following intervention.

6.2 Social Context Variables for Study Two

Tables 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8 present the percentages for the social context variables pre-intervention, post-intervention and six-months post-intervention for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. Identical to study one, the social context variables of adjustment include: emotional; psychological; social; financial; extent of property division; and, satisfaction with property division. Pre-intervention, for the six-week intervention group, (see Table 6.6), 25% of participants reported to be in the shock and denial phase of emotional adjustment, 50% in the anger and depression phase and 25% had achieved resolution and acceptance. For the post-intervention and six-months post-intervention, 40% of participants reported being in the anger and depression phase while 60% reported

being in the resolution and acceptance phase of the grief process. For psychological adjustment, 75% of participants reported mixed feelings and 25% claimed feeling separate and single at the pre-intervention stage. At the post- and six-months post-intervention, 20% reported still feeling married, 40% having mixed feelings and 40% feeling separate and single.

For financial adjustment, 100% of participants reported having separate finances prior to intervention. At post-intervention, 40% reported having some shared finances and 60% reported separate finances. At the six-month post-intervention period, 60% of participants reported having some shared finances and 40% reported separate finances. In relation to property division, 100% of participants at pre-intervention reported they had not divided property. At post-intervention, 60% reported no division of property and 40% reported they had divided most of their property. At six-months post-intervention, 60% reported they had not divided their property, 20% had divided most of their property and 20% had completely divided their property. In regard to feeling satisfied with the division of property, 100% of participants at pre-intervention were not satisfied. At post- and six-months post-intervention, 66.7% were mostly satisfied and 33.3% were completely satisfied with the division of property.

The two-day intervention group percentage distributions in Table 6.7 show that at pre-intervention, 75% of participants reported being angry and depressed and 25% were at the stage of resolution and acceptance. At post- and six-month post-intervention 100% of participants reported achieving resolution and acceptance in the grieving process. For psychological adjustment, pre-intervention, 75% of participants reported they had mixed feelings and 25% reported feeling separate and single

compared to 100% of participants feeling separate and single six-months post-intervention. In regard to property division, pre-intervention, 50% of participants reported no division of property, 25% had mostly completed division of property and 25% had completed division of property compared to 33.3% reporting they had mostly completed and 66.7% had completed division of property at post-intervention and six-months post-intervention.

The percentage distributions for the wait-list control group (see Table 6.8) show that for emotional adjustment pre-intervention that 50% of participants reported feelings of anger and depression and 50% of participants reported feelings of resolution and acceptance in the grieving process. Six-months post intervention 100% of participants reported feelings of resolution and acceptance. For psychological adjustment, pre-intervention 25% of participants reported feeling married, 25% reported mixed feelings and 50% perceived themselves to be separate and single compared to six-months post-intervention where 100% of participants perceived themselves to be separate and single. To describe social interaction with the former partner, 25% of participants at pre-intervention reported to have shared friends and 75% reported separate friends. At six-months post-intervention 100% of participants reported having separate friends. Similarly, in regard to organizing finances with the former partner, 50% reported they had some shared finances and 50% had separate finances. At six-months post-intervention 100% reported to have separate finances since separating from the former partner.

6.3 Relationship Status, Relationship Number and Decider

For study two, due to small sample sizes for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group, data were not analysed

for relationship status (to determine differences between married and de facto participants); relationship number (first time, second or third time separatees); and, decider (self or former partner's decision to leave the relationship).

Table 6.6

Study Two: Percentage Distributions of Social Context Variables for the Six-Week Intervention Group.

	Six-Week Intervention Group					
Social Context Variables	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention		6 Months Post-	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emotional Adjustment						
Shock, Denial	1	25.0	—	—	—	—
Anger, Depression	2	50.0	2	40.0	2	40.0
Resolution, Acceptance	1	25.0	3	60.0	3	60.0
Psychological Adjustment						
Feel Married	—	—	1	20.0	1	20.0
Mixed Feelings	3	75.0	2	40.0	2	40.0
Separate, Single	1	25.0	2	40.0	2	40.0
Social Adjustment						
Shared Friends	—	—	—	—	—	—
Occasionally	—	—	1	20.0	1	25.0
Separate Friends	4	100.0	4	80.0	3	75.0
Financial Adjustment						
Joint Finances	—	—	—	—	—	—
Some Shared	—	—	2	40.0	3	60.0
Separate Finances	3	100.0	3	60.0	2	40.0
Property Division						
Not Divided	5	100.0	3	60.0	3	60.0
Mostly	—	—	2	40.0	1	20.0
Completely	—	—	—	—	1	20.0
Property Div. Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	1	100.0	—	—	—	—
Mostly	—	—	2	66.7	2	66.7
Completely	—	—	1	33.3	1	33.3

Table 6.7

Study Two: Percentage Distributions of Social Context Variables for the Two-Day Intervention Group.

	Two-Day Intervention Group					
Social Context Variables	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention		6 Month Post-	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emotional Adjustment						
Shock, Denial	—	—	—	—	—	—
Anger, Depression	3	75.0	—	—	—	—
Resolution, Acceptance	1	25.0	3	100.0	3	100.0
Psychological Adjustment						
Feel Married	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mixed Feelings	3	75.0	2	66.7	—	—
Separate, Single	1	25.0	1	33.3	3	100.0
Social Adjustment						
Shared Friends	—	—	—	—	—	—
Occasionally	—	—	—	—	—	—
Separate Friends	4	100.0	3	100.0	3	100.0
Financial Adjustment						
Joint Finances	—	—	—	—	—	—
Some Shared	1	25.0	1	33.3	1	33.3
Separate Finances	3	75.0	2	66.7	2	66.7
Property Division						
Not Divided	2	50.0	—	—	—	—
Mostly	1	25.0	1	33.3	1	33.3
Completely	1	25.0	2	66.7	2	66.7
Property Div. Satisfaction						
Not Satisfied	1	50.0	—	—	—	—
Mostly	—	—	1	50.0	2	66.7
Completely	1	50.0	1	50.0	1	33.3

Table 6.8

Study Two: Percentage Distributions of Social Context Variables for the Wait-List Control Group.

	Wait-List Control Group							
Social Context Variables	Pre- 1		Pre- 2		Post-		6 Mth Post-	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emotional Adjustment								
Shock, Denial	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Anger, Depression	2	50.0	1	33.3	1	50.0	—	—
Resolution,Acceptance	2	50.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	2	100.0
Psychological Adjustment								
Feel Married	1	25.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mixed Feelings	1	25.0	1	33.3	1	50.0	—	—
Separate, Single	2	50.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	2	100.0
Social Adjustment								
Shared Friends	1	25.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Occasionally	—	—	1	33.3	1	50.0	—	—
Separate Friends	3	75.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	2	100.0
Financial Adjustment								
Joint Finances	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Some Shared	2	50.0	1	33.3	2	100.0	—	—
Separate Finances	2	50.0	2	66.7	—	—	2	100.0
Property Division								
Not Divided	2	50.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mostly	1	25.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	1	50.0
Completely	1	25.0	1	33.3	1	50.0	1	50.0
Property Div. Satisfaction								
Not Satisfied	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mostly	1	50.0	2	66.7	1	50.0	1	50.0
Completely	1	50.0	1	33.3	1	50.0	1	50.0

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

In the previous two chapters, the results of study one and two were reported. In concluding the research, this chapter provides a discussion and summary of the results of study one and two and their implications. Specifically, attention will be given to the limitations and recommendations to acknowledge the constraints experienced in the process of conducting this research and to offer future directions.

7.1 Discussion of Results for Study One

The findings of this longitudinal study are based on the comparison of data between two experimental groups. In making group comparisons, the results for the immediate intervention group were inconsistent with the delayed intervention group across all adjustment measures and treatment times for gender, relationship status, relationship number and decider of separation. Similarly, for the social context variables, inconsistencies were noted for the immediate and delayed intervention groups hence confirming the unique nature of each group. It could be argued that pre-separation functioning and relationship termination factors may have contributed to these effects (Tschann, Johnston & Wallerstein, 1989; Chirriboga, 1982; Spanier & Casto, 1979; Spanier & Thompson, 1984). In acknowledging the absence of a control group, care would need to be taken in attributing adjustment gains to group intervention. Quite clearly, any of the abovementioned factors could explain the observed changes in adjustment scores (Vera, 1993).

7.1.1 Gender Differences and Adjustment Outcomes

Nonetheless, comparing the immediate intervention group and the delayed intervention group scores revealed that there were some differences for gender pre-

post- and six-months post-intervention for all adjustment measures. Specifically, for total scores, males in the immediate intervention group showed lower levels of self-esteem, weaker subjective appraisal of social support, higher expectations of external control and a higher degree of separation trauma at the pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention periods than females. Similarly, Erbes and Hedderson (1984) also found that males had lower self-esteem pre- and post-divorce. Regarding social support appraisal, Kitson and Raschke's research (1981) claimed that men tend to have less social support networks than women consequently report a weaker appraisal of social support.

Conversely, males in the delayed intervention group showed higher levels of self-esteem, stronger subjective appraisal of social support, lower expectations of external control and higher expectations of internal control as well as greater progress in the adjustment process pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention than females. That is, the males in the delayed intervention group reported greater progress in the adjustment process. A possible implication of these results is that perhaps they may have initiated the end of their relationship and therefore progressed further along the separation and divorce adjustment continuum than the immediate intervention group males.

The results for the delayed intervention group males support Dyad's (1984) assertion that greater internality is associated with greater self-esteem. It is to be expected that for some, ending a relationship contributed to less decline in well-being factors than for others (Marks & Lambert, 1998). Other contributors to greater adjustment scores for the delayed intervention group males may be related to issues such as personal resources, level of education and occupational status (Tschann et al.,

1989) although insufficient data did not allow for analysis of these variables. Nonetheless, according to Tschann et al.'s study (1989), separation stressors were reduced for men of higher educational and occupational status, consequently contributing to improved adjustment outcomes. It is suggested that increased personal resources improve opportunities for social resource building and enhance adjustment during the separation process.

Specifically, for the immediate intervention group, no significant differences were found for males and females for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale total score pre- and six-months post-intervention; the Social Support Appraisal and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores six-months post-intervention; and, the Locus of Control scale total score pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. Thus, this study failed to reject the respective null hypotheses. It is evident that males and females did not differ greatly on the adjustment measures for these treatment times. Alternatively, significant differences between gender at post-intervention supported the hypothesis of a difference for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, in that greater differences in self-esteem were noted between males and females following intervention.

It was evident that females in the immediate intervention group showed greater improvements in self-esteem levels following the six-week group program. Generally, women are more inclined than men to admit to difficulties and to seek help when experiencing problems (Bloom & Caldwell, 1981). Therefore, the group intervention process may have contributed to the positive effects on adjustment for females in this group. Attending a group intervention program provided opportunities for greater social involvement and building of social resources, hence contributing to improved self-esteem. An increase in social resources for women contributes to

improved adjustment outcomes as it decreases both positive and negative attachment to the former spouse (Tschann et al., 1989). This supports Wallerstein's (1986) claim that women possess greater self-esteem post-divorce.

Moreover, the null hypothesis was rejected for gender in the immediate intervention group pre- and post-intervention for the social support appraisal and the Fisher divorce adjustment scales as significant differences were noted between males and females. Gender differences at pre-intervention were maintained at the post-intervention period. Additionally, female participants' appraisal of perceptions of support systems and their progress in the adjustment to separation process improved following group intervention. Adverse effects of separation are reduced when support is provided during or following an event (Lin, 1986).

The results of this study do not identify the aspects of support that may have been helpful during the intervention period. However, evidence suggests that women find emotional support, and having another to socialize with and listen to their concerns beneficial (Smerglia, Miller & Kort-Butler, 1999). It can be argued that these findings support the notion that the group was one source of support for women in the immediate intervention group during the separation and divorce process. Additionally, it appears that improved self-esteem enhanced the immediate intervention group females' social support appraisal post-intervention. This finding offers support to Donohue-Colletta's (1979) claim that self-esteem was found to be supportive and facilitated women's satisfactory coping responses to reduce the impact of stressful situations.

In assessment of gender differences for the delayed intervention group, the null hypothesis was supported at the pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention

times for the social support appraisal, locus of control and Fisher divorce adjustment scale total scores. These results suggest that group intervention did not contribute to notable gender differences, therefore it may be suggested that males and females proceeded similarly in adjusting to separation across treatment times. This finding supports Hensley's (1996) research in that no gender differences were noted for separation and divorce adjustment on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale. Interestingly, the null hypothesis was rejected consistently across all treatment times for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale for gender. Males in this group showed significantly higher levels of self-esteem than females across all treatment times. These findings are consistent with Marks and Lambert's (1998) research that suggests women experience a greater decline in self-esteem levels than men following marital dissolution. Also, males reported a greater improvement in self-esteem levels following group intervention. These contradictory results for gender from the immediate and delayed intervention groups reflect the complex and multi-faceted nature of separation and adjustment to the separation and divorce process. Adjustment progress may be dependent on how the relationship ended, support factors and post-relationship lifestyle (Spanier & Casto, 1979).

7.1.2 Comparison of Treatment Times for Intervention Groups

A comparison of scores between treatment times for the immediate intervention group showed that no significant differences were found for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, Social Support Appraisal scale and the Locus of Control scale, therefore failing to reject the null hypothesis. Additionally, no significant differences were found between the post- and six-months post-intervention for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale group scores. On the contrary, the null

hypothesis was rejected for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total score between pre- and post-intervention and pre- and six-months post-intervention suggesting that the immediate intervention group made significant progress during the intervention period and maintained those adjustment gains six-months post-intervention.

Similarly, in a comparison of treatment times for the delayed intervention group, the null hypothesis was rejected as significant differences were noted between pre- and post-intervention; and, pre- and six-months post-intervention for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores. This confirms that greater growth resulted from intervention for both experimental groups. Once again, it appears that higher self-esteem levels were reported and greater progress in adjusting to separation were noted for the groups following group intervention. Likewise, this confirms some benefits from group intervention in the adjustment to separation process. Although the perceived value of intervention may reduce over time (Davidoff & Schiller, 1983), the group intervention period is a time when individuals experiencing a similar life event are able to express their stressors in a supportive group environment. A separated person with limited support and low self-esteem is likely to experience greater difficulties with post-separation adjustment than an individual with supportive networks and higher self-esteem levels. Therefore for separated and divorced people group intervention may provide some opportunities for adjustment during this very vulnerable period.

A similar outcome was noted for the immediate and the delayed intervention groups regarding treatment times for the Locus of Control scale and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscale scores. For all the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscales: social self-worth, social trust, grief, anger, disentanglement and self-worth; both

groups reported gains following group intervention. In addition, the delayed intervention group reported higher scores pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention suggesting that this group was more advanced in its adjustment process than the immediate intervention group. In relation to the grief process, Crosby, Gage and Raymond (1983) report a linear progression is generally experienced during the separation and divorce process although there are variations between individual's progressions of the grief resolution process.

Group differences post-intervention for the Locus of Control subscales showed the delayed intervention group had increased expectations of personal control in their life and reduced their expectations of external influences: that is, the degree to which they felt controlled by powerful others and perceptions of events occurring by chance or fate. The results indicate that the delayed intervention group perceived itself as having greater control of determining its outcomes (Levenson, 1981) at post-intervention than the immediate intervention group. At six-months post-intervention the delayed intervention group maintained its increased expectations of personal control and had decreased expectations of chance forces controlling the lives of the participants. Similarly, expectations of feeling controlled by powerful others were maintained six-months post-intervention. This finding suggests that participants were able to increase their belief in internal control while recognizing and maintaining their belief in the influence of powerful others during the separation and divorce process. Also, they continued to adjust to their separated status by reporting increased personal control six-months post-intervention.

Having stronger beliefs in personal control has been associated with better adjustment outcomes (Smith-Barnet, 1990). How one perceives control of one's

circumstances may affect how one will experience and deal with the stressors (Lefcourt, 1982). An individual's belief or perception of control is reflected in one's ability to utilize resilience and resources when stressful events are experienced. According to Dyal (1984) and Levenson (1981), reduced levels of adjustment are more likely to be associated with greater beliefs and expectations of control by chance and powerful others. Although the delayed intervention group reported the same level of influence of external others at six-months post-intervention, this group reported greater control of its personal circumstances. Levenson (1981) reported that those with higher perceptions of control by powerful others may in time increase their perceptions of personal control. As circumstances change, perceptions of influence may also change. Consequently, the experience of adjusting to separation and divorce can increase an individual's sense of personal control and autonomy (Doherty, 1983).

On the contrary, the immediate intervention group participants showed reduced expectations and beliefs of personal control in their own life post- and six-months post-intervention while maintaining their beliefs and expectations of the influences of powerful others. Friedland, Keinan and Regev (1992) claim that one's sense of control is undermined when the event is uncontrollable. Feelings of helplessness and negative outcomes may result from perceived or actual lack of control (Blankstein, 1984). Specifically, if the decision to separate is an uncontrollable event and there was a high desire for control of the situation, then a greater sense of helplessness (Burger & Cooper, 1979) may be experienced.

Although the immediate intervention group made no adjustment gains for locus of control total scores some differences were noted on the chance subscale. Similar to the delayed intervention group, the immediate intervention group lowered

its expectations of events occurring by chance following group intervention and was less likely to believe in the influences of chance and fate having control in the participants' lives six-months post-intervention. Reduced expectations of control by external forces are associated with improvement in levels of adjustment (Levenson, 1981), therefore, it may be argued that reduced expectations of control by chance forces are associated with some improvement in adjustment for this group. In a comparison of Locus of Control subscale scores for the two experimental groups, it is evident that the delayed intervention group made greater adjustment gains in personal control than the immediate intervention group.

Having personal control over a life event is sometimes determined by personal circumstances. The initiator of the decision to separate is more likely to experience being in control (Mika & Bloom, 1980). The delayed intervention group may have experienced progressive adjustment due to greater control of personal circumstances. This group comprised a greater number of participants who were the deciders of separation and were separating from a marriage partner than the immediate intervention group. Additionally, most of the deciders of separation in the delayed intervention group were separating from their second significant relationship whereas the majority of participants in the immediate intervention group were separating from their first relationship. It is suggested that the delayed intervention group participants were more experienced at making the decision to separate because of past experience and therefore had greater personal control of outcomes. Wallerstein (1986) claims that deciders of separation and divorce experience better adjustment outcomes and quality of life than non-deciders. In regard to the past experience of separation, deciders were

able to control various aspects of separation, consider personal outcomes and hence enhance their adjustment outcomes.

Other contingencies could account for the conflicting results between the immediate and the delayed intervention groups for the Locus of Control subscale scores. First, the immediate intervention group started the intervention program immediately following the information evening leaving little time to consider the consequences of intervention. Second, the delayed intervention group had seven weeks to anticipate the benefits and limitations of intervention and had the opportunity to develop a stronger expectation of having control of own life leading up to group intervention. Third, the pre-intervention waiting period plus the intervention program time extended the contact period for the delayed group, which consequently may have enhanced participants' intervention outcomes. Lastly, the percentage of participants from married or de facto relationships in each group may have influenced adjustment outcomes.

7.1.3 Relationship Factors and Adjustment Outcomes

To deduce the influence of specific relationship decisions on participants' adjustment to separation and divorce, relationship status (married or de facto relationship), relationship number (first, second or third relationship) and decider of separation (self or former partner) variables were used. Differences were noted for the immediate intervention group on the locus of control total and subscale scores. For relationship status differences, the null hypothesis was rejected as participants from de facto relationships reported higher expectations of control on the locus of control total score, had higher expectations of influences of powerful others and a greater belief in events occurring by chance than their counterparts separated from a marriage partner

at pre-intervention. Participants from married relationships reported to be more internal therefore more strongly rejected the influences of powerful others and chance in controlling their lives or had reduced expectations of control by powerful others or events occurring by chance. Interestingly, the majority of participants in this sample were from married relationships, that is 73 percent compared with 27 percent from de facto relationships.

At post-intervention for the immediate intervention group, differences between separated participants from de facto and marriage partnerships on the locus of control total score was also significant suggesting the difference in their overall beliefs following intervention was maintained. These results suggest that relationship status may have an influence on adjustment overall. Greater perceptions of control by powerful others and chance forces are associated with poor levels of adjustment (Levenson, 1981). Participants from de facto relationships showed poorer levels of adjustment than their married counterparts. It may be suggested that lower adjustment outcomes for individuals from de facto relationships could be related to lower relationship stability. Additionally, lower adjustment levels may have resulted from a lack of defining factors such as divorce to finally dissolve the relationship, or, that these participants were less likely to have made the decision to separate from the cohabiting partner. Interestingly, only 20% of participants in the immediate intervention group were the deciders and had less experience of relationship dissolution than the delayed intervention group.

It has been considered that perhaps individuals separated and divorcing from a marriage partner increases expectations of having greater control of one's own life (Doherty, 1980). Attending to and finalising the legal process of divorce draws a

conclusion for the marriage relationship, whereas in the dissolution of a de facto relationship there is no formal legal process. Doherty (1980) claims that personal control is attained over time as one progresses through the separation and divorce process. Therefore, perceived control may change over time when dealing with a significant life event (Lefcourt, 1982).

In addressing relationship status, these results confirm some differences for separated individuals from cohabiting and married partnerships and suggest that cohabitation may contribute to more complex relationship transitions. Considering this is an exploratory aspect of this study and limited inferences could be made from the findings, future research could further investigate locus of control differences for separated individuals from married and de facto relationships. As cohabitation trends continue to increase, beliefs and expectations of personal and external control factors and the influence on relationship dissolution and adjustment to separation would be a productive area for future investigation. Repeated measures of locus of control could be applied from the initial separation period until the stage of acceptance and resolution to assess the long-term changes for individuals dealing with the loss of a de facto partner.

In assessment of the effects of relationship number on adjustment for the immediate intervention group, it appeared that those separated from their first relationship reported higher self-esteem levels than participants who had separated from a second and third relationship at the pre-intervention period. On the social support appraisal scale at post-intervention, participants separating from their first relationship reported stronger subjective appraisal of social support than those separated from a second and third relationship. The delayed intervention group

participants separating from their first relationship appeared to have higher levels of self-esteem and showed greater progress in adjustment on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale than their counterparts separating from second and third relationships at the pre-intervention period. An implication of these results is that there is a reduction in self-esteem levels and adjustment outcomes with each failed relationship.

To determine the effects of deciding to end the relationship on adjustment outcomes, at post-intervention the immediate intervention group results indicate that the decider to end the relationship reported greater adjustment progress on the Fisher divorce adjustment total score. The results confirm that group intervention was of greater benefit to the decider than the non-decider of relationship dissolution. The decider has greater opportunities to plan for separation, anticipate outcomes and have control of the decision to separate. Also, it could be suggested that the decider has a greater eagerness to progress to the resolution phase of separation. The decision to separate is often out of the personal control of the non-decider. Therefore, the non-decider is less prepared for change, which can lead to greater emotional distress (Mika & Bloom, 1980). Consequently, the non-decider's adjustment progress was less advanced following group intervention, as they did not seek separation from the outset. As a non-initiator of separation, coming to terms with the loss may lead to some reluctance to progress through the phases of separation. According to Weiss (1976) even when the decision to separate has been made by both individuals, a range of emotional responses that appear paradoxical may be experienced: from ambivalence to increase in confidence; and, reduced self-esteem to euphoria.

7.1.4 Social Context Variables Influence on Adjustment Outcomes

The social context variables of adjustment provided additional information about participants' well being (Chiriboga, Roberts & Stein, 1978). Reports of emotional, psychological, social, financial and legal aspects of separation show progress in adjustment following intervention for both experimental groups. Movement for the immediate intervention group was considerable in the emotional adjustment process of separation, where 40 percent of participants who were in the anger and depression phase of emotional adjustment reduced to 15 percent at post-intervention. Although anger is a response to loss of relationship (Weiss, 1976) and depression a consequence of relationship breakup (Chiriboga, Brierton, Krystal & Pierce, 1982) considerable change was noted at post-intervention. Namely, 77 percent of the group reported being at the resolution and acceptance phase of emotional adjustment. Although Chiriboga et al. (1982) claim a temporary nature of these emotional responses to separation and divorce, the findings of this study provide some evidence that group intervention was helpful in increasing adjustment and reducing the stressful symptoms. Additionally, participants reported some adjustment gains post-intervention for psychological adjustment, financial adjustment and property division. In conclusion, this confirms movement along the adjustment to separation and divorce continuum following group intervention.

Regarding emotional adjustment to separation for the delayed intervention group pre-intervention, 54 percent of participants reported to be at the resolution and acceptance phase of separation. It appears that 46 percent of participants experienced emotional adjustment during the intervention period to reach the resolution and acceptance phase of the separation process following intervention. At the six-month

post-intervention period all participants had maintained their emotional growth. A similar trend was evident for psychological adjustment for this group. For financial adjustment some movement toward achieving separate finances was evident following group intervention. Similarly, a greater percentage of participants had managed property division and reported greater feelings of satisfaction at the post-intervention period.

It appears that both experimental groups were able to make some adjustment gains on the social context variables during the intervention period. These gains were mostly sustained six-months post-intervention. Therefore, it may be suggested that some individuals attending a group intervention program focus on specific personal difficulties of transition for personal progress. Once the progress has been achieved, participants are able to maintain those adjustment gains. It is suggested that attending small group intervention programs may help some participants manage some aspects of separation more effectively. Group members have the opportunity to share experiences and coping strategies. Although each group participant may have different needs, often they are able to express their concerns about being separated. Interpersonal learning, group cohesiveness and universality are important factors in any group process where the focus is on personal growth and transition (Øygard,Thuen & Solvang, 2000). Considering group size, it is apparent that males participating in groups comprising more than eight individuals experience reduced benefits than those participating in smaller groups (Yalom, 1995). Considering this, the larger group size may have contributed to lower adjustment scores for the immediate intervention group males.

In summary, the results of study one for the two experimental groups were inconsistent across most adjustment measures. Some benefits in adjustment outcomes following group intervention were evident. Specifically, in relation to gender differences, females in the immediate intervention group showed higher levels of self-esteem and improved appraisal of social support post-intervention. Conversely, males in the delayed intervention group reported higher levels of self-esteem than females across all treatment times reporting greater improvement following group intervention. Regarding group differences, it appears that the immediate intervention group made significant adjustment gains on the Fisher divorce adjustment scale following group intervention and maintained these gains six-months following intervention.

Similarly, the delayed intervention group reported significant adjustment gains on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the Fisher divorce adjustment scale following group intervention. Additionally, the delayed intervention group had increased expectations of personal control post-intervention, which may have resulted from having past experience of separation and deciding to separate. These relationship factors further added to the complexities of attributing the various influences to adjustment progress. Other group differences were noted. Married participants reported greater perceptions of internal control and more adjustment gain than de facto participants. Additionally, those separating from a first relationship reported greater self-esteem levels than those adjusting to second or third relationship dissolution.

Investigating adjustment gains following intervention has shown to be a complex process. Consequently, the results of study one are inconclusive for a variety

of reasons. Firstly, because a control group was not utilized, therefore a range of other factors may have contributed to participants' self-assessment besides the group intervention effects. Secondly, the sample size of each group did not allow for comprehensive analysis of between and within group differences. Thirdly, the majority of participants in both experimental groups were females consequently the possibility of skewed results. Lastly, informal positive verbal feedback from participants was not recorded due to time constraints. Despite the inconclusive outcome of study one, the results support the underlying suggestion regarding the benefits of group intervention.

7.2 Discussion of Results for Study Two

Similar to study one, the purpose of study two was to investigate gender, group differences, social context variables and demographics on adjustment outcomes for separated and divorced participants. Due to reduced sample size, the findings for study two are based on the comparison of mean scores between three groups longitudinally. Between group and within group comparisons were assessed. The three groups being the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group. For study two, the results were inconsistent across adjustment measures for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. This trend was evident for gender, the social context variables, relationship status, relationship number and decider of relationship dissolution across groups.

Specifically, gender differences could not be assessed for the two-day intervention group due to this group comprising only females. It is evident that some of the methodological shortcomings of this study are due to the small sample size and

the limited opportunity for gender and group comparisons. In consideration of the benefits of evaluating individual adjustment outcomes following participation in a community group intervention program, the data can provide useful information to guide future intervention strategies for separated and divorced groups (Vera, 1993). Not only are the limited participant numbers representative of the separated and divorced people in the Cairns area but confirm the limitations of enlisting high participation rates across a vast region in a group intervention program held at a regional centre.

7.2.1 Gender Differences and Adjustment Outcomes

Despite the inconsistencies and limitations, analysis of the results from study two revealed that the following hypotheses, there will be no significant gender differences in levels of self-esteem, social support appraisal, locus of control and divorce adjustment pre-, post- or six-months post-intervention for the six-week intervention group or the wait-list control group was supported. Therefore, the findings from the six-week group and the wait-list control group lend support to Hensley's (1996) research where no gender differences were reported utilizing the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale to assess the adjustment process.

Although the small sample size did not allow for significant differences to be assessed in this study, the mean scores showed that some improvement was evident for gender between pre-intervention 1 and 2 periods for wait-list control participants on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, the Social Support Appraisal scale and the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale and subscales. Specifically, participants' adjustment improved during the waiting period while minimal adjustment gains were made following intervention. Thus, this finding partially supports the claim that separation

and divorce adjustment is a process that eventuates over time (Spanier & Thompson, 1983; Salts & Zongker, 1983; Vera, 1990) without intervention (Spivey & Sherman, 1980). Interestingly, research by Mika and Bloom (1980) reported on individuals separated from a cohabiting partner who did not participate in an intervention group but nonetheless found completing questionnaires relative to their separation helpful. This result lends support to the idea that any opportunity to consider one's separation status may be helpful. Therefore, waiting for intervention and having the opportunity to consider the separation issues in anticipation of help may be a useful process for some separated and divorced individuals.

In considering this, the question still remains 'does waiting for intervention enhance adjustment outcomes?" It could be argued that anticipating intervention appears to enhance adjustment outcomes during the waiting period. Waiting for intervention may be somewhat helpful for some in knowing that help is available. Additionally, while anticipating intervention the individual has time to consider specific aspects of the separation process and their separation behaviour as well as considering ways of improving personal outcomes. Waiting for intervention may provide some individuals with opportunities to draw on their inactive personal resources and take some action that is helpful in adjusting to their changed relational circumstances.

Similarly, for the six-week intervention group, it appears that group intervention did not contribute to significant improvement in self-esteem levels post-intervention for males and females. In fact, males' self-esteem levels reduced a fraction following group intervention. Further assessment of individual progress at six-months post-intervention revealed considerable gains in self-esteem levels for one

male and one female. Although this result suggests that improvement in self-esteem levels is achievable six-months post-intervention, this is contrary to Sprenkle and Storm's (1983) review of group intervention effects on adjustment outcomes. They claimed that educational groups aimed at adjustment for separated and divorced individuals appear to be helpful and were more likely to improve self-esteem levels in the short-term. Although individual progress was evident six-months post-intervention for the six-week intervention group, caution needs to be taken in suggesting these outcomes could be associated to intervention.

Additionally, for the six-week intervention group some adjustment progress was noted on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale for males and females following group intervention. Specifically, the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscales showed that following group intervention, participants increased their level of social trust, were dealing with the loss of the relationship and their grief, their separation anger and had managed to progress with their disentanglement process from the former partner. It is interesting to note that only females managed to maintain these adjustment gains six-months post-intervention. It seems undeniable that intervention contributed to some adjustment progress on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment subscales during the intervention period for both males and females yet males were unable to maintain these adjustment gains six-months post-intervention. This result suggests that further assessment of separation adjustment post-intervention may be helpful to identify the additional resources that could assist males continue their adjustment progress.

Similar inconsistencies were evident for the Locus of Control scale scores for males and females in the six-week intervention group. Specifically, females had

higher expectations of internal control at pre- and post-intervention than males although these scores were not maintained six-months post-intervention. This result partially supports Wong and Sprenkle's (1984) claim that females tend to have a greater illusion of control than males during specific stages of a significant life event. Interestingly, Doherty's research (1980) found that women were more internal as a result of the divorce experience. An individual's perception of internal control may influence how the life stressor is experienced (Lefcourt, 1982). In other words, higher expectations of internal control may reflect the individual's belief that they are somewhat responsible for their present circumstances and therefore make use of their personal resources to deal with the impact of the stressors. Interestingly, Lefcourt, Martin and Saleh (1984) found that those with greater internal orientation gained greater benefits from social support.

According to Lefcourt (1982) a sense of control does change over time. The internally oriented may have been the deciders of relationship or marriage dissolution and experienced significant adjustment over time. Alternatively, those individuals who had no choice in deciding separation and divorce would be more inclined to have greater expectation of control by powerful others in the early stages of separation and divorce. As individuals continue to adjust to their circumstances their beliefs about internal control may increase. In other words, once individuals reach the acceptance phase of relationship dissolution, expectations of having greater internal control of their circumstances may result. When focus on personal adjustment increases, attention on the former partner and/or relationship is likely to decrease. Therefore, the results from this study suggest that the individual's stage of separation and divorce

may affect fluctuations in levels of control over time and consequently influence adjustment outcomes.

Some adjustment gains were also noted for the separated and divorced women in the two-day intervention group. They reported increased self-esteem levels on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale following group intervention and these gains were maintained six-months post-intervention. Similarly, adjustment gains for the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale were evident following group intervention and maintained six-months post-intervention. This result is contrary to Thiessen, Avery and Joanning's (1980) research where no significant difference was found in self-esteem levels for separated and divorce women following intervention. These authors suggest that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale lacked the sensitivity to record adjustment changes following intervention and support this claim because differences in adjustment outcomes were found on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Self-Worth subscale.

Adjustment gains were also evident following group intervention on the social support factor for the two-day intervention group, although they were not sustained six-months post-intervention. These findings support Smerglia, Miller and Kort-Butler's (1999) assertion in their analysis of support research, that is, there appear to be greater adjustment gains for women from having emotional support, someone to listen to them and socialize with than the provision of goods and practical services. Supportive networks can alleviate some of the separation and divorce stressors (Sansom & Farnill, 1997; Milardo, 1987) and enhance the adjustment process (Kunz & Kunz, 1995; Waggener & Galassi, 1993). A group intervention program may provide the short-term emotional supportive elements required by participants but it is

evident that these support networks may not be sustainable in the long-term outside of the group intervention environment.

The two-day intervention group possessed a number of unique features. Interestingly, participants were a female only group and reported short-term improvement on the Social Support Appraisal scale and long-term improvements on the Fisher Divorce Adjustment scale total scores and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale scores following intervention. Additionally, the two-day intensive group program reduced opportunities for interaction to two Saturdays rather than a six-week period. These differences provide partial support to Byrne's (1990) claim that one group intervention format may be more effective in facilitating separation and divorce adjustment than another. One group format may be more appealing to some than to others in terms of a gender specific group and time restraints, hence enhance adjustment outcomes. If the participants' preference is a two-day intensive program over a six-week program or to be in an all male or female group then personal preference for a specific type of group may influence outcomes.

7.2.2 Differences in Intervention Groups

The adjustment outcomes for participants in the intensive two-day and the six-week intervention program, particularly in relation to more sustaining results for women in improving self-esteem and separation and divorce adjustment, suggest some benefits from participation in the group intervention programs. Similarly, Graff, Whitehead and LeCompte's research (1986) found that short-term cognitive-behavioural group intervention a more effective intervention particularly for women. Although the results of the present study are inconclusive, the two-day intensive

program, which was an exploratory aspect of this study, showed progressive adjustment outcomes for the all female sample.

In addition to the two-day group being an all female group, the small group size may have contributed to the improved adjustment outcomes. According to Yalom (1995) small groups provide greater opportunities for participants to work through personal difficulties. With larger groups these opportunities would be limited due to time restraints particularly in a structured group process. The expression of personal experiences and the sharing of information with other group members often lead to greater group cohesiveness and rapport between group members. A smaller group is a more intimate group and is more likely to increase group members' comfort in the expression of concerns regarding adjustment difficulties. Yalom (1995) claims that as the group size increases, the opportunities reduce for sharing personal experiences and coping strategies. Therefore, less time is available for the rapport building process that leads to a more supportive group environment.

Similarly, for the six-week intervention group, Social Support Appraisal scores improved following intervention. In contrast to the two-day intervention group, the six-week intervention group continued to improve six-months post-intervention. This was not evident for the wait-list control group as considerable improvements were reported as a result of waiting for intervention. Interestingly for this group no difference in adjustment was noted as a result of intervention. In other words, short-term gains were evident as a result of waiting for intervention.

For the two-day intervention group, the results suggest that short-term support has some short-term benefits. During group intervention, participants were provided with the opportunity to express their experience of separation and divorce including

the difficulties of coping and seeking emotional support from group members experiencing a similar life event. Although groups are potentially supportive (Morris & Prescott, 1975), according to Bloom et al. (1985) the benefit for women is time limited. Nonetheless, it appeared that the two-day intervention group found the group process supportive and for a very brief period provided a different type of support network however time limited. This finding lends credence to Øygard et al.'s (2000) claim that the support element in an intervention group helps individual adjustment to separation and divorce. To assist with specific adjustment difficulties, perhaps future group intervention programs could consider the development of a support group program to follow on from the structured group process to assist those seeking additional support post-intervention.

Considering the extreme limitations of the present study, perhaps future research could investigate the value of intensive two-day group intervention programs further. Interestingly, the results highlight the fact that there are some gender specific differences in the way females and males progress along the adjustment to separation and divorce continuum. Adjustment outcomes for gender-specific groups could be compared to assess gender-specific benefits. In addition, intensive programs may be offered in combined and gender-specific groups to address both generic and gender-specific adjustment difficulties. To assess the benefits of both generic and gender-specific intervention, intensive two-day group programs could be compared to medium length six-week group programs and long-term three-month group intervention programs. Future research would need to focus more on gender-specific factors relating to the difference in men and women's adjustment to assist in dealing with gender unique difficulties during the adjustment process.

Although these findings regarding differences in group interventions are inconclusive, they highlight that the design of group intervention programs is another dimension that may assist some individuals in the adjustment process. Also, they reflect the disproportionate number of females to males attending group intervention programs. According to Myers (1989) it is evident that separated and divorced females are more likely to seek assistance whereas separated and divorced men have higher death rates from motor vehicle accidents, homicide, cirrhosis of the liver and suicide. To address some of these differences, future group intervention programs may need to consider these gender-specific factors during this developmental process. Furthermore, a range of relationship factors contributing to adjustment difficulties and the development of an independent identity unrelated to the status of the former partner may be worthwhile considering when developing future intervention programs.

According to Bohannan (1979) the long-term unresolved effects of separation and divorce may hinder the development of an independent identity unrelated to the status of the former partner. Therefore, providing opportunities to identify the long-term unresolved issues that hinder adjustment to separation and divorce may be another avenue for investigation. Perhaps, the development of a comprehensive assessment tool to help long-term separatees identify the entrenched factors hindering adjustment to separation and divorce may be helpful.

7.2.3 Relationship Factors and Adjustment Outcomes

Due to the small sample size and insufficient data to analyse the effects of relationship status, relationship number and decider of relationship termination on adjustment outcomes for the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention

group and the wait-list control group, very little information could be extrapolated to suggest trends in adjustment outcomes. Nonetheless, it is suggested that future research investigate adjustment difficulties and outcomes by taking into account some of the changing features of relationships, particularly the increasing trend of de facto relationships and number of significant relationships experienced by individuals in the twenty-first century.

Separation from a de facto partner is similar to separation from a marriage partner, particularly in terms of an increase in stress (Mika & Bloom, 1980) and a decrease in physical and mental health (Wu & Hart, 2002). Future research would need to consider societal changes regarding relationships, such as: types of relationships, living, parenting and economic arrangements, and how they are likely to influence adjustment outcomes during separation from a de facto or marriage partner and divorce.

In general, although the findings for relationship factors are exceptionally limited and do not provide an opportunity to suggest trends, they add to the existing body of research by highlighting the difficulties of research using small samples when investigating aspects of group intervention and the interplay between a range of relationship factors and separation and divorce adjustment. Undeniably, it was an ambitious undertaking to consider the use of such a large number of variables linked with aspects of the separation and divorce adjustment process in a population challenged area within a vast region.

7.2.4 Social Context Variables Influence on Adjustment Outcomes

Nonetheless, additional information regarding participants' adjustment progress has been gained from the social context variables. Some changes were

reported by the six-week intervention group, the two-day intervention group and the wait-list control group, post- and six-months post-intervention on the emotional, psychological, social, financial and legal aspects of the separation process. Similar to study, one the greatest gains were reported by the two experimental groups for emotional adjustment. Specifically, most participants had progressed through to the resolution and acceptance phase of emotional adjustment following intervention and maintained the gains six-months post-intervention. Although emotional adjustment to separation and divorce occurs in time, the results for the two experimental groups suggest that the group intervention process may have been helpful as the gains achieved post-intervention were sustained six-months post-intervention.

A range of emotions related to the separation and divorce experience was covered in the group intervention program. Additionally, group members participated in the process of sharing information regarding the emotional impact of separation and ways of dealing with their emotional, social, psychological, financial and legal aspects of separation (Bohannan, 1970). The main area of adjustment is adapting to new roles and responsibilities and the adaptation process varies for each individual. According to Bohannan (1970), often it is the unresolved issues that contribute to the long-term effects of divorce and adjustment difficulties. Therefore, it is the long-term unresolved effects that require attention. Consequently, the social, emotional, psychological, financial and legal aspects of separation are importance to consider during adjustment.

7.3 Limitations of Study One and Two

A number of limitations were experienced in study one and two. The primary limitation was the small sample size, which substantially restricted statistical analysis

of the data. The sample was also non-representative of the general population as participants were predominantly Caucasians, well educated and a disproportionate number of women to men. Additionally, the results apply only to individuals who had been separated for at least two months and up to several years. Although the sample size is a reflection of the region's population and access to one community center's resources, careful consideration of the limitations should be practiced when making generalizations to other populations. Perhaps a future study in a rural and remote region could offer group intervention programs in community centers across the region on a six-month rotation basis to increase sample size and access to resources for separated and divorced individuals seeking intervention. Additionally, this area has a broad range of European, Asian and Indigenous cultures, which could provide future research an opportunity to assess a plethora of cultural differences in separation adjustment within a very diverse region.

A high attrition rate was another limitation experienced in conducting this longitudinal research project. Generally, separated and divorced individuals are more likely to become mobile during the separation period (Smith-Barnet, 1990), hence creating difficulties in maintaining contact during the research period. Cairns does have a high itinerant population especially in difficult economic times. In an attempt to address this issue at the beginning of the project, this study included a *'change of address form'* for participants' information folders. Some participants who had relocated post-intervention forwarded their new postal address, but did not follow through with their change of address details if they had relocated again prior to the six-month post-intervention assessment period.

Maintaining continuity in a longitudinal design can be challenging when conducting research in an area with a high itinerant population. In recognition of these difficulties and knowing there has been relatively limited longitudinal research, it may be helpful to consider alternative ways of addressing some of these issues in the future. As 70 percent of adult Australians have access to computers, perhaps future research could incorporate an additional option for maintaining regular contact with participants through information technology. For participants with access to computer technology, more frequent assessment of the adjustment progress could be incorporated into a longitudinal research design.

7.4 Future Recommendations

It is apparent that a considerable amount of information regarding participants' adjustment has been lost due to the attrition rate. Also, separation and divorce research has failed to find a method of evaluating the differences in support factors for those who drop out of an intervention program to those who claim benefits from participating fully. Perhaps future research could find a way to maintain contact with participants not willing to continue with the group intervention process but willing to provide feedback regarding their adjustment progress. A longitudinal research design could incorporate an alternative option to those participants to reduce attrition rates and utilize this valuable data. It would be an opportunity to assess the adjustment progress of those who had reconsidered participating in an intervention program. Therefore, an additional assessment process could be incorporated for non-attendees to evaluate their adjustment progress over time.

Another direction to consider is present living trends and the increasing number of de facto relationships. Future research needs to further explore adjustment

differences between married and de facto separatees, particularly in relation to locus of control. The initial findings for the immediate intervention group in study one regarding locus of control factors indicate some differences between married and de facto participants pre- and post-intervention for the locus of control total score. This suggests that participants separated from de facto partners had higher expectations of control by powerful other and events occurring by chance than their married counterparts.

In other words, individuals from de facto relationships had lower expectations of personal control during the separation adjustment process. To test the validity of this finding, undoubtedly, future research would need to use a larger sample to determine the significance of relationship status on locus of control factors and adjustment progress during the separation and divorce process. Additionally, the influence of other demographic variables such as decider of separation and relationship number on locus of control factors in study one confirm the need to further investigate the effects of locus of control on adjustment outcomes. It is possible that this type of research could be helpful in guiding the development of more appropriate group intervention options for separated and divorced individuals.

Further investigation of these group differences and changes over time during the separation process will need to be considered. Overall, future research could explore locus of control differences for married and non-married groups longitudinally as changes in locus of control orientation may be evident for some. This information could be helpful in the development of new group intervention programs to improve adjustment outcomes for individuals separated from married and non-married unions seeking assistance. Group intervention programs could

incorporate a pre-intervention assessment of short- and long-term expectations of control during the separation process and provide appropriate information sessions to assist with specific adjustment issues related to perceptions of control or influence.

The possibilities for future research seem endless. These findings, although inconclusive, have highlighted the benefits and shortfalls of group intervention in the short- and long-term for separated and divorced individuals. This study provided some insights into aspects of group intervention that may be helpful during the adjustment phases of separation to separatees living in regional areas of Australia. Specifically, this study provides data from which professionals may gain a greater understanding of the relationship between personality factors and separated and divorced individuals' adjustment processes. Regarding group size, although small group size limits the statistical analyses of data, further consideration could be given to the possible benefits of attending a small group program.

In addition, assessment of participants' personal resources prior to intervention may be helpful information to incorporate into a group intervention program to increase the likelihood of positive adjustment outcomes. According to Marks and Lambert (1998) the relationship quality factors prior to the relationship dissolution process may also be a contributor to post-separation well being. Consequently, assessment of the contributors pre-intervention may help identify the additional resources required to assist participants' adjustment outcomes. Furthermore, assessment of participants' support networks and the value placed on those supportive networks may be a worthwhile consideration.

In summary, for both study one and two, additional demographic variables were used to assess adjustment outcomes. Some of these variables were: time since

separation, time since divorce, number of children and post separation living arrangement. Evidently, due to the small sample size, time since separation did not produce any significant results therefore was not a significant predictor of adjustment outcomes in this study. In support of this result, Plummer and Koch-Hatton (1986) also found no relationship between length of separation and adjustment outcomes thus confirming that adjustment to separation tends to be a progressive process.

Also, it appears that adjustment to separation and divorce can continue indefinitely. A four-year follow-up by Bloom, Hodges et al. (1985) noted a divorce samples' changes in adjustment over time. Also, other researchers have found long-term problems in adjustment and reported changes at 5, 10, and 15-year intervals following divorce (Wallerstein, 1991; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980). It is apparent that the adjustment process and changes in adjustment may continue for significant periods for some individuals. Given a limited understanding of these phenomena, further longitudinal research is required.

Using a randomized controlled methodology in evaluating the benefits of group work can create procedural difficulties. Sometimes there are inherent ethical and procedural difficulties in using this design. Alternatively, self-reports can provide the evidence that individuals participating in intervention programs claim benefits from participating. Additionally, future research would benefit from considering the items on each measurement scale and their relevance to the psycho-educational intervention program utilized. It would be difficult to understand individual, gender and group differences without taking into account cultural influences and personal histories of separated and divorced people. Therefore, further investigation and identification of gender-specific adjustment problems would need to take into

consideration some of these factors. Perhaps using a research design allowing greater investigation into individual adjustment progress and comparing unique features of individual progress would be of greater benefit to separation and divorce research on adjustment in regional areas.

7.5 Conclusion

The results from study one and two not only contribute to the existing body of research on separation and divorce adjustment but also suggest some trends in adjustment outcomes during the separation and divorce process for a regional sample. The longitudinal design has allowed for an investigation of the adjustment process pre-, post- and six-months post-intervention. It is evident with the mixed results in study one that it is unlikely one could foresee the difficulties of assessing post-separation adjustment. These differences would need to be considered carefully due to the changes that occur for each individual at various stages of the separation and divorce process. Undoubtedly, the adjustment to separation and divorce process can be stressful at times (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980; Weiss, 1975; Bloom, Asher & White, 1978; Bloom, White & Asher, 1979; Counts & Sacks, 1985) due to the changes that need to be incorporated into one's life.

Although the methodological limitations are considerable, nonetheless the results from this study offer an abundance of information for practice. Practitioners in regional areas may utilise this information in developing individual and group interventions aimed at improving adjustment outcomes for people experiencing difficulties following relationship dissolution. However, while the results of this research add support to Vera's suggestion that group intervention is helpful to participants seeking support during difficult times in the adjustment process, it also

identifies the unique nature of adjustment research when working with small samples. In summary, this study has contributed to providing some general and specific information on aspects of separation and divorce adjustment and a community group intervention program in a regional area.

In conclusion, adjustment to separation and divorce can be a lengthy and lonely process and recovery may appear like that long and winding dusty road to nowhere. For those experiencing the anguish of separation and divorce and seeking intervention, the results from this study are encouraging. A range of beneficial adjustment outcomes was reported post-intervention. Some attendees found participation in a group intervention program helpful and experienced short-term benefits while others reported long-term benefits. In contrast, some found less value in the group intervention experience where short and long-term gains were limited. Nonetheless, the results from this study suggest that the majority of participants reported adjustment changes, hence gained a more positive outlook of the future. Finally, participant's readiness to participate in a group intervention program and the assessment process is in itself testimony that some benefits were gained by those who participated.

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RESEARCHER AND PROGRAM FACILITATOR

My name is Dragica (Dee) Vukalovich. I am a Masters student at James Cook University, the principal investigator of this research project and the facilitator of the six-week group intervention program 'Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce' at Lifeline Cairns.

I am a psychologist registered with the Psychologists Board of Queensland and a Member of the Australian Psychological Society.

PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

You will be eligible to participate in this research if you fulfil the following criteria:-

(1) you need to be separated for more than 2 months

(2) your marital or defacto relationship must have lasted more than 12 months

PARTICIPATION DETAILS

Prior to participating in the group program you will be required to attend an information evening. The details are as follows:

Date: Friday, 18th February 2000
Time: 5.30pm
Venue: Lifeline Cairns Region

You may register your interest for participating in this research by contacting

Dee Vukalovich
Lifeline Cairns Region
Phone: 40504955

This research is gratefully supported by

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SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
CAIRNS

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REBUILDING AFTER SEPARATION/DIVORCE PROGRAM

Research suggests that the loss of a partner through separation and divorce is one of the most stressful life experiences. Considerable changes occur during this period.

To assess the value of intervention, this research will investigate the value of participating in an educational group program during adjustment to separation and divorce. For the purpose of this study the Lifeline Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce Program is offered FREE to research participants.

REBUILDING AFTER SEPARATION AND DIVORCE PROGRAM

This is a six-week program which is interactive, educational and supportive. It is designed to assist separated and divorced individuals adjust to the end of their relationship or marriage. Sessions will focus on the physical, emotional and psychological aspects of separation.

PROGRAM AIMS

◊ Information will be provided so that participants may gain a greater understanding of their adjustment process.

◊ The focus will be on self-awareness and the enhancement of coping skills.

◊ The intention is to provide a safe and supportive environment to facilitate the process of self exploration.

PROGRAM TOPICS

Week 1:

Factors contributing to the marriage decline and the stress of separation

Week 2:

Grief and Loss during separation

Week 3:

Communicating more effectively during separation

Week 4:

Separation Emotions - guilt and rejection

Week 5:

Beliefs and values

Week 6:

Improving self-esteem and support

PROGRAM INFORMATION

* Participation is voluntary and in group

* Attendees need to be sober and free of recreational drug

* Confidentiality will be respected

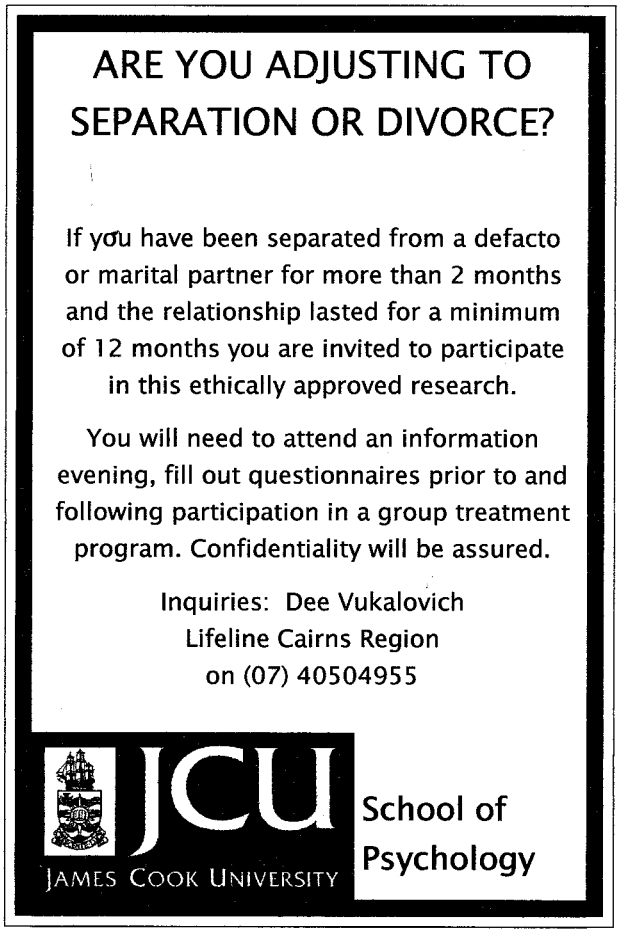
* Anonymity is offered

* Research questionnaires and session evaluations will need to be completed

* Upon completion of the six-week program brief evaluations will be conducted for the following twelve-months

APPENDIX B

Advertising in Print Media for Research Participants



APPENDIX C

JCU
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

School of Psychology

Dear Service Providers,

Thank you for your support of my Masters research project. I am evaluating the effectiveness of a group intervention programme for individuals adjusting to separation and divorce.

During this phase of my research I am recruiting potential research participants to attend the *'Rebuilding After Separation and Divorce Programme'* offered by Lifeline Cairns Region. This program will be free of charge to research participants.

I would appreciate the distribution of the attached brochure to co-workers to share with clients who are coping with separation or divorce. Additionally, could you please leave a copy of this brochure on your community noticeboard.

For further information and if additional brochures are required, my contact details are as follows:

Ph: [redacted]
Fx:
E-mail: [redacted]

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely

Dee Vukalovich
Psychologist

This research is supported by

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APPENDIX D

JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP INTERVENTION PROGRAM

This group intervention program is for men and women who have recently experienced separation and/or divorce. All group sessions are designed to assist participants adjust to the loss of a significant defacto or marital relationship. During sessions the focus will be on the emotional, psychological and social aspects of loss. Your participation will assist the researcher in determining the benefits of group intervention following separation and divorce.

The group process will include the presentation of information, group interaction, role play, paper and pencil exercises and brainstorming activities.

The participation guidelines are as follows:

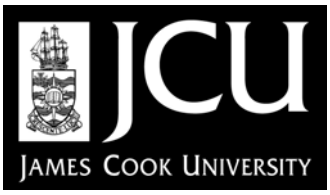
(i) Participation is voluntary and free of charge.
(ii) Should you decide to withdraw from the study at any time, please advise the researcher.
(iii) Participation is by group only.
(iv) You are requested to arrive on time for group sessions.
(v) If you are unable to attend a session, please inform the researcher prior to the session.
(vi) You are requested to complete between session assignments in preparation for the following session.
(vii) You are required to attend sessions sober and free of recreational drugs.
(viii) You are required to abide by group rules (please see attached handout on group rules).
(ix) All information that you provide in the questionnaires will be treated as confidential.
(x) Personal details and experiences shared in the group are strictly confidential and may not be disclosed outside of the group.
(xi) You will be requested to complete a questionnaire package before and immediately after completing the group intervention program and in the one-year follow-up.
(xii) You will be allocated an identification number (ID...), please state this number when completing the pre-intervention questionnaires, session evaluations, program evaluation, post-intervention questionnaires and the one-year follow-up.
(xiii) If you have any concerns during participation you may speak directly to the researcher Dragica (DEE) Vukalovich, or the Supervisors of this project, Dr. Nerina Caltabiano and Dr. Shirley Morrissey.

Contact Details:

Dragica (DEE) Vukalovich	Lifeline Cairns Region	(W)	[redacted]
Dr. Nerina Caltabiano	School of Psychology, JCU, Cairns	(W)	
Dr. Shirley Morrissey	University of Teesside, England		

Thank you for participating in this study. Your feedback on the group intervention program is important in the final evaluation of the benefits of group intervention in adjustment to separation and/or divorce.

APPENDIX E



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

SEPARATION AND DIVORCE RESEARCH

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Your continued participation is a very important part of the Separation and Divorce Adjustment Research. The one-year post-intervention follow-up evaluation will help to determine the benefits of completing an intervention program. If you should change your residential, postal, e-mail address, phone or fax details, please keep me informed by completing the following:

Name: ……

Residential Address: …….

Postal Address: …….

Telephone: (W) ……. (H) ……..

Fax: …… E-mail: …….

Please send this form to:

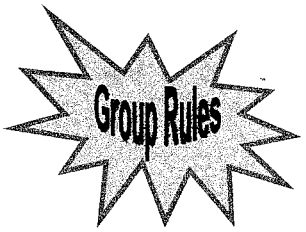
[redacted]

Or you may phone Dee at Lifeline on [redacted] or fax these details to [redacted]

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX F

Rebuilding after Separation & Divorce Program



Security	The front door locks automatically at 5 pm, therefore you will need to ring the buzzer when you arrive.
Breaks	We have a 10 minute break half way through each session for refreshments.
Attendance	If you are unable to attend a session, please advise the researcher.
Listening	We need to listen to one person speak at a time.
Time Limits	Some limits will be set on speaking and interacting so that most of the content for each session can be presented.
Level of Disclosure	Personal issues will be at the fore for most participants, only disclose what is comfortable for you.
Unresolved Issues	Due to time restraints, unresolved individual issues may not be attended to in group treatment sessions. You may wish to make an appointment with a counsellor of your choice or phone Lifeline 24 hour Telephone Counselling Service on 131114.
Confidentiality	To maintain confidentiality, all group participant's personal details and disclosures are to remain within the group.
Anonymity	Participant's names are not to be disclosed outside of the group unless you have the individual's permission.
Handouts	Please read all handouts and complete session evaluation forms at the end of each session.

APPENDIX G

ID No: .....

JCU JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY School of Psychology

Questionnaire 1: Pre-adjustment to Separation and Divorce

PART A - Demographic Information

1. Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐ **2. Age** ..... years

3. Prior to separation, were you married ☐ **or living in a de facto relationship** ☐

4. Length of Marriage/De facto relationship ? .....years ..... months

5. Date of decision to separate? / /

6. Date of actual separation? / /

7. If you are divorced, how long were you separated when you received your divorce decree? ..... years ..... months

8. If you are divorced, how long has it been since you received your divorce decree? ..... year ..... months

9. Many people have several 'long-term committed relationships' (i.e. for one year or more and involving living together). Please indicate whether this marital/de facto relationship was your:-

1st long-term relationship ☐ **2nd** long-term relationship ☐

3rd long-term relationship ☐ **4th** long-term relationship ☐

Other (please specify) .....

10. Who ended this relationship? Self ☐ Partner ☐ Mutual ☐

11. What are your living arrangements since separation?

Family home without partner ☐ Under same roof ☐

Independent accommodation ☐ Staying with family ☐

Staying with friends ☐ Other .....

(please specify)

12. How many children, if any, do you have from this relationship?

(Please specify the number of boys and girls and their ages. e.g. two boys, 7 and 5 and one girl, 9 years old). .....

.....

.....

13. How many children, if any, do you have from previous relationships?

(Please specify the number of boys and girls and their ages).

.....

.....

.....

14. Please provide some information about your parenting arrangements (residency, contact and other special arrangements) with your children.

Residency (who does your child/children live with most of the time?)

.....

Contact (How often do you have contact with your child/children?)

.....

.....

Special orders (What specific arrangements, if any, do you and your former partner have regarding child care? e.g. family court order, domestic violence order, hand-over arrangements or supervised care)

.....

.....

15. Are you currently employed? Yes ☐ No ☐

16. If yes, is this work: Paid ☐ Unpaid ☐

17. If you are employed, please specify your work time.

Full time ☐ Part time ☐ Casual ☐

18. What type of work do you do? (please specify your occupation, e.g. Mechanic, Journalist, Science Teacher, Domestic Manager, Machine Operator, Retail Assistant, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

19. What level of education have you completed? (please specify)

Grade 10 ☐ Grade 12 ☐ Trade Certificate ☐

Diploma ☐ Undergraduate degree ☐ Postgraduate degree ☐

TAFE qualification ☐

20. Did you or your former partner have couple's counselling prior to separation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

21. If yes, how many sessions? .....

22. How useful was the couple's counselling?

Not at all useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Moderately useful ☐ Very useful ☐

23. Have you had individual counselling sessions since separation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

24. If yes, how many sessions? .....

25. How useful was the individual counselling?

Not at all useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Moderately useful ☐ Very useful ☐

26. Have you participated in groupwork programs since separation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

27. If yes, please describe these programs.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

28. Which of the following stages best describes your current emotional state with respect to your separation?

Shock and denial ☐ Anger and depression ☐ Resolution and acceptance ☐

29. How do you currently perceive yourself with respect to your recent separation?

Consider self married ☐ Mixed feelings ☐ Separate and single ☐

30. Which of the following statements would best describe your social interaction with your former partner since separating from him/her?

Share friends and activities	☐	Occasionally share friends or activities	☐	Separate friends and independent activities	☐

31. How have you organized your finances with your former partner since separation?

Maintain and support joint accounts	☐	Some shared financial interests	☐	Independent account and financial autonomy	☐

32. Have you completed the division of property?

Not at all	☐	Yes, mostly	☐	Yes, completely	☐

33. If yes, how satisfied are you with the division of property?

Not at all	☐	Yes, mostly	☐	Yes, completely	☐

PART B - Self-esteem Questions

This part of the questionnaire consists of 10 questions that assess general feelings you have about your self worth. Read each statement carefully and respond to each question honestly.

Please choose one of the following four responses and tick the appropriate box that best reflects your beliefs about yourself.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. At times I think I am no good at all.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART C - Social Support Questions

Part C of this questionnaire consists of 23 questions that deal with social support, the extent to which you believe you are esteemed by, loved by, and involved with family, friends and others.

Respond to each statement about your relationships with family, friends and others by choosing your response on the strongly agree to strongly disagree scale.

Please select one of the following four responses that best represent your beliefs and tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My friends respect me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. My family cares for me very much.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I am not important to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. My family holds me in high esteem.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I am well liked.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I can rely on my friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I am really admired by my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I am respected by other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I am loved dearly by my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. My friends don't care about my welfare.	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Members of my family rely on me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I am held in high esteem.	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I can't rely on my family for support.	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. People admire me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I feel a strong bond with my friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. My friends look out for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. I feel valued by other people.	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. My family really respects me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. My friends and I are really important to each other.	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I feel like I belong.	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. If I died tomorrow, very few people would miss me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I don't feel close to members of my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. My friends and I have done a lot for one another.	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART D - Locus of Control Questions

Part D of this questionnaire consists of 24 questions that deal with control measures. Read each statement carefully and respond to each question. Please choose one of the following six responses that best represent your beliefs and tick the appropriate box.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends mostly on my ability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on how good a driver I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. When I make plans, I am almost certain to make them work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Often there is no chance of protecting my personal interests from bad luck happenings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. When I get what I want, it's usually because I'm lucky.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Although I might have good ability, I will not be given leadership responsibility without appealing to those in positions of power.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. How many friends I have depends on how nice a person I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. My life is chiefly controlled by powerful others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Whether or not I get into a car accident is mostly a matter of luck.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. People like myself have very little chance of protecting our personal interests when they conflict with those of strong pressure groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. It's not always wise for me to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Getting what I want requires pleasing those people above me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Whether or not I get to be a leader depends on whether I'm lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. If important people were to decide they didn't like me, I probably wouldn't make many friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I can pretty much determine what will happen in my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I am usually able to protect my personal interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Whether or not I get into a car accident depends mostly on the other driver.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. In order to have my plans work, I make sure that they fit in with the desires of people who have power over me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. My life is determined by my own actions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. It's chiefly a matter of fate whether or not I have a few or many friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PART E - Divorce Adjustment Questions

This questionnaire consists of 100 questions. The following statements are feelings and attitudes that people frequently experience while they are ending a marital or de facto relationship. Please read each statement and respond to how frequently each statement applies to your present feelings and attitudes during this separation and/or divorce period.

Please choose one of the following five responses to each question and tick the box that best represents your beliefs.

	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
1. I am comfortable telling people I am separated from my partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I am physically and emotionally exhausted from morning until night.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I am constantly thinking of my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I feel rejected by many of the friends I had when I was in the relationship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I become upset when I think about my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I like being the person I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I feel like crying because I feel so sad.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I can communicate with my former partner in a calm and rational manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. There are many things about my personality I would like to change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. It is easy for me to accept my becoming a single person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I feel depressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I feel emotionally separated from my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. People would not like me if they got to know me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. I feel comfortable seeing and talking to my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I feel like I am an attractive person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I feel as though I am in a daze and the world doesn't seem real.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. I find myself doing things just to please my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I feel lonely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. There are many things about my body I would like to change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I have many plans and goals for the future.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. I feel I don't have much sex appeal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I am relating and interacting in many new ways with people since my separation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Joining a singles' group would make me feel I was a loser just like them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. It is easy for me to organize my daily routine of living.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. I find myself making excuses to see and talk to my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. Because my love relationship failed, I must be a failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. I feel like unloading my feelings of anger and hurt upon my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. I feel comfortable being with people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. I have trouble concentrating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I think of my former partner as related to me rather than as a separate person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
31. I feel like an okay person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. I hope my former partner is feeling as much or more emotional pain than I am.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I have close friends who know and understand me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. I am unable to control my emotions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. I feel capable of building a deep and meaningful love relationship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. I have trouble sleeping.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37. I easily become angry at my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38. I am afraid to trust people who might become love partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39. Because my relationship ended, I feel there must be something wrong with me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40. I either have no appetite or eat continuously which is unusual for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41. I don't want to accept the fact that our love relationship is ending.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42. I force myself to eat even though I'm not hungry.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
43. I have given up on my former partner and I getting back together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44. I feel very frightened inside.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45. It is important that my family, friends, and associates be on my side rather than on my former partner's side.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46. I feel uncomfortable even thinking about dating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
47. I feel capable of living the kind of life I would like to live.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48. I have noticed my body weight is changing a great deal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
49. I believe if we try, my love partner and I can save our relationship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
50. My abdomen feels empty and hollow.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51. I have feelings of romantic love for my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
52. I can make the decisions I need to because I know and trust my feelings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53. I would like to get even with my former partner for hurting me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
54. I avoid people even though I want and need friends.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
55. I have really made a mess of my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
56. I sigh a lot.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
57. I believe it is best for all concerned to have our relationship end.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
58. I perform my daily activities in a mechanical and unfeeling manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59. I become upset when I think about my partner having a love relationship with someone else.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
60. I feel capable of facing and dealing with my problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
61. I blame my former partner for the failure of our love relationship.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
62. I am afraid of becoming sexually involved with another person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
63. I feel adequate as a fe/male love partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
64. It will only be a matter of time until my partner and I get back together.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
65. I feel detached and removed from activities around me as though I were watching them on a movie screen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
66. I would like to continue having a sexual relationship with my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
67. Life is somehow passing me by.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
68. I feel comfortable going by myself to a public place such as a movie.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
69. It is good to feel alive again after having felt numb and emotionally dead.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Almost Never
70. I feel I know and understand myself.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
71. I feel emotionally committed to my former partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
72. I want to be with people but I feel emotionally distant from them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
73. I am the type of person I would like to have for a friend.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
74. I am afraid of becoming emotionally close to another partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
75. Even on the days when I am feeling good, I may suddenly become sad and start crying.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
76. I can't believe our love relationship is ending.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
77. I become upset when I think about my partner dating someone else.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
78. I have a normal amount of self-confidence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
79. People seem to enjoy being with me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
80. Morally and spiritually, I believe it is wrong for our relationship to end.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
81. I wake up in the morning feeling there is no good reason to get out of bed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
82. I find myself daydreaming about all the good times I had with my partner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
83. People want to have a love relationship with me because I feel like a loveable person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
84. I want to hurt my former partner by letting him/her know how much I hurt emotionally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
85. I feel comfortable going to social events even though I am single.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
86. I feel guilty about my relationship ending.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
87. I feel emotionally insecure.					
88. I feel uncomfortable even thinking about having a sexual relationship.					
89. I feel emotionally weak and helpless.					
90. I think about ending my life with suicide.					
91. I understand the reasons why our relationship did not work.					
92. I feel comfortable having my friends know our love relationship is ending.					
93. I am angry about the things my former partner has been doing.					
94. I feel like I am going crazy.					

APPENDIX H

ID No: .....

JCU
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

School of Psychology

Questionnaire 2: Post-treatment Separation & Divorce Program

PART A - Demographic Information

1. Gender: Female ☐ Male ☐ **2. Age** ..... years

3. Have your living arrangements with your former partner changed since your participation in this program?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. If yes, please describe how your living arrangements have changed?

.....

.....

5. Have your parenting arrangements changed during your participation in the group treatment program?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If yes, please provide some information on your new parenting arrangements.

Residency (who does your child/children reside with most of the time?)

.....

Contact (How often do you have contact with your child/children?)

.....

.....

Special Orders (What specific arrangements, if any, do you have with your former partner regarding child/children contact? e.g. Family Court order, Domestic Violence order, hand over arrangements or supervised care).

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Have you had individual counselling during participation in the group program?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. If yes, how many sessions? .....

9. If yes, how useful was the individual counselling?

Not at all useful ☐ Somewhat useful ☐ Moderately useful ☐ Very useful ☐

10. Which of the following stages best describes your current emotional state since participating in the group treatment program?

Shock and denial ☐ Anger and depression ☐ Resolution and acceptance ☐

11. How do you currently perceive yourself with respect to your recent separation?

Consider self married ☐ Mixed feelings ☐ Separate and single ☐

12. Which of the following statements would best describe your social interaction with your former partner since your participation in the group treatment program?

Shared friends and activities ☐ Occasionally share friends or activities ☐ Separate friends and independent activities ☐

13. Have you changed your financial arrangements since your participation in the group treatment program?

Yes ☐ No ☐

14. Which of the following statements best describe your financial arrangements with your former partner since your participation in the group treatment program?

Maintain a joint account ☐ Some shared financial interests ☐ Independent account & financial autonomy ☐

15. Have you completed the division of property since your participation in the group treatment program?

Not at all ☐ Yes, mostly ☐ Yes, completely ☐

16. If yes, how satisfied are you with the division of property?

Not at all ☐ Yes, mostly ☐ Yes, completely ☐

17. Please comment on any other changes you have noticed about your separation since your participation in the group treatment program.

.....

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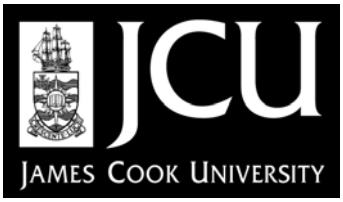
APPENDIX I



SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dragica (DEE) Vukalovich
[redacted]

Dear Research Participant,

I appreciate your continued participation in the Separation and Divorce Adjustment Research. Thank you for your support during the initial phase of the research project.

I am continuing the evaluation of the effectiveness of the group intervention program with some minor changes. Initially the post-intervention follow-up evaluation was organised for one year following the completion of the Separation and Divorce Group Intervention Program. This has been bought forward to a six-month follow-up.

The date set for the six-month follow-up evaluation is Wednesday 1st November 2000. This will be held at the Lifeline Counselling and Administration Centre at 5.30pm. If you are unable to attend, please inform me to make an alternative arrangement. I can be contacted on the following:

Phone:
Fax:
E-mail Address: [redacted]

Thank you for supporting the second phase of this research.

Sincerely

Dragica (DEE) Vukalovich

APPENDIX J

Study One: Six-Week Intervention Group

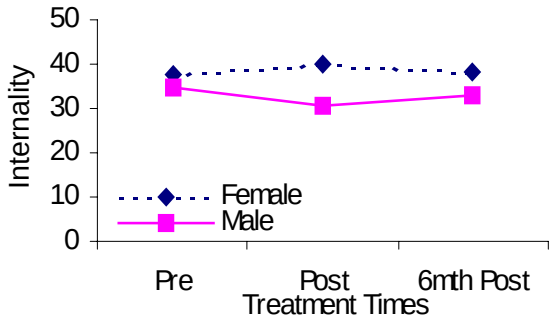


Figure J 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

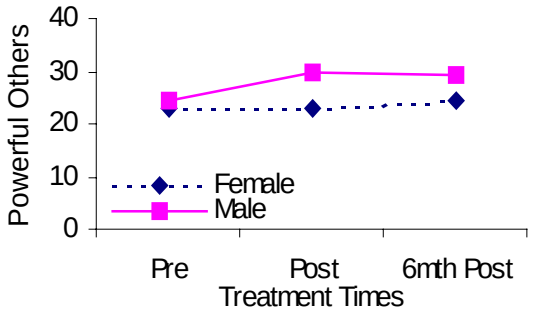


Figure J 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

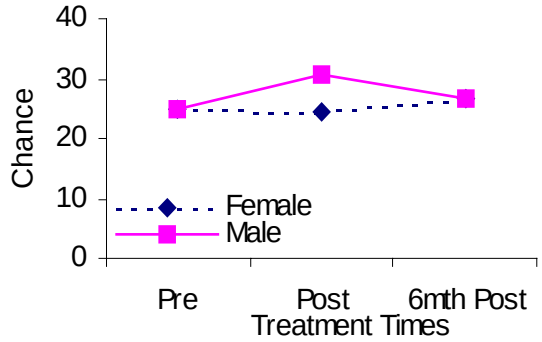


Figure J 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

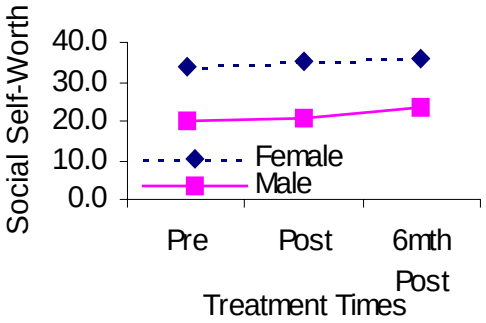


Figure J 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

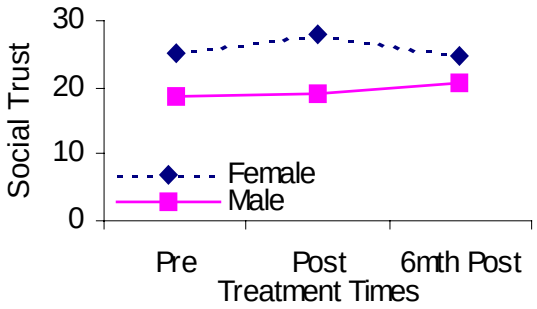


Figure J 5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

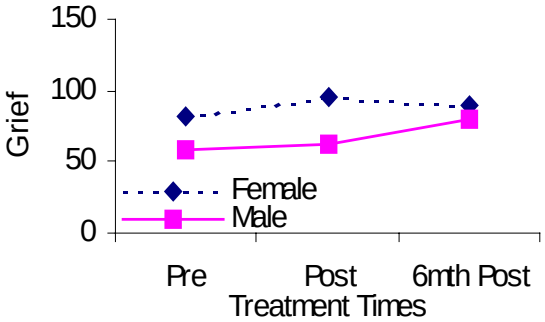


Figure J 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

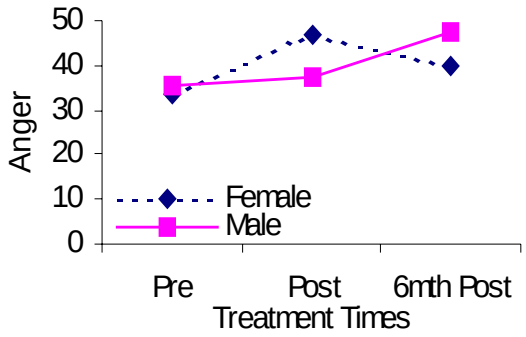


Figure J 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

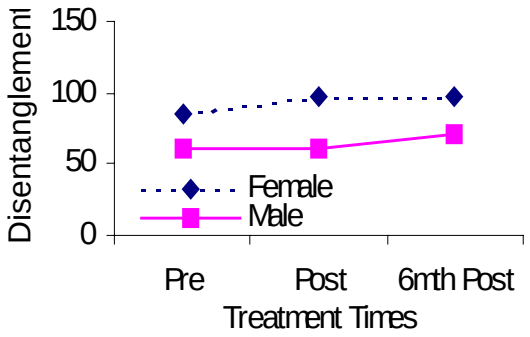


Figure J 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

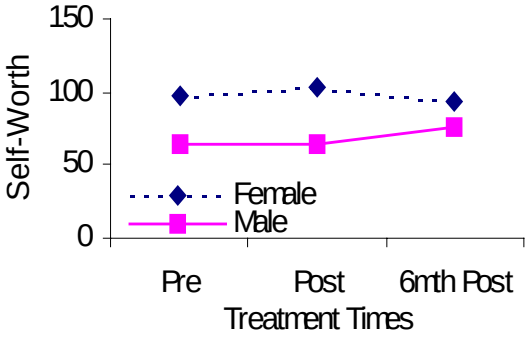


Figure J 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

APPENDIX K

Study One: Delayed Intervention Group

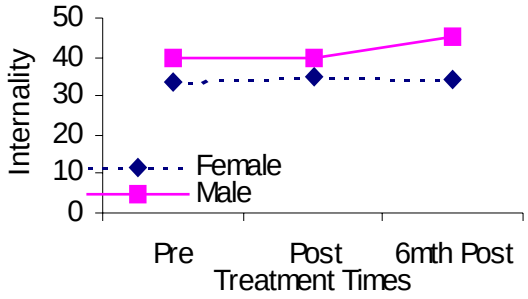


Figure K 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

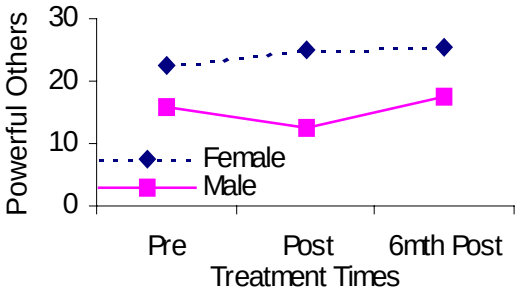


Figure K 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

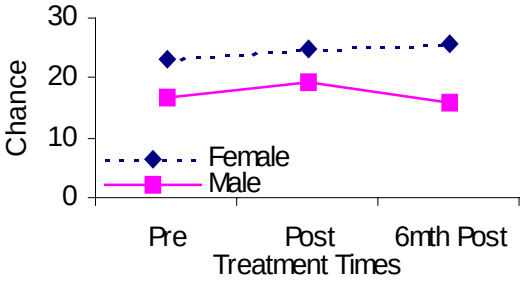


Figure K 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

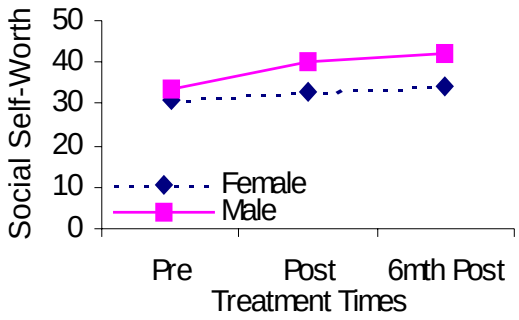


Figure K 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

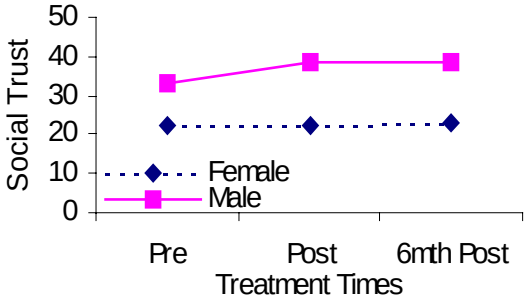


Figure K 5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

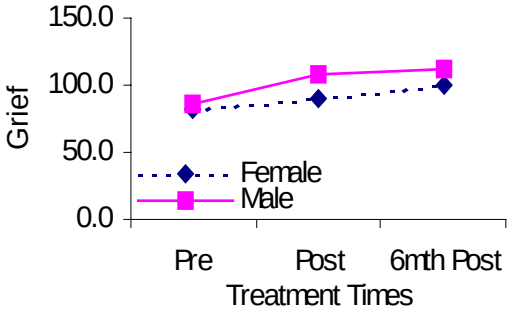


Figure K 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

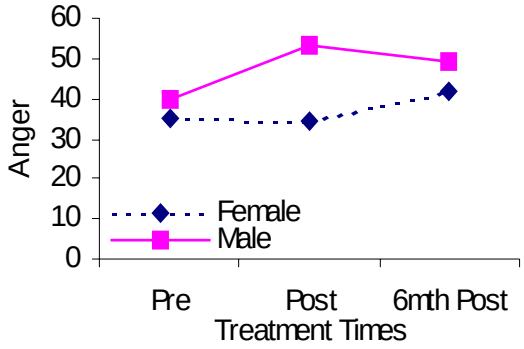


Figure K 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

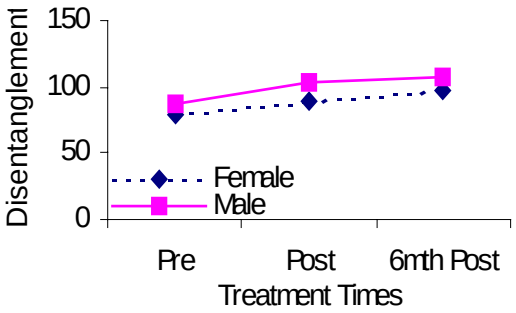


Figure K 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

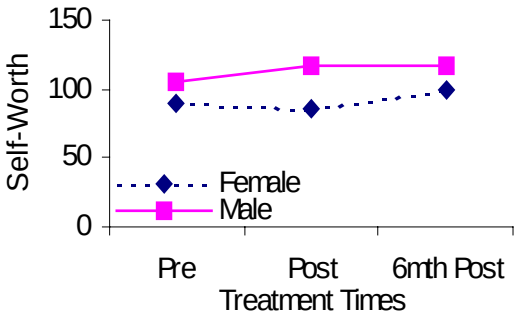


Figure K 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

APPENDIX L

Study One: Comparison of Intervention and Delayed Intervention Groups

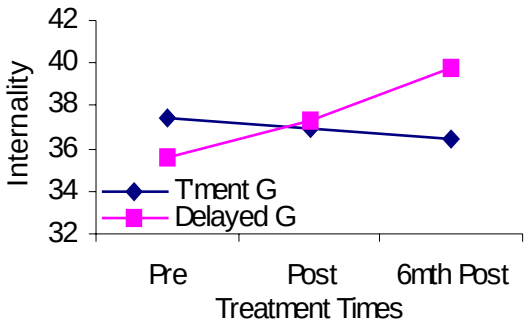


Figure L 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for intervention and delayed intervention groups

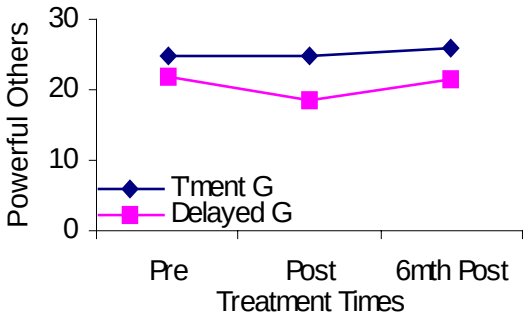


Figure L 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for intervention and delayed intervention groups

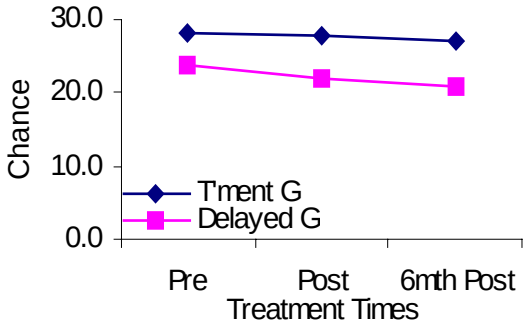


Figure L 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups

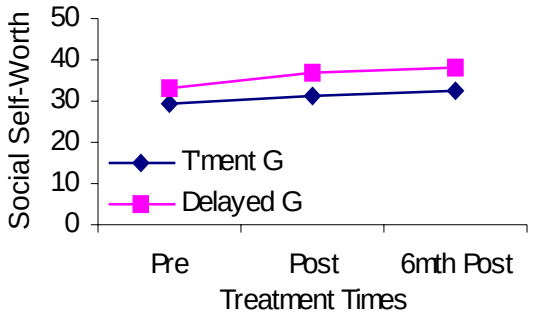


Figure L 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

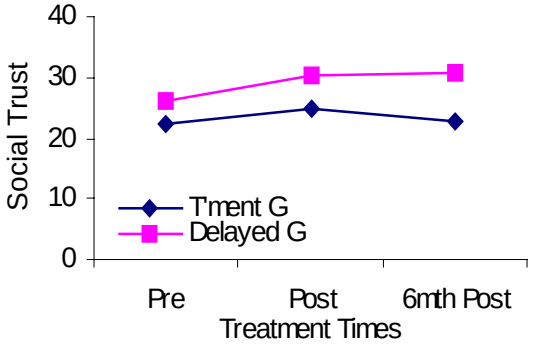


Figure L 5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

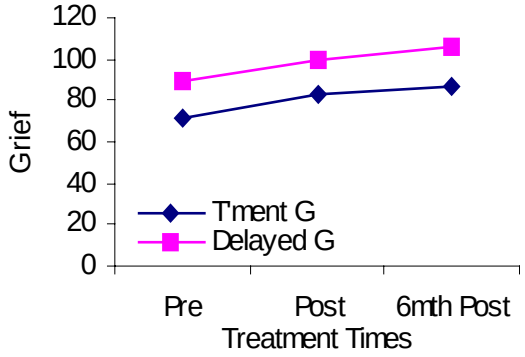


Figure L 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

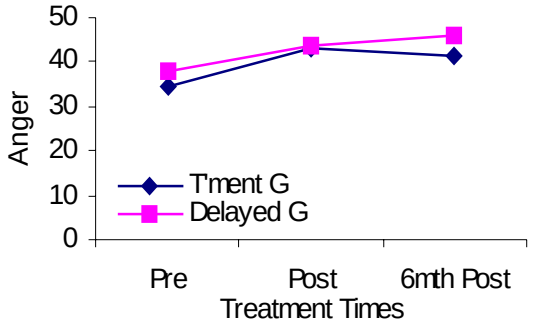


Figure L 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

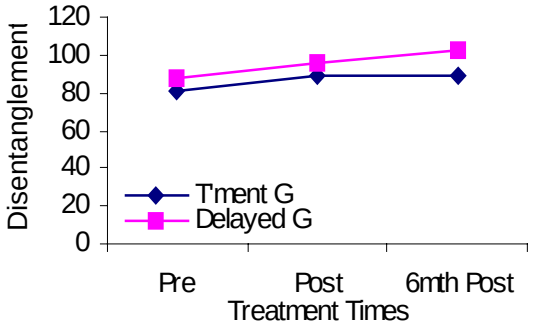


Figure L 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

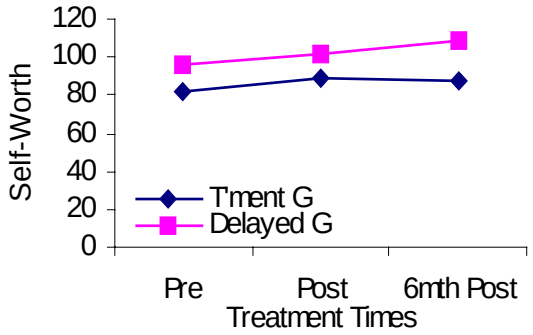


Figure L 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for the intervention and delayed intervention groups.

APPENDIX M

Study Two: Six-Week Intervention Group

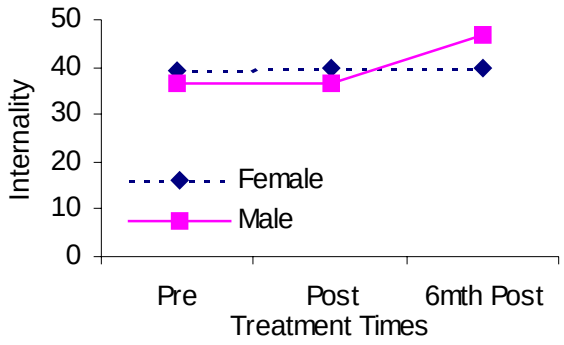


Figure M 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

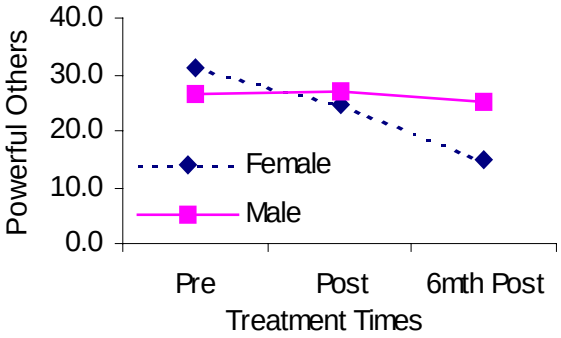


Figure M 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

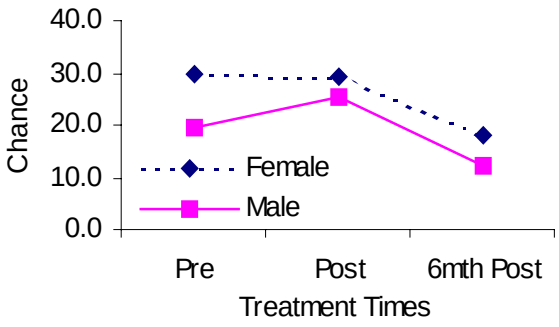


Figure M 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

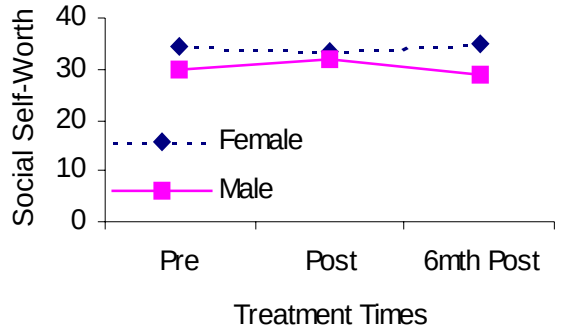


Figure M 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

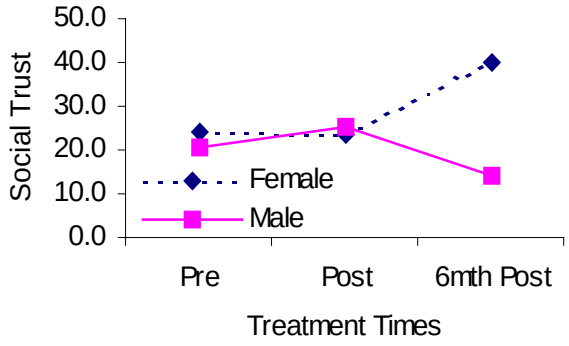


Figure M 5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

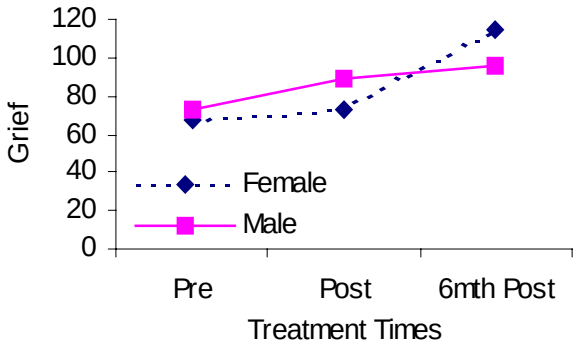


Figure M 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

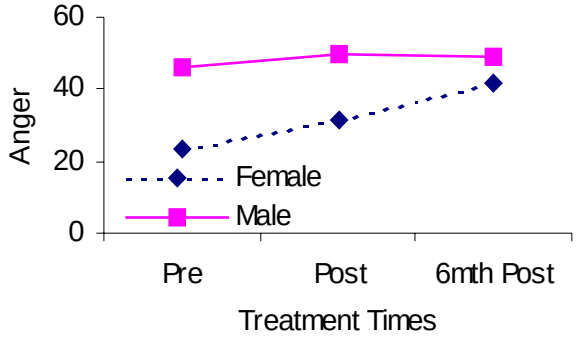


Figure M 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

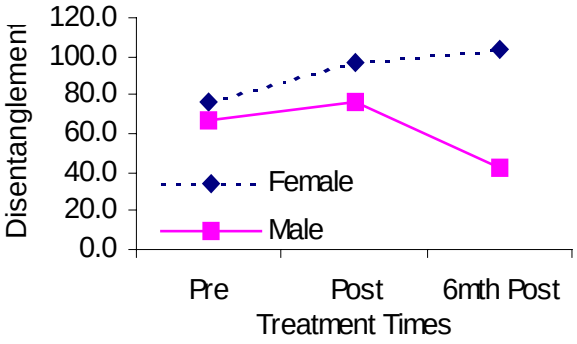


Figure M 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

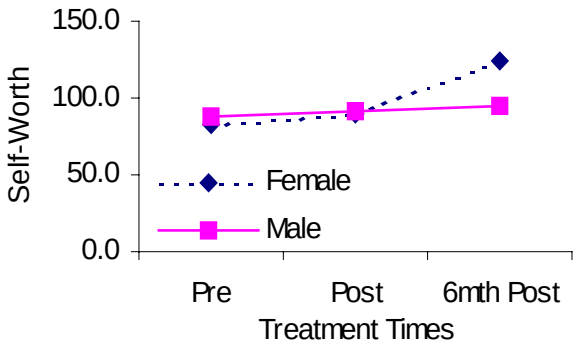


Figure M 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

APPENDIX N

Study Two: Wait-List Control Group

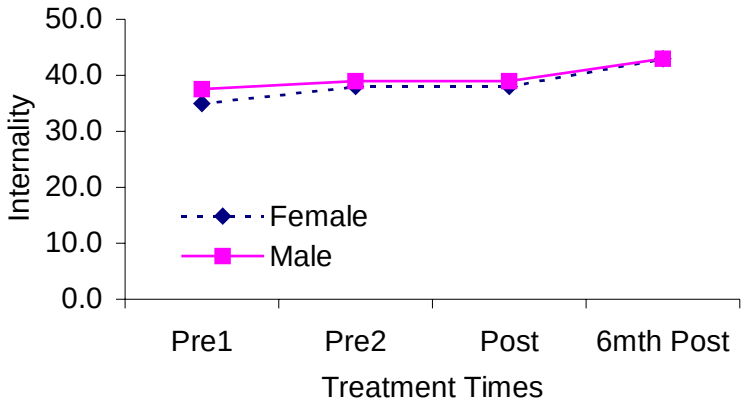


Figure N 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

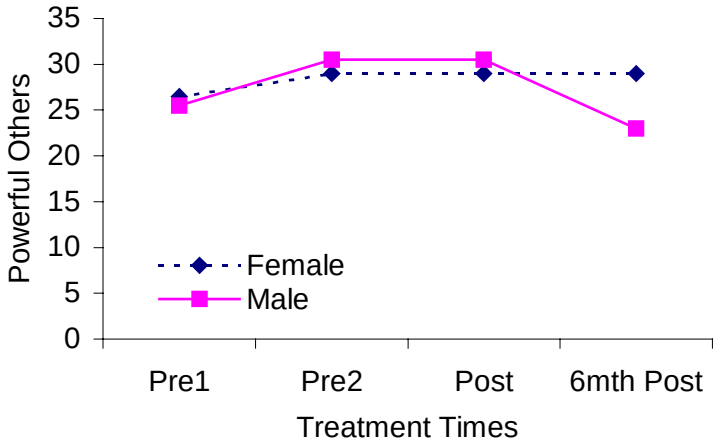


Figure N 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

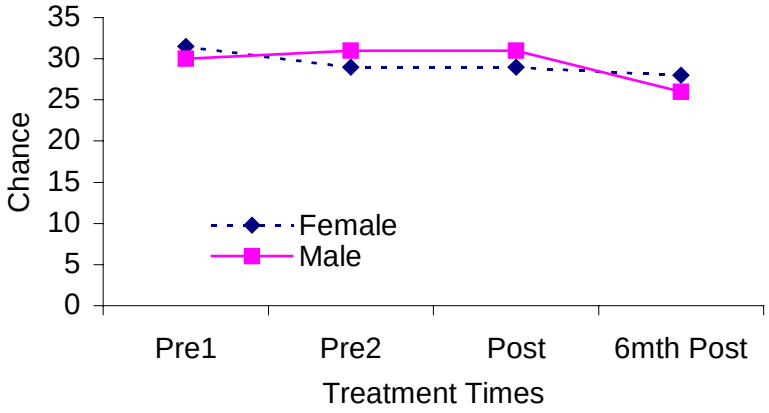


Figure N 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

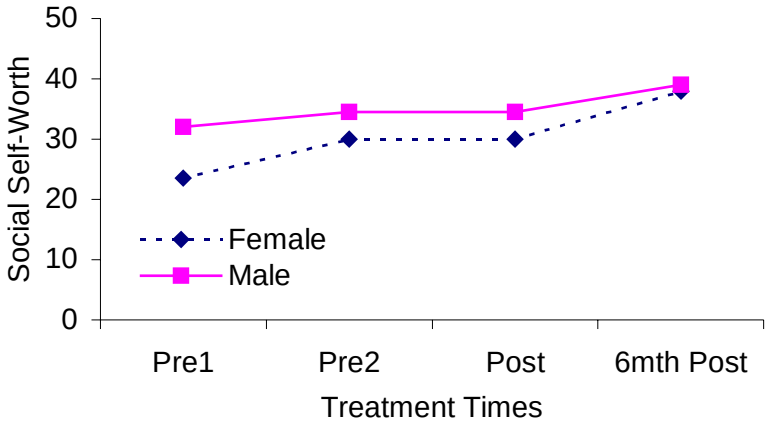


Figure N 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

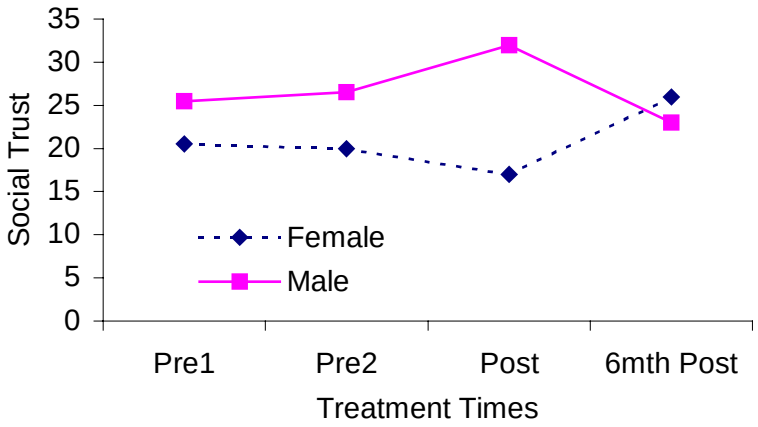


Figure N 5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

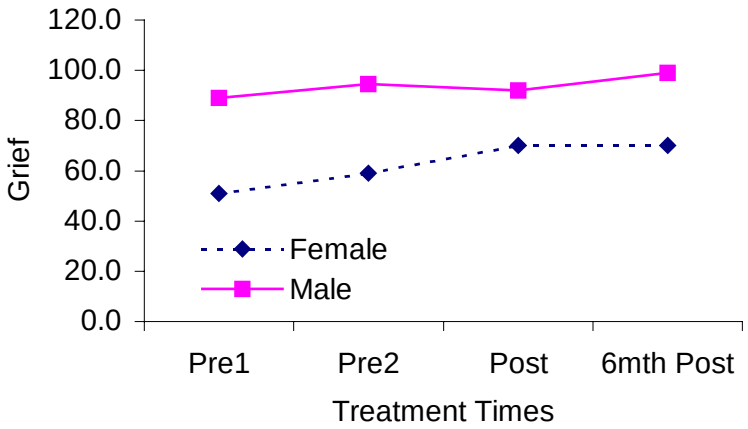


Figure N 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

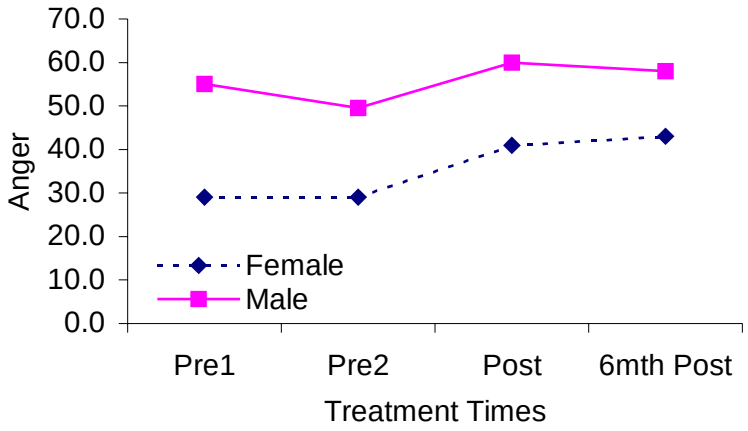


Figure N 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for gender.

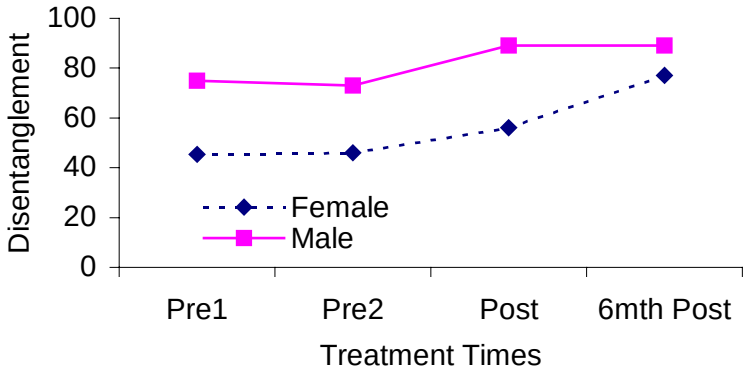


Figure N 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale score by treatment times by gender.

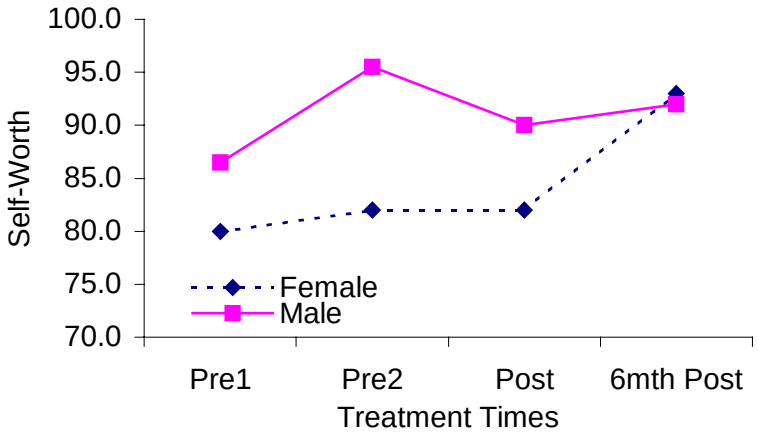


Figure N 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times by gender.

APPENDIX O

Study Two: Comparison of two Intervention Groups and the Control Group

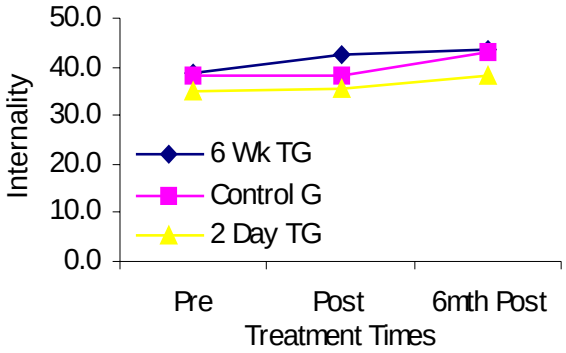


Figure O 1. Mean locus of control internality subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

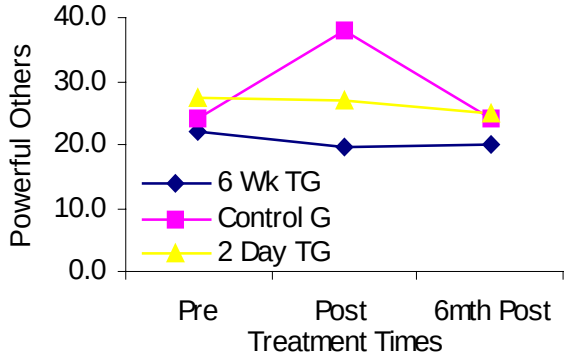


Figure O 2. Mean locus of control powerful others subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

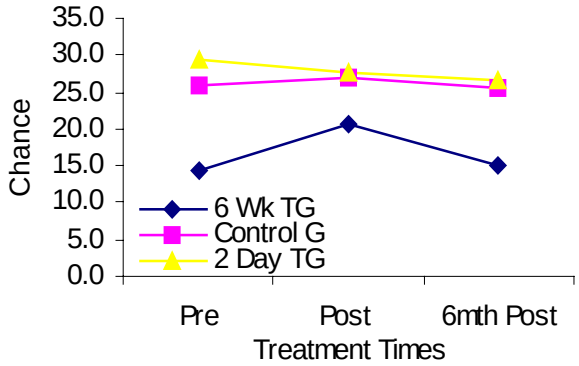


Figure O 3. Mean locus of control chance subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

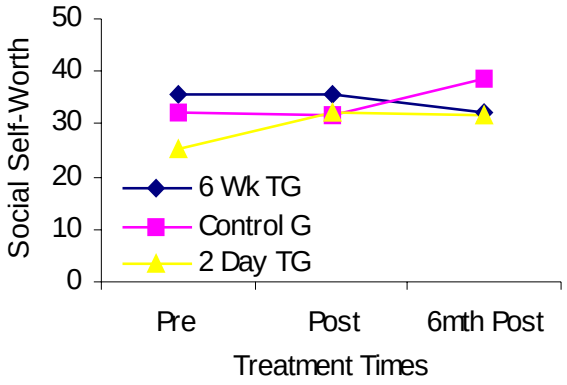


Figure O 4. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

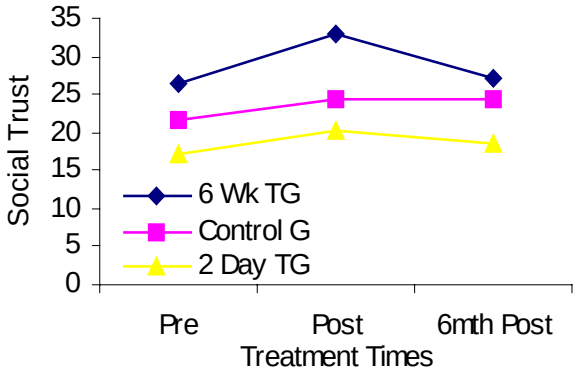


Figure O5. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment social trust subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

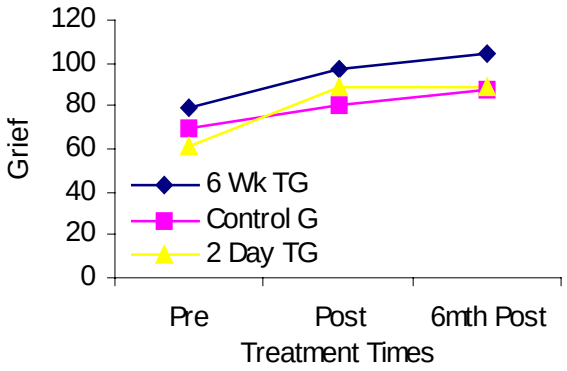


Figure O 6. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment grief subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

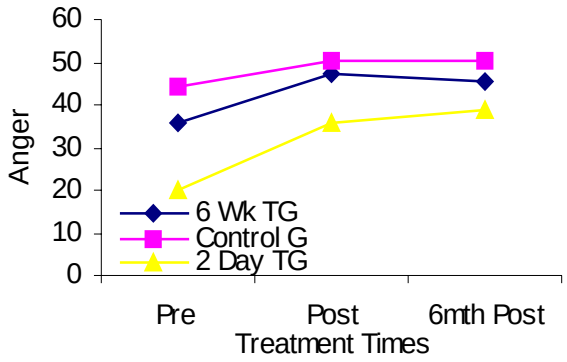


Figure O 7. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment anger subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

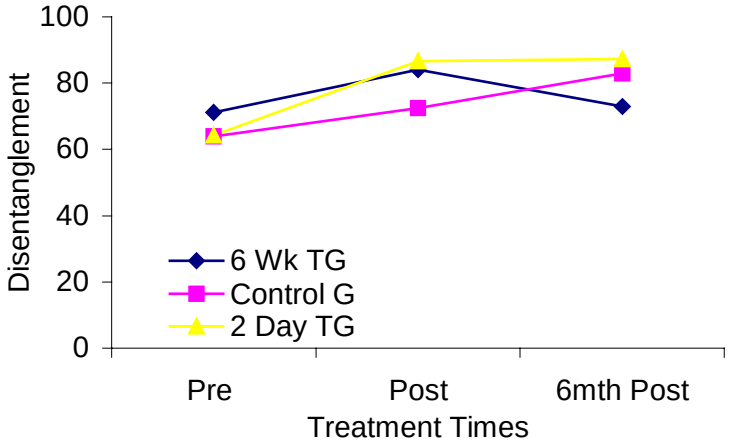


Figure O 8. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment disentanglement subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.

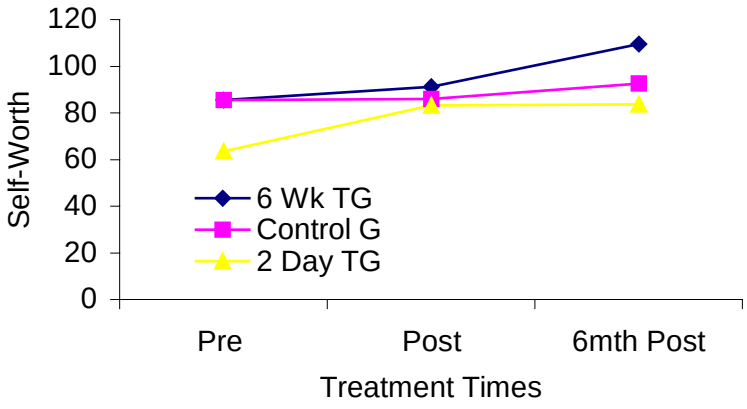


Figure O 9. Mean Fisher divorce adjustment self-worth subscale scores by treatment times for intervention groups.