

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: COUPLES' CONFLICT TACTICS AND THE
USE OF PARENTING STYLES IN AFRICAN-
AMERICAN AND CAUCASIAN FAMILIES

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The purpose of this study was to examine differences in the relationship between physical and psychological aggression and the parenting styles of 24 African-American and 22 Caucasian parents. The sample of 92 participants came from pre-existing data of couples and families who attended therapy at the Family Service Center at the University of Maryland, College Park. Physical and psychological aggression were measured by a self-report instrument of conflict behaviors, the Conflict Tactics Scale, Revised. Parenting practices were measured with the Parenting Practices Questionnaire. A Pearson's correlation or analyses of variance were used to determine if a relationship existed between the level of physical and psychological aggression and parenting styles, and whether this relationship varies by the race/culture of the family and gender of the parents. The findings suggest that the interaction of race and gender impacts the parenting styles of African-American mothers. Clinical implications are suggested.

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION AND THE USE OF
PARENTING STYLES: A COMPARISON OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND
CAUCASIAN FAMILIES

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	ii
List of Tables.....	iii
List of Figures.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose.....	5
Review of the Literature.....	7
Physical and Psychological Aggression.....	7
Negotiation.....	10
Parenting Styles.....	11
Race.....	14
Parental Gender.....	15
Theoretical Framework.....	17
Ecological Theory.....	17
Hypotheses.....	20
Chapter 2: Methodology.....	23
Sample.....	23
Measures.....	23
Physical and Psychological Aggression and Negotiaion.....	23
Race.....	27
Authoritarian Parenting.....	27
Authoritative Parenting.....	27
Parental Gender.....	29
Procedure.....	29
Data Analysis.....	30
Chapter 3: Results.....	32
Preliminary Analysis.....	32
Tests of Hypotheses.....	34
Differences in Parening Across Race and Gender.....	36
Chapter 4: Discussion.....	41
Summary of Results.....	41
Behaviors Within the Couple Relationship and Parenting Styles.....	41
Clinical and Theoretical Implications.....	46
Limitations.....	48
Conclusion.....	49
Appendices.....	50
Appendix A: Conflict Tactics Scale-Revised (CTS-2).....	50
Appendix B: Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ).....	52
Appendix C: Family and Individual Information and Instructions Sheet.....	54
Appendix D: Couple Information and Instructions Sheet.....	56
References.....	58

List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of Conceptual and Operational Definition of Variables and Tools of Measurement.....	24
Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.....	34
Table 3: Correlations of Conflict Tactics and Parenting Practices for Mothers and Fathers	37
Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations for All Independent Variables and Dependent Variables for Mothers and Fathers	38
Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Authoritarian Parenting, Race, and Gender of Mothers and Fathers	40

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Effects of Parental Physical and Psychological Aggression, Negotiation, and Race on Parents' Use of Authoritarian Parenting Moderated by Gender.....	21
Figure 2: The Effects of Physical and Psychological Aggression, Negotiation, and Race on Parents' Use of Authoritative Parenting.....	22

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Racial differences in parenting practices have been a topic of considerable debate and controversy. Presently, researchers have not reached a consensus regarding whether race/cultural differences exist in parenting practices, specifically between African-Americans and Caucasians. Some research has found cultural differences between African-American and Caucasian parenting behaviors, specifically an increased use of corporal punishment within African-American families (Graham, 1992). Paul (2006) reported that African-Americans felt more pressure to have their children under control because of the prejudicial nature of American society. Research reviewed by McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, and Wilson (2000) also found that how one ethnic group evaluates another group's parenting style may impact parenting behaviors. She reported that parenting behaviors deemed typical by African-Americans were considered strict by Caucasian-American parents. Another factor that may add to the racial differences in parenting is the methods of observation and data collection in many of these studies. McLoyd et al. (2000) found that many studies examining the parenting behaviors of Caucasian parents used longitudinal methods and relied heavily on behavioral observation of the families. However, with African-American families, much of the data came from cross-sectional studies or short-term longitudinal studies. The authors also reported that most of the studies examining Caucasian families were of normative (low-risk, two parents) families, whereas the studies examining African-American families were often focused on high-risk families, single parent mothers and prevention and/or intervention strategies. Of the studies that focused on normative African-American

families, they lacked perspectives of both African-American parents (the mothers and fathers) and use of behavioral observation techniques. This discrepancy in the population samples of Caucasian and African-American families may also reinforce many of the stereotypes held about African-American families.

Classic research by Baumrind (1978) on parenting styles has provided another important lens for examining differences in parenting. Baumrind identified three distinct parenting styles that are common for the majority of Caucasian parents. These styles were later explored with other ethnic/racial groups including African-Americans (McGroder, 2000; Murry, Bynum, Brody, Wilert, & Stephens 2000). These styles were authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting. According to these three typologies, corporal punishment falls under the authoritarian parenting style. This is a parenting style that is commonly associated with the parenting practices of African-Americans, although this categorization is controversial (Bradley, 1998). Some studies have found that African-Americans tend to identify with the use of more authoritative parenting behaviors than authoritarian behaviors, which espouses the use of corporal punishment (Bluestone & LeMonda, 1999; Bradley, 1998). The findings of these various studies demonstrate the relatively unclear relationship between race and parenting practices within the African-American population.

As previously mentioned, one major difference research has reported in the parenting styles of African-Americans and Caucasians is the use of corporal punishment (Graham, 1992) The use of corporal punishment as a primary method of disciplining children still remains a controversial issue among both parents and professionals (Kadzin & Benjet, 2003). Corporal punishment has been a topic of great debate for decades and

continues to receive considerable media attention (e.g., Paul, 2006). Professionals that oppose the use of corporal punishment point to the negative effects that spanking may have on children (Gershoff, 2002). Those who believe that spanking is not necessarily harmful argue that spanking can be a useful discipline tool, but stress that it should not be administered out of anger or for punishment of mild misbehavior (Gershoff, 2002).

In addition to use of corporal punishment, other factors may contribute to differences in the use of parenting styles. This study will focus specifically on the role that physical and psychological aggression in the partner relationship and gender of the parents have on the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles.

Physical aggression and psychological aggression between parents have been shown to directly and indirectly affect children. Directly, parental aggression has been identified as one of the factors that may lead to an increase in the use of corporal punishment in child rearing. Research has found that parents experiencing high rates of physical and psychological aggression in their relationship often use discipline practices that are inconsistent and harsh (Kanoy, Ulku-Steiner, Cox, & Buchinal, 2003). Jouriles, Bourg, and Farris (1991) found that excessive, overt conflict resulting in physical aggression between partners led to negative long-term effects on children, particularly the development of child conduct problems. However, the sample used in the Jouriles' et al. (1991) study was comprised of 1,107 families chosen randomly from various socio-economic backgrounds whose race/ethnicity was not reported.

Parental educational attainment and/or social class is another variable that has been explored in relationship to parenting styles. For example, a study conducted by Coolahan, McWayne, Fantuzzo, and Grim (2002) explored parenting behaviors of 465

low-income African-American caregivers. Of this sample, 79% were mothers, 9% were fathers, and 12% were other relatives or foster parents. The study found caregivers that had a high school diploma or higher were less likely to use authoritarian parenting behaviors (a parenting style which includes the use of corporal punishment) than caregivers with education below a high school diploma. The results also showed that married caregivers were less likely to use authoritarian parenting behaviors than single caregivers. The study did not report the family structure of the parents as to whether or not the families were one or two-parent families. However, another recent study by Horn, Cheng, and Joseph (2004) found in a sample of 175 African-American families, 91.4% of whom were mothers and 7.4% of which were fathers, that African-Americans from lower, middle, and upper middle class backgrounds viewed corporal punishment as an acceptable form of discipline, with no significant differences across economic backgrounds. This study also did not report whether the parents were from one or two parent families. For the purpose of this study, the income and education of the sample will be examined in the preliminary analyses of the demographic characteristics of the study.

Constructive conflict tactics have also been investigated in the relationship between couple conflict tactics and parental behaviors. A study by Cummings, Goeke-Morey, and Papp (2003) of children's responses to marital conflict found that constructive conflict tactics elicited higher positive responses in children. The sample consisted of 116 families comprised of two adult caregivers that were living together. The sample was 89% Caucasian and 6 % African-American. However, a limitation of this study was that negotiation was not one of the constructive conflict tactics measured in the

study. However, this study provides a foundation for examining other constructive conflict tactics.

Another area of investigation has been the relationship between parental gender and parenting practices, an area also resulting in similarly unclear findings. A study by Flynn (1998) exploring attitudes towards spanking in a sample of 207 college students attending a public southeastern university found that males were more likely to have more favorable attitudes towards spanking than females. Of this sample, 32.8% were males, 63.8% were females, 84.1% of the sample was Caucasian, and 15.9% were African-American. Contrasting findings were reported in research that found mothers more likely to endorse the use of corporal punishment than fathers were (Mahoney, Donnelly, Lewis, & Maynard, 2000; Pinderhughes, Bates, Dodge, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000). Both of these later studies used participants who were currently parents, as opposed to Flynn's (1998) participants that were neither married nor parents.

The findings of these studies have begun to shed some light on the complex factors that influence the use of parenting styles. However, additional research needs to be conducted with more diverse populations, specifically focusing on African-Americans and fathers who have been largely neglected in past research.

Purpose

The research on the interaction of parental use of physical and psychological aggression in the couple relationship, race, and gender on the use of parenting styles has reported contradictory findings. Unfortunately much of what is known about the relationship between these factors has come from samples consisting of mostly Caucasian mothers, with little or no focus on African-American two-parents families. In addition,

the majority of previous research has focused on maternal parenting behaviors, largely excluding fathers.

Therefore, the present study will examine the influence of physical and psychological aggression on the parenting styles of a sample of African-American and Caucasian-American two-parent families. This study will examine 1) the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting in African-American and Caucasian families, 2) the amount of physical and psychological aggression between the couple, and 3) the differences between African-American and Caucasian parenting styles. This study will also explore whether gender differences exist in the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting in both African-American and Caucasian families and examine the interrelationships of each of these variables.

This study has important implications because it will help clarify the relationship between physical and psychological aggression in the parent relationship and how this relates to the parenting style of the parents. This study will also examine factors in the parent relationship such as negotiation, and how this impacts the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting. Finally, this study will also add to the existing literature that has begun to examine the influence that race used in this study as a proxy for culture/race, the broad concept which encompasses the biological race and the larger cultural context and gender may have on the parenting styles of African-American and Caucasian families and the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting.

Review of Literature

Physical Aggression and Psychological Aggression

Marital and relationship conflict spans behaviors ranging from mild verbal disagreements to the other end of the spectrum, extreme physical aggression. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most frequently used terms describing these behaviors which include: threatened physical, sexual, psychological, or stalking violence by a partner (Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson, 2004). The population used in this sample was comprised of married and cohabitating partners, and physical aggression and psychological aggression were the terms used to measure destructive couple conflict tactics in this study. All couples experience some degree of conflict throughout the duration of their relationship, and in a small percentage of couple's conflict can develop into abuse. In his review of literature, Fincham (2004) estimated that physical aggression occurs in 30% of married couples in the United State. Relationship conflict that results in physical aggression transcends ethnic and cultural groups. A decade review of the literature by McLoyd et al. (2000) reported, that from sample of 7,000 married couples in the National Survey of Families and Households, African-Americans were 1.58 times more likely to experience physical violence with their partners than Caucasians. In that study, income, education, age, number of children, and the duration of the marriage were controlled. McLoyd et al. also found that in multiple studies African-American women were more likely to underreport physically aggressive acts perpetrated by their partners.

Physical and psychological aggression can have significant effects on partner well being. In a review of literature, Fincham (2004) found that 10% of the physical aggression that occurred in married couples resulted in physical injuries. In addition to

the physical injuries that result from physically aggressive relationship conflict, psychological and emotional effects are often present. Physical and psychological aggression has been linked to depressive symptoms, eating disorders, binge drinking, and male alcoholism (Fincham, 2004). Also, various areas of daily life can be affected by excessive physical and psychological aggression, particularly parenting. In a study with a sample of 138 largely rural Caucasian families, Kanoy et al., (2003) found that in parental relationships with high levels of marital distress, three specific parenting behaviors were affected: parental discipline behaviors, parental involvement, and parental consistency. Holden and Ritchie (1991) supported and extended these findings, suggesting that marital discord leads to parental inconsistency in the form of poor communication between partners. Parents may also disagree about child rearing which leads to inconsistency between parents. For example, each parent may use different parenting practices and change these practices directly in front of the children. Mann and McKenzie (1996) also found differences in parents that experienced high levels of relationship conflict. The authors suggested that fathers may withdraw from their children in situations of high levels of relationship discord, often resulting in mothers becoming less firm with the discipline of the children as a means of compensating for the father's withdrawal.

Buehler and Gerard (2002) described the relationship between physical aggression, psychological aggression and ineffective parenting as "spillover". Spillover was defined as the direct transfer of mood, affect, and behavior from one setting to another (Buehler & Gerard, 2002). The spillover of physical and psychological aggression into parenting practices may lead to high levels of child maladjustment

specifically increased psychological distress, noncompliance, poor peer relationships, and delinquency. The term “spillover” has been used in previous studies to describe this relationship between partner physical and psychological aggression and parenting practices. Holden and Ritchie (1991) found in a review of literature that parents experiencing discord will use more negative disciplinary practices with their children than parents who are not experiencing relationship conflict. The authors found that parents that are violent with each other tend to interact with their children less positively and have more interactions that are initiated by anger and the desire to punish their children. Thus, the link between spousal physical and psychological aggression and physical child punishment has been proposed.

Gender differences of parents have also been found in the way that parenting is affected by physical and psychological aggression (Kanoy et al., 2003). Kanoy et al. found in their review of literature that physical and psychological aggression had more negative effects on the parenting practices of fathers than mothers. For example, fathers have been found to have higher negativity with daughters, and less attachment with infants than mothers. The authors also reported that fathers experiencing physical and psychological aggression with their partners were also more likely to demonstrate parenting styles characterized by power assertiveness, intrusiveness, and rejection.

Despite the research suggesting that physically aggressive relationship conflict can have detrimental effects on children, other research supports the fact that positive parental involvement may lessen these negative effects. For example, Mann and MacKenzie (1996) found (in a sample of 50 two-parent families) that parents who use consistent discipline and involved parenting may buffer the effects of overt physical and

verbal aggression between the spouses. However, the major limitation of this study was that the sample used was largely middle-class, Caucasian families from a small southern town; therefore, these findings cannot be generalized to an ethnically diverse population.

Much of the reviewed research suggested that there are significant differences in the parenting and discipline practices for families who experience relationship conflict in the form of physical and psychological aggression. However, these samples consist largely of Caucasian two-parent households or mothers from said households. Because prior studies have largely excluded African-Americans and fathers, it is important to include them to determine if the findings hold for African-American two-parent families.

Negotiation

In addition to destructive conflict tactics, constructive behaviors also have an affect on parenting behaviors and child well being. Constructive behaviors can be defined as positive behaviors directed to oppose one's partner, and can include behaviors such as collaboration, compromise, brainstorming and negotiation. (Rinaldi & Howe, 2003). A study of the effect of destructive and constructive behaviors and parental emotions on child well-being found a positive relationship between the parents' use of constructive behavior and secure emotional responses of children (Goeke-Morey, Papp, & Dukewich, 2003). The results of the study also found that constructive conflict tactics were more consistently related to children's positive reactions towards their parents than parents' positive emotions alone. The sample consisted of 51 couples, 94% of which were Caucasian, and 4% of African-American.

A study by Rinaldi and Howe (2003) examined the role of spillover of constructive and destructive conflict tactics within the marital, parent-child, and sibling

subsystems, key concepts described by Minuchin's (1981) structural family therapy. The results of the study found that constructive marital behaviors were positively correlated with parent-child reasoning strategies. However, the sample of this study consisted of 60 middle-class Caucasian families; therefore the results may not be generalized to a more diverse population. Although there are a variety of behaviors that constitute constructive conflict tactics, for the purpose of this study, negotiation will be the only constructive conflict tactic measured.

Parenting Styles

Baumrind (1978) organized common parenting practices into three well-defined parenting styles: authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian. Baumrind has described the characteristics of each style.

Authoritative parenting encourages a give and take relationship with children. Parents typically are firm, reasonable, rational, and consistent. Autonomy for the children is encouraged, while still adhering to conformity and established standards. Authoritative parents seek to establish a balance between exerting parental control while still encouraging children to develop their own beliefs and interests (Baumrind, 1967). Reason and power are used to reinforce parental objectives and decisions are made by the parent that may encompass, but do not completely adhere to, a child's individual desires (Baumrind, 1967).

Permissive parents present themselves as resources at their child's disposal. They make few demands of their children concerning household duties or appropriate behavior and allow their children to regulate their own activities (Baumrind, 1967). The parents do not require children to obey rules and standards and do not focus on shaping a child's

future behavior. Control is rarely exercised; attempts to reason with or manipulate the child into obeying are more often used. The permissive parenting style is typically characterized by excessive freedom and lax, or minimal discipline.

Authoritarian parents function on the premise that it is their responsibility to control and shape a child's behavior in accordance with rules and standards (Baumrind, 1967). Parents who use this method typically expect strict adherence to their rules and guidelines, while leaving little room for reasoning. A child's autonomy is often restricted as a means of keeping a child in his or her place (Baumrind, 1967). Household tasks and chores are valued and emphasized as a means to encourage a work ethic. Open dialogue between parent and child is not permitted because of the belief that a parent's word is the right word. Authoritarian parents value obedience and forceful, punitive measures when a child's behavior conflicts with what is believed to be the "right" conduct (Baumrind, 1967). Therefore, authoritarian parents tend to use physical punishment as a primary method of discipline more often than parents who favor other parenting styles.

The definition of what constitutes corporal punishment has been the center of significant debate. In the past, corporal punishment was often characterized by the use of an object such as a paddle when spanking a child. Straus (1994) defined corporal punishment as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purposes of correction or control of the child's behavior" (p.543). This definition reflects one popular view of the use of corporal punishment. This view has evolved to the use of an open hand as the most acceptable method of corporal punishment. Baumrind (2002) viewed acceptable corporal

punishment as several slaps on a child's bottom, while strongly discouraging punishment behavior that could be deemed abusive (e.g. resulting in bruising or injury).

The line between “acceptable” corporal punishment and abuse is often difficult to recognize and clearly define. In some instances, punitive behavior that may be deemed corporal punishment can easily become abusive (Gershoff, 2002). Abusive behaviors include but are not limited to: angry beatings, slaps, and hits. Kadzin and Benjet (2003) defined physical abuse as: “corporal punishment that is harsh and excessive, involves the use of objects such as paddles, belts, etc., and is directed to parts of the body other than extremities, and causes or has the potential to cause physical harm” (p. 100).

Distinguishing between normative punishment behaviors and child abuse is a serious issue because of the risks to the safety of children. Accurately making this distinction is also of great importance because of the effects harsh discipline and/or abuse have been found to have on the overall wellbeing of children. For example, children who are frequently spanked often have poor relationships with their parents, are often hugged and played with less by their parents, and are more likely to have mental health issues (Kadzin & Benjet, 2003). However, making this distinction accurately can prove difficult because many disciplining behaviors that may be deemed abusive by some are sometimes regarded as normative discipline in other families. For the purpose of this study, only the authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles will be examined.

Race

Theorists have argued about whether racial differences in parenting styles exist. The extent to which the parenting styles of African-Americans differ from Caucasian families is not completely understood (McLoyd et al., 2000). Hill and Bush (2001)

attribute differences in parenting practices of African-Americans and European-Americans to differences in values and goals. Each group may utilize parenting practices that they believe leads to the most desirable outcome for their children. As previously mentioned, physical punishment is one example where differences have been reported. Previous research has found that African-American parents are more likely to use the authoritarian style of parenting than Caucasians (Bradley, 1998). Flynn (1994) supports this view, also finding that African-Americans are three times more likely to spank (a practice that is characteristic of authoritarian parenting) than Caucasian-American parents. In a phone survey of 2,068 parents, Regalado, Sareen, Inkelas, Wissow, and Halfon (2004) found that Black parents were twice as likely to report frequent spanking than either Hispanic or Caucasian participants. However, Querido, Warner, and Eyberg (2002) report contrasting evidence in their study of parenting styles and child behavioral problems, finding that African-American families ascribed to the authoritative parenting style, favoring reasoning over the use of physical discipline. Querido et al. also found that this authoritative parenting style was predictive of fewer behavioral problems in the children. Another important finding of this study was that the lower the educational level of the caretaker, the more likely he or she was to use authoritarian parenting. This sample consisted of 108 African-American caretakers of children ranging in age from 3 to 6 years. The sample of caretakers consisted of 96 mothers, 3 stepmothers, 1 aunt, 7 grandmothers, and 1 foster mother. Of this sample, half were single mothers. Again, this was a sample that largely excluded fathers, a group commonly underrepresented in research on this topic.

Current literature is also beginning to examine the differences of parenting styles within African-American families. As previously mentioned, in the study by Horn, Cheng, and Joseph (2004), there was some evidence that there are no significant differences in discipline methods within African-Americans across different socio-economic backgrounds'. Rather, the authors point to a higher acceptance of corporal punishment as a primary form of parental discipline for all African-Americans. Bluestone and LeMonda (1999) reported opposite evidence, finding that in a sample of largely working and middle class African-American families, authoritative parenting was often used with reports of infrequent use of physical punishment. Bradley (1998) also supports this view, finding that African-American families favor authoritative parenting practices and may only resort to physical punishment in more severe situations, such as when a child directly challenges authority. Thus, available research to date reports equivocal findings about what differences, if any, exist between the use of corporal punishment between African-American and Caucasian parents.

Parental Gender

Research in the area of parental gender differences in the use of corporal punishment is scarce. This is largely due to the fact that fathers are rarely included in the literature, which primarily focused on maternal parenting behaviors (Bradley, 2000; Pinderhughes, et al., 2000). In the studies where fathers were present, there was often little information about what differences if any exists in their use of corporal punishment. However, Bradley (2000) conducted a study that did include the disciplinary practices of African-American fathers. The sample consisted of 121 African-American parents (44 fathers and 77 mothers). The mean age of the participants was 40.8 years old, and it was

reported that the majority of the participants were from two-parent households, although exact numbers were not given. Although no significant differences were reported among the African-American mothers and fathers, of the disciplinary practices measured, the results indicated that the mean frequencies for the use of spanking were lower for African-American fathers than for African-American mothers. The study also found that the majority of the African-American fathers favored the use of discussion with their children as a primary means of discipline. Pinderhughes et al. (2000) examined parental discipline in a study of 978 parents with a sample comprised of 475 Caucasian, and 95 African-American mothers, and 358 Caucasian and 30 African-American fathers. Of these parents 585 were cohabiting families, but the ethnicity was not reported for this group. Pinderhughes et al. (2000) found that African-American mothers were more likely to use physical discipline than African-American fathers. However, a limitation of this study was that the sample size being compared consisted of three times more African-American mothers than African-American fathers.

A study by Mahoney, Donnelly, Lewis, and Maynard (2000) examined the frequency of the use of corporal punishment in a clinic referred sample of 359 mothers and 140 fathers. Of a sample that was 90% Caucasian and 1% African-American, the findings showed that the mothers in the samples of both clinic-referred and non-clinic referred parents, mothers were more likely to use corporal punishment than fathers residing in the same household. The researchers hypothesized that these findings were the result of the greater amount of time that mothers spend parenting than fathers. Because little research has considered the parenting styles of fathers in general and

African-American fathers in particular, this study explored what differences, if any, existed in the sample population of fathers in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Theory

One theory that can be used to explain the increased occurrences of physical discipline in African-American families is the ecological systems model. According to this framework, individual behavior can be explained by the influence of four systems. These systems include: the microsystem, the meso-level, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem refers to the individual level dealing with role and relations. The meso-level corresponds to the family level and interactions between two or more settings. The exosystem corresponds to external setting outside of a person such as the community. Finally, the macrosystem corresponds to the larger culture to which one ascribes.

Through the lens of the ecological model, the more frequent use of physical punishment in African-American families might be explained as a combination of the influences of the cultural (macrosystem) and familial practices (meso-level). The combination of these two influences has led to the use of the authoritarian style that is perceived to be most effective by many African-American parents (which will be explained below). In the longitudinal study of African-American and European-American parents Deater-Deckard and Dodge (1997) found that physical discipline is often viewed as an indication of positive parenting in the African-American culture. The authors suggested that this may be due to the difference in meaning that physical punishment has across cultures.

Research has also suggested that the use of the authoritarian style may have positive effects for African-American youth, across different community contexts (Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996). Lamborn et al. found that the community context is an important factor to examine when looking at the use of authoritarian parenting. Their study of 3,645 students consisted of approximately 182 African-Americans and approximately 2,219 Caucasians. Although it was found that authoritarian parenting had positive effects for African-American youth in poor, unsafe, communities, it was also found that authoritarian parenting played a more positive role for African-American youth raised in predominately Caucasian neighborhoods than those living in ethnically diverse communities. The researchers hypothesized that in predominately Caucasian neighborhoods, African-American youth are afforded more advantages economically at the price of facing increased discrimination. These youths become more aware of their minority status, a realization that may not be as salient in predominately African-American neighborhoods. Therefore, instead of focusing on safety concerns that are a product of poorer neighborhoods with little resources, parents living in predominately Caucasian neighborhoods focused their attention away from protecting the physical safety of their child to concerns about the dangers of prejudice and racism. However, because of the relatively small sample of African-Americans, these findings may not generalize to the larger population of African-Americans.

In addition, Chao (1994) suggested that the standard of effective parenting, the authoritative parenting style, is not always beneficial for ethnic minority youth. This is thought to be a result of the increased risks African-American youth encounter that their Caucasian counterparts do not face. These risks include violence, racism, and

discrimination (Kotchick & Forehand, 2002). Parenting of African-American children is characterized by a desire to instill pride in African-American culture while teaching children how to navigate successfully between the minority African-American culture, and the majority culture (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 1985; Strom et al., 2001). Previous research has also suggested that the authoritarian style is often used in the African-American community as a means of protecting children from the dangers of their environment and of promoting their chance of survival and success (Kelley, Power, & Winbush, 1992). The differences between African-American and Caucasian parents that some research suggests exist were explored in the sample of African-American and Caucasian participants in the proposed study.

Ecological theory is also useful in explaining the occurrence of destructive couple conflict tactics in African-American families. Many of the stressors that African-Americans experiences in the exosystem (i.e. racism, joblessness, and poverty) may contribute to an increased likelihood of violence within a couple relationship (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995). Because African-Americans are more likely to experience many of these stressors more frequently than Caucasian families, African-Americans may be at a greater risk of exhibiting destructive couple conflict tactics. Research by LaTaillade (1999) may support this hypothesis finding a negative relationship between institutional experiences of racism and the use of constructive communication, as well as a positive relationship between these experiences of racism and destructive communication. Thus, stressors that occur within the exosystem may then begin to filter to other systems, particularly to the meso-level, or family level, where couple conflict tactics occur.

Hypotheses

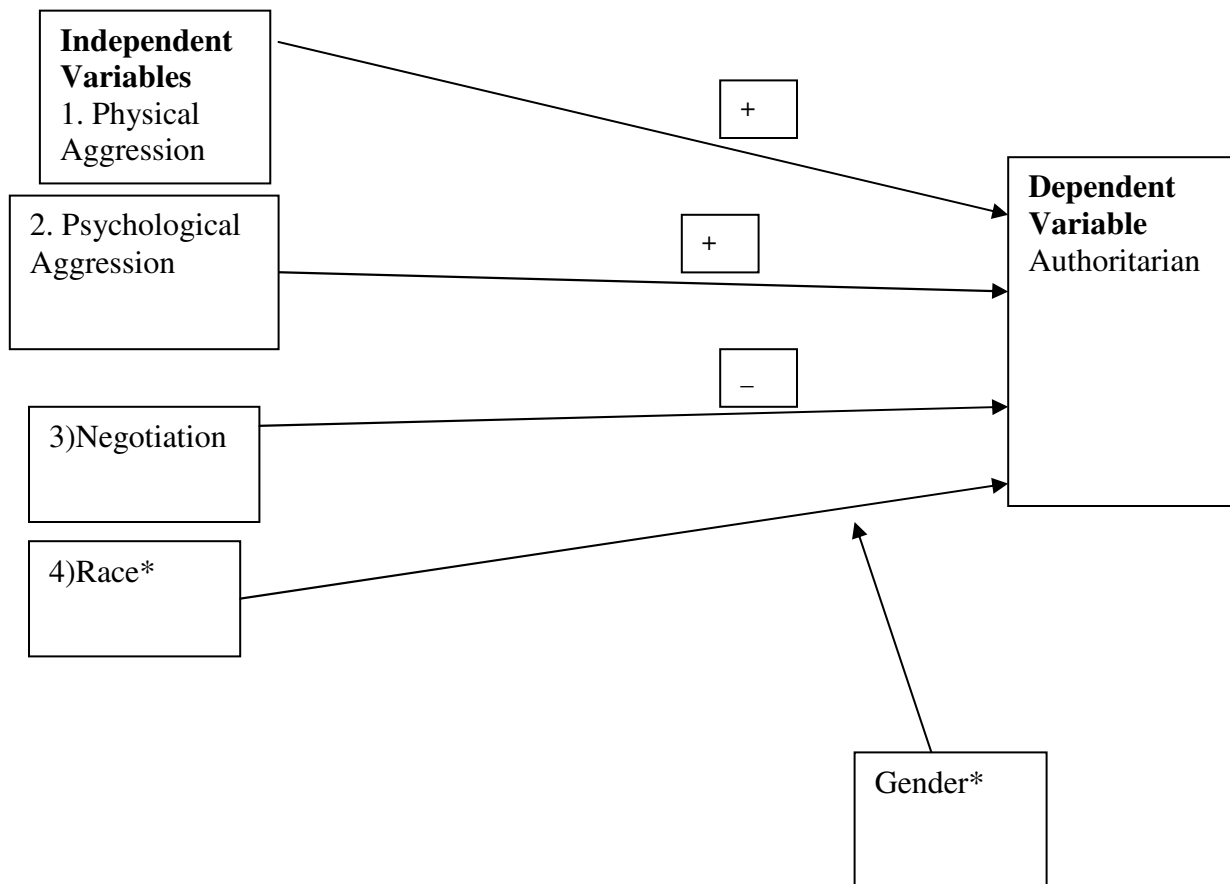
Based on the reviewed literature it was hypothesized that:

- 1) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's physical aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 2) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's physical aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices.
- 3) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's psychological aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 4) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's psychological aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices.
- 5) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's negotiation in the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 6) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's negotiation in the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices.
- 7) It was expected that African-American parents would self-report more authoritarian parenting practices than Caucasian parents.

- 8) There would be an interaction of race and gender such that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers would be more likely to self-report use of authoritarian parenting practices than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers.

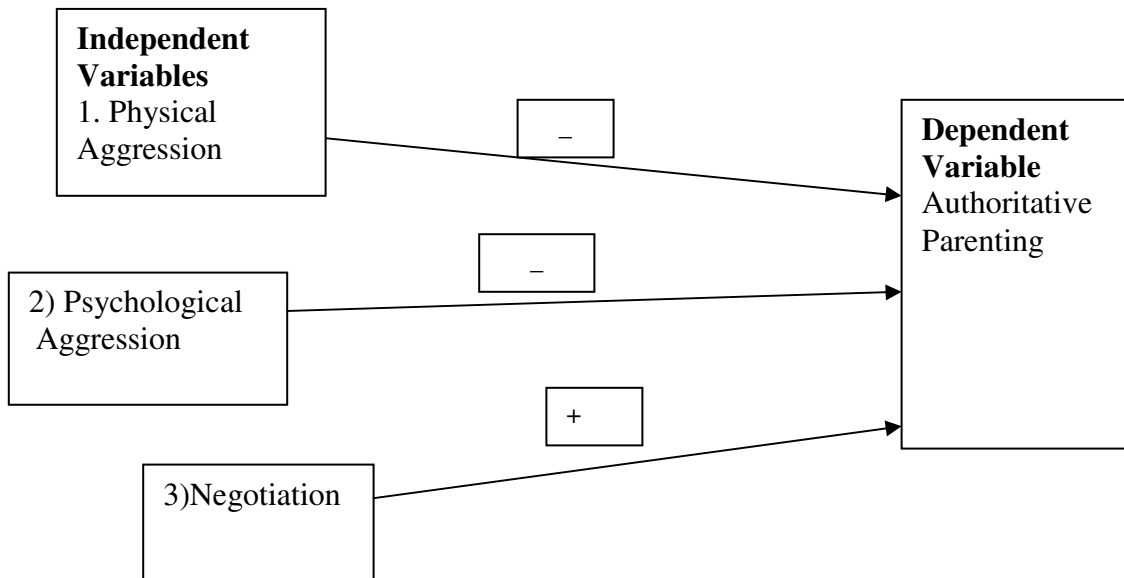
Figure 1.

The Effects of Couple Conflict Tactics and Race Moderated by Gender on Parents' Use of Authoritarian Parenting



* Interaction Effect

Figure 2. The Effects of Couple's Conflict Tactics on Parents' Use of Authoritative Parenting



CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was a secondary data analysis of pre-existing data collected from families that voluntarily sought couple or family therapy at the Family Service Center (FSC), at the University of Maryland, College Park. The families were seen in the Family Service Center from the years 2001-2006. The sample consisted of 92 participants, 24 African-American and 22 Caucasian-American families. The sample was comprised of two-parent households, in which both family members have attended therapy at the FSC. All of the participants in the sample indicated that they were currently married and living together, or living together and not married. The demographics of the participants that were included were: the age of the participants in years, the highest level of education completed, age of children, gross couple annual income, and the years together of the couple. This information was gathered from the Couple Information and Instructions Sheet and the Family/Individual Information and Instructions Sheet (Appendix C & D). This study was approved study by IRB # 06-0295.

Measures

A summary of the variables, definitions and measures can be found in Table 1.

Physical Aggression, Psychological Aggression, and Negotiation

The independent variables, physical aggression, psychological aggression, and negotiation were measured by the *Conflict Tactics Scale, Revised (CTS2)*, a 78-item self-report instrument assessing mild to severe levels of physical and psychological aggression (See Appendix A). Participants were asked to report the frequency of specific behaviors in the past four months, with responses ranging from 0=*not at all in the*

Table 1.

Summary of Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Variables and Tools of Measurement

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition	Tool of Measurement
Independent Variables			
1) Physical Aggression	Overt, physically aggressive acts such as pushing, shoving and hitting. (Straus, Hamby, McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996).	Males' and females' reports of their partners' use of physical aggression as reported on the Physical Assault, and Injury subscales, with responses ranging on a scale of 0-9	<i>Conflict Tactics Scale(2)</i> Physical Assault items: 8, 10, 18, 22, 28, 38, 44, 46, 54, 62, and 74. Injury items: 12, 24, 32, 42, 56, and 72.
2) Psychological Aggression	Any behaviors occurring within the context of a couple relationship that may damage the emotional well-being of the partner. (Straus, Hamby, McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996).	Males' and females' reports of their partners' use of psychological aggression as reported on the Psychological Aggression subscale with responses ranging on a scale of 0-9	<i>Conflict Tactics Scale(2)</i> Psychological Aggression items: 6, 26, 30, 36, 50, 66, 68, and 70.
3) Negotiation	Any actions taken to constructively settle a disagreement through discussion. (Straus, Hamby, McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996).	Males' and females' reports of their partners' use of negotiation behaviors as reported on the Negotiation subscale with responses ranging on a scale of 0-9	<i>Conflict Tactics Scale(2)</i> Negotiation items: 2, 4, 14, 40, 60, and 78.
4) Race	The ethnic/cultural background that an individual identifies with.	Participant's responses to answer choices indicating African-American or Caucasian	<i>Family/Individual Information & Instructions Sheet</i>

Table 1 continued

Summary of Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Variables and Tools of

Measurement

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition	Tool of Measurement
Dependent Variables			
1)Authoritarian Parenting	Parenting style characterized by strict discipline and little room for reasoning or compromise on the part of the child. (Baumrind, 1967).	Parenting styles defined on the <i>Parenting Practices Questionnaire</i> developed by Robinson et al, 1995.	<i>Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)</i> Authoritarian Items: 2,6 10, 13, 17, 23, 26, 28, 32, 40, 44, 47, 50, 54, 56, and 59.
2)Authoritative Parenting	Parenting style characterized by a give and take relationship with children, and firm discipline while still encouraging a child's autonomy. (Baumrind, 1967).	Parenting styles defined on the <i>Parenting Practices Questionnaire</i> developed by Robinson et al, 1995.	<i>Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)</i> Authoritative items: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 39, 42, 46, 48, 51, 53, 55, 58, 60, and 62.
Moderator Variable			
Gender	The social context of one's sex.	Participants responses' indicating male or female	<i>Family/Individual Information & Instructions Sheet and/or Couple Information & Instructions Sheet</i>

past 4 months but did occur before, 1=once, 2=twice, 3=3-5 times, 4=6-10 times, 7=11-20 times, 8=more than 20 times, or 9= never in the relationship. These questions measured the reported levels of physical assault, sexual coercion, injury, negotiation, and psychological aggression.

The Conflict Tactics Scale, originally developed by Straus (1979) is a measure of physical and psychological abuse in couples that are dating, cohabiting, or married. This instrument was later revised by Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman (1996) to include scales measuring sexual coercion and injury and renamed the *CTS2*. The *CTS2* was chosen for this study, because it is a measure of conflict behaviors that is given to all couples that enter therapy at the Family Service Center. The questions that were used for this study coincide with the physical assault, injury, negotiation, and psychological aggression subscales. Participants were asked about their own behaviors as well as their partner's behaviors. For this study, the items used were the participant's report of his or her partner's behavior.

An example of an item on the physical assault subscale is: "My partner did this to me (pushed or shoved)". The range of scores for this subscale is 0-66 with higher scores indicating more reported physical aggression. There are six items on the injury subscale and the range of scores for this subscale is from 0-36. An example of an item on the injury subscale is: "My partner passed out from being hit on the head in a fight with me". These two subscales are combined in this study to measure physical aggression, thus the range of scores for this subscale is from 0-102. There are six items on the negotiation subscale and an example of an item is: "My partner showed care for me even though we disagreed". The range of scores for this subscale is 0-36, with higher scores indicating

more reports of negotiation behaviors. Eight items make up the psychological aggression subscale with a range of scores from 0-48, with higher scores indicating more reports of psychologically aggressive behaviors. An example of an item on this subscale is: “My partner did this to me (insulted or swore at me)”. The scores of the subscales were summed to determine the scores for physical and psychological aggression and negotiation. The internal consistency reliability of the measure ranges from .79 to .95 for the instrument (Straus et al., 1996).

Race

Information concerning participants’ race was gathered from the *Family/Individual Information & Instructions Sheet or Couple Information & Instructions Sheet* that is found in each of the Family Service Center assessment packets (Appendices C & D). The information sheet asks participants to indicate their race. Forty-eight participants who indicated their race as African-American and 44 participants who indicated their race as Caucasian-American were chosen. Interracial families that were present in the data were excluded for the purpose of this study.

Authoritarian Parenting

The dependent variable, authoritarian parenting was measured with a self-report measure, the *Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)* (Appendix B). The PPQ was developed by Robinson, Mandelco, Olsen and Hart (1995). The questionnaire contained 133 items that were later reduced to include the present 62 items that measures parenting behaviors. Participants were asked to report the frequency of the behaviors with responses ranging from a score of 1=*never*, 2=*once in a while*, 3=*about half of the time*, 4=*very often*, 5=*always*. This instrument is included in the assessment packet given to

couples and families before beginning the first therapy session. The responses were scored to determine authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles. The authoritarian parenting style consists of 20 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .86 (Robinson et al., 1995). The authoritarian parenting style is organized into subscales measuring verbal hostility, corporal punishment, nonreasoning, punitive strategies, and directiveness. There are 16 items that correspond with this style and an example of an item of this subscale is: "I spank my children when they are disobedient". The range of possible scores for this subscale is 20-100. Only the responses corresponding to the authoritarian and authoritative parenting were included and scored. The participants' scores for authoritarian parenting were determined by using the mean score of the responses for the authoritarian parenting subscale

Authoritative Parenting

The dependent variable, authoritative parenting was also measured with a self-report measure, the *Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)* (Appendix B). The authoritative parenting style consists of 27 items with a Cronbach's alpha of .91 (Robinson et al., 1995). This parenting style is organized into two subscales measuring warmth and involvement, and reasoning/induction. An example of an item from this subscale is "I am easy going and relaxed with my children" The range of scores on PPQ for the authoritative parenting style is from 27-135, with higher scores indicated more authoritative behaviors. The participants' scores were determined by summing each item in the scale, using the mean score of the responses for the authoritative parenting subscale. The scoring on the PPQ for the authoritative parenting style is from 1-5 with higher scores indicating how often authoritative behaviors are used.

Parental Gender

Information concerning the gender of the participants was also gathered from the *Family/Individual Information & Instructions Sheet* or the *Couple Information & Instructions Sheet* found in the Family Service Center assessment packets (Appendices C& D). The information sheet asked participants to indicate their gender. The sample gathered information for both fathers and mothers living in the same household with their children.

Procedure

Families and couples that requested therapy were first asked to complete a phone interview, usually lasting 10 to 15 minutes. During this phone interview, callers were asked about the general concerns that have lead them to seek therapy, information about the members of their household, and information pertaining to problems with substance use, as well as safety and legal issues. After this phone interview, families and couples were assigned to one therapist or a co-therapy team. During the initial meeting, families and couples were assigned a 5-digit case number so that their identifying information remained confidential. Families were told of the fee for therapy and were given a consent form to sign in order to participate in therapy. In addition, families and couples were asked to complete 12 research instruments, which usually takes 1-2 hours to complete. This assessment packet contains research instruments to gather demographic information as well as information about a wide variety of behaviors such as familial social support, substance use, and level of depression. From this assessment battery, the *Family/Individual Information & Instructions Sheet* or *Couple Information & Instructions Sheet*, the *Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)*, and the *Conflict*

Tactics Scale (CTS2) were used for this study. Couples were given assessment instruments in separate rooms, and an interview was conducted to gather information about domestic violence, anger management, and substance use. The assessment packets were checked for completeness and later entered into a database for family and individual data. The data was entered based on the 5-digit code assigned to each family or couple case. Therefore, the family's identifying information was kept confidential.

Data Analysis

For this study, an alpha level of .05 was selected to be the criterion for significance. Any effects between .05 and .10 were considered trends. A study by Riggs, Murphy, & O'Leary, (1989) found in a study of college undergraduates that participants were much less likely to report physical aggression if they were the perpetrators. Therefore, parents' report of their partner's behavior was used because typically the abused partner's report is more accurate than that of the abuser. Pearson's correlations were used to examine if there were significant relationships between behaviors in the couple relationship and parenting behaviors in the following hypotheses:

- 1) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's physical aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 2) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's physical aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices.

- 3) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's psychological aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 4) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's psychological aggression within the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices.
- 5) There would be a negative association between parent's report of partner's negotiation in the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritarian parenting practices.
- 6) There would be a positive association between parent's report of partner's negotiation in the couple relationship and self-reports of authoritative parenting practices

An analysis of variance was used to examine differences between race and gender, on the use of parenting styles in hypotheses 7 and 8:

- 7) It was expected that African-American parents would self-report more authoritarian parenting practices than Caucasian parents.
- 8) There would be an interaction of race and gender such that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers would be more likely to self-report use of authoritarian parental practices than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Table 2 contains the analyses of the demographic characteristics of the sample in this study. Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine if any significant differences existed between the demographic characteristics of the African-American and Caucasian samples. A *t*-test was conducted to determine any differences between racial groups in the average number of years together, using the mothers' report. The mothers' report was used because the women's report is typically held as the acceptable standard. No significant differences were discovered finding on average that the African-American couples had been together for 10.07 years and Caucasian couples had been together for 11.14 years. A *t*-test was used to determine if any significant differences in age existed between the African-American and Caucasian samples. No significant differences were discovered, finding that the average age of the African-American mothers was 38.9 years and 41.5 for African-American fathers. The average age of the Caucasian mothers was 40 years and 42.4 years of age for the Caucasian fathers.

Level of education was examined using Chi-square analyses conducted separately for mothers and fathers. African-American and Caucasian fathers were compared on level of education below and above a bachelor's degree, finding no significant differences. African-American and Caucasian mothers were also compared on level of education both below and above a bachelor's degree, finding no significant differences. Of the African-American couples, 66.7% of fathers and 54.2% of mothers did not obtain a bachelor's degree, and 33.8% of fathers and 45.8% of mothers had an education of a bachelor's or above. Within the Caucasian couples, 54.5% of fathers and

63.6% of mothers had not obtained a bachelor's degree and 45.5% of fathers and 36.4% of mothers had obtained at least a bachelor's or above. Differences in income were also examined using a *t*-test analysis that was conducted separately for mothers and fathers. The results also found no significant differences. On average, African-American fathers reported an income of \$42,279.71, and African-American mothers reported an average income of \$39,342.64. Caucasian fathers reported an average income of \$48,728.57 and Caucasian mothers reported an average income of \$30,700.42.

A Chi-square analysis was used to determine if any differences existed between these two groups concerning the age of their children; i.e., those with at least one child under 12 years of age, and those with all children 13 years of age and above. The mother's report of children's age was used because mothers are more likely to be the keepers of family records and know the ages of their children. The Chi-square analysis found no significant differences, with approximately 42% of African-Americans and Caucasians having at least one child 12 years of age or younger.

As shown in Table 2, 43.5% of the African-American couples were married and 41.5% of Caucasian couples were married, a difference that was not significant. With no significant differences found between the African-American and Caucasian samples regarding demographic information, it was determined that those characteristics would not need to be controlled for in later analyses.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	African-American (N=24)		Caucasian (N=22)		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>p</u>
Years together	10.1	7.58	11.1	6.17	.61
Age					
Fathers	41.5	8.06	42.4	9.10	.74
Mothers	38.3	8.62	40.0	9.46	.49
Income ^a					
Fathers	43.3	36.1	48.7	27.2	.52
Mothers	39.3	36.0	30.7	27.3	.40

Variable	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	<i>p</i>
Education					
Below Bachelors					
Fathers	66.7%	24	54.5%	22	.38
Mothers	54.2%	24	63.6%	22	.38
Bachelors or above					
Fathers	33.8%	24	45.5%	22	.38
Mothers	45.8%	24	36.4%	22	.38
Age of children					
At least one child 12 yrs. or below	42%	24	42%	23	.53
Child 13 yrs. and older	8.9%	24	6.7%	23	.53
Married	43.5%	46	41.5%	46	.55

Note: ^a Gross yearly income in thousands earned by each individual.

Tests of the Hypotheses

Relationship between couple conflict tactics and parenting practices

The results for hypotheses 1-6 can be found in Table 3. The means of each variable can be found in Table 4.

According to hypothesis 1, *it was expected that a positive association would exist between physical aggression within the partner relationship, and the parents' use of*

authoritarian parenting. Pearson's correlational analyses were conducted to determine if an association existed between physical aggression and psychological aggression, as reported on the *CTS (2)*, and the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles, determined by responses reported on the *PPQ*. The analysis was conducted separately for mothers and fathers. Contrary to expectations, the results of this analysis did not find any significant relationship between these two variables for either mothers ($r=.06, p= .36$), or fathers ($r=.11, p= .24$).

According to hypothesis 2, *it was expected that there would be a negative association between physical aggression within the partner relationship and the parents' use of authoritative parenting*. The Pearson's correlational analysis was conducted separately for mothers ($r= -.21, p=.09$), and fathers ($r= -.03, p= .49$). A trend was discovered in the sample of mothers, suggesting that a negative relationship exists between the use of physical aggression and the use of authoritative parenting, but this relationship is not a significant level.

According to hypothesis 3, *it was expected that there would be a positive association between psychological aggression within the partner relationship, and the parents' use of authoritarian parenting*. A Pearson's correlational analysis was conducted separately for mothers ($r=.26, p=.06$), and fathers ($r= -.07, p=.32$). A trend was discovered in the sample of mothers, suggesting that a positive relationship exists between the use of psychological aggression and authoritarian parenting, but this relationship is not at a significant level.

According to hypothesis 4, *it was expected that there would be a negative association between psychological aggression within the partner relationship, and the*

parents' use of authoritative parenting. A Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted separately for mothers ($r = -.20, p = .12$) and fathers ($r = -.02, p = .44$). Contrary to expectations, no significant relationship was found between either sample.

According to hypothesis 5, it was expected that there would be a negative association between the use of negotiation within the partner relationship, and the parents' use of authoritarian parenting. A Pearson's correlation was conducted separately for mothers and fathers. Contrary to expectations, a significant association was not found in the sample of mothers ($r = .05, p = .40$), or fathers ($r = .13, p = .21$).

According to hypothesis 6, *it was expected that there would be a positive association between the use of negotiation in the partner relationship, and the parents' use of authoritative parenting.* A Pearson's correlation was conducted separately for mothers and fathers. Contrary to expectations, a significant association was not found in the sample of mothers ($r = .20, p = .11$) or fathers ($r = .11, p = .25$)

In order to test differences in parenting across race, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. According to hypothesis 7, *it was expected that African-Americans would be more likely to use the authoritarian parenting than Caucasians.* Contrary to expectations, no significant differences were found between the African-American sample and Caucasian sample $F(1, 75) = .13, p = .72. n.s.$

Differences in Parenting Across Race And Gender

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted in order to test differences in parenting across race moderated by gender. According to hypothesis 8, *it was expected that the effects of race on parenting would be moderated by gender such that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers would be more likely to use authoritarian*

parenting than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers. A significant interaction was found between race and gender, $F(1, 75) = 4.85, p = .03$, supporting the hypothesis that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers were more likely to use authoritarian parenting practices than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers. However, post hoc analysis analyses indicated that a significant relationship existed between the African-American mothers and African-American fathers use of authoritarian parenting, but not for Caucasian fathers and mothers. Although it was not included in the hypotheses of this study, post hoc analyses of mean scores found a significant difference between gender and the use of the authoritative parenting style, suggesting that mothers use authoritative parenting behaviors more than fathers.

Overall, the results of the analyses conducted in this study found no significant relationship between the use of physical aggression, psychological aggression, and negotiation within the couple relationship, and the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. The results also indicated that there were no significant differences among the races as a group, but significant differences in parenting were found when race was moderated by gender.

Table 3

Correlations of Conflict Tactics and Parenting Practices for Mothers and Fathers

Independent Variables	Parenting Styles			
	<u>Authoritarian</u>		<u>Authoritative</u>	
	N	r	N	r
Physical Aggression				
Fathers	42	.11	44	.00
Mothers	37	.06	41	-.21 ⁺

Table 3 continued

Correlations of Conflict Tactics and Parenting Practices for Mothers and Fathers

Independent Variables	<u>Authoritarian</u>		<u>Authoritative</u>	
	N	r	N	r
Psychological Aggression				
Fathers	42	-.07	44	-.02
Mothers	36	.26 [†]	40	-.20
Negotiation				
Fathers	42	.13	44	.11
Mothers	36	.05	40	.20

Note. [†] Indicates a trend

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for All Independent Variables and Dependent Variables for Mothers and Fathers.

Independent Variables	N	Mean	SD	<i>p</i>
Physical Aggression				
Mothers	46	1.26	3.09	.21
Fathers	46	3.00	7.00	.21
Psychological Aggression				
Mothers	45	6.45	6.11	.25
Fathers	46	8.04	6.85	.25

Table 4 continued

Means and Standard Deviations for All Independent Variables and Dependent Variables for Mothers and Fathers.

Independent Variables	N	Mean	SD	<i>p</i>
Negotiation				
Mothers	45	14.44	8.04	.57
Fathers	43	15.47	8.67	.57
Authoritarian Parenting				
Mothers	37	2.10	.59	.19
Fathers	42	1.95	.41	.19
Authoritative Parenting				
Mothers	41	4.07	.41	.02
Fathers	44	4.00	.64	.02

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Authoritarian Parenting, Race, and Gender of Mothers and Fathers

Gender	<u>African-American</u>			N	<u>Caucasian</u>	
	N	M	SD		M	SD
Mothers	19	2.24*	.72	17	2.00	.38
Fathers	20	1.87	.40	21	2.10	.39

*p < .05

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

Summary of Results

This study was conducted to further explore some of the factors that may contribute to the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. In addition, this study explored the impact that race may have on the use of these parenting styles. It was expected that parents who indicated higher levels of physical and psychological aggression in the couple relationship would be more likely to use the authoritarian parenting style, and that parents who indicated lower levels of physical and psychological aggression in the couple relationship would be more likely to use the authoritative parenting style. It was also expected that the use of negotiation in the couple relationship would be more indicative of the authoritative parenting style and less indicative of the authoritarian parenting style. It was further hypothesized that there would be gender and racial differences such that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers would be more likely to use the authoritarian parenting style than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers.

Behaviors Within the Couple Relationship and Parenting Styles

Contrary to expectations, the relationship between the parent's use of physical aggression, psychological aggression, and negotiation in the couple relationship were not found to be significantly related to the use of either the authoritarian or authoritative parenting styles, thus not supporting any of the first six hypotheses. The results of this study do not support the previous research that found significant relationships between the use of physical aggression and psychological aggression in the couple relationship,

and the use of authoritarian and authoritative parenting behaviors (Buehler & Gerard, 2002; Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Mann & McKenzie, 1996).

One possible explanation for the findings may be the result of the setting and guidelines that are explained to participants attending therapy at the Family Service Center. Before the assessment tools are administered to participants, clients are first required to sign a consent form explicitly stating that the assigned therapists are legally mandated to report any possible child abuse to the appropriate legal authorities. This may affect the participants' willingness to disclose information about parenting, especially in regards to the use of physical punishment.

The participants' belief system about abuse may be a possible explanation for the lack of a significant relationship between couples' physical aggression and authoritarian parenting. Partners may believe that what is acceptable in a couple relationship may not be acceptable with a child. Because a partner is often regarded as an equal counterpart, physical aggression against a partner may be perceived as acceptable because the partner may be viewed as having the ability to defend him or herself. Children may be viewed as more vulnerable, less likely to defend themselves against physical aggression, and protected by laws prohibiting child abuse. The belief that violence is acceptable against a partner may stem from the nature of common couple violence. This type of violence occurs in relationships and often involves both partners as the perpetrators of violence (Straus & Smith, 1990). Because common couple violence rarely escalates to serious violence, this may also explain the relatively low levels of violence found in the sample of this study. In the sample of this study the mean score of physical aggression was for the mothers were 1.26 with 102 being the highest scores possible. For the fathers in this

study, the mean score for physical aggression was 3.00 with the highest score also being 102. Thus, the sample in this study did not have high reports of physical aggression in their couple relationship. It could also be hypothesized that partner's experience physical and psychological aggression at the hands of a partner may not want their children to share a similar experience. However, a trend was discovered in the sample of mothers in the use of physical aggression and authoritative behaviors suggesting that a negative relationship exists between these two variables.

Another possible explanation may again result from the nature of the sample of this study. Participants with current severe levels of physical aggression in the past four months in their couple relationship are screened out and are not seen as a couple at the Family Service Center because of the potential dangers in being seen together. Therefore, high levels of physical aggression would not be expected in this sample of participants, and a significant relationship between couple conflict tactics and parenting behaviors would also not be expected.

In regard to the use of psychological aggression, a trend was discovered in the sample of mothers. This suggests that a positive relationship exists between the use of psychologically aggressive behaviors and authoritarian parenting, although not at a significant level.

Another possible explanation for the findings of this study involves which report of behaviors in the couple relationship was used. In this study, the parent's report of his or her partner's behaviors regarding negotiation, physical aggression, and psychological aggression were used. However, for parenting behaviors, the parent's report of his or her own behavior was used. For example, the mother's report of her husband's physically

aggressive behaviors was used but the father's report of his own behaviors regarding parenting was used. This difference may have an impact on the significance of the results because the parents' report of their partner's parenting behaviors cannot be obtained with the use of the *PPQ*, thus increasing the likelihood of reporter bias.

In hypothesis 7, it was expected that there would be differences in the use of authoritarian parenting such that African-American parents would be more likely to use authoritarian parenting than Caucasian parents. This hypothesis was not supported by this study. One possible explanation for the results may be the similarities in education and income between the sample of African-Americans and Caucasians. As past research has found, parents from a lower-economic status are more likely to use the authoritarian parenting behaviors than parents from a higher socio-economic status (Coolahan, McWayne, Fantuzzo, & Grim 2002). Although there are various factors that comprise socio-economic status, education and income are two of the major indicators. A study by Coolahan, et al., found that mothers with a high school diploma or above were less likely to use authoritarian parenting behaviors than those with education less than that of a high school diploma. In this study 33.8% of African-American fathers, 45.8% of African-American mothers had an education of a bachelor's degree or above. Of the Caucasian sample, 45.5% of fathers and 36.4% of mothers had an education of a bachelor's degree or above.

Income is a second factor included as an indicator of socio-economic status. The gross annual income of the participants in this study compared with that of other families in the surrounding county may also add another lens for examining the results. According to demographic information gathered from the year 2000, the average family income of

residents of Prince George's County (the county in which the Family Service Center is located) is approximately \$64,422 ([www.dataplace.org/area overview/index.html?place=p.26.14%3A2403](http://www.dataplace.org/area%20overview/index.html?place=p.26.14%3A2403)). The combined average income of the African-Americans couples in this sample was approximately \$81,000 and approximately \$78,000 for Caucasians couples. Both samples report higher incomes than the average of the county thus not representing the parenting behaviors of families of the average of lower income level for their area. Therefore, the sample may again be more reflective of a higher social class which some research has found typically uses authoritative parenting rather than authoritarian parenting behaviors (Coolahan, et al 2002). Future studies would benefit from examining in more depth the role that income may play in the use of varied parenting practices.

In hypothesis 8, it was expected that African-American mothers and Caucasian fathers would be more likely to use authoritarian parenting than African-American fathers and Caucasian mothers. The results of this study support previous research that found that African-American mothers were more likely to use authoritarian parenting behaviors than African-American fathers (Bradley, 2000; & Pinderhughes et al., 2000). This study supports the finding that African-American mothers may be the stricter disciplinarians within African-American families as is indicative of the authoritarian parenting style. However, it is important to note that with both the samples of African-Americans and Caucasians, the role of the male and female was not clearly defined. Participants indicated that they were either wife, mother, and/or female partner, or husband, father, and/or male partner. Therefore, it is unclear whether both parents in each couple were the biological parents of the children within the household. This may have

an effect on the use of parenting styles because non-biological parents may have less of a disciplinarian role with their non-biological children than the biological parents.

Although the results suggested that African-American mothers used more authoritarian parenting than African-American fathers, further analyses revealed that the results were not supported for Caucasian fathers and Caucasian mothers. However, post hoc analyses found that a significant relationship between gender and the use of authoritative parenting suggesting that Caucasian mothers use more authoritative parenting than Caucasian fathers. Although authoritative parenting styles in Caucasians was not a focus of this study, future studies would benefit from exploring these findings.

Clinical and Theoretical Implications

The results of this study suggest that African-Americans and Caucasians from similar socio-economic backgrounds, may have parenting styles that are more similar than expected. This study also suggests that race may not be as influential on parenting practices as other factors such as gender. Thus, it is important for clinicians working with populations of both African-Americans and Caucasians to consider the effect that other factors may have on parenting behaviors more than focusing on racial or cultural differences. Although not addressed in this study, it would also be important for clinicians to examine the relationship satisfaction of members of a couple and how that may also affect the use of couple conflict tactics and parenting styles.

Although race alone was not found to result in significant differences within the sample, the interaction of race and gender was found to result in significant differences in parenting styles. This underscores the complexity of the relationship between race and gender. Therefore, clinicians must examine how the role of a mother or a father has

different implications and responsibilities within African-American and Caucasian families and not assume that being a mother or father means the same thing to people of different ethnic backgrounds.

The results of the analyses examining the relationship between behaviors in the couple relationship and parenting behaviors were not significant and found that overall, parents did not allow behaviors within their couple relationship, both positive and/or negative, to impact their parenting practices. Perhaps the parents in this study were able to establish boundaries between behaviors that occurred within their couple relationship and parenting behaviors with their children. The idea of boundaries between interrelationships within a family is a major concept of structural family therapy (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Families that can effectively separate behaviors within the couple relationship from behaviors within the parenting relationship are said to have clear boundaries. The use of clear boundaries contradicts the concept of spillover, previously described by Buehler and Gerard (2002).

The findings of the study also have important implications for the use of theory. Referring back to the framework of ecological theory, the parenting behaviors of African-Americans may be impacted primarily at the meso-level or family level, and the exosystem, or community level. This may be particularly true for African-American mothers, who were found to be more likely to use authoritarian parenting than their partners. Within the meso-level, African-Americans may have different expectations of parenting, such that African-American mothers may be expected to be the primary disciplinarians within their families. These parenting expectations may also be supported within the exosystem in which these families belong. Therefore, the demands of the

family and the community may influence the parenting roles that mothers may use within their families. However, more research is needed to explore this possibility.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study is regarding the characteristics of the sample. The sample used was a clinical sample of participants voluntarily seeking therapy at a university setting. Although the samples of African-American and Caucasian participants were relatively similar in demographic characteristics, a future study would benefit from having a larger sample size of both African-Americans and Caucasians and from the general, non-clinic population. It would also be important to include participants with more violent or conflictual couple relationships who would not be eligible for services in the Family Service Center setting. The sample in this study consisted largely of participants with incomes above the average income of the surrounding county. The participants were also screened for high levels of violent behavior. Therefore, the results may not be characteristic of the general population, because participants with high levels of violence are excluded. It may also be possible that the parents experiencing high levels of violence in the general population may not be as likely to seek therapy. The sample of both African-Americans and Caucasians were not significantly different on the demographic characteristics such as average age, years together, income, education, and ages of children. A future study would benefit from having a population with more diverse demographic variability.

Another limitation of this study is the self-report measures administered as part of the assessment protocol. Participants may be less likely to disclose negative information, especially information that may not present themselves in the most favorable light. This

may be the case for the responses on the Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ). As previously mentioned, participants may be less likely to disclose information concerning physical punishment of their children out of fear as being regarded as a “bad parent” and the potential for reporting to child protective services.

Conclusion

This study’s results suggest that future research continue to explore the relationship between behaviors within the couple relationship and parenting behaviors. This study has also begun to shed light on the role that race and gender plays on parenting behaviors. Future studies may expand on the findings of this study to begin to understand the complex relationship between race and gender and the spousal behaviors and the effect on parenting.

Appendix A

CONFLICT TACTICS SCALE, REVISED (CTS2)

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things **IN THE PAST 4 MONTHS**, and how many times your partner did them **IN THE PAST 4 MONTHS**. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past 4 months, but it did happen before that, circle "0".

How often did this happen?

0 = Not in the past 4 months, but it did happen before	4 = 6-10 times in the past 4 months
1 = Once in the past 4 months	5 = 11-20 times in the past 4 months
2 = Twice in the past 4 months	6 = 20+ times in the past 4 months
3 = 3-5 times in the past 4 months	9 = This has never happened

1. I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
2. My partner showed care for me even though we disagreed.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
3. I explained my side of a disagreement to my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
4. My partner explained his/her side of a disagreement to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
5. I insulted or swore at my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
6. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
7. I threw something at my partner that could hurt him/her.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
8. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
9. I twisted my partner's arm or hair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
10. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
11. I has a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
12. My partner had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
13. I showed respect for my partner's feelings about an issue.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
14. My partner showed respect for my feelings about an issue.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
15. I made my partner have sex without a condom.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
16. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
17. I pushed or shoved my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
18. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
19. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
20. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
21. I used a knife or gun on my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
22. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
23. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
24. My partner passed out from being hit on the head in a fight with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
25. I called my partner fat or ugly.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
26. My partner called me fat or ugly.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
27. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
28. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
29. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
30. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
31. I went to a doctor because of a fight with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
32. My partner went to a doctor because of a fight with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
33. I choked my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
34. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
35. I shouted or yelled at my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
36. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9

How often did this happen?

0 = Not in the past 4 months, but it did happen before

1 = Once in the past 4 months

2 = Twice in the past 4 months

3 = 3-5 times in the past 4 months

4 = 6-10 times in the past 4 months

5 = 11-20 times in the past 4 months

6 = 20+ times in the past 4 months

9 = This has never happened

37. I slammed my partner against a wall.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
38. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
39. I said I was sure we could work out a problem.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
40. My partner was sure we could work it out.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
41. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner, but I didn't.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
42. My partner needed to see a doctor because of a fight with me, but didn't.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
43. I beat up my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
44. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
45. I grabbed my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
46. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
47. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
48. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
49. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
50. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
51. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
52. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
53. I slapped my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
54. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
55. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
56. My partner had a broken bone from a fight with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
57. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
58. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
59. I suggested a compromise to a disagreement.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
60. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
61. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
62. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
63. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
64. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
65. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
66. My partner accused me of this.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
67. I did something to spite my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
68. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
69. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
70. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
71. I felt physical pain that still hurt the next day because of a fight with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
72. My partner still felt physical pain the next day because of a fight we had.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
73. I kicked my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
74. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
75. I used threats to make my partner have sex.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
76. My partner did this to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
77. I agreed to try a solution to a disagreement my partner suggested.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
78. My partner agreed to try a solution I suggested.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9

Appendix B

Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ)

Directions: This questionnaire is about your parenting practices. Think about what you usually do as a parent in the raising of your child or children and select the response that best indicates how often you usually do the following things: (If you have one child, respond as you usually do to that child in general.)

1. Never 2. Once in a while 3. About half of the time 4. Very often 5. Always

- ____ 1. I encourage my children to talk about their troubles.
 ____ 2. I guide my children by punishment more than by reason.
 ____ 3. I know the names of my children's friends.
 ____ 4. I find it difficult to discipline my children.
 ____ 5. I give praise when my children are good.
 ____ 6. I spank when my children are disobedient.
 ____ 7. I joke and play with my children.
 ____ 8. I don't scold or criticize even when my children act against my wishes.
 ____ 9. I show sympathy when my children are hurt or frustrated.
 ____ 10. I punish by taking privileges away from my children with little if any explanation.
 ____ 11. I spoil my children.
 ____ 12. I give comfort and understanding when my children are upset.
 ____ 13. I yell or shout when my children misbehave.
 ____ 14. I am easy going and relaxed with my children.
 ____ 15. I allow my children to annoy someone else.
 ____ 16. I tell my children my expectations regarding behavior before they engage in an activity.
 ____ 17. I scold and criticize to make my children improve.
 ____ 18. I show patience with my children.
 ____ 19. I grab my children when they are disobedient.
 ____ 20. I state punishments to my children, but I do not actually do them.
 ____ 21. I am responsive to my children's feelings or needs.
 ____ 22. I allow my children to help make family rules.
 ____ 23. I argue with my children.
 ____ 24. I appear confident about my parenting abilities.
 ____ 25. I give my children reasons why rules should be obeyed.
 ____ 26. I appear to be more concerned with my own feelings than with my children's feelings.
 ____ 27. I tell my children that we appreciate what they try to accomplish.
 ____ 28. I punish by putting my children off somewhere alone with little if any explanation.
 ____ 29. I help my children to understand the effects of behavior by encouraging them to talk about the consequences of their own actions.
 ____ 30. I am afraid that disciplining my children for misbehavior will cause them not to like me.
 ____ 31. I take my children's desires into account before asking them to do something.
 ____ 32. I explode in anger towards my children.
 ____ 33. I am aware of problems or concerns about my children in school.

1. Never 2. Once in a while 3. About half of the time 4. Very often 5. Always

- ___ 34. I threaten my children with punishment more often than I actually give it.
- ___ 35. I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my children.
- ___ 36. I ignore my children's misbehavior.
- ___ 37. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my children.
- ___ 38. I carry out discipline after my children misbehave.
- ___ 39. I apologize to my children when making a mistake in parenting.
- ___ 40. I tell my children what to do.
- ___ 41. I give into my children when they cause a commotion about something.
- ___ 42. I talk it over and reason with my children when they misbehave.
- ___ 43. I slap my children when they misbehave.
- ___ 44. I disagree with my children.
- ___ 45. I allow my children to interrupt others.
- ___ 46. I have warm and intimate times together with my children.
- ___ 47. When two children are fighting, I discipline the children first and ask questions later.
- ___ 48. I encourage my children to freely express themselves.
- ___ 49. I bribe my children with rewards to get them to do what I want.
- ___ 50. I scold or criticize when my children's behavior doesn't meet my expectations.
- ___ 51. I show respect for my children's opinions by encouraging them to express them.
- ___ 52. I set strict well-established rules for my children.
- ___ 53. I explain to my children how I feel about their good and bad behavior.
- ___ 54. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.
- ___ 55. I take into account my children's preferences in making plans for the family.
- ___ 56. When my children ask why they have to conform, I state: "Because I said so" or "I am your parent and I want you to."
- ___ 57. I appear unsure about how to solve my children's misbehavior.
- ___ 58. I explain the consequences of my children's behavior.
- ___ 59. I demand that my children do things.
- ___ 60. When my children misbehave, I channel their behavior into a more acceptable activity.
- ___ 61. I shove my children when they are disobedient.
- ___ 62. I emphasize the reasons for rules.

APPENDIX C

FAMILY/INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

This is a first in a series you are being asked to complete that will contribute to the knowledge about couple therapy. In order for our research to measure progress over time we will periodically re-administer questionnaires. Please answer the questions at a relatively fast pace, usually the first response that comes to mind is the best one. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

Date: _____

The following information is gathered from each family member separately.

Name: (Print) _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone Numbers (h) _____ (w) _____

(cell) _____ (fax) _____

5. Gender: M F 6. SSN _____ - _____ - _____. Age (in years): _____

8. You are coming for: a.) Family _____ b.) Couple _____ c.) Individual _____ therapy.

9. **Relationship Status** _____

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Currently married, living together | 5. Separated, not married |
| 2. Currently married, separated, but not divorced | 6. Dating, not living together |
| 3. Divorced, legal action completed | 7. Single |
| 4. Living together, not married | 8. Widowed/ Widower |
| | 9. Domestic partnership |

10. **Years Together:** _____

11. What is your **occupation?** _____

1. _____
2. Clerical sales, bookkeeper, secretary
3. Executive, large business owner
3. Homemaker
4. None – child not able to be employed
5. Owner, manager of small business
6. Professional - Associates or Bachelors degree
7. Professional – master or doctoral degree
8. Skilled worker/craftsman
9. Service worker – barber, cook, beautician
10. Semi-skilled worker – machine operator
11. Unskilled Worker
12. Student

12. What is your **current employment status?** _____

1. Employed full time
2. Employed part time
3. Homemaker, not employed outside home
4. Student
5. Disabled, not employed
6. Unemployed
7. Retired

13. Personal **yearly gross income:**\$ _____
(before taxes or any deductions)

14. **Race:** _____

1. Native American
2. African American
3. Asian/Pacific Islander
4. Hispanic
5. White
6. Other (specify) _____

15. What is **your country of origin?** _____

What was **your parent's country of origin?**

16. _____ (father's)

17. _____ (mother's)

18. Highest Level of **Education Completed:** _____

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Some high school | 5. Associate degree |
| 2. High school diploma | 6. Bachelor's degree |
| 3. Some college | 7. Some graduate education |
| 4. Trade School | 8. Masters degree |
| | 9. Doctoral degree |

19. Number of **people in your Household:** _____

20. Number of **children who live at home** with you: _____

21. Number of children who **do not live** with you: _____

Names and Phone Numbers of **Contact People** in case of emergency (minimum 2):

22. What is your **religious** preference? ____
1. Mainline Protestant (e.g., Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian)
 2. Conservative Protestant (e.g., Adventist, Baptist, Pentecostal)
 3. Roman Catholic
 4. Jewish
 5. Other (e.g., Buddhist, Mormon, Hindu) Please Specify _____
 6. No affiliation with any formal religion

23. How often do you **participate in organized activities of a church or religious group?** _____
1. several times per week
 2. once a week
 3. several times a month
 4. once a month
 5. several times a year
 6. once or twice a year
 7. rarely or never

24. How **important is religion or spirituality** to you in your daily life? ____
1. Very important
 2. Important
 3. Somewhat important
 4. Not very important
 5. Not important at all

25. **Medications:** ____ Yes ____ No. If yes, please list the names, purpose, and quantity of the **medication(s)** you are currently taking. Also list the name and phone number of the medicating physician(s) and your primary care Physician:

Medications: _____
 Primary Care Physician: _____ Phone _____
 Psychiatrist? Yes/No Name & Phone , if yes _____ Phone _____

Legal Involvement

26. Have you ever been involved with the police/legal authorities? Yes/No (circle)
 If yes, please explain:

27. Have formal, legal procedures (e.g., ex-parte orders, protection orders, criminal charges, juvenile offenses) been brought against you? Yes/No (circle) If yes, please explain:

28. If formal procedures were brought, what were the results (e.g., eviction, restraining orders)? _____

29. Many of the questions refer to your "family." It will be important for us to know what individuals you consider to be your family. Please list below the names and relationships of the people you will be including in your responses to questions about your family. Circle yourself in this list.

(Number listed in family) _____.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
-------------	---------------------

List the concerns and problems for which you are seeking help. Indicate which is the most important by circling it. For each problem listed, note the degree of severity by checking () the appropriate column.

30	31		
32	33		
34	35		
36	37		

38. The most important concern (circled item) is # _____.



Appendix D

COUPLE INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

This is a first in a series of questionnaires you are being asked to complete that will contribute to the knowledge about couple therapy. In order for our research to measure progress over time we will periodically re-administer questionnaires. Please answer the questions at a relatively fast pace, usually the first that comes to mind is the best one. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Case #: _____ 2. Therapist's(s') Code: _____ 3. Co-therapist's Code: _____ 4. Date: _____

The following information is gathered from each partner separately.

Name: (Print) _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____ zip _____

Phone Numbers: (h) _____
(cell) _____

(w) _____
(fax) _____

5. Gender: M F

6. SS# _____

7. Age (in years) _____

8. You are coming for: a.) Family _____ b.) Couple _____ c.) Individual Therapy _____

9. **Relationship status** to person in couple's therapy with you:

1. Currently married, living together
2. Currently married, separated, but not legally divorced
3. Divorced, legal action completed
4. Engaged, living together
5. Engaged, not living together
6. Dating, living together
7. Dating, not living together
8. Domestic partnership

10. Total Number of **Years** Together: _____

a. **If married**, number of years married: _____

11. What is your **occupation** ? _____

4. Clerical sales, bookkeeper, secretary
5. Executive, large business owner
6. Homemaker
7. None – child not able to be employed
8. Owner, manager of small business
9. Professional - Associates or Bachelors degree
10. Professional – master or doctoral degree
11. Skilled worker/craftsman
12. Service worker – barber, cook, beautician
13. Semi-skilled worker – machine operator
14. Unskilled Worker
15. Student

12. What is your **current employment status** _____

1. Employed full time
2. Employed part time
3. Homemaker, not employed outside
4. Student
5. Disabled, not employed
6. Unemployed
7. Retired

13. Personal **yearly gross income**: \$ _____
(i.e., before taxes or any deductions)

14. **Race:** _____

1. Native American
2. African American
3. Asian/Pacific Islander
4. Hispanic
5. White
6. Other (specify) _____

15. What is your **country of origin**? _____

What was your **parent's country of origin**?

16. _____ (father's) 17. _____ (mother's)

18. Highest Level of **Education** Completed: _____

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Some high school | 5. Associate degree |
| 2. High school diploma | 6. Bachelors degree |
| 3. Some college education | 7. Some graduate education |
| 4. Trade School | 8. Masters degree |
| | 9. Doctoral degree |

19. Number of people in household: _____

20. Number of **children** who **live in home** with you: _____

21. Number of children who **do not live** with you: __

Names and phone number of **contact people** (minimum 2):

22. What is your **religious** preference? _____
1. Mainline Protestant (e.g., Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian)
 2. Conservative Protestant(e.g., Adventist, Baptist, Pentecostal)
 3. Roman Catholic
 4. Jewish
 5. Other(e.g., Buddist, Mormon, Hindu)
 6. No affiliation with any formal religion

23. How often do you **participate in organized activities of a church or religious group**? _____
1. several times per week
 2. once a week
 3. several times a month
 4. once a month
 5. several times a year
 6. once or twice a year
 7. rarely or never

24. How **important is religion or spirituality** to you in your daily life? _____
1. Very important
 2. Important
 3. Somewhat important
 4. Not very important
 5. Not important at all

25. **Medications:** ___ Yes _____ No If yes, please list the names, purpose, and quality of **medication(s)** you are currently taking. Also list the name and phone number of the medicating physician(s) and primary care physician:

Medications:

Primary Care Physician: _____ **Phone:** _____

Psychiatrist? Yes/No Name & Phone, if yes. _____ **Phone:** _____

Legal Involvement:

26. A. Have you ever been involved with the police? Yes/No (circle)
If yes, what happened? Explain: _____
27. B. Have formal, legal procedures (i.e., ex-parte orders, protection orders, criminal charges, juvenile offenses) been brought against you? Yes/No (circle)
If yes, what happened? Explain: _____
28. If formal procedures were brought, what were the results (e.g., eviction, restraining orders?) _____

Many of the questions refer to your "family". It will be important for us to know what individuals you consider to be your family. Please list below the names and relationships of the people you will include in your responses about your family. Circle yourself in this list.

29. (Number listed in family) _____
- Name _____ Relationship _____

List the concerns and problems for which you are seeking help. Indicate which is the most important by circling it. For each problem listed, note the degree of severity by checking (√) the appropriate column.

	4-Severe	3-Somewhat Severe	2 – Moderate	1 - Mild
30.	31.			
32.	33.			
34.	35.			
36.	37.			

38. The most important concern (circled item) is # _____

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