

PAIRS Relationship Skills Training Helps Men Succeed as Husbands and Fathers

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Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FE0029/04. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. More information online at evaluation.pairs.com.

Executive Summary

Strong families are critically important to the well-being of children and dramatically impact the health, stability, safety and viability of communities throughout the United States. Helping fathers improve their ability to create and sustain stable marriages and promoting consistent, active, responsible engagement with their sons and daughters is vitally important to the well-being of children and the economic health, safety and potential of America's neighborhoods and communities.

Resilient marriages and families are built on core values and behaviors that are significantly influenced by early life experiences. Men generally prepare for their roles as husbands and fathers based on the examples provided by their fathers, who learned from their own fathers, and so on. As greater numbers of children who grew up without fathers actively engaged in their lives reached adulthood, the challenges to families and communities increased exponentially.

Through the middle of the 20th century, enduring marriages in the United States were commonly based on security, stability, and raising children with men traditionally serving as primary breadwinners and women primarily responsible for raising and nurturing their children.

As women increasingly entered the workforce to help meet the challenges of World War II, increasingly pursued higher education and careers over subsequent decades, and claimed greater freedoms to fulfill their potential outside the home, the basis of marriage shifted to peer-relationships based on equality and sustained by love and intimacy.

Men who looked to the examples of their own fathers for models of relationship increasingly floundered, leading to significant increases in national rates of marital and family breakdown and generations of American children raised in single-parent households. Those children typically reached adulthood ill-prepared to sustain relationships based on love and intimacy, deprived of basic knowledge, skills, and examples upon which to model their own marriages and parental relationships.

These experiences have substantially contributed to social and economic conditions altering the very fabric of American society, culture and potential for prosperity, including dramatic increases in

delinquent and illegal behaviors that lead to juvenile and adult incarceration; increased illegal drug use; increased rates of teen pregnancy and risky sexual activities; declining academic performance; spiraling healthcare costs related to addressing mental and physical health consequences; increased poverty; decreased ability to train, obtain, and keep jobs; and the squandered potential of our future generation.

Research demonstrates that PAIRS Relationship Skills Training, a behavioral/cognitive educational approach developed, evaluated, and refined over a quarter century, has the potential to reverse this trend and significantly contribute to strengthening families, improving outcomes for children, and providing the foundation for revitalized schools, neighborhoods and communities.

Brief Overview of PAIRS Relationship Skills Training

For over a quarter century, PAIRS (Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills) classes have provided a comprehensive system to enhance self-knowledge and develop participants' abilities to sustain pleasurable intimate relationships. PAIRS unique technology is built on a skills-based approach to enhancing empathy, bonding and emotional literacy that has been tested and validated across diverse literacy, ethnic groups, and socio-economic groups, including the formerly homeless, couples impacted by combat deployment, couples in marital crisis, couples with special needs children, improving prisoner reentry and reducing recidivism, immigrant absorption, premarital preparation, and many others.

Originally developed as a tool for therapists to assist clients dealing with marital challenges and training for mental health professionals, PAIRS has evolved into a highly-cost effective educational process that can be facilitated by teachers, counselors, clergy and others in small, medium and large classroom environments.

The program's brief classes integrate a wide range of theories and proprietary methods from psychology, education and psychotherapy and presents them in an educational format in classes ranging in length from nine to 30 hours. This study evaluates the impact of PAIRS most popular brief programs, *PAIRS Essentials* (9 – 12 hours) and *PAIRS for Life* (12 – 18 hours), delivered in public group settings by non-mental health professionals. Although not specifically studied in this evaluation, the skills and processes included in these programs are also contained in PAIRS for Our Future, For Our Family (30 hours) curriculum.

PAIRS programs focus on enhancing competencies in three areas:

- (1) Emotional literacy;
- (2) Confiding, Listening and Problem-Solving skills for building and maintaining intimacy;
- (3) Practical knowledge, strategies and attitudes for sustaining positive marriage and family life with the goal of enabling couples to create relationships that both partners can live with joyfully.

To sustain relationships based on love and intimacy, each partner must be able to identify his or her own feelings and needs, communicate them in such a way that they can get met, and integrate skills that lead to constructive conflict resolution based on empathy, good will and a shared relationship vision.

The PAIRS Educator

The PAIRS Educator plays a vitally important role establishing rapport, personal and organizational credibility, group safety, assuring ethical practices, guiding exercises, and empowering each participant's personal journey through the curriculum. Qualities most important in effective course leaders include:

- Personal warmth, optimism, authenticity, poise, and maturity;
- Speaks clearly with appropriate pacing and expression, is easily understood, avoids wordiness, professional jargon and terminology;
- Emotionally stable and comfortable with emotional intensity;
- Relevant and appropriate self-disclosure;
- Ability to maintain a safe educational environment, including appropriate boundaries;
- Use of appropriate humor;
- At ease with groups and establishing group rapport, appropriately evaluates and reads participant responses;
- Authentically models tools and values;
- Stays within boundaries and topics of each class,
- Effectively teaching curriculum content and covers all required material and exercises within time allowed;
- Knowledge, understanding, and adherence to PAIRS standards of ethical practice and licensing;
- Asks for help when needed;
- Understands and respects the vulnerabilities of class participants;
- Identifies and recommends improvements based on group feedback;
- Consistently receives positive evaluations from class participants.

Related Literature Review

- Children raised in stable, two-parent families have an overall higher standard of living, receive more effective parenting, experience more cooperative co-parenting, are emotionally closer to both parents, and are subjected to fewer stressful events and circumstances (Amato, 2005).
- A 1991 analysis summarizing the results of ninety-three studies conducted over three decades confirmed that children with divorced parents are worse off on measures of academic success (school grades, scores on standardized achievement tests), conduct (behavior problems, aggression), psychological well-being (depression, distress symptoms), self-esteem (positive feelings about oneself, perceptions of self-efficacy), and peer relationships (number of close friends, social support from peers) (Amato & Keith, 1991).
- A meta-analysis of sixty-seven studies conducted in the 1990s found that children with divorced parents typically scored significantly lower on various measures of well-being than did children with continuously married parents and revealed that children with divorced parents continued to have lower average levels of cognitive, social and emotional well-being (Amato, 2005).
- Children in single-parent or other non-intact family structures are at greater-risk of committing criminal or delinquent acts, almost two times more likely to have pulled a knife or a gun on someone in the past year (Franke, 2005).
- Communities with high rates of family fragmentation (especially unmarried childbearing) suffer higher crime rates (Franke, 2005).
- Divorce – regardless of economic status – has been shown to strongly correlate with robbery rates in American cities with population larger than 100,000 (Willats, 1987).

- Compared to those with continuously married parents, children of divorce are more likely to experience poverty, educational failure, unhappiness, emotional problems, risky sexual activity, non-marital childbirth, marital discord, and divorce (D'Onofrio, 2008).
- Children born to unmarried parents are disadvantaged across a broad range of outcomes, including higher rates of infant mortality, lower scores on tests measuring cognitive abilities (math and verbal), and more behavioral problems in early and middle childhood. As adolescents and young adults, these children have higher rates of delinquency and teenage pregnancy, lower educational attainment, and more problems finding and keeping steady jobs. They also exhibit more mental health problems (Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin, & Kiernan, 1995).
- Over the second half of the 20th century, the basis of marriage shifted from security, stability and raising children to meeting each other's needs for love and intimacy. Sustaining intimacy is a skill that can be learned (Durana, 1998).
- In 1996, the United States topped the list of industrialized nations in which children are growing up without a father in the home, with more than 21% of American children living in single-mother families compared to just over 4% in Italy. A child living in a single-mother family is five times more likely to live below the national poverty line (UNICEF, 1996).
- Criminogenic needs identified as predictors for incarceration and recidivism can be linked to the lasting impact of early childhood experiences on adults who grew up without the benefits of a two-parent home. Criminogenic needs include increased likelihood of anti-social personality, anti-social attitudes and values, anti-social associates, family dysfunction, poor self control and problem-solving skills, substance abuse, and lack of employment/employment skills (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2006).
- By 1986, more than half of the inmates of state correctional facilities had grown-up without the benefits of a two parent household (Chapman, 1986).
- A Bureau of Justice Statistics study of 25,000 incarcerated juveniles found they were nearly three times as likely to have come from single parent homes than their non-incarcerated peers; a child growing up in a single-parent home is seven time as likely to be a delinquent (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1988).
- Incarceration rates have steadily increased in the United States, significantly within the most vulnerable communities, as minority men in particular increasingly turned to illegal enterprises such as drug trafficking and related activities, as options for economic survival and advancement. More than 2 million American children have a parent who is incarcerated in a State or Federal prison or jail (Grayson, 2007).
- Private enterprises profit from increased rates of incarceration and recidivism. As of 1988, taxpayers spent an estimated \$18 billion for costs related to maintaining 650,000 inmates [double the number of five years prior] in state and local prisons (Joel, 1988).

Public Opinion

According to a 2007 PEW Research Center study, there is a growing generation gap in behaviors and values related to marriage, family structure, and parenting. While Americans overwhelmingly believe that births to unwed women are a big problem for society and they take a mixed view at best of cohabitation without marriage, these two nontraditional behaviors have become commonplace among younger adults, who have a different set of moral values from their elders about sex, marriage and parenthood. Highlights of the study include (Pew Research Center, 2007):

- **A Generation Gap in Behaviors and Values.** Younger adults attach far less moral stigma than do their elders to out-of-wedlock births and cohabitation without marriage. They engage in these behaviors at rates unprecedented in U.S. history. Nearly four-in-ten (36.8%) births in this country are to an unmarried woman. Nearly half (47%) of adults in their 30s and 40s have spent a portion of their lives in a cohabiting relationship.
- **Public Concern over the Delinking of Marriage and Parenthood.** Adults of all ages consider unwed parenting to be a big problem for society. At the same time, however, just four-in-ten (41%) say that children are very important to a successful marriage, compared with 65% of the public who felt this way as recently as 1990.
- **Marriage Remains an Ideal, Albeit a More Elusive One.** Even though a decreasing percentage of the adult population is married, most unmarried adults say they want to marry. Married adults are more satisfied with their lives than are unmarried adults.
- **Cohabitation Becomes More Prevalent.** With marriage exerting less influence over how adults organize their lives and bear their children, cohabitation is filling some of the vacuum. Today about a half of all nonmarital births are to a cohabiting couple; 15 years ago, only about a third were. Cohabitors are ambivalent about marriage – just under half (44%) say they to want marry; a nearly equal portion (41%) say they aren't sure.
- **Divorce Seen as Preferable to an Unhappy Marriage.** Americans by lopsided margins endorse the mom-and-dad home as the best setting in which to raise children. But by equally lopsided margins, they believe that if married parents are very unhappy with one another, divorce is the best option, both for them and for their children.
- **Racial Patterns are Complex.** Blacks are much less likely than whites to marry and much more likely to have children outside of marriage. However, an equal percentage of both whites and blacks (46% and 44%, respectively) consider it morally wrong to have a child out of wedlock. Hispanics, meantime, place greater importance than either whites or blacks do on children as a key to a successful marriage – even though they have a higher nonmarital birth rate than do whites.

National Priority

Policy makers at every level of government routinely echo national sentiments regarding the importance of marital and family stability, yet public policy itself is often inconsistent, ineffective, or silent in areas in which concerted local, state and federal efforts could reverse the increasing generation gap and meaningfully improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. A coordinated national effort bringing together leadership of the public and private sectors is needed to incorporate evidence-based Relationship Skills Training into America's national educational curriculum – *a fourth "R" for education: Relationships* -- including:

- Elementary, middle and high schools;
- Adoption, foster care, early childhood, special needs, and parenting education;
- Juvenile and adult detention, probation, rehabilitation, and reentry;
- Job training and workforce innovation;
- Welfare and assistance to needy families;
- Initiatives for active duty military, guard and veterans, especially those impacted by combat deployments;
- County and state support for premarital education;
- Early local interventions for parents in divorce proceedings;
- Immigrant absorption

An effective, ongoing, concerted national approach reflected in local, state and federal policy will dramatically contribute to the well-being of children, strengthen America's families, schools, neighborhoods and communities, and enhance national productivity and prosperity for generations.

Special Interests

While the national cost to America for decades of increasing rates of marital and family breakdown are enormous, many special interests have emerged with solutions that both address and contribute to maintaining the status quo:

- Private enterprises that profit from increased rates of incarceration and recidivism. As of 1988, taxpayers spent an estimated \$18 billion for costs related to maintaining 650,000 inmates [double the number of five years prior] in state and local prisons. (Joel, 1988). The largest prison corporation in the U.S., Corrections Corporation of America, trades on the New York Stock Exchange. In 2008, revenue was \$1.6 billion with net income of \$150 million (CCA, 2008);
- Residential developers, realtors, advertisers, lenders, and shareholders that benefit from increased rentals, property sales, and related fees as divorces increase demand for housing;
- Pharmaceutical manufacturers, advertisers, distributors and retailers that generate revenues from products developed to mask emotional experiences significantly related to the impact of relationship breakdown;
- Family law practices sustained substantially by revenues generated from divorce proceedings;
- Mental health professionals serving clients impacted by family breakdown with evidence suggesting therapy is actually harmful to preserving marriages (Doherty, 1999);
- Doctors, hospitals, diagnostic service providers, and insurance companies who benefit from costs associated with serving patients whose emotional experiences related to the breakdown of primary relationships are directly linked to significant physical health consequences.

Methodology

In October 2006, PAIRS Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit headquartered in Weston, Florida, was awarded a multi-year, multi-million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, to conduct a marriage education demonstration project in South Florida. The project, "PAIRS Relationship Skills for Strong South Florida Families," was envisioned and created by PAIRS President Seth Eisenberg, who has directed implementation of the initiative from inception, including significant adaptations to the original PAIRS curriculum; creation of multi-lingual print and multi-media teaching, training and marketing materials in English, Spanish, French and Creole; training of more than 200 program instructors, assistants, support staff, and referral partners; and recruitment, training, and oversight of a team of nearly 20 full-time and part-time professionals. Amanda Falciglia, PAIRS Foundation's Research Director, oversees data collection and analysis.

To date, approximately 5,000 couples and singles have participated in brief (9 – 18 hour) classes in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. Participants represent a highly diverse pool of adult men and women in all stages of relationship with significant inclusion of minorities and couples entering the program at high levels of marital distress.

In designing evaluation of the demonstration project, PAIRS Foundation collaborated with Dr. Andrew Daire of the University of Central Florida's Marriage and Family Research Institute. The study utilizes a range of assessment instruments to measure marital cohesion and the level of pleasure couples experience in their relationships. Key instruments include the 32-question Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) and 6-question Relationship Pleasure Scale (Daire, 2008), a proprietary PAIRS assessment which has been validated by UCF as providing an accurate measure of key relationship dynamics. Some participants also completed the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2006) and OQ45 Outcome Questionnaire (Owen & Imel, 2010). Forms are provided in English and Spanish.

South Florida is home to one of the nation's largest Hispanic/Latino communities, who represent the majority of participants in this study. The majority have minor children.

While the size of the research sample has allowed PAIRS Foundation to begin analyzing and interpreting data on a broad range of significant variables, the purpose of this presentation is to share a preliminary snapshot of key findings based on statistically significant samples.

Classes evaluated for the study were offered in a variety of formats, from weekend intensives to multi-week sessions that generally include three hours of instruction one time per week over four to six weeks, delivered in partnership with local faith-based, community, and educational organizations, including public schools, churches, synagogues, YMCAs, rehabilitation centers, and through providers of supportive housing to the formerly homeless.

Individual classes range in size from eight to as many as 150 participants, delivered by a primary facilitator, teaching assistant, administrative and research support staff. Generally, one additional teaching assistant is provided for every 15 participants beyond the first 20. All staff members involved in program delivery complete a minimum of PAIRS Level One Professional Certification Training (32 hours), including ethical standards, domestic violence, and grant operations modules. Facilitators are certified and licensed annually by PAIRS Foundation.

Prior to the delivery of services, participants complete informed consents, demographic questionnaires, and assessments, either online or manually, with the opportunity to review their answers for accuracy and completion upon arrival at their first class. Follow-up questionnaires are completed at their final class and by mail, phone, online, or in-person six and 12-months after program completion. All participation is voluntary.

Source of Participants

The majority of public participants were referred to PAIRS by a friend, family member, colleague or professional in the community; others enrolled in response to key-word advertising on the Internet, flyers, news articles, posters, brochures, newsletters, and previews. PAIRS class have also been delivered through Adult Education in cooperation with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, churches, YMCA, and community service organizations serving vulnerable populations, such as Carrfour Supportive Housing.

Most public participants have at least one phone, e-mail, or in-person contact with a member of PAIRS' staff prior to enrollment. More than 99 percent of participants completing PAIRS said they would recommend the program to others.

Findings

Research on PAIRS has consistently confirmed statistically significant positive change across all key groups in terms of demographic, socio-economic, ethnic, and relationship status measures. Immediate benefits for couples who measure in the atypical low range are especially meaningful as is the fact that, individually, the far majority of participants experience statistically significant improvement both in levels of couple cohesion and the level of pleasure in their relationship.

PAIRS Research Team recently evaluated pre, post and six-month follow-up assessments from 419 adult male participants in *PAIRS Essentials* and *PAIRS for Life* classes to specifically review the programs’ impact on men, whose attitudes and behaviors are critically important to sustaining marriages, families, and providing consistent, active, responsible engagement with their children. Prior research has confirmed statistically significant benefits for couples, adult women, and teenage participants.

Highlights of the findings in the study of adult male participants include:

- ✓ **95% reported improvement in communication with their partner.**
- ✓ **93% reported improvement in regularly sharing appreciations.**
- ✓ **92% reported improvement in their ability to resolve conflicts constructively.**
- ✓ **84% reported improvement in their physical intimacy.**
- ✓ **89% reported improvement in their ability to confide emotions.**
- ✓ **94% reported improvement in their overall relationship.**

SIX MONTH FOLLOW-UP Adult Males; N = 419						
Results	Communication	Appreciations	Conflict Resolution	Physical	Emotional	Overall
Much Improvement	35%	34%	35%	31%	34%	39%
Some Improvement	43%	46%	39%	38%	40%	43%
Very Little Improvement	16%	13%	18%	16%	16%	12%
No Improvement	4%	6%	7%	14%	10%	5%
Worse	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Further evaluation of 383 adult male participants based on comparison of pre-class and six-month follow-ups using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, a standard measure of key characteristics of couple cohesion, also indicated significant positive outcomes, including:

Reduced the Frequency of Financial Disagreements:

- ✓ 48% decrease in frequency of men always disagreeing, almost always disagreeing and frequently disagreeing with financial decisions.
- ✓ 35% increase in frequency of financial decisions in which men always agree.

Increased Agreement on Ways of Dealing with Parents or In-Laws:

- ✓ 53% increase in men always agreeing with ways of dealing with parents or in-laws.

Increased Agreement on Aims, Goals and Things Believed Important:

- ✓ 60% increase in men always agreeing on aims, goals, and things believed important.

Increased Agreement on Amount of Time Spent Together:

- ✓ 30% increase in men always agreeing on amount of time spent together.

Increased Agreement on Major Decisions:

- ✓ 50% increase in men always agreeing on major decisions.

Increased Agreement on Leisure Time Interest and Activities:

- ✓ 89% increase in men always agreeing on leisure time interest and activities.

Increased Agreement on Career Decisions:

- ✓ 65% increase in men always agreeing with career decisions.

Decreased Frequency of Leaving the House After a Fight:

- ✓ 70% decrease in men always leaving the house after a fight.
- ✓ 29% increase in men never leaving the house after a fight.

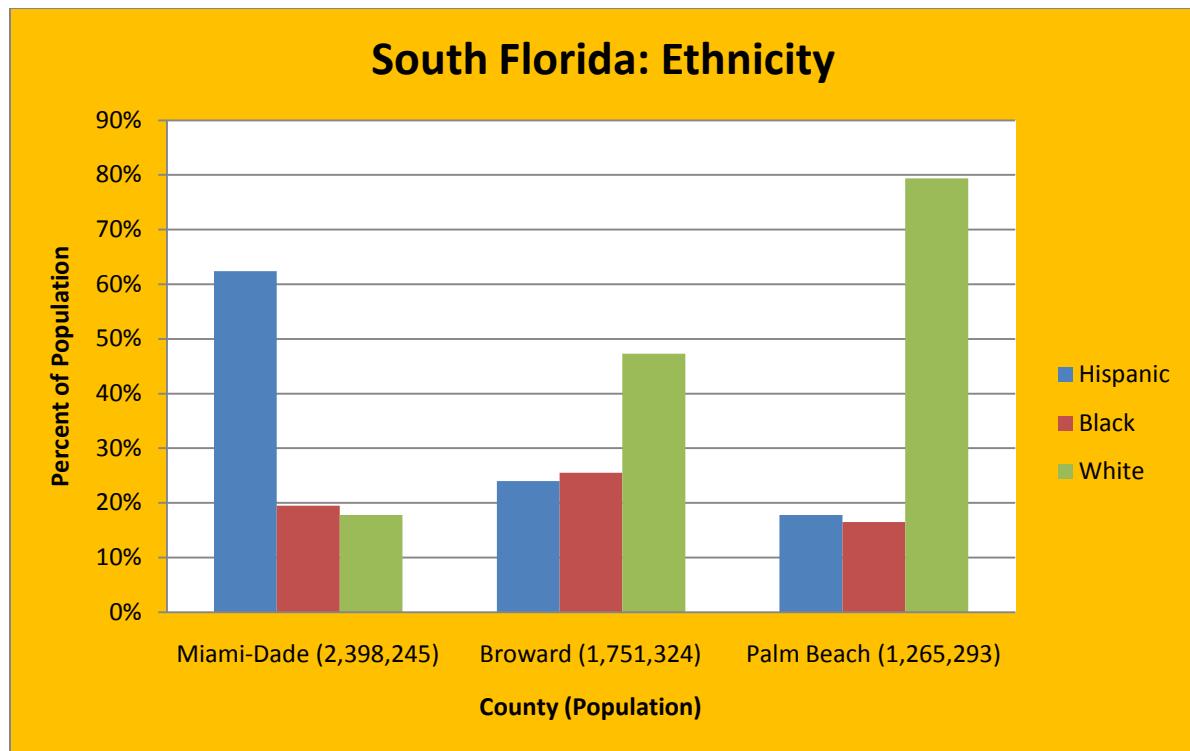
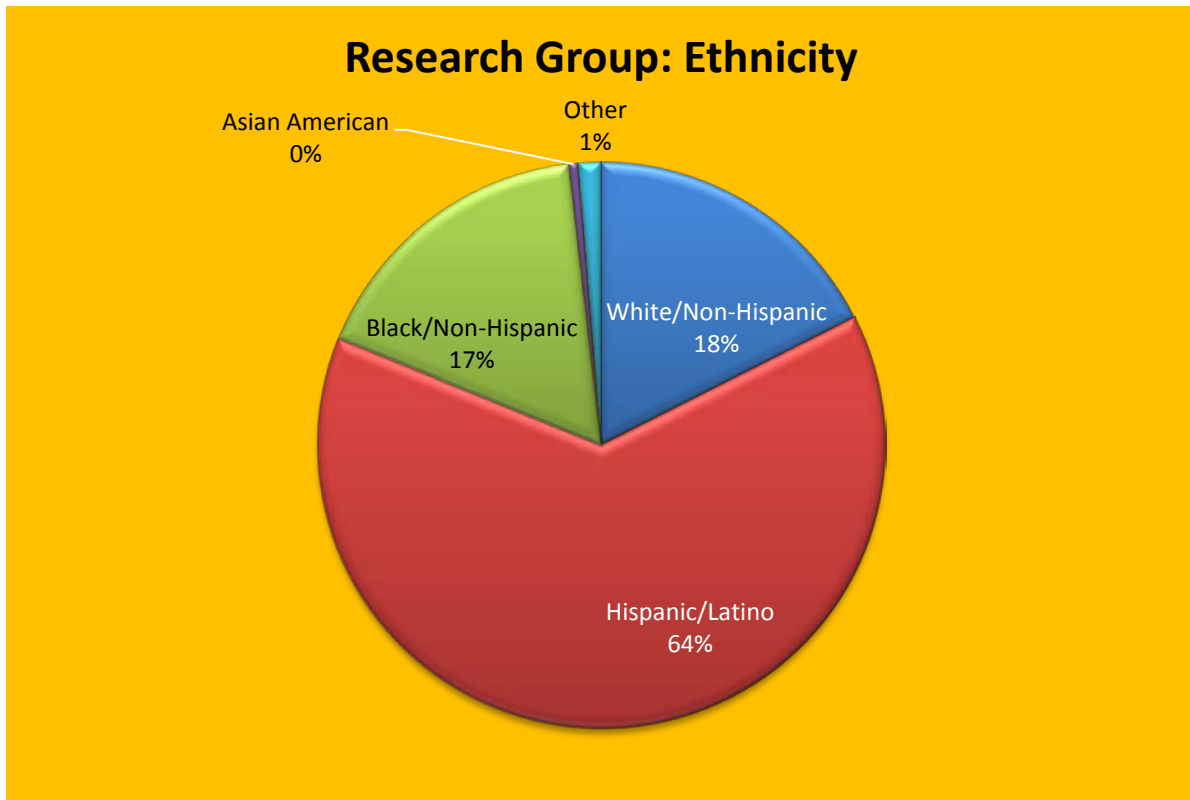
Increased Frequency of Confiding in Mate:

- ✓ 77% decrease in men who never confide in their mate.
- ✓ 32% increase in men who confide in their mate most of the time or all the time.

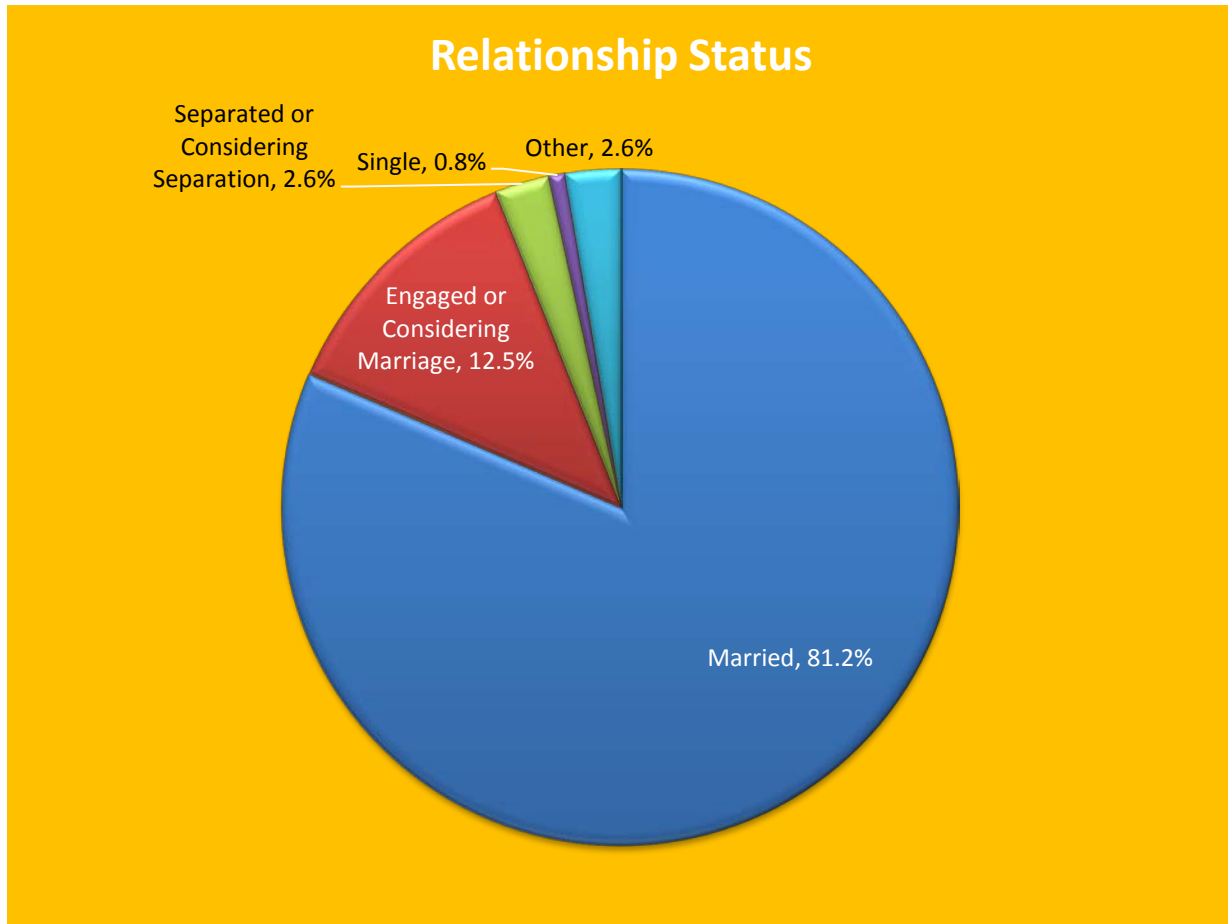
Decreased Frequency of Quarrels with their Partner:

- ✓ 43% decrease in men who quarrel with their partner all the time.
- ✓ 85% increase in men who never quarrel with their partner.

Demographics



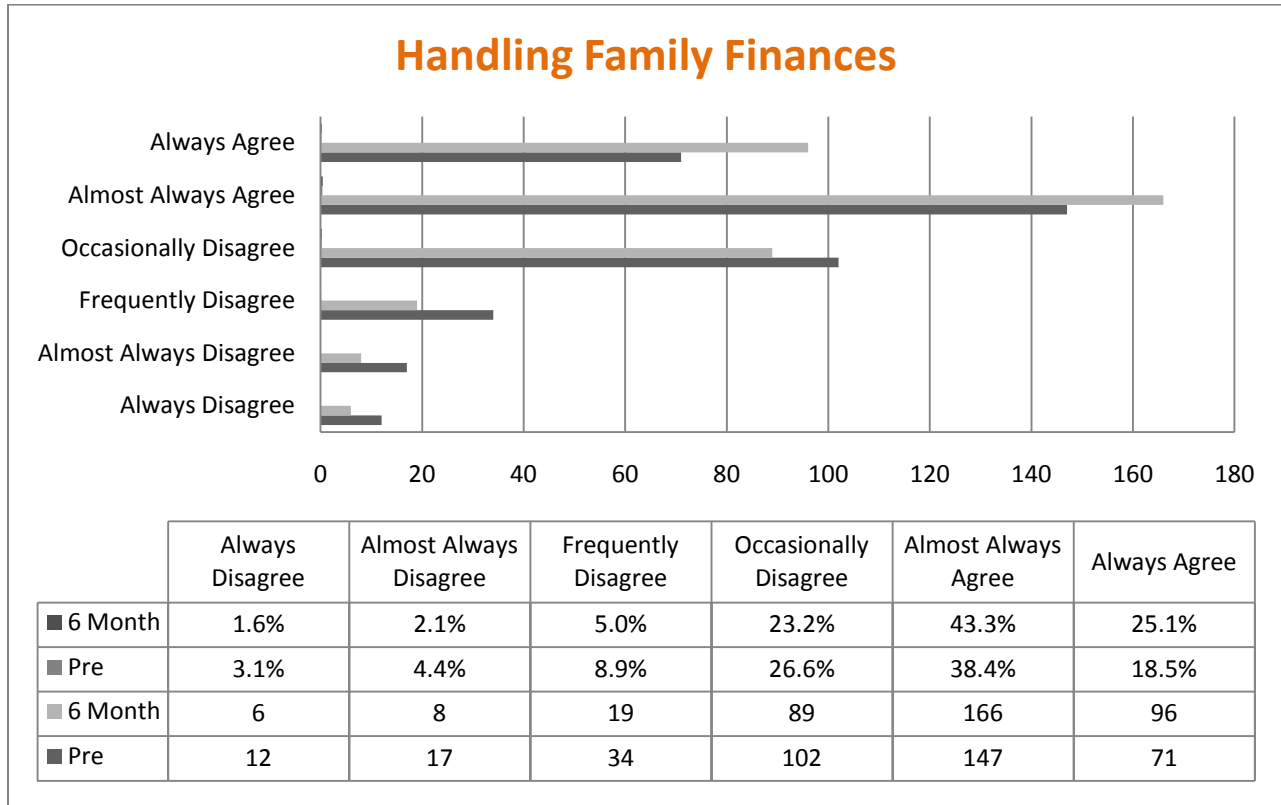
U.S. Census 2008



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	311	81.2	81.2	81.2
Engaged or Considering Marriage	48	12.5	12.5	93.7
Separated or Considering Separation	10	2.6	2.6	96.3
Single	3	.8	.8	97.1
Other	10	2.6	2.6	99.7
No Answer Given	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	383	100.0	100.0	

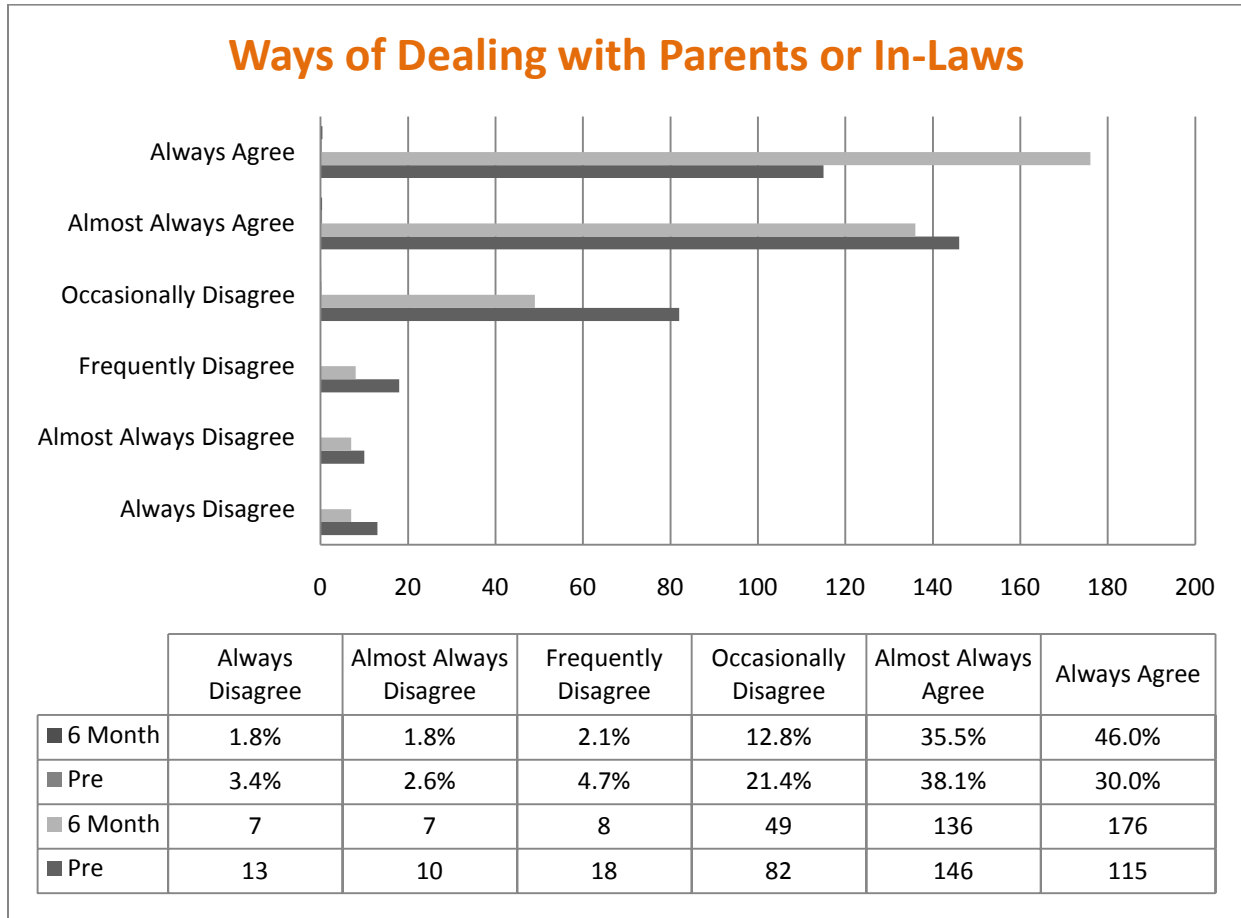
Children under 18					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, child under 18	206	53.8	54.4	54.4
	No child under 18	171	44.6	45.1	99.5
	No answer given	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	379	99.0	100.0	
Missing	Unknown	4	1.0		
Total		383	100.0		

Years of Education						
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Below 12	16	4.2	4.3	4.3	
	12	99	25.8	26.9	31.2	
	13	6	1.6	1.6	32.9	
	14	116	30.3	31.5	64.4	
	15	8	2.1	2.2	66.6	
	16	60	15.7	16.3	82.9	
	17	18	4.7	4.9	87.8	
	18	25	6.5	6.8	94.6	
	19	4	1	1.1	95.7	
	20	6	1.6	1.6	97.3	
	21	3	0.8	0.8	98.1	
	22	2	0.5	0.5	98.6	
	24	2	0.5	0.5	99.2	
	25	1	0.3	0.3	99.5	
	26	1	0.3	0.3	99.7	
	28	1	0.3	0.3	100	
	Total		368	96.1	100	
	Unknown		15	3.9		
	Total		383	100		



- 48% decrease in frequency of men always disagreeing, almost always disagreeing and frequently disagreeing with financial decisions.
- 35% increase in frequency of financial decisions in which men always agree.

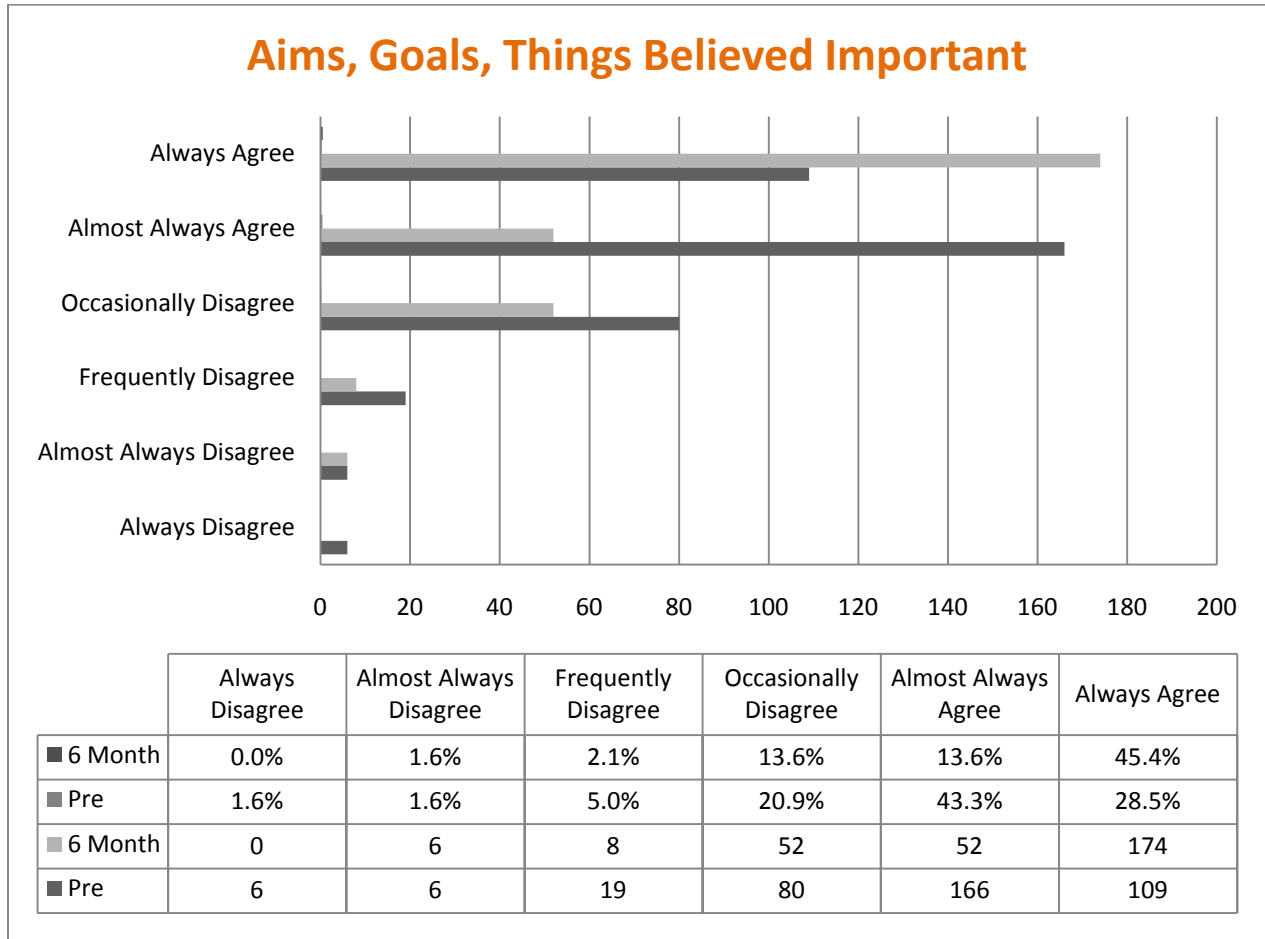
“Economic loss produced marked declines in marital quality among middle- and working-class families. In large part, this outcome reflected the acute deprivational meaning of income loss to husbands. Marital discord increased under economic pressures as men who lacked adaptive resources became more difficult to live with, more tense, irritable, and explosive. But even apart from such change, marital relations generally grew more tense and conflicted as couples were forced to adapt family needs to unexpected income constraints.” (Liker & Elder, 1983)



- 53% increase in men always agreeing with ways of dealing with parents or in-laws.

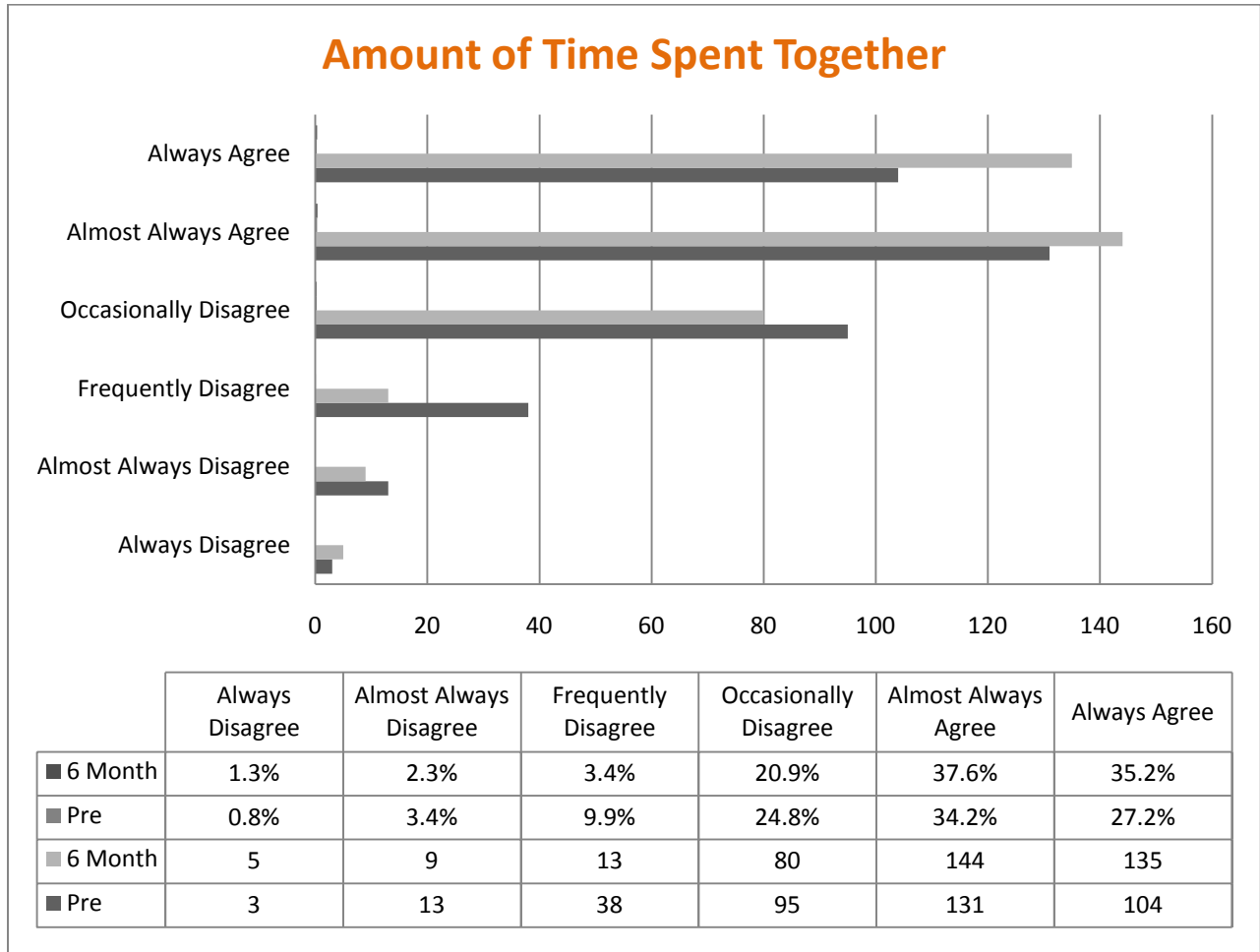
“Negative relations with in-laws may actually lead to relative decline in marital success, even in long term marriages ... Even after 2 decades of marriage, unhappiness and conflict with in-laws still leads to decreased perceptions of marital success.” (Bryant, Conger, & Meehan, 2001)

“Among newlyweds, low levels of conflict with in-laws predicts marital happiness for both husbands and wives.” (Timmer & Veroff, 2000)



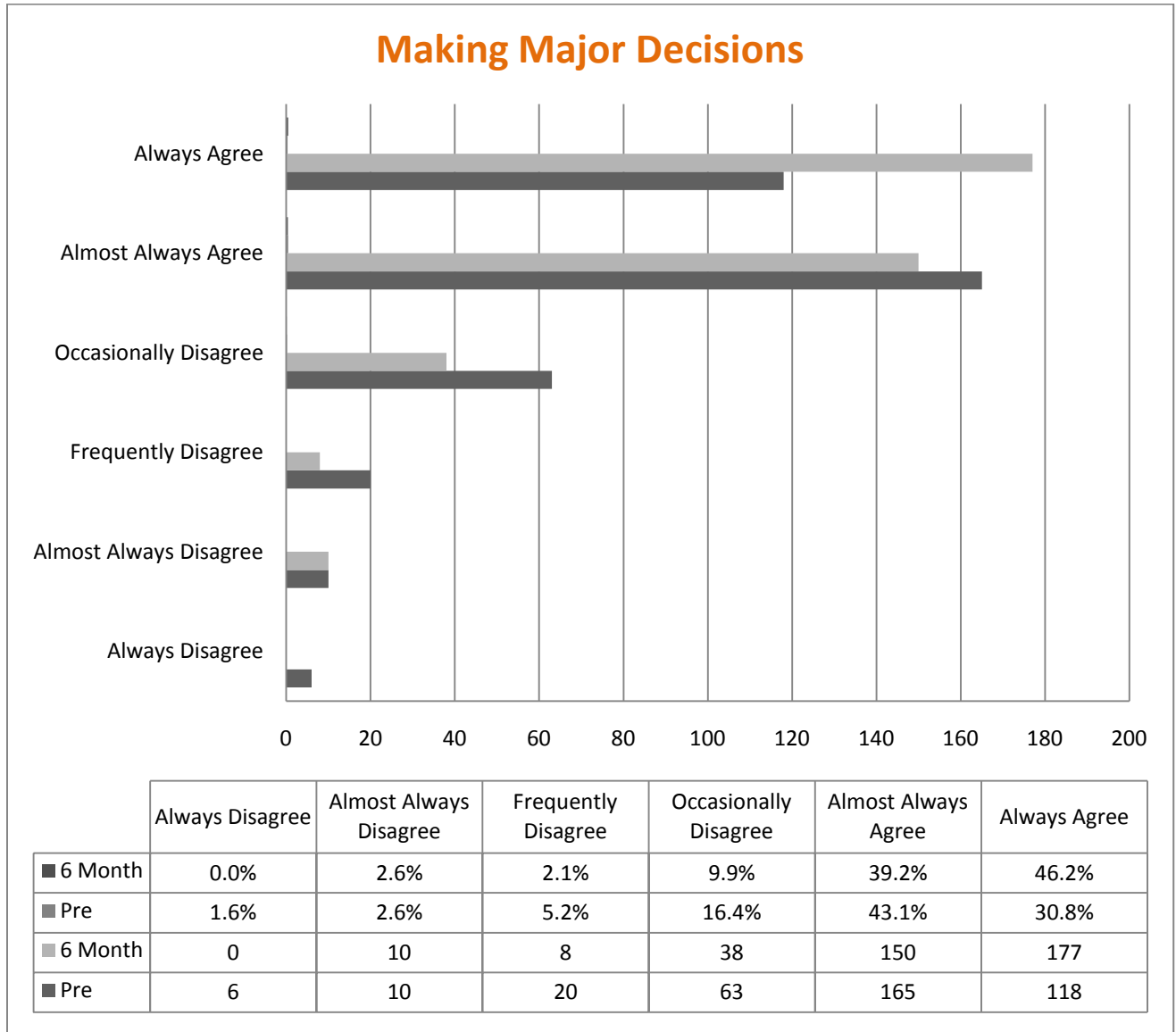
- 60% increase in men always agreeing on aims, goals, and things believed important.

Findings of a sample of 78 committed romantic couples suggest a central role for shared relationship goals and for perceptions of relationship goal progress in the context of romantic relationships. (Avivi, Laurenceau, & Carver, 2009)



- 30% increase in men always agreeing on amount of time spent together.

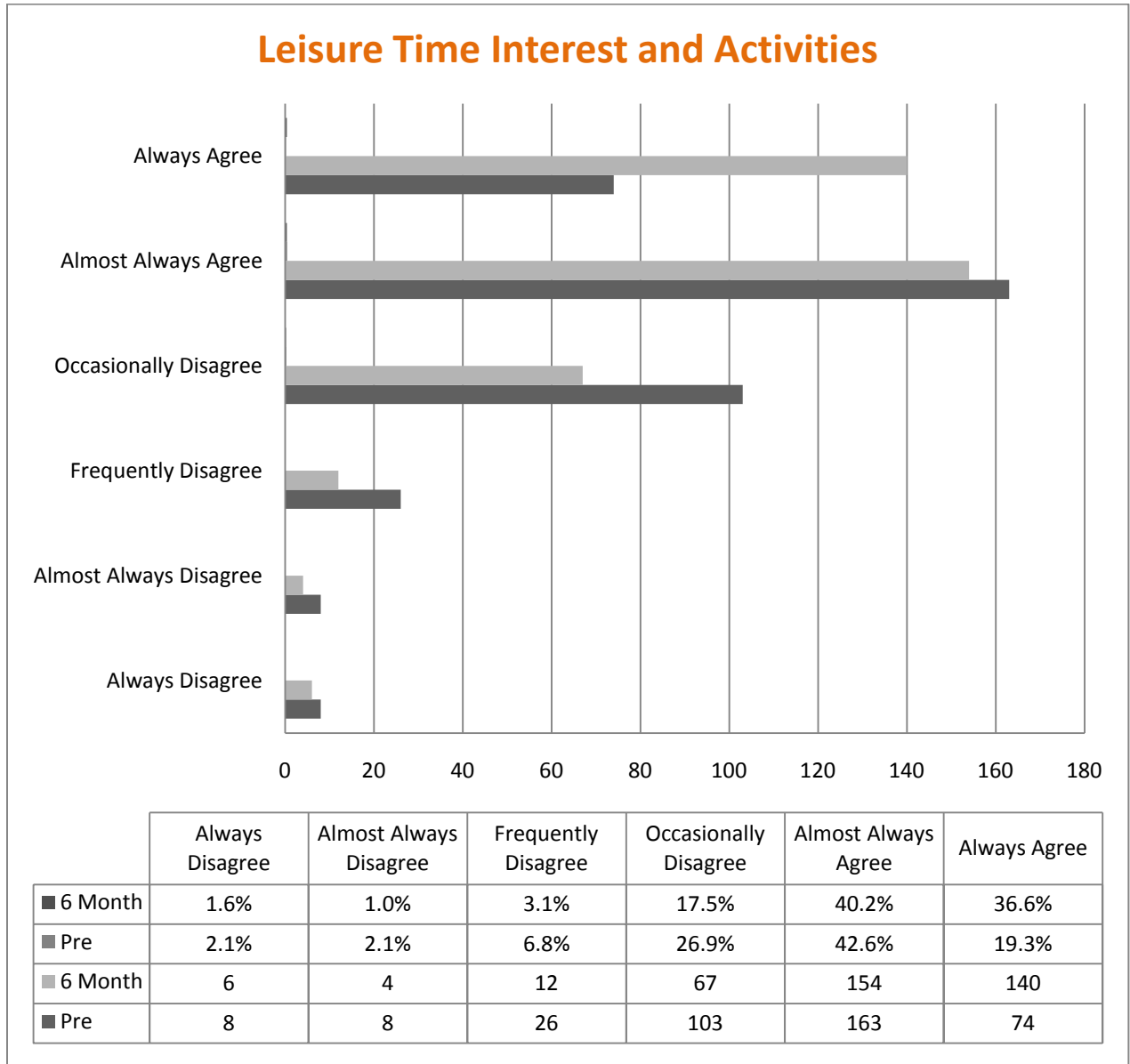
“The information presented in PAIRS has taught me how to prevent repeating negative behaviors and switch to productive behaviors.”
 – Paul, 43, Fort Lauderdale



- 50% increase in men always agreeing on major decisions.

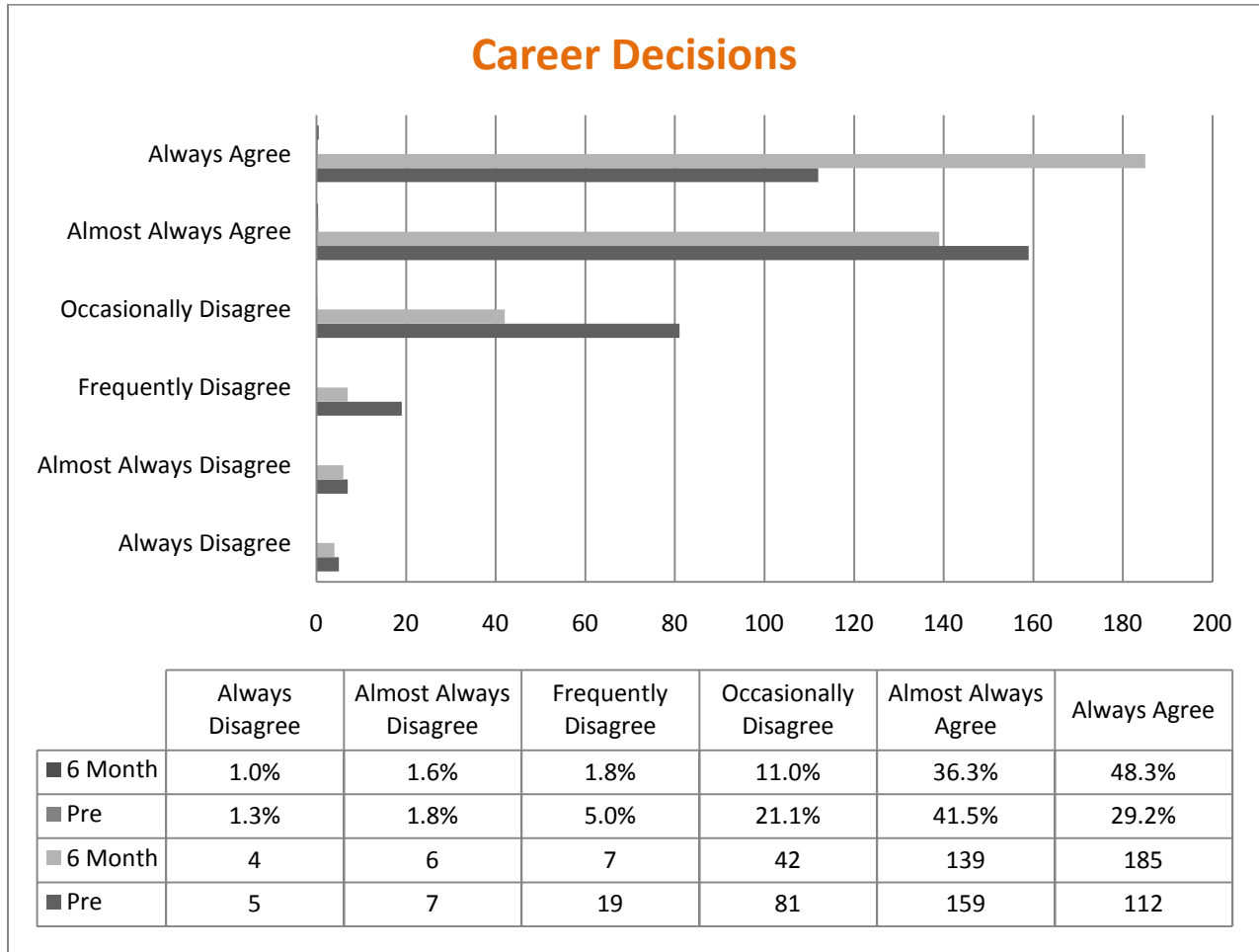
“This is the first time that my wife gave me a complaint without yelling or accusing me ... Thank you for this class ... Please let me know about future classes.”

-- Julio, 45, Cutler Bay



- 89% increase in men always agreeing on leisure time interest and activities.

There is a “positive relationship between proportion of leisure at high levels of joint security and marital satisfaction ... The couple who plays together stays together ...” (Holman & Jacquart, 1988)



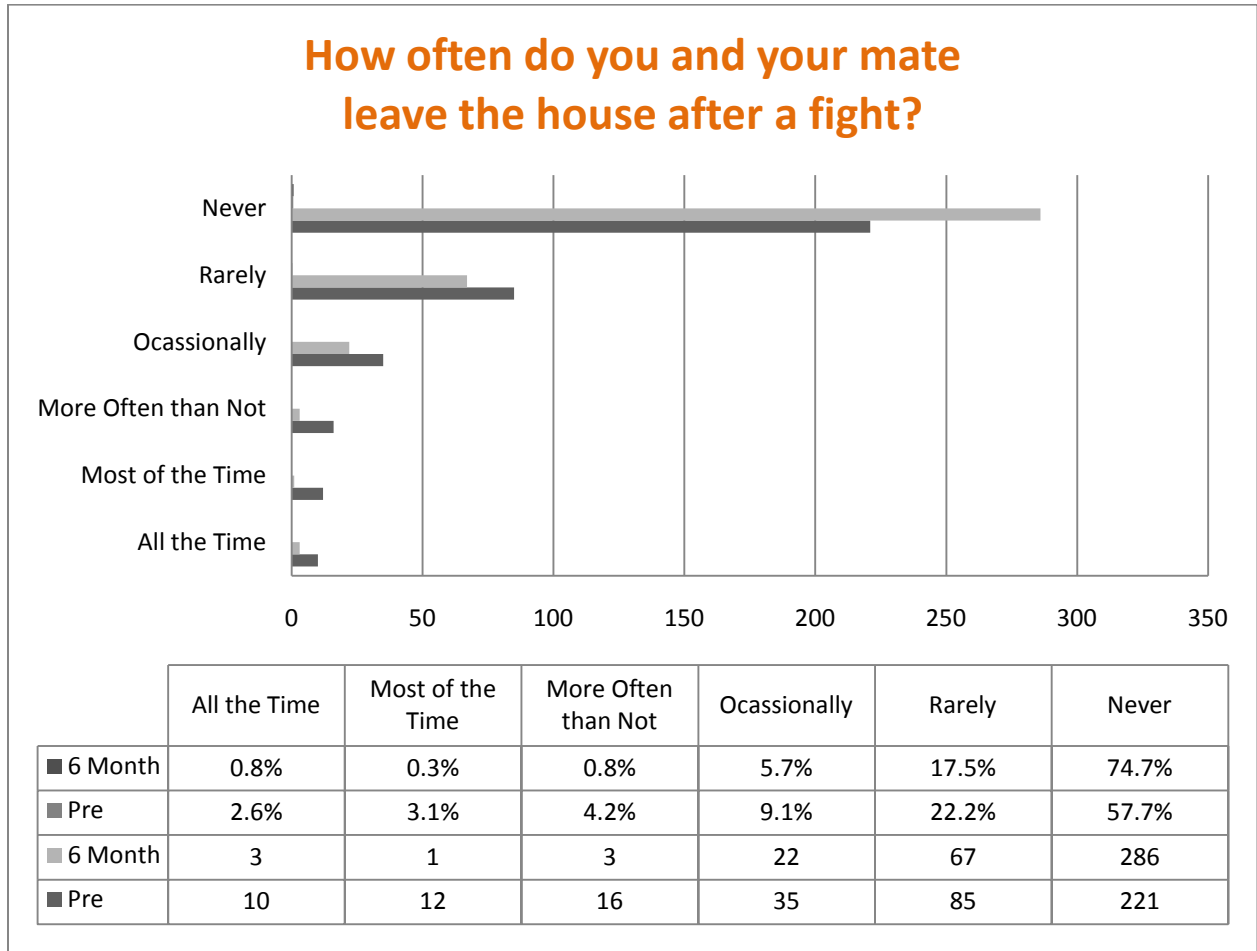
- 65% increase in men always agreeing with career decisions.

“The information and skills were beneficial and taught us how to start talking without interruption, while allowing us to focus on what the other was saying.”

– Joe, 36, Weston

“It was good to commit to a program that improved my communication skills with my wife as well as bring to light some internal corrections I need to make.”

– Randy, 55, Cooper City



- 70% decrease in men always leaving the house after a fight.
- 29% increase in men never leaving the house after a fight.

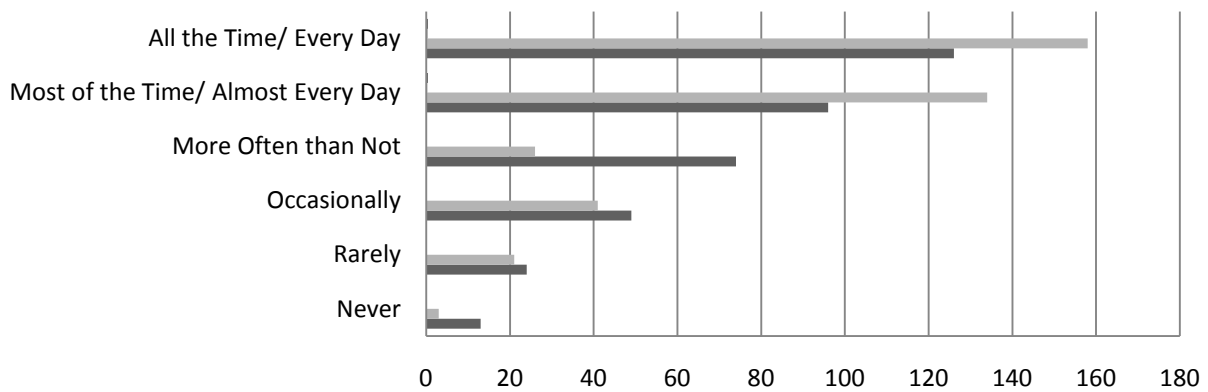
“PAIRS provides a framework my wife and I can both agree upon to solve problems and communicate effectively.”

-John, 41, El Portal

“I learned that these tools are necessary to sustain our relationship and are helpful in our marriage.”

-Hipolito, 64, Miami

How often do you confide in your mate?

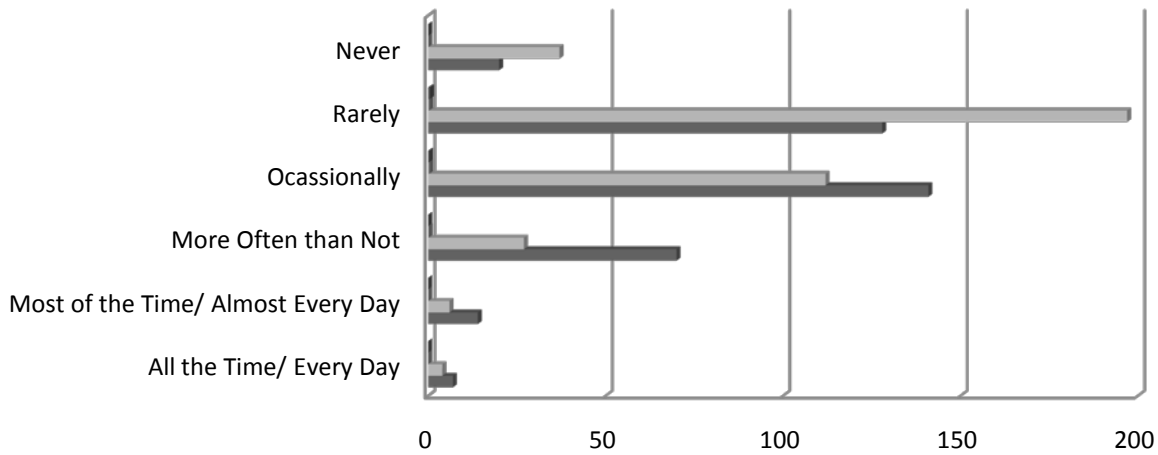


	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	More Often than Not	Most of the Time/ Almost Every Day	All the Time/ Every Day
■ 6 Month	0.8%	5.5%	10.7%	6.8%	35.0%	41.3%
■ Pre	3.4%	6.3%	12.8%	19.3%	25.1%	32.9%
■ 6 Month	3	21	41	26	134	158
■ Pre	13	24	49	74	96	126

- 77% decrease in men who never confide in their mate.
- 32% increase in men who confide in their mate most of the time or all the time.

“Choosing one’s spouse as a confidant is associated with the highest levels of marital satisfaction.” (Lee, 1988)

How often do you and your partner quarrel?



	All the Time/ Every Day	Most of the Time/ Almost Every Day	More Often than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
■ 6 Month	1.0%	1.6%	7.0%	29.2%	51.4%	9.7%
■ Pre	1.8%	3.7%	18.3%	36.8%	33.4%	5.2%
■ 6 Month	4	6	27	112	197	37
■ Pre	7	14	70	141	128	20

- 43% decrease in men who quarrel with their partner all the time.
- 85% increase in men who never quarrel with their partner.

“My wife and I were going through a very difficult time. She wanted a divorce and was only going to the PAIRS class because she thought that it would help me with the end of our marriage. I did not want the divorce and the PAIRS classes were fun but very difficult for us. We missed the follow up class because we were taking a trip to Paris. It was my hope that it would help rekindle the feelings we once had for each other. My wife and I had gone there for our first Valentine's trip together and it was magical for us. My wife and I continued to talk using the techniques we learned from you in the PAIRS program, while there my wife told me during the classes that she realized we were not ‘done’ like she had thought we were. We are now doing very well together! Thank you so much for your help.”

-- Gene, 50, Fort Lauderdale

Summary

- Marital and family breakdown is significantly preventable.
- Relationship Skills Training enables the far majority of adult male participants to learn skills that significantly improves their ability to sustain relationships with significant others and children.
- Education is the most effective intervention to address and resolve factors that most frequently lead to divorce, children born to single mothers, and single-parent households.
- Educators, counselors, clergy and others can be trained to be effective class instructors.
- Effective programs should incorporate a skills-based approach to enhancing empathy, bonding, and emotional literacy, including enhancing competencies in three areas:
 - (1) Emotional literacy;
 - (2) Skills for building and maintaining intimacy;
 - (3) Practical knowledge, strategies and attitudes for sustaining positive marriage and family life with the goal of enabling couples to create relationships that both partners can live with joyfully.
- Program outcomes should include enabling individuals to identify feelings and needs, communicate them in such a way that they can get met, and integrate skills that lead to constructive conflict resolution based on empathy, good will and shared vision.
- Breaking the cycle of marital and family breakdown requires a concerted national effort involving the public and private sector and informing local, state and federal policies.
- Addressing the needs of special interests that benefit from the status quo must be considered.
- The multi-generational benefits to children, families, and communities are critical to resolving significant social challenges and will contribute to America's productivity and prosperity.

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