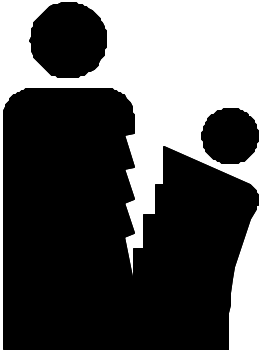


Children Coping With Divorce



Divorces are difficult and stressful at the best of times but with children involved it is compounded even more. It helps if parents can anticipate how the children are going to respond and be prepared to act accordingly.

Younger children often revert back to past behaviors as a way of handling the news. Behaviors can include whining, crying, wetting the bed or being very aggressive. At this age, children may try everything they know to reconcile the relationship.

Older children tend to react with anger against the parent who initiated the divorce. The divorce becomes a personal concern for them as far as where they will fit in and who will take care of them.

Teenagers tend to pick sides, which can put even more stress on the parents. Teenagers will also think about the divorce more than younger children and can even question their own chances of having a successful marriage in the future.

The common denominator with all children is they wonder if they were the cause of the divorce.

If you are going through a divorce or know someone who is, here are a few ideas to help the children involved:

- Try to prepare the children for the future once a definite decision has been made to go through with the divorce – don't keep it a secret from them.
- Include both parents when telling the children so that they know that both parents are available to work through the tough times with them.
- Be honest about the reasons for the divorce. It is important that the children understand that they are not the cause of the divorce.
- If you are having trouble dealing with the situation yourself, there are excellent resources to help explain why these things happen. For example, there are good books that are written for different age groups that help explain divorce and how to cope.

- Encourage your children to ask questions about the divorce so that they fully understand and accept the changes that are going to occur.
- Finally for the adult – take care of yourself. You need to keep your own strength up to cope with the changes that you will be going through as well.