

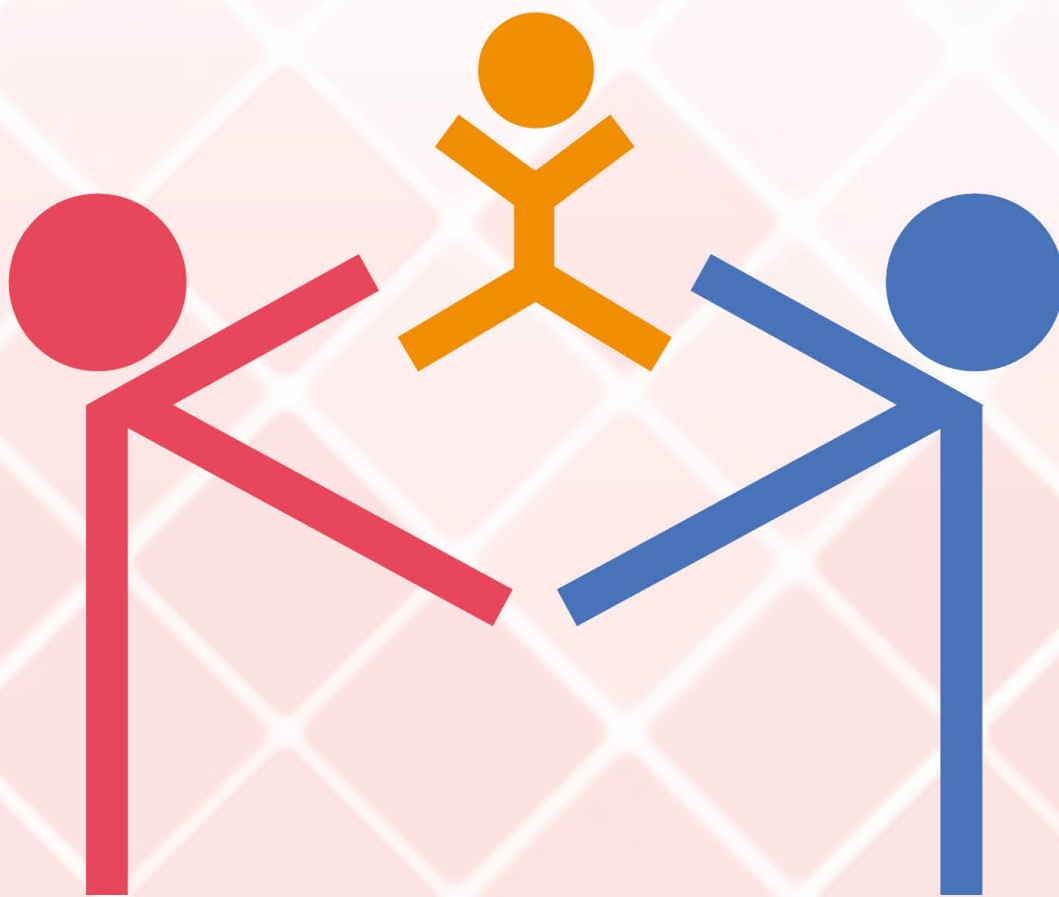
賽馬會離異父母支援服務
Jockey Club Parenting Coordination Service for Divorced Families

迎難而上

香港離異家庭共親職支援服務成效研究報告

Difficult But Possible

Evaluation study on the effectiveness of the
Co-parenting supportive service for
divorced families in Hong Kong



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“迎難而上” - 香港離異家庭共親職支援服務成效研究報告

Principal Investigators:

Dr. Yuk King Lau

**(Professional Consultant, Department of Social Work,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong)**

Dr. Glenn Stone

**(Professor & Chair, Baccalaureate Social Work Program, Ball State University,
Muncie, Indiana, United States)**

Research Assistants:

Ms. Lam Kit, Ms. Lam Tsui Hung and Ms. Chan Sin Ting, Stella

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Executive Summary

This report details an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Jockey Club Parenting Coordination Service for Divorced Families (the project). The evaluation adopted a mixed-method approach that integrated a quantitative study and a qualitative study.

The quantitative study

A quasi-experimental study was conducted to examine changes in participants' individual adjustment to divorce, the level of parental conflict, the triangulation of children, parents' mutual support in co-parenting, and the well-being of children over time. Questionnaires were collected at the three different times: pretest, post-test, and follow-up. In total, 138 parents from 110 families participated. At pretest, 182 valid pretest questionnaires were collected; at post-test, 85 valid post-test questionnaires were collected; and at follow-up, 48 valid follow-up questionnaires were collected. Return rates were thus 46.7% and 69.6% for post-test and follow-up, respectively.

Results of the quantitative study revealed that co-parenting education, counseling, and parenting coordination all contributed directly to parents' individual adjustment to divorce, lessened their anger and grief, and improved their self-worth and social self-worth. Counseling services also directly increased parents' mutual support, while co-parenting education and parenting coordination indirectly lowered the level of parental conflict when mediated by adjustment to divorce. Children's symptoms of hyperactivity significantly relieved due to the positive effects of counseling and co-parenting education for their parents on ways to relieve anger and enhance mutual support.

The qualitative longitudinal study

Twenty participants—10 parents whose children resided with them (i.e., resident parents), five parents whose children resided with the other parent (i.e., nonresident parents), three daughters, and two sons—took part in the in-depth interviews and focus groups. Qualitative results revealed that co-parenting education sensitized parent participants to the needs and difficulties of both resident and nonresident parents, motivated them to adopt a child-centered perspective, and equipped them with knowledge and skills useful in practicing child-centered co-parenting. Counseling support facilitated parents' adjustment to divorce, which empowered them with adequate emotional capacity to survive the difficulties of post-

divorce co-parenting. Parenting coordination mediated parental conflict and buffered direct conflicts between parents as well. However, when used as a standalone service, parenting coordination did not resolve relational problems between parents.

Recommendations

1. Co-parenting education services with different levels of programming and that address the involvement of grandparents and other significant parental figures in post-divorce co-parenting should be promoted and expanded. Advanced programming can provide useful follow-up guidance and opportunities for reflective learning to parents in practicing child-centered co-parenting.
2. The holistic family-centered support of both children and parents in post-divorce families and the multimodality of services (e.g., counseling, parenting coordination, group therapy, and education intervention) should be maintained.
3. Additional similar projects in different districts of Hong Kong should be developed and implemented.
4. Rooted in the Western context, parenting coordination and its applicability in Hong Kong remain in the pilot phase. Further practice as well as research and legislative support are necessary to overcome the identified constraints and difficulties.
5. Targeting towards parents experiencing high degrees of conflict, the delivery of parenting coordination services should be packaged with co-parenting education and counseling support for both parents, as well as multidisciplinary collaboration as deemed necessary.
6. Practice wisdom gained from the project should be shared with practitioners in related helping professions.
7. Whether to make co-parenting education a mandatory measure for divorcing parents warrants careful scrutiny and discussion.

行政撮要

是次研究旨在評估香港公教婚姻輔導會「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」的成效，研究採用了量性研究和質性研究互相混合補充的方法。

量性研究

我們採用了準實驗研究的設計，以追蹤調查的方式探討參與研究的家長在有關離婚的個人適應進度、父母雙方衝突的嚴重程度、子女因父母衝突而捲入三角關係的程度(子女因父母爭吵而成為磨心的情況)、父母間的親職支援及子女發展等指標在接受服務前和後的轉變。分別在服務使用者進入服務時(基線)，半年後(後測)及一年後(跟進調查)以問卷調查形式收集有關數據。共有分別來自 110 個家庭的 138 名家長參與了是次的研究，在基線階段共完成了 182 份有效問卷；在後測，共完成了 85 份有效問卷；在跟進調查，共完成了有效問卷 48 份。有效問卷的回應率分別為 46.7%和 69.6 %。

量性研究的結果顯示「共親職教育」、「輔導服務」，及「親職協調」對父母有關離婚的個人適應都有直接裨益：服務降低了服務使用者的憤怒和悲傷，增強了他們的自我價值和社會自我價值。「輔導服務」也直接提升了父母間共親職合作的支援水平。雖然上述計劃對父母衝突和兒童涉入三角關係沒有直接影響，但研究證實通過降低憤怒水平及脫離感情羈絆，有效減少了父母之間的衝突，可見服務對緩解衝突有間接影響。這些服務也對兒童發展產生間接的正面影響：通過降低家長的憤怒水平和增加彼此之間的共親職合作支援，舒緩了兒童的多動癥狀。

質性研究

我們採用了深入訪談及聚焦小組討論方式。共有 20 位家長及子女參與了研究，當中包括 10 名與子女同住的家長，5 名非與子女同住的家長、3 名女兒及 2 位兒子。訪談的結果發現「共親職教育」幫助家長明白「與子女同住父母」和「非與子女同住父母」各自的難處和需要、採用以兒童福祉為依歸的角度和原則去彼此相待、以及為他們裝備有助共享親職的知識和技巧。「輔導服務」有助促進家長們有關離婚的個人適應，讓其有足夠心力和平靜的心境去克服共親職過程中的困難和挑戰。「親職協調」

為父母間的親職衝突提供緩衝、減低父母間的正面衝突。但研究亦發現當家長單單接受「親職協調」，而沒有同時透過輔導或「共親職教育」幫助個人的離婚適應及內化以兒童福祉為依歸的信念時，服務似乎未能有效解決父母之間的相處問題。

建議

1. 擴充及推廣「共親職教育」，包括提供不同層次的教育支援，也要確認祖父母和子女的其他重要照顧者在共親職過程中的參與，以及所須的協調和支援。進階的「共親職教育」可為離異家長提供跟進的共親職指引，和幫助他/她們在實踐過程中作反思學習。
2. 維持現時服務中以家庭為本，給家長及子女們的多方面支援，包括情緒及適應輔導、親職協調、抒緩/治療小組及教育講座等。
3. 在香港不同的區域為離異家庭提供有關服務。
4. 「親職協調」乃引進外國的服務模式，在香港仍在試驗階段，在實踐上仍有多限制和不足，有待同業及當局多作研究和如何作法制上的配合。
5. 「親職協調」的對象主要為高衝突父母，建議「親職協調」要有「共親職教育」及「輔導服務」作為配套，甚至需要有多專業協作的支援。
6. 與相關專業輔導人員分享有關服務的經驗智慧。
7. 審慎考慮是否應該將「共親職教育」列為強制性的機制。

Chapter 1: Background

Trends in divorce and proposed legal reforms in Hong Kong

In recent decades, Hong Kong has experienced a considerable rise in the rate of divorce. In particular, the crude divorce rate in Hong Kong jumped from 1.1 to 3.1 per 1,000 people from 1991 to 2013 (Census and Statistics Department, 2015). Likewise, the Census and Statistics Department (2018) has highlighted that the number of divorce decrees granted nearly tripled from 1991 to 2016. Consequently, in the decade from 2001 to 2011, the proportion of children affected by divorce in Hong Kong increased from 4% to 7% (University of Hong Kong, 2014).

Given the complexity of parental cooperation in post-separation and post-divorce families, Hong Kong's social service and legal sectors have vigorously advocated the development of a system of comprehensive services to facilitate the effective management of negative emotions and workable parental alliances for the best benefit of children in such families (Lau, 2014). Their advocacy has been especially keen in response to the proposed legal reform on child custody and access and the implementation of the parental responsibilities model through legislative means (Labour and Welfare Bureau, 2011, 2015). The proposed reform stresses the responsibility of both parents for children in post-separation and post-divorce families and children's right to maintain a continuing relationship with both parents after they separate or divorce.

With reference to the effects of similar legal reforms in Australia, evidence from recent research has shown "a general decline in parental conflict among separated families in more recent cohorts, including shared-time families," due to the reforms (Smyth, Chisholm, Rodgers, & Son, 2014, p. 145). However, such positive change has been attributed not to the changes in legislation itself but to the consequent provision of child-sensitive dispute-resolution processes and well-integrated legal and relationship support services. To facilitate both parents' on-going involvement in children's life without an extension of unresolved parental conflict and violence in post-divorce families, intensive intervention models and differential case management have been examined in countries such as the United States (Schepard, 1999; Sullivan, Ward, & Deutsch, 2010). Structural education programs for separating and divorcing parents have been developed and widely implemented worldwide (Kelly, 2002), with the broad goal of helping children to cope more effectively with

separation or divorce by informing and helping their parents. Participating in divorce education programs early in the legal process rather than later appears to be more effective.

Jockey Club Parenting Coordination Service for Divorced Families

Envisioning the challenges of the anticipated legal reform for post-divorce families in Hong Kong, especially those experiencing lingering relational discord and conflict, the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council initiated a pilot project on co-parenting support service for divorced families. Beginning on April 1, 2015, and ending in March 2018, the three-year project offered holistic support to help both parents and children in post-separation and post-divorce families. Means of support included:

1. Counseling for divorced parents as they face impasses during the divorce process;
2. Co-parenting counseling to facilitate parents' post-divorce co-parenting;
3. Parenting coordination to assist high-conflict parents to uphold their mutually agreed parenting plan;
4. Education and workshops for parents to promote their knowledge of children's needs, their post-divorce parenting skills, and their conflict resolution skills;
5. Therapeutic groups for divorced adults to address their emotional injuries and for divorced parents to facilitate support of one another;
6. Child therapy to enhance children's strategies for coping with anxiety and stress arising from parents' divorce and post-divorce conflicts;
7. Therapeutic workshops to empower children with confidence and the ability to adjust to parental divorce and family changes; and
8. Legal consultation on co-parenting issues and disputes to help parents to understand their legal rights and responsibilities (The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, 2014, pp. 6–8).

Families in need of such services were recruited from referrals of the legal system and clients who have received mediation services from the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and who were assessed to be in need of continued support services. Briefly, the objectives of the project were:

1. To enhance the emotional and physiological adaptation of parents and their children who experience separation or divorce in the family;
2. To assist separated or divorced parents with best performing their roles and with ensuring that their children grow up in a stable, secure, and healthy environment by developing practical, positive, and healthy co-parenting plans;

3. To manage and reduce the conflicts of separated and divorced parents while facilitating the co-parenting process;
4. To manage ongoing issues in high-conflict child care arrangement and visitation with the aid of parenting coordinators; and
5. To teach communication and negotiation skills to parents in order to empower them to achieve cooperative parenting goals.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the project and thereby inform the development of an indigenous model in holistic support services for post-divorce families in Hong Kong, an evaluation study was commissioned to the Department of Social Work at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Chapter 2: Methods

A mixed-methods approach that integrated a quantitative study and a qualitative study was followed in the study. The quantitative study examined the effectiveness of the services examined by the project, whereas the qualitative study investigated factors that facilitated or hindered the effectiveness of those services. The invitation letter and consent form for participants appear in Appendix 1.

The quantitative longitudinal study

A quasi-experimental design was used in the quantitative study. Self-administrated pretest and post-test measures were administrated to parent participants in the experimental group during intake and before the first interview. Post-test measures were administered half a year after the pretest, and a follow-up test was administered half a year after the post-test.

According to the objectives of the programs in the project, five indicators of effectiveness were adopted in our study: parents' adjustment to divorce, the level of parental conflict, parents' mutual support in co-parenting, the degree of the triangulation of children in parental conflict, and the well-being of children in the families. It was hypothesized that the services would:

- (1) Enhance parents' adjustment to divorce;
- (2) Reduce parental conflict and the triangulation of children in such conflicts;
- (3) Facilitate mutual support between parents; and
- (4) Improve the children's well-being.

Measures

To measure the parent participants' adjustment to divorce, the short version of Fisher's Divorce Adjustment Scale (Fisher, 1978) was used. The scale consists of 31 items grouped into six subscales—Disentanglement from Love Relationship, Anger, Grief, Self-Worth, Social Self-Worth, and Social Trust—and rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *almost always*, 5 = *never*). According to the results of factor analyses, seven items were removed from analysis. The reliability of the subscales ranged from .52 to .92 at pretest, .74 to .91 at post-test, and .62 to .88 at follow-up after the removal of the seven items.

Parental conflict was measured using the four-item Conflict subscale of the Co-Parenting Communication Scale (Ahrons, 1981). Examples of the four items include, "When you and your former spouse discuss parenting issues related to this child, how often does an

argument result?” and “How often is the conversation stressful and tense?” Answers are captured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *always*, 5 = *never*), and higher scores reflect higher levels of conflict or support as perceived by respondents. Reliability of the Conflict subscale has ranged from .88 to .89 (Ahrons, 1981; Mullett & Stolberg, 1999); in our study, reliability was .84 at pretest, .91 at post-test, and .92 at follow-up.

In parents’ questionnaires, the triangulation of children in parental conflict was measured with the four-item triangulation subscale of the Coparenting Questionnaire (Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001). Items were revised to include both parents; examples are “We try to get this child to take a side when we argue” and “We use this child to get back at each other.” The Cronbach’s alpha of the original subscale has ranged from .73 to .84 (Margolin, et al., 2001); in our study, reliability was .71 at pretest, .79 at post-test, and .75 at follow-up.

Mutual support between parents was measured with the 6-item Support subscale of the Parenting Support Scale (Ahrons & Wallisch, 1987). Examples of items include, “When you need help regarding the children, do you seek it from your former spouse?” and “If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate?” The reliability of the subscale has ranged from .74 to .89 (Ahrons & Wallisch, 1987; Mullett & Stolberg, 1999). Due to the problems of factor structure and reliability, two self-evaluation items (i.e., “Would you say that you are a resource to your former spouse in raising this child?” and “If your former spouse has needed to make a change in visiting arrangements, do you go out of your way to accommodate?”) were removed and only four items used in our study. The reliability of the four-item subscale was .75, .77, and .76 at pretest, post-test, and follow-up, respectively.

Children’s well-being was measured with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, Meltzer, & Bailey, 1998), a 25-item mental health questionnaire for children aged 3–16 years that contains a Prosocial subscale, a Peer Relationships subscale, and three symptoms subscales: Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, and Hyperactivity–Inattention. The total difficulties score is calculated by adding the score of the three symptoms subscales and the Peer Problems subscale. The questionnaire has shown satisfactory internal consistency, test–retest reliability, and inter-rater agreement (Stone, Otten, Engels, Vermul, & Janssens, 2010). The single-page Chinese version of the questionnaire was used in our study, although some items were removed from analysis due to problems of factor structure and reliability. After their removal, Cronbach’s alphas were .78, .73, .68, .64, and .58 at pretest, .76, .81, .68, .52, and .43 at post-test,

and .83, .84, .74, .66, and .68 at follow-up for the Prosocial (five items), Hyperactivity–Inattention (four items), Emotional Symptoms (four items), Conduct Problems (four items), and Peer Relationships (four items) subscales.

In families with multiple children, parents had to report their level of parental conflict and mutual support with reference to which child was being co-parented, as well as the perceived behavioral and emotional well-being of that child. Information of important demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, parents' education level, parents' monthly income, parents' current relationship status, and children's assessed special needs, if any) was collected to facilitate the examination of whether such characteristics altered the effectiveness of services received. Details of the mentioned measures and the survey questionnaires appear in Appendix 2, while details of the reliabilities and contents of scales with removed items used for final analyses appear in Appendix 3.

The qualitative study

In-depth interviews and focus group interviews were conducted to gather narrative feedback from both parents in the project and professionals in the programs. To provide early feedback on the services' adequacy, appropriateness, and fidelity (i.e., how closely actual services resembled planned services), the first round of interviews occurred after the first year of the project. The results not only served as feedback to HKCMAC but also informed preliminary pretest–post-test analyses of the quantitative study with the first cohort of parents in the project for an interim report. The second round of interviews occurred at the end of the project to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the results of the quantitative study and to evaluate the entire project. Interview participants included parents whose children resided with them (i.e., resident parents), parents whose children resided with the other parent (i.e., nonresident parents), and children who had participated in the project. Parents' written consent for participation or the resident parents' consent of child participants was obtained prior to interviews.

Interviews with parents addressed parents' experiences with using the services, the perceived effectiveness of the services, factors perceived to influence their effectiveness, and ways to enhance their effectiveness. By some contrast, interviews with children addressed their observations of their parents' alliance in implementing co-parenting plans, their own experiences with using the services, and the perceived effectiveness of the services for them and their parents. The interview guides and consent forms for tape recording the interviews appear in Appendixes 4–7.

Chapter 3: Results of the Quantitative Study

By the end of 2017, 182 pretest questionnaires from 110 families had been completed by 138 parent participants, 88 of whom were resident parents while 50 were nonresident parents. At post-test, 85 questionnaires from 57 families were completed by 65 parents; 45 were resident parents while 20 were nonresident parents. Post-test return rates were 51.8% for families, 47.1% for parents, and 46.7% for total valid questionnaires. The time lag between pretest and post-test ranged from 6 months to 23 months, with a mean of 10.86 months and a median of 10 months.

Because the follow-up measures had to be administered 6 months after post-test, the longitudinal study results reported here represent only parents who had completed the post-test measures by June 30, 2017. The number of eligible post-test questionnaires therefore dropped to 69. Ultimately, 48 valid follow-up questionnaires from 33 families were completed by 36 parents, 26 of whom were resident parents while 10 were nonresident parents. Follow-up test return rates were 71.7% for families, 67.9% for parents, and 69.6% for total valid questionnaires. The time lag between post-test and follow-up ranged from 6 months to 23 months, with a mean of 10.48 months and a median of 10 months (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Number of participants and valid questionnaires collected by the end of 2017

	Pretest	Post-test		Follow-up	Response rate (%)	
		All	End of June 2017		Post-test	Follow-up
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(b/a)	(d/c)
Families	110	57	46	33	51.8	71.7
Parents	138	65	53	36	47.1	67.9
Resident parents	88	45	36	26	51.1	72.2
Nonresident parents	50	20	17	10	40.0	58.8
Valid questionnaires	182	85	69	48	46.7	69.6
From resident parents	116	59	47	33	50.9	70.2
From nonresident parents	66	26	22	15	39.4	68.2

(a) Total number of questionnaires collected at pretest

(b) Total number of questionnaires collected at posttest

(c) Number of questionnaire required follow-up

(d) Number of follow-up test questionnaire collected

Demographic characteristics of parent participants

Of the 138 parents who completed the pretest, 67 (48.6%) were men whereas 71 (51.4%) were women; 76 (55.1%) were aged 36–45 years. Altogether, 60 (43.5%) remained single after their divorce whereas 13 (9.4%) reported having new partners; 66 (47.8%) had at least a college education whereas 21 (15.2%) had no more than a junior-high-school education; 28 (20.3%) had no income or received Comprehensive Social Security Assistance whereas 33 (23.9%) had monthly incomes exceeding HKD 30,000; and 75 (54.3%) had no religious beliefs whereas 44 (31.9%) were Christian and 16 (11.6%) were either Buddhist or Taoist (Table 3.2). Resident parents ($n = 88$) and nonresident parents ($n = 50$) were similar in terms of age, education level, income, and religious beliefs but differed significantly in terms of gender and marital status. Whereas 61 resident parents (69.3%) were women, only 10 nonresident parents (20.0%) were ($\chi^2 = 31.047, p < .001$). By extension, whereas 41 resident parents (46.6%) had remained single after their divorce, only 19 nonresident parents (38.0%) had ($\chi^2 = 6.828, p < .05$). Detailed demographic results regarding parents who completed the pretest appear in Table 3.2.

Similar trends emerged among parents who completed the post-test. Of them, the 45 resident parents and 20 nonresident parents were similar in terms of age, education level, and religious beliefs yet differed significantly in terms of gender and marital status. Among the resident parents, women ($n = 33, 73.3%$) outnumbered men ($n = 12, 26.7%$), whereas men ($n = 15$) outnumbered women ($n = 5$) among nonresident parents ($\chi^2 = 13.320, p < .001$). Concerning marital status, 24 resident parents (53.3%) had remained single after their divorce, and only one (2.2%) reported having a new partner. By contrast, a significantly higher percentage of nonresident parents ($n = 6, 30.0%$) reported having new partners ($\chi^2 = 11.403, p < .01$), as Table 3.2 shows.

Last, among parents who completed the follow-up test, resident parents ($n = 26$) and nonresident parents ($n = 10$) were similar except in terms of gender. Again, women outnumbered men among resident parents, whereas men outnumbered women among nonresident parents ($\chi^2 = 4.431, p < .05$). By marital status, resident parents most often had remained single after their divorce ($n = 19, 73.1%$); only one (3.8%) reported having a new partner, and only three (11.5%) reported being separated or divorcing (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Demographic characteristics of parent participants at pretest, post-test, and follow-up

	Pretest			Post-test			Follow-up		
	RPs (n = 88) Freq. (%)	NPs (n = 50) Freq. (%)	Total (n = 138) Freq. (%)	RPs (n = 45) Freq. (%)	NPs (n = 20) Freq. (%)	Total (n = 65) Freq. (%)	RPs (n = 26) Freq. (%)	NPs (n = 10) Freq. (%)	Total (n = 36) Freq. (%)
Gender									
Man	27 (30.7)	40 (80.0)	67 (48.6)	12 (26.7)	15 (75.0)	27 (41.5)	6 (23.1)	6 (60.0)	12 (33.3)
Woman	61 (69.3)	10 (20.0)	71 (51.4)	33 (73.3)	5 (25.0)	38 (58.5)	20 (76.9)	4 (40.0)	24 (66.7)
χ^2		31.047 [‡]			13.320 [‡]			4.431 [*]	
Age									
21–35 years	26 (29.5)	7 (14.0)	33 (23.9)	10 (22.2)	1 (5.0)	11 (16.9)	7 (26.9)	1 (10.0)	8 (22.2)
36–45 years	44 (50.0)	32 (64.0)	76 (55.1)	27 (60.0)	13 (65.0)	40 (61.5)	15 (57.7)	7 (70.0)	22 (61.1)
46 years or older	18 (20.5)	11 (22.0)	29 (21.0)	8 (17.8)	6 (30.0)	14 (21.5)	4 (15.4)	2 (20.0)	6 (16.7)
χ^2		4.393			3.443			1.202	
Marital status									
Single after divorce	41 (46.6)	19 (38.0)	60 (43.5)	24 (53.3)	8 (40.0)	32 (49.2)	19 (73.1)	4 (40.0)	23 (63.9)
Remarried or cohabitating	4 (4.5)	9 (18.0)	13 (9.4)	1 (2.2)	6 (30.0)	7 (10.8)	1 (3.8)	3 (30.0)	4 (11.1)
Separated or divorcing	43 (48.9)	22 (44.0)	65 (47.1)	19 (42.2)	6 (30.0)	25 (38.5)	3 (11.5)	3 (30.0)	6 (16.7)
Reconciled	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.5)	2 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)
Missing	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)
χ^2		6.828 [*]			11.403 [‡]			8.314	
Level of education attained									
Junior high school or less	13 (14.8)	8 (16.0)	21 (15.2)	5 (11.1)	5 (25.0)	10 (15.4)	4 (15.4)	3 (30.0)	7 (19.4)
Senior high school	34 (38.6)	17 (34.0)	51 (37.0)	20 (44.4)	4 (20.0)	24 (36.9)	13 (50.0)	2 (20.0)	15 (41.7)
College or more	41 (46.6)	25 (50.0)	66 (47.8)	20 (44.4)	11 (55.0)	31 (47.7)	9 (34.6)	5 (50.0)	14 (38.9)
χ^2		0.294			4.300			2.279	
Monthly income (in HKD)									
No income or on CSSA	23 (26.1)	5 (10.0)	28 (20.3)	16 (35.6)	0 (0.0)	16 (24.9)	10 (38.5)	0 (0.0)	10 (27.8)
5,000 or less	7 (8.0)	2 (4.0)	9 (6.5)	1 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.5)	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)
5,001–10,000	7 (8.0)	1 (2.0)	8 (5.8)	3 (6.7)	1 (5.0)	4 (6.2)	2 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)
10,001–15,000	12 (13.6)	10 (20.0)	22 (15.9)	7 (15.6)	5 (25.0)	12 (18.5)	3 (11.5)	3 (30.0)	6 (16.7)
15,001–30,000	22 (25.0)	16 (32.0)	38 (27.5)	12 (26.7)	8 (40.0)	20 (30.8)	7 (26.9)	5 (50.0)	12 (33.3)
30,001 or more	17 (19.3)	16 (32.0)	33 (23.9)	6 (13.3)	6 (30.0)	12 (18.5)	3 (11.5)	2 (20.0)	5 (13.9)
χ^2		10.328			11.170 [*]			8.003	
Religious belief									
Atheist	48 (54.5)	27 (54.0)	75 (54.3)	25 (55.6)	8 (40.0)	33 (50.8)	17 (65.4)	6 (60.0)	23 (63.9)
Christian	29 (33.0)	15 (30.0)	44 (31.9)	11 (24.4)	9 (45.0)	20 (30.8)	5 (19.2)	3 (30.0)	8 (22.2)
Buddhist or Taoist	10 (11.4)	6 (12.0)	16 (11.6)	8 (17.8)	2 (10.0)	10 (15.4)	3 (11.5)	1 (10.0)	4 (11.1)
Missing or other	1 (1.1)	2 (4.0)	3 (2.1)	1 (2.2)	1 (5.0)	2 (3.1)	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)
χ^2		1.303			3.453			.810	

Note. RP = resident parent, NP = nonresident parent, CSSA = Comprehensive Social Security Assistance; * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Services received by parent participants

At pretest, 96 parents (69.9%) had received marriage- or divorce-related services before participating in the project. Most often, parents had received mediation ($n = 48$, 34.8%) or individual counseling ($n = 46$, 33.3%), if not both (Table 3.3). At post-test, 36 parents (55.4%) had received counseling, 19 (29.2%) had participated in parenting coordination, and 18 (27.7%) had attended co-parenting talks or courses (Table 3.4). At follow-up, 32 parents (88.9%) had received services; most often, they attended counseling ($n = 20$, 55.6%) or co-parenting talks or courses ($n = 13$, 36.1%), if not both (Table 3.4).

Table 3.3 Support services received by parent participants ($n = 138$) before pretest

Received services?	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
No	32	23.2		
Missing	10	7.2		
Yes	96	69.9		
Mediation			48	34.8
Individual counseling			46	33.3
Divorce counseling			14	10.1
Divorce education (i.e., talks or seminars)			9	6.5
Co-parenting talks or courses			8	5.8
Other			10	7.2

Table 3.4 Support services received by parent participants at the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council before post-test (*n* = 65) and follow-up (*n* = 36)

	Before post-test (<i>n</i> = 65)				Before follow-up (<i>n</i> = 36)			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Received services?								
No	4	6.2			4	11.4		
Missing	1	1.5						
Yes	60	92.3			32	88.9		
Mediation			2	3.1				
Counseling			36	55.4		20	55.6	
Co-parenting talks or courses			18	27.7		13	36.1	
Group services			14	21.5		10	27.8	
Parenting coordination			19	29.2		9	25.0	
Other			3	4.6		1	2.8	

Demographic characteristics of participant parents' children and services received

Among the 182 children whose information was collected through their parents, 79 (43.4%) of them were boys and 103 (56.6%) were girls. With a mean age of 7.62 years, the children were mostly either 2–6 years old (*n* = 75, 41.2%) or 6–11 years old (*n* = 77, 42.3%). By birth order, 79 children (43.4%) had no siblings, and 50 (27.5%) were the oldest children in their families. Of the 24 children (13.2%) with assessed special needs, 13 had attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), five had dyslexia, and three had autism (Table 3.5).

At post-test, there were 85 children, including 41 (48.2%) boys and 44 (51.8%) girls. Their mean age was 8.31 years, and most (*n* = 49, 57.6%) were 6–11 years old. By birth order, 40 children (47.1%) had no siblings, and 21 (24.7%) were the oldest children in their families. Of the 16 children (18.8%) with assessed special needs, nine had ADHD, two had dyslexia, and four had autism (Table 3.5).

Last, at follow-up, there were 48 children, including 23 boys (47.9%) and 25 girls (52.1%). Their mean age was 9.33 years, and most (*n* = 32, 66.7%) were 6–11 years old. By birth order, 20 children (41.7%) had no siblings, and 13 (27.1%) were the oldest children in their

families. Of the nine children (18.8%) with assessed special needs, four had ADHD, and three had autism (Table 3.5).

At pretest, only 35 children (19.2%) of the total 182 had received services related to their parents' marriage or divorce; 20 of those children (11.0%) had attended individual counseling. At post-test, more children ($n = 44$, 51.8%) had received such services, including individual counseling ($n = 28$, 32.9%), group services ($n = 24$, 28.2%), and play therapy ($n = 6$, 7.1%). At follow-up, 30 children (62.5%) had received services: mostly individual counseling ($n = 19$, 39.6%) and group services ($n = 12$, 25.0%), if not both, as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.5 Demographic characteristics of parent participants' children

		Pretest ($n = 182$)		Post-test ($n = 85$)		Follow-up ($n = 48$)	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gender	Boy	79	43.4	41	48.2	23	47.9
	Girl	103	56.6	44	51.8	25	52.1
Age	2–6 years	75	41.2	21	24.7	6	12.5
	6–11 years	77	42.3	49	57.6	32	66.7
	12–17 years	30	16.5	15	17.6	10	20.8
	($M \pm SD$)	(7.62 \pm 3.62)		(8.31 \pm 3.41)		(9.33 \pm 3.41)	
Birth order	Only child	79	43.4	40	47.1	20	41.7
	Oldest child	50	27.5	21	24.7	13	27.1
	Second child	50	27.5	23	27.1	14	29.2
	Third child	3	1.6	1	1.2	1	2.1
Has assessed special needs	No	158	86.6	69	81.2	39	81.3
	Yes	24	13.2	16	18.8	9	18.8
	ADHD	13	7.1	9	10.6	4	8.3
	Autism	3	1.6	4	4.7	3	6.3
	Dyslexia	5	2.7	2	2.4	0	0.0
	Other	8	4.4	3	3.5	4	8.3

Note. ADHD = attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Table 3.6 Services received by parent participants' children

	Before pretest (<i>n</i> = 182)		From pretest to post-test (<i>n</i> = 85)		From post-test to follow-up (<i>n</i> = 48)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Received services?						
No	114	62.6	40	47.1	18	37.5
Missing	33	18.1	1	1.2	0	0.0
Yes	35	19.2	44	51.8	30	62.5
Individual counseling	20	11.0	28	32.9	19	39.6
Group services	6	3.3	24	28.2	12	25.0
Play therapy	4	2.2	6	7.1	1	2.1
Other	7	3.8	2	2.4	1	2.1

Number of relitigations

By number of relitigations between divorced couples, samples at pretest and post-test showed no significant difference. Approximately four-fifths of respondents reported no relitigation whatsoever (80.8% at pretest, 80.0% at post-test), and at follow-up, the number dropped further, to 41 respondents (85.4%), as detailed in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Relitigation between divorced parent participants

	Pretest (<i>n</i> = 182)		Post-test (<i>n</i> = 85)		Follow-up (<i>n</i> = 48)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Relitigation with former spouse?						
Never	147	80.8	68	80.0	41	85.4
1 time	22	12.1	10	11.8	6	12.5
2 times	6	3.3	3	3.5	1	2.1
3–5 times	3	1.6	3	3.5	0	0.0
More than 5 times	3	1.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Missing	1	0.5	1	1.2	0	0.0

Changes over time

Paired sample *t* tests were used to measure parent participants' changes in adjusting to divorce, level of parental conflict, triangulation of children in such conflict, and level of mutual

support over time. The purpose of the tests was to identify statistical evidence, if any, of significant improvement in those aspects.

Adjustment of parents to divorce

Changes in mean scores of indicators of adjustment to divorce were encouraging. Whereas scores for grief and anger significantly decreased, scores for self-worth, social self-worth, rebuilding social trust, and disentanglement from love relationship all significantly increased (Figure 1). The paired sample *t* test results thus revealed significant progress in the parents' adjustment to divorce after their participation in the project.

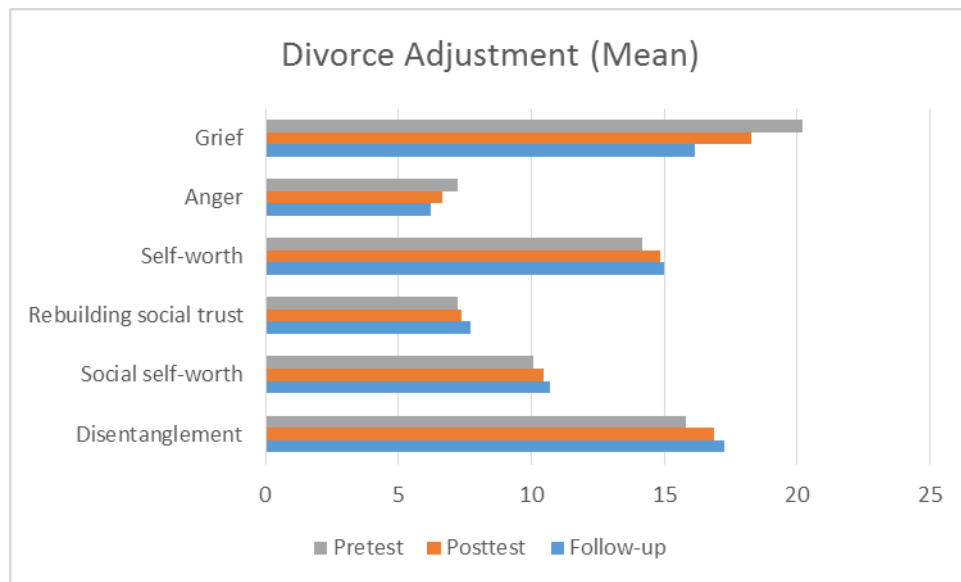


Figure 1. Mean scores for indicators of adjustment to divorce at pretest, post-test, and follow-up

Changes in adjustment to divorce occurred at different rates. First, the level of grief decreased significantly throughout the study period—in particular, by 5.22 ($t = 5.520$, $p < .001$)—with a mean score that dropped from 20.19 ($SD = 7.25$) at pretest to 18.41 ($SD = 7.26$) at post-test ($t = 3.025$, $p < .01$) and even to 16.17 ($SD = 4.96$, $t = 3.861$, $p < .001$) at follow-up

(Table 3.8). Second, levels of anger and self-worth changed from pretest to post-test; the mean score for anger decreased from 7.36 ($SD = 2.54$) at pretest to 6.67 ($SD = 2.54$) at post-test ($t = 2.467, p < .05$), whereas the mean score for self-worth rose from 13.78 ($SD = 3.37$) at pretest to 14.76 ($SD = 3.21$) at post-test ($t = -3.034, p < .01$). However, no significant changes in either anger or self-worth occurred from post-test to follow-up (Table 3.8). Third, rebuilding social trust and social self-worth also changed significantly during the study period. The mean score for rebuilding social trust increased from 6.86 ($SD = 1.94$) at post-test to 7.71 ($SD = 1.56$) at follow-up ($t = -2.841, p < .01$), whereas the mean score for social self-worth increased significantly ($t = -2.174, p < .05$) from 9.74 ($SD = 2.57$) at pretest to 10.84 ($SD = 2.96$) at follow-up. Last, changes in disentanglement from love relationship, however, were not significant (Table 3.8).

In sum, changes in anger, grief, and self-worth outpaced those in rebuilding social trust and social self-worth. Whereas significant changes in the latter two occurred from post-test to follow-up and from pretest to follow-up, respectively, significant changes in anger and self-worth changed from pretest to post-test only.

Table 3.8 Paired sample *t* test results for indicators of adjustment to divorce

	From pretest to post-test				From post-test to follow-up				From pretest to follow-up			
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Grief	20.19	59	7.25	3.025 [†]	19.42	36	7.24	3.861 [‡]	21.61	31	7.21	5.520 [‡]
	18.41	59	7.26		16.17	36	4.96		16.39	31	5.19	
Anger	7.36	58	2.54	2.467*	6.69	36	2.69	1.297	7.45	31	2.54	3.087 [†]
	6.67	58	2.54		6.22	36	2.19		6.10	31	2.10	
Self-worth	13.78	58	3.37	-3.034 [†]	14.36	36	3.06	-1.754	13.10	31	2.87	-3.654 [‡]
	14.76	58	3.21		14.97	36	2.58		14.97	31	2.70	
Rebuilding social trust	7.28	58	2.06	-0.542	6.86	35	1.94	-2.841 [†]	6.23	30	1.98	-4.080 [‡]
	7.40	58	1.79		7.71	35	1.56		7.67	30	1.63	
Social self-worth	10.03	58	2.60	-1.138	10.22	36	3.14	-1.432	9.74	31	2.57	-2.174*
	10.47	58	2.87		10.69	36	2.98		10.84	31	2.96	
Disentanglement from love relationship	16.20	59	4.15	-1.671	16.89	36	3.61	-0.939	16.52	31	3.94	-1.716
	16.81	59	3.56		17.25	36	3.41		17.35	31	3.27	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Parental conflict, triangulation of children in such conflict, and mutual support

Throughout the study period, levels of parental conflict, triangulation of children in that conflict, and mutual support decreased (Figure 2). Paired sample *t* test results indicated that parental conflict and triangulation of children dropped from pretest to post-test and thereafter stabilized. The mean score for conflict significantly decreased from 13.80 (*SD* = 3.71) at pretest to 12.22 (*SD* = 3.98) at post-test ($t = 3.463, p < .001$), as did the mean score for triangulation of children, from 9.37 (*SD* = 3.28) at pretest to 8.28 (*SD* = 3.28) at post-test ($T = 3.283, p < .01$), as shown in Table 3.9. No significant changes emerged in the scores for parental conflict or triangulation of children from post-test to follow-up, however. Regarding mutual support, significant drops ($t = 2.648, p < .05$) in the mean score for mutual support occurred from pretest (10.50, *SD* = 3.28) to follow-up (9.61, *SD* = 3.23), as shown in Table 3.9.

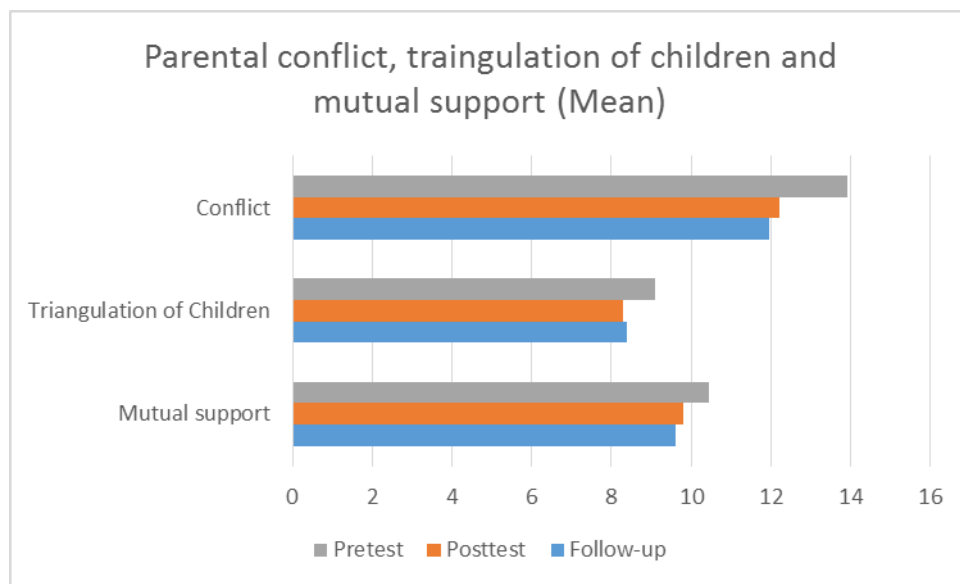


Figure 2. Mean scores for parental conflict, triangulation of children, and mutual support at pretest, post-test, and follow-up

Table 3.9 Paired sample *t* test results for conflict, triangulation of children, and mutual support

	From pretest to post-test				From post-test to follow-up				From pretest to follow-up			
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Conflict	13.80	82	3.71	3.463 [‡]	12.00	43	4.01	-0.079	14.27	44	2.97	3.987 [‡]
	12.22	82	3.98		12.05	43	4.05		11.95	44	4.05	
Triangulation of children	9.37	83	3.28	3.283 [†]	8.32	47	2.81	-0.279	9.52	48	2.72	3.079 [†]
	8.28	83	3.28		8.40	47	3.10		8.40	48	3.06	
Mutual support	10.24	79	3.19	1.232	9.93	45	3.35	1.312	10.50	46	3.28	2.648 [*]
	9.81	79	3.20		9.40	45	2.93		9.61	46	3.23	

**p* < .05, [†]*p* < .01, [‡]*p* < .001

Changes in children’s well-being

No significant change occurred in mean scores for indicators of children’s well-being except for hyperactivity (Figure 3). The mean score for hyperactivity significantly decreased from 4.17 (*SD* = 2.12) at post-test to 3.62 (*SD* = 2.33) at follow-up (*t* = 2.313, *p* < .05) and from pretest to follow-up (*t* = 2.957, *p* < .01), as shown in Table 3.10.

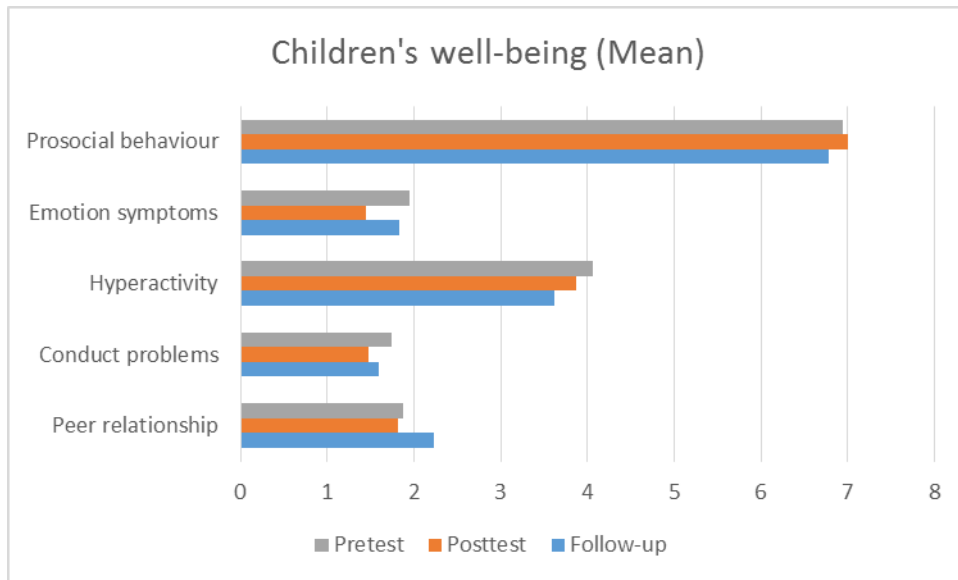


Figure 3. Mean scores of dimensions of children’s well-being at pretest, post-test, and follow-up

Table 3.10 Paired sample *t* test results for the dimensions of children’s well-being

	From pretest to post-test				From post-test to follow-up				From pretest to follow-up			
	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Prosocial behavior	7.01	84	2.38	-0.204	6.83	48	2.15	0.198	6.70	47	2.32	-0.254
	7.05	84	2.07		6.79	48	2.20		6.77	47	2.22	
Emotional symptoms	1.71	84	1.56	1.796	1.72	46	1.44	-0.558	1.98	47	1.70	0.654
	1.45	84	1.37		1.83	46	1.68		1.83	47	1.66	
Hyper-activity	4.11	85	2.13	1.302	4.17	47	2.12	2.313*	4.34	47	2.14	2.957 [†]
	3.87	85	2.23		3.62	47	2.33		3.62	47	2.33	
Conduct problems	1.58	84	1.43	0.993	1.63	46	1.53	0.189	1.51	45	1.31	-0.179
	1.44	84	1.38		1.59	46	1.64		1.56	45	1.65	
Peer relationships	1.63	82	1.51	-0.961	1.91	47	1.38	-1.342	1.85	47	1.71	-1.195
	1.80	82	1.43		2.23	47	1.89		2.17	47	1.85	

**p* < .05, [†]*p* < .01, [‡]*p* < .001

The project’s effects

Linear regression was used to test whether the project’s effect, not the effect of time, caused the significant changes observed. Because of small sample size at follow-up, hierarchical analysis was applied in particular. Demographic characteristics, including gender, age, marital status, and resident or nonresident parental status, were first examined following a stepwise procedure to remove variables that were not significant. Participants’ baseline levels of parental conflict, triangulation of children in that conflict, mutual support, and adjustment to divorce were controlled to test the program’s effect in terms of counseling, group services, co-parenting education, and parenting coordination services. The same procedure was also applied to test children’s well-being, albeit for the project’s effect in terms of counseling, play therapy, and group services for children. To test the carryover effect of the services, the regression was run again using follow-up test scores as the dependent variable, whereas post-test scores were controlled.

Effect of services on the individual adjustment of parents to divorce

Results of regression analysis revealed that co-parenting education, parenting coordination, and counseling all contributed to parents’ individual adjustment to divorce. Parents

who participated in co-parenting talks or seminars demonstrated higher self-worth ($\beta = .216, p < .05$) and social self-worth ($\beta = .320, p < .01$), as well as less anger ($\beta = -.279, p < .01$) and grief ($\beta = -.276, p < .01$), than those who did not (Table 3.11). No carryover effect surfaced except for social self-worth, the positive effect of which appeared at follow-up (Table 3.11). Counseling ($\beta = .222, p < .05$) and parenting coordination ($\beta = .221, p < .05$) also contributed to social self-worth, although co-parenting education exerted the greatest influence.

Regression analysis also revealed that parents who engaged in parenting coordination showed less disentanglement from their relationship ($\beta = -.187, p < .05$). In pretest, they were the group of parents who demonstrated the highest level of conflict, which usually reflected unresolved emotional and relational entanglement. Many of them were ordered by the court to engage in parenting coordination. Their failure to achieve a clean break due to the court-imposed co-parenting requirement and difficulties in the co-parenting process might intensify their unresolved entanglement. Regarding demographic characteristics, marital status exerted an impact, for parents who were separated or divorcing had higher levels of anger ($\beta = .338, p < .05$) and grief ($\beta = .174, p < .05$) than the others (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11 B and beta values of adjustment to divorce

	Self-worth				Disentanglement from relationship			
	Post-test (n = 57)		Follow-up (n = 36)		Post-test (n = 58)		Follow-up (n = 36)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	4.997 [†]		6.027 [‡]		7.673 [‡]		4.372*	
Self-worth, disentanglement from relationship, and anger	0.694 [‡]	0.697 [‡]	0.562 [‡]	0.667 [‡]	0.595 [‡]	0.703 [‡]	0.752 [‡]	0.796 [‡]
Parenting coordination	-1.008	-0.147	1.026	0.160	-1.390*	-0.187*	0.590	0.070
Counseling	0.236	0.037	0.450	0.087	-0.476	-0.069	-0.219	-0.032
Group services	-0.472	-0.061	0.580	0.090	-0.964	-0.113	0.896	0.106
Co-parenting education	1.486*	0.216*	1.073	0.189	1.412	0.190	0.041	0.005
Adjusted R ²	.527 [‡]		.535 [‡]		.592 [‡]		.577 [‡]	

	Anger				Rebuilding social trust			
	Post-test (n = 57)		Follow-up (n = 36)		Post-test (n = 57)		Follow-up (n = 35)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	2.086*		2.843*		3.380 [‡]		5.508 [‡]	
Self-worth, disentanglement from relationship, and anger	0.576 [‡]	.588 [‡]	0.484 [‡]	.594 [‡]	0.606 [‡]	.710 [‡]	0.282	.350
Parenting coordination	0.378	.071	1.110	.203	-0.643	-.170	-0.541	-.140
Counseling	-0.065	-.013	0.038	.009	-0.260	-.075	0.170	.054
Group services	0.110	.018	0.122	.022	-0.399	-.091	0.256	.066
Co-parenting education	-1.466 [†]	-.279 [†]	-0.434	-.090	0.382	.101	0.824	.242
Separated or divorcing	1.693 [‡]	.338 [‡]						
Adjusted R ²	.543 [‡]		.336 [‡]		.499 [‡]		.180	

	Social self-worth				Grief			
	Post-test (n = 57)		Follow-up (n = 36)		Post-test (n = 58)		Follow-up (n = 36)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	6.567 [‡]		1.552		5.068*		8.659 [†]	
Rebuilding social trust, social self-worth, and grief	0.477 [†]	.425 [†]	0.718 [‡]	.755 [‡]	0.696 [‡]	.697 [‡]	0.446 [‡]	.651 [‡]
Parenting coordination	-0.027	-.004	1.646*	.221*	0.697	.046	0.714	.058
Counseling	-1.426	-.247	1.326*	.222*	-1.002	-.070	-1.399	-.141
Group services	0.049	.007	0.632	.085	-0.514	-.029	-0.243	-.020
Co-parenting education	-0.316	-.051	2.105 [†]	.320 [†]	-4.214 [†]	-.276 [†]	-1.549	-.142
Separated or divorcing					2.527*	.174*		
Adjusted R ²	.179 [†]		.729 [‡]		.695 [‡]		.455 [‡]	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Indirect effect of services on parental conflict and triangulation of children

Although regression analysis revealed that services had no direct effect on the level of conflicts between parents and the triangulation of children in those conflicts (Table 3.12), they did have an indirect effect. Individual adjustment to divorce significantly influenced the level of conflicts between parents. Table 3.13 shows that anger was the most significant factor in the level of parental conflict; a single additional point in anger resulted in a .772-point increase in conflict level, which explained 27.0% of variance related to parental conflict ($\beta = .520, p < .001$). Another factor in the level of parental conflict was disentanglement from the relationship, which demonstrated a positive relationship with such conflict. The more that parents became disentangled from their relationship, the greater their conflict level; indeed, disentanglement explained approximately 10.0% of the variance related to conflict ($\beta = .317, p < .05$), as shown in Figure 3.4. By contrast, a significant indirect influence of services on the triangulation of children in parental conflicts and mutual support did not surface. The association of disentanglement with parental conflict is another unexpected finding. The result seems to suggest that disentangling from the love relationships with their ex-spouses, the parent participants' shifted their entanglement with their ex-spouses on co-parenting issues.

By demographic characteristics, women perceived a significantly lower level of triangulation of children in parental conflicts than men did ($\beta = -.206, p < .05$). Parents separated or divorcing reported a significantly lower level of triangulation of children in their conflicts than ones who were divorced and had other marital statuses ($\beta = -.244, p < .05$), as Table 3.13 shows.

Direct effect of services on mutual support between parents

Regression analysis additionally revealed that counseling services bore a significant direct impact on mutual support. Parents who had received counseling scored 1.831 points higher in mutual support than those who had not after the baseline levels of mutual support and three other services were controlled. Counseling explained 8.1% ($\beta = .284, p < .01$) of the variance related to mutual support (Table 3.12) and showed no carryover effect at follow-up. Women reported significantly less mutual support in the long term than men did. Women's mean score for mutual support was 2.121 points less than that of men at follow-up, at which time it explained 12.2% of the variance related to mutual support ($\beta = -.350, p < .01$).

Table 3.12 B and beta values of parental conflict, triangulation of children, and parental support

	Parental conflict				Triangulation of children				Mutual support			
	Post-test (n = 80)		Follow-up (n = 43)		Post-test (n = 81)		Follow-up (n = 47)		Post-test (n = 77)		Follow-up (n = 45)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	5.515 [†]		5.500*		3.266 [‡]		2.540*		3.016*		5.648 [‡]	
Parental conflict, triangulation of children, and mutual support	0.430 [‡]	.399 [‡]	0.629 [‡]	.623 [‡]	0.573 [‡]	.566 [‡]	0.875 [‡]	.794 [‡]	0.532 [‡]	.532 [‡]	0.500 [‡]	.571 [‡]
Parenting coordination	1.122	.128	1.173	.114	-0.551	-.075	-0.331	-.043	0.675	.097	-0.648	-.089
Counseling	1.620	.201	-1.876	-.229	-0.138	-.021	-0.150	-.024	1.831 [†]	.284 [†]	0.449	.076
Group services	-0.740	-.079	0.252	.027	0.351	.046	1.075	.153	-0.923	-.117	-0.358	-.051
Co-parenting education	-1.131	-.129	-0.428	-.050	-0.734	-.100	-0.009	-.001	1.148	.162	0.311	.050
Separated or divorcing							-1.497*	-.244*				
Gender							-1.296*	-.206*			-2.121 [†]	-.350 [†]
Adjusted R ²	.242 [‡]		.262 [†]		.290 [‡]		.628 [‡]		.322 [‡]		.450 [‡]	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Table 3.13 Effect of individual adjustment to divorce on parental conflict at post-test

	Parental conflict (n = 61)	
	B	β
(Constant)	-3.634	
Parental conflict	0.363 [†]	.347 [†]
Anger	0.772 [‡]	.520 [‡]
Disentanglement from relationship	0.355*	.317*
Adjusted R ²	.296 [‡]	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

The indirect effect of the services on children's well-being

Regression analysis showed that the services had no direct effect on children's well-being in terms of prosocial behaviors, emotional symptoms, and hyperactivity (Table 3.14). Additional path analyses were conducted to elucidate relationships among variables that significantly affected different aspects of children's well-being. Results revealed that the triangulation of children in parental conflict significantly worsened their emotional symptoms ($\beta = .234$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, parents' anger and mutual support bore significant but various influence on children's hyperactivity; anger increased their hyperactivity ($\beta = .195$, $p < .01$), whereas mutual

support reduced it ($\beta = -.161, p < .05$), as Table 3.15 and Figure 3.4 indicate. The influence of anger was slightly greater than that of mutual support. Mediated by the positive effects of counseling and co-parenting education on parents' anger and mutual support, the significant indirect effect of the services on children's well-being was therefore established.

Significant influences of group services on children's conduct problems and peer relationships also emerged (Table 13.14). Regression analysis showed that the more that parents rebuilt social trust, the less the children's conduct problems ($\beta = -.230, p < .05$) and the better their relationships with peers ($\beta = -.278, p < .05$), as shown in Table 13.14. However, given doubt about the reliabilities of conduct problems and peer relationships, it remains uncertain whether the findings are valid.

Table 3.14 B and β values of indicators of children's well-being

	Prosocial behaviors				Emotional symptoms				Hyperactivity			
	Post-test (n = 83)		Follow-up (n = 48)		Post-test (n = 83)		Follow-up (n = 46)		Post-test (n = 84)		Follow-up (n = 47)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	2.569 [‡]		1.284		0.442*		0.297		0.694		0.129	
Prosocial behaviors, emotional symptoms, or hyperactivity	0.644 [‡]	.724 [‡]	0.794 [‡]	.774 [‡]	0.531 [‡]	.613 [‡]	0.725 [‡]	.622 [‡]	0.691	.658 [‡]	0.753 [‡]	.686 [‡]
Counseling or play therapy	0.121	.028	0.138	.031	-0.164	-.058	0.584	.170	0.341	.075	0.146	.031
Group services	-0.322	-.071	0.075	.016	0.514	.170	0.196	.056	0.688	.142	-0.043	-.009
Has special needs											1.786 [†]	.292 [†]
Adjusted R ²	.550 [‡]		.576 [‡]		.359 [‡]		.418 [‡]		.494 [‡]		.583 [‡]	

	Conduct problems				Peer relationships			
	Post-test (n = 83)		Follow-up (n = 46)		Post-test (n = 81)		Follow-up (n = 47)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	0.511		0.476		1.336 [‡]		0.675	
Conduct problems or peer relationships	0.552 [‡]	.553 [‡]	0.504 [‡]	.469 [‡]	0.328 [‡]	.351 [‡]	0.684 [‡]	.500 [‡]
Counseling or play therapy	0.031	.011	-0.095	-.028	0.348	.119	0.183	.048
Group services	0.217	.070	0.939*	.275*	0.775*	.245*	-0.228	-.058
Has special needs							1.506*	.303*
Child gender					-0.817 [†]	-.290 [†]		
Adjusted R ²	.305 [‡]		.290 [‡]		.291 [‡]		.328 [‡]	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Table 3.15 Results of the effect of parental conflict, triangulation, mutual support, and adjustment to divorce on children’s well-being at post-test

	Prosocial behavior (n = 74)		Emotional symptoms (n = 75)		Hyperactivity (n = 75)		Conduct problems (n = 74)		Peer relationships (n = 74)	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
(Constant)	3.012 [‡]		-0.130		1.718*		2.023 [†]		3.429 [‡]	
Prosocial behavior, emotional symptoms, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and peer relationships	0.629 [‡]	.765 [‡]	0.527 [‡]	.608 [‡]	0.720 [‡]	.703 [‡]	0.489 [‡]	.501 [‡]	0.235*	.259*
Triangulation			0.093*	.234*						
Mutual support					-0.113*	-.161*				
Anger					0.170*	.195*				
Rebuilding social trust							-0.180*	-.230*	-0.212*	-.278*
Has special needs	-0.896*	-.176*								
Child age					-0.008*	-.157*			-0.846 [†]	-.305 [†]
Separated or divorcing	-0.580*	-.144*								
Adjusted R ²	.637 [‡]		.381 [‡]		.575 [‡]		.355 [‡]		.274 [‡]	

Note. * $p < .05$, [†] $p < .01$, [‡] $p < .001$

Summary of the results of the quantitative study

Results of the paired sample *t* tests revealed significant improvement in most aspects of the parents’ adjustment to divorce. Although parental conflicts and the triangulation of children in those conflicts significantly decreased, so did mutual support between parents.

The results of analyses on the program’s effects revealed that the services, including co-parenting talks, counseling, and parenting coordination, all contributed to better individual adjustment to divorce. Grief, anger, and disentanglement from the relationship all decreased, while self-worth and social self-worth improved.

The services also bore direct and indirect effects upon the levels of mutual support and conflict between parents. Counseling service directly increased mutual support in implementing co-parenting plans, and co-parenting education and parenting coordination had an indirect effect on lowering the level of conflict under the influence of adjustment to divorce.

Children’s well-being, particularly their hyperactivity, was better controlled via the positive effects of counseling and co-parenting education on parents’ anger and mutual support,

meaning that the significant indirect effect of the services on children's well-being were also established. Figure 4 illustrates the results of analyses and path analyses on the program's effects.

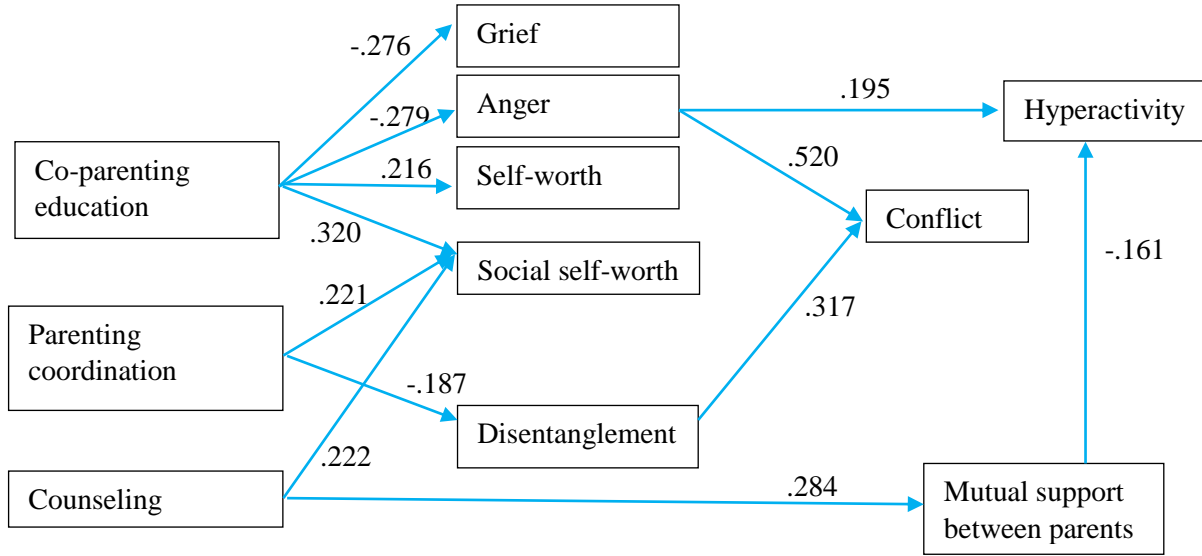


Figure 4. Path diagram of the project's effects

Chapter 4: Results of the Qualitative Study

In-depth interview and focus group participants

First-round interviews occurred late in the pretest phase from May to August 2016, whereas second-round interviews occurred in the follow-up phase from August 2017 to November 2018. In all, 20 participants—10 resident parents, 5 nonresident parents, and 5 children—took part in 13 individual interviews and two focus group interviews (Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Table 4.1 Background of parent interview participants

	Interview date	Gender	Age (in years)	Marital status	Individual income (per month, in HKD)
RP1	05/20/16	Woman	41–45	Separated	On CSSA
RP2	05/21/16	Man	36–40	Single after divorce	30,001–35,000
RP3	05/27/16	Woman	36–40	Single after divorce	10,001–15,000
RP4	07/30/16	Woman	41–45	Divorce decision made	10,001–15,000
RP5	08/05/16	Woman	26–30	Separated	No income
RP6	08/18/16	Woman	36–40	Single after divorce	20,001–25,000
NP1	08/03/17	Woman	36–40	Single after divorce	20,001–25,000
RP7	09/15/17	Woman	40–45	Single after divorce	5,001–10,000
NP2	09/29/17	Man	51–55	Single after divorce	50,001–55,000
NP3	10/04/17	Man	56–60	Separated but living together	On CSSA
RP8	11/04/17	Man	51–55	Single after divorce	No income
RP9	11/04/17	Woman	36–40	Separated	No income
NP4	11/04/17	Woman	40–45	Single after divorce	No income
NP5	11/04/17	Woman	31–35	Single after divorce	15,001–20,000
RP10	11/04/17	Woman	46–50	Single after divorce	No income

Note. RP = resident parent, NP = nonresident parent, CSSA = Comprehensive Social Security Assistance

Table 4.2 Background of child interview participants

	Interview date	Gender	Age (in years)	Residence arrangement
Girl 1	11/04/17	Girl	6–10	Residing with father
Girl 2	11/11/17	Girl	11–15	Residing with mother
Girl 3	11/11/17	Girl	16–20	Residing with father
Boy 1	11/11/17	Boy	16–20	Residing with mother
Boy 2	11/11/17	Boy	16–20	Residing with mother and father separately

Positive effects of the services on mutual support, parent–child relationships, and adjustment to divorce among parents and children

In the interviews, participants described their experiences, feelings, and personal transformations after participating in the project, which provided valuable insights into how the services might help their recipients. Their reported experiences highlight the effectiveness of the services in facilitating positive change at both individual and relational levels. At the individual level, many participants revealed that, after participating in the project, they gradually recovered from their loss, grief, and despair. The services also eased the pain of the divorce process by providing emotional support to participants.

- *I didn't want to keep living. The social workers here offered me great help, so now I'm living my life normally. (11/11/2017, RP9)*
- *I was trapped, but now I'm out of the trap. The service here has been very helpful. (11/11/2017, RP10)*
- *I'm now able to live on my own. (08/03/2017, NP1)*
- *HKCMAC's service is really very comprehensive. I feel particularly comfortable at the center. Everyone is nice to me. What has given me faith is that though no one really knows what they'll get after walking into the center and telling them [the center's staff] their difficulties, you have spiritual comfort after having gone to the center. That's very important to me. (07/30/2016, RP4)*

Among the children participants, two teenagers revealed the positive effects of the services on them, and some parent participants shared similar observations of their children's improvement after beginning to receive the services.

- *Having talked with the social worker, I no longer get mad with my schoolmates so easily. I'm aware that I used to not know that I was cross with my father and then get mad with my schoolmates. (11/11/2017, Girl 2)*
- *We have weekly gatherings of three or four people, including the social workers. We talk about what's going that week and help each other. I used to hide everything in my heart and burst out once I was triggered. I've changed now. (11/11/2017, Boy 2)*
- *She [our daughter] tended to blame herself for every mistake. From our perspective, she is improving due to the therapy process. She's now more confident. . . . I've received the same comment from her school teacher. . . . He said that my child had improved a lot. If she fails at something, then she's tried not to cry or lose faith in herself. Instead, she'll talk to her teacher about how she'll succeed next time. She finds her way. (08/18/2016, RP6)*
- *The thing that helps me the most is that play therapy eases my daughter's emotions She had major emotional problems before receiving therapy. . . . She's improved a lot now. (11/11/2017, RP8)*

At the relational level, two child participants revealed the positive effects of co-parenting supportive services on restoring a peaceful, cooperative parental alliance and reconciling the parent–child relationship.

- *They [my parents] have started to feel better about each other, not as that [husband and wife] but as friends. We're having hot pot tonight together. (11/11/2017, Boy 2)*
- *[With the help of the social worker] I don't hate her [the nonresident mother] anymore. I don't resist going out with her. I've become optimistic. . . . Mom made a divorce decision: a decision that I didn't like at that time. Divorce is*

divorce. However, we're still family, and we still connect with each other.
(11/11/2017, Girl 3)

Echoing the children's reported experiences, a nonresident mother underscored the significance of a workable parental alliance for children in post-divorce families.

- *The services have helped to resolve the conflict between their father and me. It really helps our kids. Our agreement is a 'magic word' to them. They'll be happy with the arrangement when they hear the magic words [Mom and dad both agreed that]. Our agreement is the most important thing.* (11/11/2017, NP5)

Most parent participants shared their children's gratitude for the social workers and the services that they offered. They emphasized how the services had guided them to cope with the difficulties of co-parenting and to persist amid the pain, not bask in their success in co-parenting. Co-parenting is a taxing task, and achieving a workable parental alliance was reportedly difficult for all parent participants, as the following paragraphs clarify.

How services helped

Consistent with the results of the quantitative study, co-parenting talks or workshops and counseling, including individual guidance, were the most mentioned services during interviews. Parent participants shared a great deal about how the services sensitized them to the needs and suffering of their children in the midst of parental conflicts and equipped them with the right attitude, knowledge, and skills for co-parenting.

Co-parenting talks and workshops equipped parents with a child-centered perspective that motivated them to practice child-centered co-parenting

Divorce involves not only adults but children as well. At times, children are vulnerable and unable to speak for themselves, and those hurdles increase when they are placed in the middle of parental conflicts. The co-parenting talks and workshops of the program revealed to parents the suffering of children amid divorce and guided them toward achieving child-centered co-parenting.

- *Co-parenting talks have enabled me to feel more about the emotions of the kids and their psychological change. There was a period when kids' father . . . we*

were angry with each other. We constantly picked on each other. It made the kids feel very sad when they saw us like that. Slowly, they started to think “Is mom really that bad?” Of course, they faced a dilemma. . . . During that period, they alienated me. I felt the most depressed at that time. By participating in the co-parenting course, I started to realize the stress and the pain of my kids. They didn’t know how to put that into words. The father said a lot about me, and if I did the same at the same time, my kids would likely lose a source of safety and shelter. Realizing that, after easing my own emotions, I encouraged them to express more about themselves. Unlike in their dad’s house, where they are not allowed to use the word “Mum” but only “The woman,” I allow them to share their happy moments with their dad with me if they want to. . . . I’ve learned to think from the children’s perspective like the video clip in the course showed. It touched me. A child was standing in the middle, and then the father said, “Why are you wearing the clothes from your mother? Don’t wear them; throw them away!” I felt sad while watching that. (11/11/2017, NP5)

- *After participating in the co-parenting course, I’ve learned to think from alternative perspectives. You can even stand in your kid’s shoes. It’s okay when even though the day is not scheduled for a father to meet his kids, he says that he really wants to meet his kids, and the children say yes. Then they can meet on that day. I don’t think we should just stick to the rules, like how many times a week you can see the kids, you can’t be late. . . . You have to let go of that. After participating in the course, you know you have to see from the kid’s perspective. Then you can feel a little relieved. (11/11/2017, RP10)*

Helping parents to step into other parties’ shoes

Empathy and mutual understanding are crucial for divorced or divorcing parents to cooperate or support each other for the good of their children. Stepping into others’ shoes facilitates and makes possible the successful implementation of co-parenting, because parents become willing and able to better understand each other.

- *I'm very interested [in the course] because there are participants with different marital and parental statuses: resident parents and nonresident parents, men and women, divorced and separating, as well as those still contemplating divorce. We have group discussions. The conversation has encouraged me to think, "If I were in his position, what would I experience?" If my ex-husband told me that he missed my son and dearly wanted to see him, that would surely trigger my emotions. But what if I consider it from a different perspective? What about if the nonresident parent is a mother? People would understand how eager she wants to see her children or that she is worried about the daily life of her children and wondering what their father's teaching them in case of disputes. How would I handle those things if I can visit my children only once a week? The course makes me think more. (05/27/2016, RP3)*
- *I attended many courses that made me understand the difficulties of both parents. It's hard for resident parents, because they need to look after their kids. It's sad for those nonresident parents, because it's not easy for them to see their kids. I understand the pain of both parties. Of course, there are some parents who prohibit their exes to visit their kids in Hong Kong. That's very sad for both of them. (08/03/2017, NP1)*
- *Now I understand. I back off. I don't think about telling him [my ex] that I can take care of the kids if he's unavailable. Because he may think that I'm trying to take the kids away from him. Now I understand that if he's unavailable, he'll speak up for help. If I'm the one that initiates the help, it'll make things bad. That's what I've learned. Things work smoothly now, because I understand the whole situation. Of course, I still have lots to learn. (11/11/2017, NP5)*

Equipping parents with necessary knowledge and skills for co-parenting

Along with attitude, understanding, and motivation, parents gained knowledge and skills for communicating, managing discrepancies, and avoiding negative reciprocity.

- *Case studies point out the common problems and difficulties that we're [my fellow program participants and I] facing. It gives us concepts and directions.*

The course also teaches us what we could do if our exes or partners took that position [a provoking one] and what we might do to help ourselves. That can help avoid some unnecessary disputes and conflicts. . . . After the course . . . I [understand] . . . if you don't overreact, the other party's provocation wouldn't be effective. The other party will eventually stop. So that even when we're not on good terms with our ex-spouses, there may be beam of hope to work together. (05/27/2016, RP3)

- *[The workshop was] a group of people facing similar situations who discuss problems that they've encountered after divorce. We talked about our expectations and differences in expectations from our ex-spouses and about how to handle them if there are discrepancies, or how to communicate with our kids when they get involved. . . . After participating in the workshop, I understand that he [my ex-husband] has his own life after our divorce. We don't need to expect too much from each other but just live our own lives. Only when we talk about our kids do we have to communicate rationally. (08/05/2016, RP5)*
- *It's [the course's lessons] helpful in understanding each other. That takes knowledge. In the course, I remember clearly that, in one lesson, the social worker taught us that if you communicate with the other [an ex] in a commanding way—for example, "I told you to do this or to do that"—that in fact hurts. Nobody likes it. When you point your finger at me, I feel like I'm being challenged. In addition to that kind of knowledge, the course also attended to the details of the conversation process and taught us tactics that can enable us to be more self-regulated. (10/04/2017, NP3)*
- *How to get along with each other, how to deal with matters about the kids: Those are many of the lessons in the course. (05/21/2016, NP1)*

Providing counseling and peer support to enhance parents' emotional capacity in surviving the difficulties of post-divorce parenting and co-parenting

Even with the necessary attitude, understanding, skills, and knowledge, as well as a willing heart, many of parent participants expressed difficulties with overcoming their anger and emotional entanglement with their ex-spouses, as well as with managing the psychological pain involved in post-divorce parenting and co-parenting.

- *We [my fellow participants in the course and I] learned a lot of skills in the course. However, I've realized that we're not able to let go of our anger so quickly. It's hard for us to actualize what we've learned when we're still angry. (11/11/2017, NP5)*
- *It's not easy. I have to let go of and relieve my own emotional and psychological pain. I fell apart when I saw my kids coming to me crying . . . saying, "Mom, I don't like you. I don't want to see you anymore." . . . But I could feel that my kids were forced to do that. It's devastating for my children when they get involved in this matter [the post-divorce parental power struggle]. That's what I've learned [in the co-parenting courses]. It wasn't easy. At the time, I've thought what if my kids really hate me for what I haven't done that I should have done as a mom. I feel so bad. (11/11/2017, NP5)*
- *The course has taught me [not to triangulate children as spies]. I was the one who didn't learn the lesson. My urge to know was just too strong. (10/04/2017, NP3)*

With empathetic understanding about the parents' difficulties and by facilitating the necessary emotional and psychological recovery to make co-parenting possible, strong counseling support at the individual and relational levels was provided to most parent participants.

- *At the very beginning, I felt that my relationship with my daughter was a total loss. The social worker supported me and helped me to realize that though I could no longer live with her and take care of her every day, that does not mean that I'm no longer a mother. . . . I can still love her and care for her. It took three to four counseling sessions for me to actually realize that. It was a complicated process. . . . Before receiving counseling, I couldn't stand her saying dirty words.*

Now, I talk to her like a friend and tell her that people might say dirty words to her to express their negative emotions and anger. I just give her a bit of personal opinion. That has improved our relationship a lot. (08/03/2017, NP1)

- *My child was playing with his back to us. The social worker observed that he stopped whenever my voice trembled with tears. He was so attentive and responsive to my emotions. I didn't notice it until the social worker shared her observation. With that realization, I know that, to take good care of my child, I have to take good care of myself and my emotions. I have to live a better life for his best interests. (11/11/2017, RP9).*
- *Through the play process, workers observed that I have a strong tendency to give commands and use controlling ways to order my daughter to complete tasks, like hurrying her up to do this or that. I lacked genuine involvement in playing with her. . . . I realized that I've overlooked something important. . . . With the program or with the feedback of the social worker, I can realize things better. (05/21/2016, RP2)*
- *The social worker organized a joint meeting with my mother and me. I talked a lot about myself, about my feelings at the time that she left. She was heartbroken after knowing what I felt. She kept apologizing. The social worker helped my mother tell me why the divorce decision was made at the time. She wanted me to get a full picture of what was going on then and everybody's feelings. After that meeting, I changed. I don't hate her anymore; I don't resist going out with her. I've become optimistic. (11/11/2017, Girl 3)*

Parent participants especially appreciated the cultivation of peer support and mutual learning in group counseling.

- *On top of my personal growth, my greatest gain has been getting to know a group of friends. . . . It's a tremendous help to us [group counseling participants and me]. It's not easy for divorced women to find each other in Hong Kong. (08/03/2017, NP1)*

- *[The services enable us to have] peers with whom we can genuinely share our life experiences without any consideration of vested interest. Our mutual support and guidance benefit all of us. It's an added bonus to what the instructors have taught us in the courses or workshops. . . . It supports and comforts us and helps us to let go and restore inner peace. . . . It explains . . . things that have happened already, they're not going to change. . . . We need to control the damage and reduce the negative impact. . . . We learn from each other. That's very effective. (10/04/2017, NP3)*
- *Through my contact with the social worker and the other group members, I learned more about my rights, the direction I might choose to take, and what I can do. Furthermore, I've found a place where I can vent my emotions. (11/11/2017, RP10)*
- *In the group, there's mutual support among us [my fellow participants in the group and me], including the social worker. It makes a big difference. It's hard to know how to deal with difficulties and how to express your struggles when you're alone as a divorcee in the community. We have peers in the group, and we know from each other that we're not alone. It puts our hearts at ease. (11/11/2017, NP5)*

Providing parenting coordination to deal with unresolved parental conflicts

On top of counseling and peer support, the project also offered intensive support with parenting coordination for parents with unresolved conflicts in the co-parenting process. It moreover mediated parental disputes and buffered the parents from direct conflict.

- *The social workers here [at the center] are very nice. Even when we [my fellow participants in the course and I] had completed the course, conflicts were still there in our daily lives, like who should keep the kid's student handbook and passport. We [my ex and I] argued about things like that, and our children suffered. . . . Arguing was meaningless. It wouldn't make him [my ex] hand over the kid's passport to me. My solicitor suggested giving him a legal warning letter*

stating that his action was against the divorce order. However, I didn't want that. I wanted to make peace with him. Therefore, I called the social worker here for help. She coordinated between us, and I got the passport a week later. The effect of the social worker's intervention is different. (11/11/2017, NP5)

However, one mother revealed that the service only deferred her ex-husband from taking legal action against her and did not solve their problems. Her ex-husband finally pursued court proceedings for disputes over co-parenting arrangements. The mother did not participate in any co-parenting courses because she misunderstood that the course would focus only on her emotional management and parenting. After realizing the content and purpose of co-parenting education, she considered that it was her ex-husband who needed the education.

- *When we were still using the social worker's coordination, my ex-husband didn't issue any legal letter. However, that doesn't mean that problems didn't arise. The problems kept on coming. . . . I hope that my ex can join the courses to expand his perspective so that he could give us some leeway. (09/15/2017, RP7)*

Not packaging co-parenting education with the parents' exploration of a child-centered perspective seems to undermine the effectiveness of the service of parenting coordination. Appreciating the services of the project and genuinely hoping for the further improvement of the services, the participants eagerly shared their opinions about the limitations of the services and their recommendations for improving them.

Limitations of the services and suggestions for improvement

Failure to facilitate the joint participation of both parents in the project and in child-centered co-parenting

According to the parent participants' experiences, the phenomenon that only one parent of a divorced couple participates in projects such as that reported here is widespread. Although the social workers extended their invitation to the other parents, the invitations were seldom accepted. Cooperative co-parenting requires the child-centered perspective of both parents, and it can be demanding if only one parent adopts a child-centered perspective. Some parent

participants also highlighted that if the other parent causes trouble and does not cooperate, then co-parenting can cause great pain. In short, co-parenting is not for all families.

- *It's a pity that it's so hard to have both parents join the project and receive co-parenting education. Usually only one attends: either the mother or the father. It would be the best if both parties could participate. (10/04/2017, NP1)*
- *The social worker extended an invitation to my ex-husband to participate in co-parenting workshops. However, her invitation was declined. (08/03/2017, NP1)*
- *My ex did not answer the social worker's calls. He told the social worker, "We [he and my ex-wife] are already finished." No need for any further follow-up. (11/11/2017 NP4)*
- *The course provides participants with concepts and directions. Of course, it depends on the cooperation of ex-husbands. If we [my fellow participants in the course and I] practice what we've learned from the course and our ex-husbands do the same, then conflicts are avoidable. In fact, after completing the course, I realized that I needed to deal with my ex regarding our kids. I reminded myself to try out what I had learned in the course and hoped that I could understand their father a bit more. I helped myself by doing that. However, there are difficulties in applying the concepts, because their father does not have the same mentality. (05/27/2016, RP3)*
- *The requirement for divorced parents to co-parent pleases the wicked party but can cause great pain to the others. (11/11/2017, RP9)*

A resident mother candidly shared her reluctance when she was asked to attend co-parenting education workshops. However, she completely changed her perspective after participating.

- *I was reluctant to take part in courses like this [the ones in the program]. It might have been due to my suspicions about why I was required to attend such courses. Was it because I really failed in some areas or performed poorly? Was the judge of the court challenging me and judging me [as if to say] that I'm not a*

good enough parent? . . . Actually, I was forced by the court to attend the co-parenting education course. But, for my own part, I thought that I had to find a way out, because the disputes had lasted for nearly two years. (05/27/2016, RP3)

In response to that limitation, some parent participants recommended making co-parenting education mandatory for divorcing parents and divorced parents with continuous disputes.

- *Coparenting education courses are now mandatory in some countries, and I suggest that as well. It might enhance the mutual understanding of the parents. . . . It would be great if the court ordered parents to take the co-parenting course. It's at least better than doing nothing, even if some parents are ordered by the court and come here for the education reluctantly. They may not listen to 10% of the words. Still, it's better than nothing. . . . I think that it's necessary, according to my own divorce experience. (08/03/2017, NP1)*
- *Both the mom and the dad have to attend the co-parenting course. (05/27/2016, RP3)*

Not addressing the significance of grandparents and other adults who play parental roles

At least three parent participants mentioned the significance of grandparents as being either a resource or hindrance in the co-parenting process. They underscored that co-parenting should not be restricted to only fathers and mothers but also extended to other significant adults in the children's lives who share or assume the parenting role.

- *Sometimes the parents need to go to work, and they need grandparents to take care of the kids. I think that if the grandparents have co-parenting concepts, it would make a big difference. Sometimes it's not the parents but the grandparents who generate the conflict. . . . Even if the father is doing a great job, when the grandparents join the conversation [and speak against the mother or provoke parental conflict], the kids may be hurt I am very lucky. The judge has asked us to bring our parents [to court] to have a word with them. (11/11/2017, NP5)*

- *My child's grandma always speaks badly about me in front of my child. I know that she has pent up a lot of emotions. She has a lot of unreasonable and unfair behaviors. I have to make frequent contact with her because she's the one who takes care of my child. Whenever I disagree with my child's father or complain about some arrangement, she has asked the child loudly, "You don't want to call her 'Mom'; is that right? She has an emotional problem, and she might be very stressed out by bearing most of the caregiving responsibility. (11/11/2017, NP4)*
- *My kid's grandparents have given me a lot of support. They've filled the empty position left by the father, especially Granddad who acts as the father. Kids need a male role model when they grow up. Granddad fills the position perfectly. I can see my kids don't feel inferior because they have Granddad. (11/11/2017, RP9)*

Limitations in human resources, time, program sessions, office space, and location

Results of the interviews indicated that, despite the great demand for services, human resources to administer them remain limited. In short, social workers are exceptionally busy people. Although they had devoted all of their time, some parent participants reported insufficient time for individual counseling sessions and that they had to wait for the sessions. Moreover, although group counseling and programs were rated highly, parents found the number of sessions to be too limited. At the same time, because the project provides territory-wide services, some participants found the location to be exceedingly far from their homes. With limited office space and a large group of service users, one adolescent participant stated that the center was sometimes congested.

- *I realize the manpower constraints. They have to offer so much help and support to us, but there are actually not that many social workers. (11/11/2017, NP5)*
- *The social worker is too busy. (09/15/2017, RP7)*
- *There's only one or one-and-a-half hours for individual counseling. If I occasionally have more things to talk about with the social worker, I hope that there can be some flexibility in extending the session. . . . [But] the social workers have to stop when time is up because other clients were waiting for them.*

I have to schedule and wait for another meeting with her. . . . The courses are good, but the sessions aren't enough. (10/04/2017 NP1)

- *Sometimes when I've come here [to the center], the environment has been so crowded and full of people. . . . The two rooms over there are somewhat better because they have windows, but they're also small and cramped. (11/11/2017, Girl 2)*
- *I live far away. Quite a number of activities [in the program] were in Kwun Tong. Plus, my three children are young, and my mom [who cares for them] needs to work, too. On holidays, I have to pick them up, so it's difficult for me to participate in the activities. (08/05/2016, RP5)*
- *I live far away, so it's difficult for me to make appointments to see the social workers. That's why my children go to another agency for play therapy and I come here by myself. (11/11/2017, RP10)*

To reduce the social workers' workload while maximizing the available services, one participating mother suggested that the project should provide parents with basic training on play therapy. That way, parents can supplement the social workers' intervention by playing with their children at home.

- *Providing parents with training on play therapy wouldn't require always coming here [to the center] for play therapy. We can play with the kids every week and learn more about them. It would save the kids the burden of long commutes, and it would be good for parent-child relationships. . . . I hope that the project can provide a service like that. (11/11/2017, NP5)*

A participating father also suggested that in addition to group counseling and other programs, follow-up programs can be offered to provide guidance in the application of the lessons and in overcoming the concrete difficulties of co-parenting.

- *I think that it would be better if the course could be divided into two levels—for example, elementary and medium. Based on the contents of the elementary-level course and the responses of participants, the medium-level course can be*

organized to support the advancement of participants by focusing on difficulties in applying what they've learned at the elementary level and reflecting on other participants' experiences. That would facilitate participants' improvement.
(10/04/2017, NP1)

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

All of the study's hypotheses, except the one addressing the triangulation of children in parental conflict, were confirmed by the results. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative studies consistently showed that participating in the project clearly improved parents' adjustment to divorce, reduced parental conflict, and facilitated mutual support between parents. Consequently, it also benefited children's well-being. In brief, the services were effective in:

1. Enhancing parents' adjustment to divorce;
2. Reducing conflict between parents;
3. Facilitating mutual support between parents; and
4. Enhancing children's well-being.

The degree of children's triangulation in parental conflicts decreased significantly throughout the study period. Results of qualitative analyses revealed that some parent participants' conscious efforts to prevent children from becoming triangulated in parental conflicts stemmed from their adoption of a child-centered perspective. However, the results of quantitative analyses showed no direct or indirect path of the services on such changes. The mechanism of change therefore needs to be further examined.

The significant reduction of parental conflict and the triangulation of children in such conflict, as well as mutual support between parents over time, could suggest the development of a pattern of parallel parenting among parent participants and their ex-spouses. Previous studies have shown that such a pattern is the most prevalent co-parenting pattern in Hong Kong, one characterized by a low level of contact and communication that reduces conflict as well as limits the degree of mutual support between parents (Cheung, 2004; Lau, 2007, 2016).

The most effective services of the project were co-parenting education, counseling services (e.g., individual counseling and group counseling), and parenting coordination. Along with those services, parent participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to develop peer support networks and engage in mutual learning with peers, as well as the genuine, caring community cultivated by the services.

Co-parenting education sensitized the parents to the needs and difficulties of both resident parents and nonresident parents, motivated them to adopt a child-centered perspective,

and equipped them with useful knowledge and skills for implementing child-centered co-parenting. At the same time, counseling support facilitated parents' adjustment to divorce, which enabled them to develop an adequate emotional capacity to survive the difficulties of post-divorce co-parenting.

Parenting coordination was targeted toward parents with unresolved conflicts regarding their co-parenting arrangements. It mediated parental conflicts and buffered parents from direct conflicts. However, as results showed, it also seemed to fail to resolve relational problems between parents if treated as a standalone service. Furthermore, the results of quantitative analyses suggested that difficulties in the parenting coordination process and parents' failure to achieve a clean break could deteriorate their sense of disentanglement.

No project is free of limitations. In the project, services were sometimes, if not usually, extended to only one parent of a divorced couple. If either parent does not adopt a child-centered perspective, then co-parenting can be a difficult, painful process. Among other limitations, co-parenting education was extended to parents only and did not address the significant influence or involvement of grandparents in post-divorce co-parenting. Limitations in human resources, time, office space, and location were also observed reflect the demand for services and the inadequacy of human resources and funding.

By the same token, no research is free of limitations, either. One limitation of the study was its small sample size and the diversity of services that participants received. Though related services were combined to reduce the number of service categories, the small number of participants in some service groups limited the statistical analysis that could be conducted. Another limitation stemmed from the relatively high attrition rate, especially for post-test phases. Despite tremendous efforts to contact respondents, 52.9% of parents dropped out of the study in the post-test phase. Thus, the findings of the study are most applicable to participants who completed the study in full and thus received a more complete course of service interventions. Moreover, results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) suggested significant differences in baseline indicators of adjustment to divorce; participants who completed the pretest only reported significantly higher scores not only in self-worth than ones who completed all three phases of the study ($f = 4.335, p < .05$) but also in rebuilding social trust than ones who completed the pretest and post-test phases and one who participated in all three phases of the study ($f = 10.697, p < .001$). By contrast, no significant differences emerged in children's well-

being, parental conflict, the triangulation of children in such conflict, or mutual support between parents. Their clearly better personal adjustment to divorce seemed to lower their felt need for co-parenting support services, possibly either because of their better psychological and emotional capacity to cope with the challenges of co-parenting or their lack of interest in co-parenting after achieving better personal adjustment. Accordingly, further qualitative research with a small sample of parents who dropped out of the study is recommended to form a more complete understanding of the reasons of their dropping out, identify ways to motivate them to continue participating in the project, and lower the attrition rate so that the impact of services can be evaluated more conclusively.

Recommendations

With reference to the results of the study, the following recommendations are proposed regarding the further development of the project and the enhancement of its services.

1. Co-parenting education services with different levels of programming and that address the involvement of grandparents and other significant parental figures in post-divorce co-parenting should be promoted and expanded. Advanced programming can provide useful follow-up guidance and opportunities for reflective learning to parents in practicing child-centered co-parenting.
2. The holistic family-centered support of both children and parents in post-divorce families and the multimodality of services (e.g., counseling, parenting coordination, group therapy, and education intervention) should be maintained.
3. With reference to the effectiveness of the project and limitations arising in providing territory-wide services at only one center, HKCMAC should seek funding for projects in different districts of Hong Kong, and funding bodies should support meaningful projects related to the delivery of services.
4. Rooted in the Western context, parenting coordination and its applicability in Hong Kong remain in the pilot phase. Further practice as well as research and legislative support are necessary to overcome the identified constraints and difficulties.

5. Targeting toward parents experiencing high degrees of conflict, the delivery of parenting coordination services should be packaged with co-parenting education and counseling support for both parents, as well as multidisciplinary collaboration as deemed necessary.
6. To maximize the benefits of the project for members of divorcing and post-divorce families, it is the obligation of The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council to share the practical wisdom gained from the project with helping professionals in related fields.
7. Although addressing whether to make co-parenting education a mandatory measure for divorcing parents was beyond the scope of the study, that question nevertheless warrants careful scrutiny and thoughtful discussion. With reference to the practice in other countries and its impacts on divorcing and post-divorce families, it is important to integrate violence sensitivity into co-parenting education. Instead of emphasizing that “parents should cooperate for the benefit of the children,” parent education programs have to clarify that “parents should cooperate if it is safe for parents and children to do so” (Schepard, 1999, p. 420).

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Appendix 1

香港公教婚姻輔導會

「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」評估研究

邀請及參與同意書

研究簡介:

承蒙香港賽馬會慈善信託基金資助，香港公教婚姻輔導會於 2015 年 4 月開展一項為期三年的「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」先導服務計畫，並委託香港中文大學社會工作學系就有關服務計劃作成效評估。評估內容包括:

- (1)服務計劃是否能有效減少父母之間的衝突；
- (2)服務計劃是否能有效促進父母的親職協作；
- (3)服務是否能有效提升這些離異父母的子女們的福祉。

研究的成果將有助於改善有關服務，以及在香港進一步推廣有關服務，使更多的離異父母及其子女因而獲益，故此是非常有價值的研究。

誠意你邀請參加是次的研究，無論你是否決定參與上述先導服務計畫，有關你和前配偶的親職協作情況，以及孩子的發展情況的資料對研究都非常重要，因為服務參與者和非服務參與者的情況比較，將幫助研究團隊更能確定研究的成效。

特別要強調的是參與是次研究全屬**自願性質**，並不會影響你是否能獲得所需的服務，你亦有權隨時收回有關同意及退出研究，並要求銷毀曾向研究團隊提供的評估問卷、訪談錄音及有關的電腦記錄。在研究過程中，你的個人資料會獲得**保密**，在研究結果發佈時有關的資料會以集體數據及以匿名的形式呈現，絕不會洩露任何受訪者的個人私隱。

研究主要以評估問卷的形式收集資料，每份問卷需時約二十分鐘，參加者需為**每位子女**作分別的評估。參加服務計劃的父母須在:

- (1) 接受服務之前填寫一次評估問卷;
- (2) 在接受服務約半年之後再填寫一次評估問卷，以比較服務前後的改變;
- (3) 跟進評估會在第二次評估九個月之後進行，以確定改變是否可以持續，即共三次。
- (4) 小部份的家長及孩子會被邀請參加深入的研究訪談，訪談為時約四十五分鐘至一小時。

如有任何查詢，請與香港公教婚姻輔導會陳倩婷女士(聯絡電話: 27827560)，或香港中文大學社會工作學系專業顧問劉玉琮博士聯絡(39437552 或電郵: yklau@cuhk.edu.hk。)

本人同意參與是次研究，並同意香港公教婚姻輔導會因研究的緣故與我作所需的跟進聯絡，本人明白研究的目的及資料保密的原則，也知道本人隨時有權退出研究，同時所提供的數據亦會被刪除。

參加者簽名: _____ 參加者姓名: _____

日期: _____

Appendix 2

香港公教婚姻輔導會

「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」評估研究 (Combined questionnaire)

問卷編號: _____ (RP/NP) (C)

填寫日期: _____

這份問卷旨在探討你和前配偶在照顧子女方面的相處情況、以及子女的行為品性，若你與前配偶有多於一名子女，請選定一位子女，並根據你和前配偶就照顧該名子女而作的溝通、合作和衝突情況，按照你的印象回答以下問題。答案無分對錯，你的前配偶和子女也不會知道你的答案，請放心回答。在作研究報告時，所有資料都會以集體數據呈現，而你和子女的個人資料會獲得保密。

1. 受訪者子女數目: _____
2. 若多於一個子女，為本問卷所選子女的排行: (1) 最大 (2) 第二 (3) 其他: _____
3. 上述子女的年齡: _____ 歲 _____ 月
4. 上述子女性別: (0) 男 (1) 女
5. 上述子女是否有已經診斷的特殊學習困難或精神健康方面的困難?
(0) 否 (1) 是 (請註明: _____)
6. 你是否和上述子女同住? (0) 否 (1) 是
7. 父母之間的衝突和互相支援: 請根據最近半年的情況回答以下的問題

	從不	甚少	有時	經常	常常
7.1 當你和前配偶商討養育上述子女的事宜，有多經常會發生爭拗?	1	2	3	4	5
7.2 商討時的氣氛，有多經常是憤怒和敵意的?	1	2	3	4	5
7.3 有多經常對話是充滿張力和緊張?	1	2	3	4	5
7.4 你和前配偶就養育上述子女的事宜，有基本分歧?	1	2	3	4	5
7.5 當你在與上述子女有關的事情上需要幫忙，你會向前配偶尋求幫助?	1	2	3	4	5
7.6 你認為前配偶是你在養育上述孩子方面的一個幫助和資源?	1	2	3	4	5
7.7 你認為自己是前配偶在養育上述孩子方面的一個幫助和資源?	1	2	3	4	5

11. 你目前的婚姻狀況:

- (1) 離婚後維持獨身 (2) 已有同居伴侶 (3) 已再婚 (4) 分居
 (5) 仍同住 (已決定/正辦理離婚) (6) 其他(請註明): _____

12. 以下是當婚姻或親密關係完結時，當事人經常會有的感受和想法，請按照你的情況，圈出合適答案。(如果你已就另一子女的情況完成了問卷和回答了這部份的問題，請跳到第 13 題。)

	完全 沒有	甚少	有時	經常	常常
12.1 我對未來有許多計劃和目標	1	2	3	4	5
*12.2 我仍不斷想念前配偶	1	2	3	4	5
12.3 我未能控制自己的情緒	1	2	3	4	5
12.4 我從早到晚都身心疲累	1	2	3	4	, 5
*12.5 因為我婚姻關係破裂，所以我很失敗	1	2	3	4	5
12.6 我覺得情感上已不再受前配偶影響	1	2	3	4	5
12.7 我容易對前配偶感到憤怒	1	2	3	4	5
12.8 我傷心得想哭	1	2	3	4	5
*12.9 我害怕信任那些有機會成為我戀愛對象的人	1	2	3	4	5
12.10 我覺得我能夠活出自己喜愛的生活	1	2	3	4	5
*12.11 我不想接受我的婚姻關係已經完結	1	2	3	4	5
12.12 我覺得孤單	1	2	3	4	5
12.13 我能坦然地告訴別人我和配偶已經分開了	1	2	3	4	5
12.14 我覺得我能夠面對和處理自己的問題	1	2	3	4	5
12.15 了結和前配偶的關係我相信是最好的做法	1	2	3	4	5
12.16 我將我們的婚姻失敗歸咎於前配偶	1	2	3	4	5
12.17 我未能集中精神	1	2	3	4	5
12.18 自從分居之後，我敢於以新的方式與人交往和相處	1	2	3	4	5
12.19 我難於入睡	1	2	3	4	5
12.20 在經驗過麻木和心死之後，覺得重新活過來的感覺很好	1	2	3	4	5
*12.21 我不能相信和前配偶的關係已經完結	1	2	3	4	5
12.22 我沒有胃口進食或不斷地進食	1	2	3	4	5
*12.23 我害怕與戀愛對象建立情感親密關係	1	2	3	4	5
12.24 我覺得我明白和了解自己	1	2	3	4	5

*12.25 每當想到前配偶另結新歡時,我就感到不快	1	2	3	4	5
12.26 我很想傷害前配偶,讓他/她也嚐到我受傷害的滋味	1	2	3	4	5
12.27 情感上,我感到軟弱及無助	1	2	3	4	5
12.28 我覺得別人會希望和我建立親密的關係,因為我是個可愛的人	1	2	3	4	5
12.29 我可以自然舒暢地以單身身份出席社交聚會	1	2	3	4	5
12.30 我想用自殺來結束生命	1	2	3	4	5
12.31 我對自己有一定的自信心	1	2	3	4	5

13. 以下是有關孩子的行為和品性，請根據上述子女在過去半年的情況選出最合適的答案。

(2-3 歲的孩子適用)

	不 符合	有點 符合	完全 符合
13.1 能體諒到別人的感受	0	1	2
13.2 不安定、過分活躍、不能長久靜止	0	1	2
13.3 經常抱怨頭痛、肚子痛或身體不舒服	0	1	2
13.4 很樂意與朋輩分享東西(糖果、玩具、筆等等)	0	1	2
13.5 經常發脾氣或大吵大鬧	0	1	2
13.6 頗孤獨，比較多自己玩	0	1	2
*13.7 一般來說比較順從，通常是成年人要求要做的都肯做	0	1	2
13.8 有很多擔憂，經常表現出憂慮	0	1	2
13.9 如果有人受傷、不舒服或是生病，都很樂意提供幫助	0	1	2
13.10 當坐著時，會持續不斷地擺弄手腳或扭動身子	0	1	2
*13.11 至少有一個好朋友	0	1	2
13.12 經常與其他孩子吵架或欺負他們	0	1	2
13.13 經常不高興、情緒低落或哭泣	0	1	2
*13.14 一般來說，受別的小孩所喜歡	0	1	2
13.15 容易分心，注意力不集中	0	1	2
13.16 在新的情況下，會緊張或愛黏人，容易失去信心	0	1	2
13.17 對年紀小的小孩和善	0	1	2
13.18 經常與成年人爭論	0	1	2

13.19 受別的小孩作弄或欺負	0	1	2
13.20 經常自願的幫助別人(父母、老師或其他小孩)	0	1	2
*13.21 可以在做事前停下來想清楚	0	1	2
13.22 對人可以充滿惡意	0	1	2
13.23 跟成年人相處比跟小孩相處融洽	0	1	2
13.24 對很多事物感到害怕，容易受驚嚇	0	1	2
*13.25 做事情能做到底，注意力持久	0	1	2

(4-17 歲的孩子適用)

	不 符合	有點 符合	完全 符合
13.1 能體諒到別人的感受	0	1	2
13.2 不安定、過分活躍、不能長久靜止	0	1	2
13.3 經常抱怨頭痛、肚子痛或身體不舒服	0	1	2
13.4 很樂意與朋輩分享東西(糖果、玩具、筆等等)	0	1	2
13.5 經常發脾氣或大吵大鬧	0	1	2
13.6 頗孤獨，比較多自己玩	0	1	2
*13.7 一般來說比較順從，通常是成年人要求要做的都肯做	0	1	2
13.8 有很多擔憂，經常表現出憂慮	0	1	2
13.9 如果有人受傷、不舒服或是生病，都很樂意提供幫助	0	1	2
13.10 當坐著時，會持續不斷地擺弄手腳或扭動身子	0	1	2
*13.11 至少有一個好朋友	0	1	2
13.12 經常與其他孩子吵架或欺負他們	0	1	2
13.13 經常不高興、情緒低落或哭泣	0	1	2
*13.14 一般來說，受別的小孩所喜歡	0	1	2
13.15 容易分心，注意力不集中	0	1	2
13.16 在新的情況下，會緊張或愛黏人，容易失去信心	0	1	2
13.17 對年紀小的小孩和善	0	1	2
13.18 經常撒謊或欺騙	0	1	2
13.19 受別的小孩作弄或欺負	0	1	2
13.20 經常自願的幫助別人(父母、老師或其他小孩)	0	1	2

*13.21 做事前會想清楚	0	1	2
13.22 會從家裡、學校或其他地方偷東西	0	1	2
13.23 跟成年人相處比跟小孩相處融洽	0	1	2
13.24 對很多事物感到害怕，容易受驚嚇	0	1	2
*13.25 做事情能做到底，注意力持久	0	1	2

受訪者背景資料(如果這是你第二份的問卷，你無須重複填寫這部分)

14. 你的性別: (0) 男 (1) 女

15. 你的年齡: (1) 20 歲或以下 (2) 21-25 歲 (3) 26-30 歲 (4) 31-35 歲
 (5) 36-40 歲 (6) 41-45 歲 (7) 46-50 歲 (8) 51-55 歲
 (9) 56-60 歲 (10) 61 歲或以上

16. 你的教育程度:

(1) 小學或以下 (2) 中一至中三 (3) 中四至預科
 (4) 大專 (5) 大學或以上 (6) 其他 (請註明): _____

17. 你的宗教信仰

(1) 沒有宗教信仰 (2) 基督教/天主教 (3) 佛教/道教
 (4) 其他 (請註明): _____

18. 你的個人平均月入

(1) <input type="checkbox"/> 5000 元以下	(2) <input type="checkbox"/> 5001-10000 元	(3) <input type="checkbox"/> 10001-15000 元	(4) <input type="checkbox"/> 15001-20000 元
(5) <input type="checkbox"/> 20001-25000 元	(6) <input type="checkbox"/> 25001-30000 元	(7) <input type="checkbox"/> 30001-35000 元	(8) <input type="checkbox"/> 35001-40000 元
(9) <input type="checkbox"/> 40001-45000 元	(10) <input type="checkbox"/> 45001-50000 元	(11) <input type="checkbox"/> 50001-55000 元	(12) <input type="checkbox"/> 55001-60000 元
(13) <input type="checkbox"/> 60001-65000 元	(14) <input type="checkbox"/> 65000 元以上	(15) <input type="checkbox"/> 領取綜援	(16) <input type="checkbox"/> 無收入

-問卷完結-

Appendix 3

Content and reliabilities of the measurement scales that were used in the final analyses

Scales	Reliabilities		
	Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up test
FDAS			
Feeling of self –worth (4 items)	.81	.82	.75
Q12.5R 因為我婚姻關係破裂，所以我很失敗			
Q12.10 我覺得我能夠活出自己喜愛的生活			
Q12.14 我覺得我能夠面對和處理自己的問題			
Q12.31 我對自己有一定的自信心			
Feeling of anger (3 items)	.65	.75	.62
Q12.3 我未能控制自己的情緒			
Q12.7 我容易對前配偶感到憤怒			
Q12.26 我很想傷害前配偶，讓他/她也嚐到我受傷害的滋味			
Symptoms of grief (8 items)	.92	.91	.83
Q12.4 我從早到晚都身心疲累			
Q12.8 我傷心得想哭			
Q12.12 我覺得孤單			
Q12.17 我未能集中精神			
Q12.19 我難於入睡			
Q12.22 我沒有胃口進食或不斷地進食			
Q12.27 情感上,我感到軟弱及無助			
Q12.30 我想用自殺來結束生命			
Rebuilding social trust (2 items)	.84	.79	.71
Q12.9R 我害怕信任那些有機會成為我戀愛對象的人			
Q12.23R 我害怕與戀愛對象建立情感親密關係			
Social self-worth (3 items)	.52	.74	.74
Q12.13 我能坦然地告訴別人我和配偶已經分開了			
Q12.18 自從分居之後，我敢於以新的方式與人交往和相處			
Q12.29 我可以自然舒暢地以單身身份出席社交聚會			

Scales	Reliabilities		
	Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up test
Disentanglement from love relationship (4 items)	.88	.84	.88
PQ12.2R 我仍不斷想念前配偶			
PQ12.11R 我不想接受我的婚姻關係已經完結			
PQ12.21R 我不能相信和前配偶的關係已經完結			
PQ12.25R 每當想到前配偶另結新歡時, 我就感到不快			
Parental conflict (4 items)	.84	.91	.92
Q7.1 當你和前配偶商討養育上述子女的事宜, 有多經常會發生爭拗?			
Q7.2 商討時的氣氛, 有多經常是憤怒和敵意的?			
Q7.3 有多經常對話是充滿張力和緊張?			
Q7.4 你和前配偶就養育上述子女的事宜, 有基本分歧?			
Mutual support between parents (4 items)	.75	.77	.76
Q7.5 當你在與上述子女有關的事情上需要幫忙, 你會向前配偶尋求幫助?			
Q7.6 你認為前配偶是你在養育上述孩子方面的一個幫助和資源?			
Q7.9 當你有需要調動上述子女的探望安排, 你的前配偶願意作出配合?			
Q7.10 你覺得前配偶明白及支持你作為與孩子同住/非與孩子同住的父母的特殊需要?			
Triangulation of children (4 items)	.71	.79	.75
Q7.11 你們在上述子女面前說話傷害或侮辱對方			
Q7.12 你們利用上述子女來駁斥對方			
Q7.13 當你們爭拗時, 要上述子女表態支持自己			
Q7.14 你們不直接對話, 而是透過上述子女傳話			
SDQ			
Prosocial (5 items)	.78	.76	.83
Q13.1 能體諒到別人的感受			
Q13.4 很樂意與朋輩分享東西(糖果、玩具、筆等等)			
Q13.9 如果有人受傷、不舒服或是生病, 都很樂意提供幫助			
Q13.17 對年紀小的小孩和善			
Q13.20 經常自願的幫助別人(父母、老師或其他小孩)			

Scales	Reliabilities		
	Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up test
Hyperactivity inattention (4 items)	.73	.81	.84
Q13.2 不安定、過分活躍、不能長久靜止			
Q13.10 當坐著時，會持續不斷地擺弄手腳或扭動身子			
Q13.15 容易分心，注意力不集中			
Q13.25R 做事情能做到底，注意力持久			
Emotional symptoms (3 items)	.68	.68	.74
Q13.8 有很多擔憂，經常表現出憂慮			
Q13.13 經常不高興、情緒低落或哭泣			
Q13.24 對很多事物感到害怕，容易受驚嚇			
Conduct problems (4 items)	.64	.52	.66
Q13.5 經常發脾氣或大吵大鬧			
Q13.12 經常與其他孩子吵架或欺負他們			
Q13.18 經常撒謊或欺騙 / 經常與成年人爭論			
Q13.22 會從家裡、學校或其他地方偷東西 / 對人可以充滿惡意			
Peer relationship (4 items)	.58	.43	.68
Q13.6 頗孤獨，比較多自己玩			
Q13.11R 至少有一個好朋友			
Q13.14R 一般來說，受別的小孩所喜歡			
Q13.19 受別的小孩作弄或欺負			

Appendix 4

訪談指引(父母)

1. 你在公教婚姻輔導會的「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」曾接受過什麼服務?
2. 那一項服務對你最有用?怎樣有用?
3. 那一項服務對你最沒有用?為何沒有用和是什麼因素障礙了其效用?
4. 整體而言，你會怎樣評價有關的服務在促進你和前配偶的親職協調和合作方面的成效?
5. 有關服務是否能在透過促進父母雙方與孩子的接觸以促進孩子的福祉，但同時又能確保孩子免受父母衝突的傷害?
6. 根據你的個人意見，你覺得有什麼辦法可以令服務更有效?/有什麼地方需要改進?

Appendix 5

訪談指引(子女)

1. 你可否告訴我，父母離婚之後你的生活安排，以及父母在照顧你方面的分工?
2. 父母之間的溝通和合作在過去一年有沒有什麼變化?
3. 如果有變化，你覺得是什麼導致這些變化?
4. 這些變化對你有什麼影響?
5. 你有沒有參與過香港公教婚姻輔導會「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」中的任何活動或使用過什麼服務? 如果有，你覺得這些活動/服務對你有沒有用? 為什麼?
6. 你會不會向同樣是面對父母離婚的孩子們推薦有關服務?
7. 你覺得怎樣可以使到服務對面對父母離婚的孩子們更有用?
8. 你覺得有什麼可以幫助你的父母就著你的安排有更好的合作和溝通?

Appendix 6

香港公教婚姻輔導會
「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」評估研究
家長同意書

本人同意小兒/小女_____參與上述研究之訪談，就其對香港公教婚姻輔導會「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」的成效，向負責是次研究的香港中文大學社會工作學系研究團組提供意見，亦同意研究團隊將訪談內容錄音及作出謄寫，以作研究分析、撰寫研究報告及發報研究結果之用。本人明白小兒/小女之個人資料將會獲得保密，所有錄音內容的謄本將會刪去小兒/小女的名字，而轉為以代號作記錄，訪談錄音亦會於文字轉錄完成後被銷毀。而在訪談過程中，小兒/小女有權隨時退出訪談，訪談完成後，本人亦有權隨時取消有關的同意，有關同意書、錄音及謄稿將會被銷毀。本人明白若在訪問過程中，研究團隊發現有需要作出輔導支援的情況，研究團隊會作出即時的支援及所需的事後跟進。

姓名: _____

簽署: _____

日期: _____

Appendix 7

香港公教婚姻輔導會

「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」評估研究

訪談及錄音同意書

本人同意參與上述研究之訪談，就本人對香港公教婚姻輔導會「賽馬會離異父母支援服務」的成效，向負責是次研究的香港中文大學社會工作學系研究團組提供意見，並同意研究團隊將訪談內容錄音及作出謄寫，以作研究分析、撰寫研究報告及發報研究結果之用。本人明白本人之個人資料將會獲得保密，所有錄音內容的謄本將會刪去本人的名字，而轉為以代號作記錄，訪談錄音亦會於文字轉錄完成後被銷毀。而在訪談過程中，本人有權隨時退出訪談，訪談完成後，本人亦有權隨時取消有關的同意，有關同意書、錄音及謄稿將會被銷毀。本人明白若在這過程中，研究團隊發現有需要作出輔導支援的事項，研究團隊會作出即時的支援和所需的事後跟進。

參加者姓名: _____

參加者簽名: _____

日期: _____