



PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND

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By Wayne D. Stocks

January 20, 2014

I'll probably date myself with this one, but back when I was growing up, there was a popular song about the relationship between kids and parents called "Parents Just Don't Understand." Nowhere is this more evident than when talking about disrupted families.

One of the issues we face in making people aware of the impact of divorce on kids is the general disconnect between how parents and other adults view how their kids react to a family disruption and how the kids react. We've written about this phenomena before on Divorce Ministry 4 Kids. In fact, one of our very first articles when we launched the ministry was all about the different between how kids and parents see divorce. That article was titled "A Change in Perspective on Divorce" (<http://divorceministry4kids.com/2011/a-change-in-perspective-on-divorce/>). Until we begin to truly see divorce from the child's point of view, we cannot be in a position to minister to them.



Recently, a British site called NetMums.com recently surveyed 1,000 parents and 100 children about the impact of family disruption and the perceptions of both parents and kids. Their conclusion was simple:

"Our new report reveals separating parents are in denial about the impact their divorce can have on their children."

In response to the survey, only 14% of children indicated that they were able to be honest with their parents about how upset they were about the family disruption. 39% indicated that they "hide their feelings from their parents as they don't want to upset them" while one in five felt "there was no point in telling my parents how I feel as they are too wrapped up in themselves." Almost 1/3 of those under the age of 18 said they were "devastated" by their parents' divorce, one in twelve thought it meant their parents didn't love them and 13% blamed themselves for the split. Despite this overwhelming response on the part of kids, only 5% of parents realized that their children blamed themselves for the disruptions and 10% thought their kids were actually relieved they had left their partner.

35% of children claimed that one of their parents tried to turn them against the other parent while only 8% admitted they had tried to do just that. 31% of the kids surveyed had witnessed their parents fighting while only 10% of parents realized their kids had seen them fighting.





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Only 18% of children were happy that their parents were no longer together while 77% of separated couples felt their children coped well.

One in five kids drank to cope with the divorce while one in nine inflicted self-harm (cutting) as a result of the trauma. Only 1 in 100 parents knew their children were drinking, doing drugs or cutting.

The study also found that 1 in 12 kids felt forced to look after their parent as the relationship broke down. Finally 6% of kids considered suicide as a means of coping while 2% actually attempted suicide but were found in time.

You can find the full results of the survey at <http://www.netmums.com/home/netmums-campaigns/get-families-talking-about-separating>.

