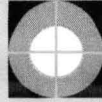


DAVID H. OLSON  
JOHN DEFRAIN

# MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

## DIVERSITY AND STRENGTHS





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## DIVERSITY AND STRENGTHS

**David H. Olson**

*University of Minnesota*

**John DeFrain**

*University of Nebraska*



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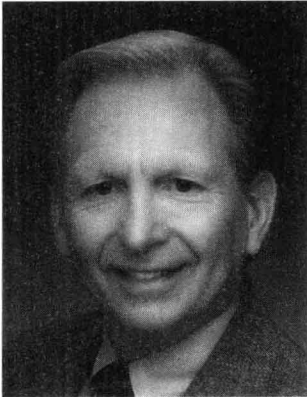
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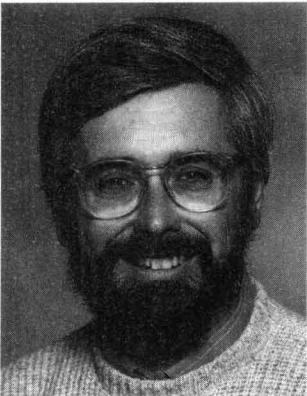
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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

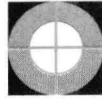


**DAVID H. OLSON, Ph.D.**, is professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota, where he has been for over twenty years. He is the founder and president of PREPARE/ENRICH. He is past president of the National Council of Family Relations (NCFR) and past president of the Upper Midwest Association for Marriage and Family Therapists (UMAMFT). He is a Fellow and clinical member of the American Association for Marital and Family Therapists (AAMFT) and a Fellow in the American Psychological Association (APA). He is also a member on six different editorial boards for family journals. He has received numerous awards, including the Distinguished Contribution to Family Therapy Research from both AAMFT and the American Family Therapy Association (AFTA). He has written or edited over 20 books, including *Families: What Makes Them Work*, *Circumplex Model*, *Power in Families*, *Treating Relationships*, and ten volumes of the *Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature* (IMFL). He has published over 100 articles with the theme of bridging family research, theory, and practice. He and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota have developed the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems and a variety of couple and family assessment tools, including PREPARE, ENRICH, FACES, PAIR, and AWARE. He is happily married to Karen and has three great children, Hans, Amy, and Chris, and three wonderful grandchildren, Adrienne, Evan, and Chelsea.



**JOHN DEFRAIN, Ph.D.**, professor of family science at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, was graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1975 and has been on the faculty of UNL for more than 18 years. He has experience as a newspaper reporter and preschool and kindergarten teacher, has co-directed a graduate training program in marriage and family therapy, was a co-founder of the National Symposium on Building Family Strengths, and has been a consultant to courts, universities, churches, agencies, and individual families on marriage, parenting, grief, divorce, and custody issues. DeFrain has co-authored two dozen professional articles on family issues and several books, including *Secrets of Strong Families*, *Sudden Infant Death: Enduring the Loss*, *Stillborn: The Invisible Death*, *On Our Own: A Single Parent's Survival Guide*, and *Parents in Contemporary America: A Sympathetic View*. He and his wife and best friend, Nikki, are the parents of three daughters: Amie, 24, Alyssa, 17, and Erica, 15. The DeFrains recently returned from the South Pacific, where as a family they conducted Fulbright-sponsored research on family strengths and challenges.





## PREFACE

The purpose of *Marriage and Family: Diversity and Strengths* is to provide a comprehensive introduction to marriage and the family. The distinctive themes that have guided our efforts in writing this textbook are the growing diversity of families and the importance of family strengths, which help individuals and families during these challenging times. It is our intent that the concepts and ideas in this textbook be personally meaningful and useful to students so that they can apply them to their own lives. The goal is to integrate intellectual ideas and personal experience, enriching both.

---

### Diversity and Strengths

*Family diversity* is emphasized throughout this textbook, with consideration of how concepts apply to many ethnic and cultural groups. Diversity in family structure is also presented, through research on couples, single parents, step-families, and two-parent families. Diversity in sexual orientation—gay male and lesbian relationships—is also explored. This focus on diversity is first introduced in Chapter 2, “Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges,” and is integrated into every chapter of the book.

*Family strengths* is an exciting addition to the family field, which has too often focused on problems within families. This textbook identifies the significant strengths common to healthy families and explores how these strengths help families to manage stress and deal with problems more effectively. In relating family diversity and the importance of family strengths, three chapters are especially important: Chapter 2 focuses on family strengths that are integrated into the framework of a number of ethnic groups, Chapter 16 details how families can better manage stress in their lives, and Chapter 20 focuses on ways in which couples and families can develop more intimate relationships.

Many family theories are presented in this textbook, with special emphasis given to the family systems approach. The Family Circumplex Model and the Family Strengths Model are both included, to emphasize the important characteristics of family strengths. The Family Circumplex Model, developed by David Olson and colleagues, focuses on the three major dimensions of family cohesion, family flexibility, and family communication. This family systems model has been or is the focus of more than 400 completed studies and about 1,200 ongoing studies, of which 200 are international in scope. Chapter 3 provides a comprehensive overview of the Family Circumplex Model; studies that

have used the Model as a theoretical base are reported throughout the text. An ongoing Family Case Study project (described in the *Instructor's Manual*) also facilitates student understanding and application of the Circumplex Model.

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## Special Program Features

To increase students' awareness of their attitudes and beliefs regarding intimate relationships, marriage, and family, a variety of assessment procedures (scales and exercises) are provided with many of the chapters. In addition, students have the opportunity to take a comprehensive attitude inventory called AWARE, which focuses on attitudes about specific issues raised in many of the chapters, before they begin to work with the textbook.

AWARE personalizes the course materials for students. As an attitude scale, AWARE explores 13 content areas with 10 items per category (a total of 130 items). Student answer sheets are computer scored; each student receives a 13-page AWARE Personal Computer Report showing the results. An AWARE Summary Report containing results for the entire class is sent to the instructor. Each student's AWARE Report is personal and private, designed to allow the student to compare her or his responses on the attitude scale with information presented in the textbook in class. Guidelines and procedures for integrating the AWARE Inventory into the course are provided in the *Instructor's Manual*, along with a chart illustrating how AWARE correlates with and reinforces specific text chapters.

A videotape series entitled "Diversity and Strengths" has been developed to highlight important topics in this textbook. The series comprises 10 videotape segments, each about 15 minutes long, that can be used in class to provide insights and to stimulate discussion. These videotapes parallel core content and issues addressed throughout the textbook.

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## Text Organization and Content

This textbook has been written for undergraduates who are interested in learning more about themselves, their family, and their close relationships. Each chapter provides a comprehensive and up-to-date look at salient issues. Each one also contains a chapter outline, a chapter summary, activities, and suggested readings. All but two chapters contain a list of key terms.

An awareness of how the textbook is organized is a prerequisite to using it successfully. Due to the growing complexity of the marriage and family field, the three chapters in Part 1 emphasize the dual themes of diversity and strengths and their centrality to the subject of marriage and family. Chapter 1 presents "Perspectives on Intimate Relationships," including myths that emphasize problems rather than relationship strengths, definitions and trends regarding marriage and the family, and the major conceptual frameworks that are

used to study relationships. Chapter 2, “Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges,” identifies family strengths in various ethnic and cultural groups. Issues that have both facilitated and delayed the appreciation of diversity in our society are also discussed. Chapter 3, “Understanding Family Relationships,” introduces the Family Circumplex Model, a tool for understanding family strengths. This model builds on three dimensions: family cohesion, family flexibility, and family communication.

Part 2 provides a foundation for understanding how individuals pair up and move toward intimate and committed relationships. Chapter 4, “Friendship, Singlehood, and Cohabitation,” explores a range of relationship types and lifestyle choices, including friendships, successful single life styles, and cohabitation. Chapter 5, “Love and Intimacy,” presents models that describe the multifaceted concept of loving, as well as that of intimacy games, both destructive and constructive. Chapter 6, “Sexual Intimacy,” reviews how premarital, marital, and extramarital sexual behavior has changed over time. It concludes with a look at sexual health and how sexual relationships can be improved. Chapter 7, “Dating and Mate Selection,” examines some theories of mate selection, as well as the dating and mate selection process.

Part 3, “Dynamics of Intimate Relationships,” focuses on the core aspects of intimate relationships. “Gender Roles and Power in the Family,” Chapter 8, compares traditional and contemporary relationships and includes a look at the three integrated concepts of power bases, power processes, and power outcomes. It sets the stage for Chapter 9, “Communication and Intimacy,” which explores communication styles and their relationship to increasing conflict or to building intimacy in a relationship. Chapter 10, “Conflict and Conflict Resolution,” illustrates the importance of resolving problems before they become serious and offers a variety of approaches for successfully resolving conflict in intimate relationships. “Managing Economic Resources,” Chapter 11, recognizes that finances are a major stressor for most couples and families across the family life cycle.

Part 4, “Stages of Marriage and Family Life,” first looks, in Chapter 12, at “Marriage and the Newlywed Years.” Chapter 13, “Pregnancy and Childbirth,” begins with the decision to become parents and explores those topics through childbirth, parent-child bonding, and the impact of a child on the family system. Chapter 14, “Parenthood,” continues the discussion with an examination of parenting styles and childrearing issues, relying on the Family Circumplex Model to highlight both the challenges and pleasures of parenthood. Chapter 15, “Mid-Life and Older Couples,” focuses on how the middle years are becoming increasingly stressful for couples and families and highlights a variety of issues regarding older couples.

Part 5, “Challenges and Opportunities,” has two main emphases. Chapters 16, 17, and 18 describe the major stressors and problems that affect families in our society. These include common family life events at various stages of the family life cycle; marital problems; emotional, physical, and sexual abuse; and divorce and adjustment to divorce. Part 5 concludes with two chapters emphasizing family strengths and ways in which these strengths can help families meet the many challenges in their lives. Chapter 19 recognizes and discusses the increasingly diverse and complex realities facing single parents and step-families. It also describes a variety of single-parent family patterns, including father’s custody, split custody, and joint custody. Chapter 20, “Family Strengths

and Coping Strategies,” reviews the characteristics of successful families and how these strengths help families cope with problems. The theme of this final chapter is that the goal of a marriage or of a family must be more than simply to survive; it must be to thrive. Couples and families must be proactive rather than reactive in dealing with ongoing relationship issues. Strong relationships, strong marriages, and strong families require time, energy, and commitment. The rewards of those investments include an enhanced and healthy emotional and physical life for every family member. Last, strong families also provide the foundation for a strong and caring society, improved by open communication.

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## Ancillary Materials

As mentioned earlier, this textbook is accompanied by an attitude assessment inventory called AWARE and a 10-segment videotape series entitled “Diversity and Strengths.” In addition, the teaching package includes an *Instructor’s Manual with Test Bank and Answer Key*, computerized testing (Brownstone for IBM and IBM-compatibles; Chariott for Macintosh), and a *Study Guide*.

The *Instructor’s Manual* contains guidelines for using the AWARE Inventory in the course, descriptions of and suggestions for using the videotapes with specific textbook topics and chapters, strategies for using Family Quads in class, and instructions for the Family Case Study assignment. For each chapter of the textbook, the *Instructor’s Manual* also includes a chapter outline, learning objectives, a summary, key terms (for all but two chapters), lecture notes, activities, and suggested readings. The Test Bank and Answer Key contains about 2,000 items, including multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Hundreds of the items included have been previously classroom tested. The *Instructor’s Manual* also includes 55 transparency masters.

The *Study Guide to Accompany Marriage and Family: Diversity and Strengths* is written by Dr. Jeanne Kohl, of the University of Washington. The guide includes review materials to help students master the concepts in each chapter of the textbook, prepare for examinations with practice tests, and assess their personal attitudes and beliefs and application of knowledge to real-life situations. To further the assessment and application objectives, each chapter of the guide concludes with a Personal Involvement Assessment and a Knowledge in Action exercise. The Personal Involvement Assessment gives students the opportunity to examine in some depth one of the important issues discussed in the textbook (for example, stereotyping, attitudes about money, accepting criticism). Knowledge in Action exercises highlight key research studies on important and interesting topics. Each exercise is designed to encourage students to apply what they have learned to “real-life” situations involving others. Projects include content analyses, interviews, and surveys.

Last but not by any means least, the authors wish to thank the following people for their thoughtful reviews of the manuscript: Esther Devall, New Mexico State University; Preston M. Dyer, Baylor University; Gerald E. Harris, University of Houston; Eugene W. Jacobs, Greenville Technical College; and Kenrick S. Thompson, Northern Michigan University.





## BRIEF CONTENTS

### **PART 1: INTRODUCTION 1**

- Chapter 1: Perspectives on Intimate Relationships 3
- Chapter 2: Cultural Diversity: Family Strengths and Challenges 35
- Chapter 3: Understanding Family Relationships 65

### **PART 2: EXPLORING AND ESTABLISHING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS 99**

- Chapter 4: Friendship, Singlehood, and Cohabitation 101
- Chapter 5: Love and Intimacy 129
- Chapter 6: Sexual Intimacy 157
- Chapter 7: Dating and Mate Selection 187

### **PART 3: DYNAMICS OF INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS 221**

- Chapter 8: Gender Roles and Power in the Family 223
- Chapter 9: Communication and Intimacy 257
- Chapter 10: Conflict and Conflict Resolution 289
- Chapter 11: Managing Economic Resources 317

### **PART 4: STAGES OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE 351**

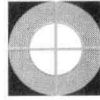
- Chapter 12: Marriage and the Newlywed Years 353
- Chapter 13: Pregnancy and Childbirth 379
- Chapter 14: Parenthood 407
- Chapter 15: Mid-Life and Older Couples 431

### **PART 5: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES 457**

- Chapter 16: Family Stress and Coping 459
- Chapter 17: Family Problems, Domestic Violence, and Alcohol Abuse 483
- Chapter 18: Divorce and Adjustment 515
- Chapter 19: Single-Parent Families and Stepfamilies 537
- Chapter 20: Family Strengths and Coping Strategies 563

### **RESOURCES 587**

- Section A: National Directory of Organizations Serving Families 589
- Section B: Sexual Anatomy and Sexual Response 609
- Section C: Contraception 621
- Section D: Abortion 629
- Section E: Sexually Transmissible Diseases 639
- Section F: Family Rating Scale for the Family Circumplex Model 649



# CONTENTS

About the Authors xxiv  
Preface xxv

## PART 1 INTRODUCTION 1

### CHAPTER 1 PERSPECTIVES ON INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS 3

#### **Myths and Realities of Marriage and Family Life 4**

Are Marriage and the Family in Decline? 4

Why Do So Many Marriages End in Divorce? 6

Seven Major Myths of Marriage 6

Can Couples Prepare for Marriage? 7

#### **Defining Marriage and Family 9**

What Is a Family? 9

What Is Marriage? 9

*Box 1.1: Some Definitions of Family 10*

#### **Trends in Marriage and the Family: Change and Continuity 11**

Trends in Family Structure 11

Trends in Marriage 12

Trends in Divorce and Remarriage 13

*Box 1.2: Marriage and Divorce Statistics 14*

Continuity in Marriage and the Family 14

## **Conceptual Frameworks for Studying Marriage and the Family 15**

- Family Systems Framework 16
- Family Development Framework 17
- Symbolic Interaction Framework 18
- Structural/Functional Framework 19
- Exchange Framework 19

## **Emerging Perspectives on Marriage and the Family 20**

- Feminist Perspective 20
- Family Strengths Perspective 21
- Family Policy Perspective 22
- Multicultural Perspective 24

## **Family Science: An Emerging Profession 24**

- A Knowledge Explosion 24
- Research Methods 25
- Research Designs 28
- Box 1.3: Family Science Research* 29
- A Final Word About Research 30

## **Summary 30**

## **Key Terms 31**

## **Activities 32**

## **Suggested Readings 32**

### CHAPTER 2

## **CULTURAL DIVERSITY: FAMILY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES 35**

### **The Nature of Cultural Diversity 37**

- A Changing Picture: Demographic Trends in the United States 37
- The Mythology of Race 39
- Kin Relationships Across Cultures: Concepts and Terms 40

### **Family Strengths in Various Ethnic and Cultural Groups 42**

- Box 2.1: Why Researchers Too Often Focus on Whites* 43
- Strengths of White Families 43

Strengths of African American Families 43

Strengths of Latino Families 45

*Box 2.2: Kwanzaa Holidays Celebrate Black Principles, Unity 46*

*Box 2.3: Getting Beyond Latino Myths 47*

*Box 2.4: Cultural Conflicts for a Female Chicana College Student 49*

Strengths of Native American Families 50

Strengths of Asian American Families 51

*Box 2.5: Life History Approach to Understanding Families from Southeast Asia 52*

Strengths of Gay and Lesbian Relationships 53

## **Challenges Facing Ethnic Families 56**

Marriage Outside the Group 56

Assimilation or Segregation 57

*Box 2.6: The Daily Effects of White Privilege 58*

Relationships Between Men and Women 58

Relationships Between Parents and Children 59

## **Issues in Cross-cultural Family Studies 59**

Ethnocentrism 60

Racism 60

Appreciating Diversity 61

*Box 2.7: Ten Principles for Appreciating Diversity 62*

## **Summary 62**

## **Key Terms 63**

## **Activities 63**

## **Suggested Readings 63**

### CHAPTER 3

## **UNDERSTANDING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS 65**

## **The Family Circumplex Model 66**

A Relationship Map 67

The Concept of Dynamic Balance 68

**Box 3.1: Family Circumplex Scales 69**

Balanced Families and Communication Skills 70

Accounting for Cultural and Ethnic Diversity 71

**Family Cohesion 72**

Balance Between Separateness and Togetherness 73

**Box 3.2: Balance Between Separateness and Togetherness 74**

Extreme Togetherness and Extreme Separateness 75

**Family Flexibility 75****Box 3.3: Extreme Togetherness and Extreme Separateness 76**

Balance Between Stability and Change 76

Extreme Stability and Extreme Change 77

**Dynamic Balance and Skiing: An Analogy 78****Movie Families As Family Circumplex Types 79***The Great Santini*: Rigidly Enmeshed 79*Ordinary People*: Rigidly Disengaged 80*Shoot the Moon*: Chaotically Disengaged 80*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*: Chaotically Enmeshed 81**Dynamic Changes in Family Relationships 82**

Changes in Early Marriage 82

Family Cohesion Across the Family Life Cycle 84

Family Flexibility Across the Family Life Cycle 86

**Using the Family Circumplex Model in Premarital Counseling 88**

A Structurally Enmeshed Family of Origin 88

A Flexibly Disengaged Family of Origin 88

Articulating Family Goals 90

**Using the Family Circumplex Model in Family Therapy 90**

Common Problems in Marital and Family Systems 91

Comparison of Families with and Without Problems 92

Case Study: Diagnosis and Treatment of a Family With Problems 93



<b>Summary</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Key Terms</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Suggested Readings</b>	<b>97</b>

PART 2  
**EXPLORING AND ESTABLISHING  
INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS 99**

CHAPTER 4  
**FRIENDSHIP, SINGLEHOOD,  
AND COHABITATION 101**

**Friends Versus Lovers 102**

The Fabric of Friendship	102
The Tapestry of Love	104
Contrasting Friends and Lovers	104

**Being Single 106**

Increasing Singlehood	107
Singlehood As an Alternative to Marriage	108
The Pros and Cons of Singlehood	109
Characteristics of Successful Singles	110
Singles and Sexual Intimacy	111
Singles and Loneliness	112
Making Singlehood Work	115

**Cohabitation 115**

Cohabiting As Preparation for Marriage	117
Cohabiting and Relationship Satisfaction	118
Cohabiting As a Courtship Stage	119
Cohabiting and Relationship Longevity	120
Legal Issues in Cohabitation	121

Same-Sex Cohabitation 122

Questions to Consider Before Cohabiting 123

*Box 4.1: Is Cohabitation the Right Choice for You?* 124

**Summary 124**

**Activities 126**

**Suggested Readings 126**

CHAPTER 5  
**LOVE AND INTIMACY 129**

**What Is Love? 130**

The Styles of Love 130

*Box 5.1: On Love* 131

*Box 5.2: Love Attitude Scale* 133

The Love Triangle 134

Three Perspectives on Love 137

**Exploring Intimacy: From Experience to Relationship 138**

Intimacy Versus Isolation 138

Intimacy and Communication 139

Intimate Experiences Versus an Intimate Relationship 140

The Paradox of Marriage and Intimacy 141

**Developing Intimacy 141**

Traits of Intimate and Non-Intimate Relationships 141

Ten Essential Relationship Strengths 142

**Intimacy Games 145**

Destructive Intimacy Games 146

Limiting Destructive Games 148

*Box 5.3: A Destructive Parenting Game* 149

Constructive Intimacy Games 150

*Box 5.4: A Constructive Intimacy Game* 152

<b>Summary</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Key Terms</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Suggested Readings</b>	<b>154</b>

## CHAPTER 6 **SEXUAL INTIMACY 157**

### **Sex and Society: An Overview 158**

Sexuality and Sexual Identity	158
Historical Perspectives on Sex and Society	159
Sexuality Across Cultures	161
American Sexual Behavior Surveyed	164
Sex Education	166
<i>Box 6.1: Test Your Knowledge About Sex</i>	168
<i>Box 6.2: Ten Ridiculous Ideas That Will Make You a Parent</i>	169
<i>Box 6.3: A Mother Talks About Her Sexuality Education</i>	170

### **Premarital Sexual Behavior 172**

Sexual Behavior Among Adolescents	172
Sexual Behavior Among College Students	173

### **Marital and Extramarital Sexual Behavior 174**

Sex Within Marriage	174
<i>Box 6.4: Advice from Masters and Johnson on Sexual Health</i>	175
Extramarital Sex	176

### **Toward Sexual Health 178**

Sexual Problems and Dysfunctions	178
Sex Therapy	180

<b>Summary</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Key Terms</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Suggested Readings</b>	<b>185</b>

## CHAPTER 7

# DATING AND MATE SELECTION 187

### Finding a Mate: Courtship Patterns 188

Parent-Arranged Marriages 188

*Box 7.1: Semi-Arranged Marriages in India 190*

The American Dating System 192

*Box 7.2: A Singles Column from a Metropolitan Newspaper 195*

*Box 7.3: Dating Services Advertised in a Metropolitan Newspaper 196*

### Narrowing the Pool of “Eligibles”: Criteria for Choosing a Mate 199

Physical Attractiveness 199

Age and Success Criteria 203

Endogamy and Exogamy 204

Mixed Marriages in the United States 204

### Theories of Mate Selection 207

Homogamy Versus Complementarity 207

*Box 7.4: Family Therapy for a Troubled Ethnic Intermarriage 208*

Filter Theory 209

Exchange Theory 210

Stimulus-Value-Role Theory 211

Reiss's Wheel Theory of Love 212

### Conflict and Violence in Dating 214

Conflict Issues 214

Violence 214

Dating Violence and Later Spouse Abuse 217

### Summary 218

### Key Terms 219

### Activities 219

### Suggested Readings 219