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## Psychological maltreatment : the case of verbal abuse

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PSYCHOLOGICAL MALTREATMENT:  
THE CASE OF VERBAL ABUSE

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

Majedah Khalifah  
University of Northern Iowa

July 1999

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between parental verbal abuse and children's emotional development (depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and anger). The participants were 29 male and 89 female college students whose average age was 19. Five instruments were used to collect data: Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21), Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, Verbal Abuse Measure, Child Attitude Toward Parents Measure, and State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory.

For data analyses, several tests were used. The Pearson correlation was calculated to see the inter-correlations of each emotional variable. A multiple regression analysis was used to find out what variables predicted the level of state anger. Moreover, an independent simple t-Test was conducted to examine gender differences. Finally, a one-way ANOVA was used to see family configuration and the effects of verbal abuse.

The findings indicate several correlations between parents' verbal abuse and children's depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and self-esteem. The results show that the more verbal abuse participants experience, the higher their depression, anxiety, and stress, and the lower their self-esteem. In addition, the findings show an inverse correlation between anger and parents' verbal abuse. The findings also indicate that males have more negative attitudes toward their mothers than females. In addition, the findings show that different family configurations have an impact on the individuals. Therefore, parental verbal abuse has both short- and long-term effects on children's emotional development. Although, implications were drawn for teachers, counselors, and parents, further research is needed to investigate the effects of parental verbal abuse.

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Entitled: Psychological Maltreatment: The Case of Verbal Abuse

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

When we hear the word abuse, most of us think of physical or sexual abuse. Rarely do we think of or even talk about verbal abuse, a form of abuse that goes on everyday in many people's lives. According to Becker (1998), verbal abuse is one of many types of psychological maltreatment that adversely affects one's emotional, social, and intellectual development. Making fun, calling names, and disrespecting are examples of verbal abuse that can have many damaging effects on a person (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1995).

Considered a form of emotional abuse, verbal abuse is unique because it takes the form of behavior that undermines a person's self-esteem or self-confidence and makes her/him feel guilty. In addition, both the child victim and the adult survivor often find it difficult to trust their own judgement, and they discredit their own reactions and feelings (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1997; Becker, 1998).

Verbal abuse is probably the hardest of all forms of abuse to identify and is the least understood form of child maltreatment. Its victims are often dismissed simply because their wounds are not visible (National Research Council, 1993). In other words, verbal abuse is not like physical and sexual abuse, which are against the law and are responded to by medical and social service authorities or even by the police. Verbal abuse is a more subtle form of abuse which is hard for an outsider to recognize or intervene in, and it is not against the law (Oates, 1996).

Emotional abuse is a serious, widespread problem with many destructive consequences for the individuals (Healthy Way Magazine, 1997). If a parent intentionally or deliberately uses a pattern of inappropriate emotional responses, the child can be said to have experienced emotional abuse (O'Hagan, 1993). It is important to recognize the deep and persistent effects of verbal abuse (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1995).

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between verbal abuse and self-esteem, depression, stress, anxiety, anger, and how it impacts a child's relationship with one or both parents.

### Statement of the Problem

Verbal abuse does not leave physical injuries. Although it continues, there is usually no visible evidence which would precipitate health, welfare, or criminal justice professionals to identify it (Oates, 1996). For that reason, emotional abuse is the most hidden form of child psychological maltreatment (Tomison & Tucci, 1997).

Verbal abuse accounts for approximately 7% of nearly 3 million reported cases of emotional abuse across the United States (Hart, Brassard, & Karlson, 1996). However, the absence of an operational definition means that the extent of emotional abuse is unknown (National Research Council, 1993).

Verbal abuse is also widespread in other countries. For example, the most recent national Australian data, produced by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, indicated that in 1995-1996 emotional abuse cases which included verbal abuse accounted for 31% of substantiated child maltreatment cases (Broadbent & Bentley, 1997).

Little research has been done on the extent of verbal abuse. Most of what are called incidence or prevalence studies only provide information on emotional abuse cases that have been reported to human services agencies (Vissing et al., 1991). Based on 1986 data of emotional abuse, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children estimated a rate of only 0.54 cases reported per 1,000 children.

The average age of a maltreated child was 7 years, compared to 5 years for those children who were reported for major physical abuse. Verbally abused children were more likely to come from single parent families and have parents with health problems and economic/living problems (Brassard & Hardy, 1997).

#### Significance of the Problem

Many people have experienced verbal abuse. Tragically, many never realize that their experiences with verbally abusive adults (parents) were twisted and that not everyone lives with intimidation, ridicule, frequent criticism, unfair treatment, or withdrawal of love. Even though verbal abuse is the most common form of emotional abuse, this type of mistreatment is not often identified for what it is. Its survivors seldom understand why they have feelings of depression, anxiety, stress, and have low self-esteem. Emotional abuse is insidious and rampant in every society. We need to recognize and act against it, whether our goal is to help others, to enjoy more fulfilling relationships ourselves, or to raise healthy children (Royse, 1997).

The causes and consequences of verbal abuse are quite complex. It is particularly difficult to understand the effects this kind of child maltreatment has on the emotional development of children. This complexity is related in part to the fact that maltreated

children typically experience additional environmental conditions, such as parental marital discord and a socio-economic disadvantage. Child maltreatment involves harm to the psychological health of a child. Depending on the specific circumstances, a wide range of effects on a child's healthy development can ensue. The effects of verbal abuse may be brief, lasting for hours or days, long-term, or perhaps permanent. The depression, anxiety, and stress a child might experience could manifest itself in many ways, including psychosomatic conditions such as stomachaches, chest pains, and headaches. Although these problems are not specific to maltreatment, it is likely that an association does exist (Starr & Wolfe, 1991).

A critical aspect of verbal abuse prevention is knowing its underlying causes and consequences. Therefore, this study examines some of the consequences by looking at the variables of depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, anger, and relationships with parents. This study investigated the following questions:

1. What are the relationships between verbal abuse and the affective variables of depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and self-esteem?
2. Does the child's attitude toward his/her mother/father relate to verbal abuse?
3. Are there gender differences in verbal abuse?
4. Does the family configuration affect (i.e., intact family, lived with mother/father, foster family, and other step father/mother) relate to verbal abuse?

### Definitions of Terms

The following definitions will be used in this study:

1. Emotional Abuse: any injury that introduces emotional pain in the child (in the form of fear, humiliation, distress, despair, etc.). The resulting pain inhibits the child from spontaneous, appropriate, positive, emotional expression. It also impairs the individual's emotional development (O'Hagan, 1995).
2. Verbal Abuse: communication intended to cause psychological pain to another person or communication perceived as having that intent. The communicative act may be active or passive, and verbal or non-verbal. Examples include name calling or nasty remarks (active, verbal), slamming a door or smashing something (active, nonverbal), and stony silence or sulking (passive, non-verbal); (Vissing, Straus, Gelles, & Harrop, 1991).
3. Psychological Maltreatment: a concerted attack by an adult on a child's development of self and social competence, a pattern of psychologically destructive behavior that takes five forms: rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring, corrupting (Garbarino, Guttman, & Seeley, 1986).

Because the terms emotional abuse and psychological maltreatment have been used to describe a host of symptoms, including verbal abuse, for the purpose of this study the words verbal abuse, psychological maltreatment, and emotional abuse will be used interchangeably.

### Organization of the Paper

The statement of the problem, significance, and definitions are described in Chapter One. Chapter Two, will discuss problems with the definitions of verbal abuse, prevalence and incidence, types of verbal abuse, the etiology of verbal abuse and consequences of verbal abuse. Chapter Three will describe the methodology used in this study and will include the participants, instruments, and procedure. Chapter Four will report the findings of the study. Chapter Five will present a discussion of the findings, some limitations of the study, and offer implications and future directions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review on verbal abuse organized in five parts: (a) problems with definitions of verbal abuse; (b) prevalence and incidence of verbal abuse; (c) types of verbal abuse; (d) etiology of verbal abuse; (e) consequences of verbal abuse; and (f) chapter summary.

#### Problems with Definitions of Verbal Abuse

During the last two decades, physical and sexual abuse have become the focus of public interest. However, the problem of psychological abuse, which includes verbal abuse, should likewise be considered. The increasing rate of emotional /verbal abuse over the last decades and its dangerous effects on children have shown researchers the need to better define this form of child maltreatment and to clarify the criteria for intervention on the part of courts, welfare departments, and child-protection organizations. For this reason, the first part of this chapter focuses on the problems with definitions of verbal abuse.

Klosinki (1993) pointed out that early in this century researchers in psychoanalysis and developmental psychology focused on specific aspects of emotional abuse under terms such as analytic depression and mother-child separation. Recent research indicated that neither verbal abuse nor its related concepts such as psychological abuse or maltreatment have a standard definition (Hart, Germain, & Brassard, 1987). In the child abuse literature, terms such as psychological abuse (Garbarino et al., 1986; McGee & Wolfe, 1989), verbal abuse (Warner, Parker, & Calhoun, 1984), emotional

abuse (O'Hagan, 1995), emotional maltreatment, and psychological maltreatment tended to predominate.

Still others used the terms mental injury (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1992), and verbal aggression (Vissing et al., 1991). Each of these concepts is intertwined with the others. Since the similarities and differences in the definitions have not been fully expressed theoretically, it is difficult to know which of these terms to use. Brassard, Hart, and Hardy (1993) stated that "definitions produced so far have been inadequate" (p. 717). The following section will provide definitions of verbal abuse, emotional abuse, and psychological maltreatment which will then be used interchangeably in the rest of this paper.

### Verbal Abuse

Vissing et al. (1991, p. 225) defined verbal abuse as:

A communication intended to cause psychological pain to another person, or a communication perceived as having that intent. The communicative act may be active or passive, and verbal or nonverbal. Examples include name-calling or nasty remarks (active, verbal), slamming a door or smashing something (active, nonverbal), and stony silence or sulking (passive, nonverbal).

They used the term "verbal /symbolic" because they believed that nonverbal communication is extremely important for all human interaction, including offensive communications. Verbal abuse as Vissing et al. defined it may be inflicted as a means to some other end. For example, verbal abuse would be a parent who attempts to end some unpleasant behavior by exclaiming, "Stop it, stupid." This is what Gelles and Straus (1979) identified as "instrumental aggression." Moreover, the verbal/symbolic aggression may be an end in itself. For example, a parent angry with a child may express

the anger by a hurtful remark such as "you are a dummy, and you don't understand anything I say." Gelles and Straus labeled this "expressive aggression."

Infante (1989) referred to verbal abuse as verbal aggression and defined it as the tendency to attack the self-concept of another person in order to cause psychological pain. In addition, he believed that the destructiveness of verbal abuse included unpleasant feelings during communication such as embarrassment and interpersonal distrust.

Bach and Deutsch (1980) described verbal abuse as "crazymaking," a form of control between individuals (parent-child interaction), or holding power over another, which can seriously impair a child capacity to recognize and deal with the reality of his/her parent-child relationship.

### Emotional Abuse

According to O'Hagan (1995), emotional abuse is "the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate emotional response to the child's expression of emotion and its accompanying expressive behavior" (p. 28). Therefore, she believed such abuse inhibits the child's capacity for spontaneous, positive, and appropriate emotional expression. In addition, O'Hagan believed that emotional abuse impairs emotional and mental life and development. In seeking a definition of emotional abuse, she recommended concentrating on the effects the abuse has on a child's emotional life and mental development. O'Hagan's definition pointed out that parents are not the only individuals who emotionally and psychologically abuse children (the words "parents" and "caregivers" do not appear in her definition). O'Hagan concluded, emotional abuse is the appropriate term when the focus is the impairment of the child's mental life. Thus,

emotional abuse can undermine the development of children's cognitive competency and social skills and can have a detrimental effect on children's trust and on the way they form relationships and express emotions.

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) (1992) referred to emotional/psychological abuse as mental injury which included acts or omissions by the parents or other persons responsible for the child's care that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. The NCCAN stated that some parental acts without any evident harm to the child's behavior, such as scapegoating or belittling, require intervention by the Child Protective Services (CPS).

McGee and Wolfe (1991) noted that many legal and procedural definitions of emotional abuse were so broad that caseworkers commonly assumed emotional abuse rarely existed on its own. Although emotional abuse can occur alone, Claussen and Crittenden (1991) identified this form of abuse as the core component and major destructive force in all types of child abuse.

Pillari (1991) argued that emotional abuse is intergenerational, highlighting deeply rooted patterns of scapegoating in families where children become the source of blame for the parents' inability to resolve the detrimental consequences of their own experiences of rejection and family trauma. Pillari noted that some professional systems continue to blame children for parental disturbances, further compounding the effects on the child and minimizing the potential for parents to change behaviors and attitudes towards children.

## Psychological Maltreatment

Wiehe (1998) defined psychological maltreatment as verbal behavior in which an adult attacks a child's self-esteem and social competence. This form of abuse is seen, for example, in comments made with intent to ridicule, insult, threaten, or belittle the child. Because of the absence of physical evidence, these verbal acts make psychological maltreatment difficult to report.

Psychological maltreatment, according to Brassard, Hart, and Hardy (1993), is "a repeated pattern of behavior that conveys to children that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, or only of value in meeting others" (p. 715). They pointed out that the word psychological is used instead of emotional because it includes the cognitive and interpersonal aspects.

From a developmental psychopathology perspective, McGee and Wolfe (1991) constructed their research definition based on child and parent interaction or communication. They concluded that psychological maltreatment is any communication that could undermine a child's resolution of important developmental tasks. Thus, it is the message given to the child that is critical to the child's experience of the abuse. For example, yelling and shouting at a child communicates "I don't love you."

Shengold (1989) used the term "soul murder" to refer to psychological maltreatment and defined it as the deliberate attempt to destroy or compromise the separate identity of another person. Therefore, murdering someone's soul means depriving the victim of the ability to feel joy and love as a separate person. Shengold said that the victims (children) of soul murder remained possessed by their abusers (parents).

According to Garbarino et al. (1986), psychological maltreatment is " a concerted attack by an adult on a child 's development of self and social competence, a pattern of physically destructive behavior and it takes five forms: rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, ignoring, and corrupting" (p. 8).

However, some issues arise from their definition. First, the word "concerted" implies that the behavior is intentional and planned. Children are very often psychologically abused without those responsible being aware of it (O'Hagan, 1993). Second, the term "by an adult" is limited. Peer groups of any age are capable of psychologically destructive behavior, and the current exposure of the extent and bullying in schools suggests this is true (Besag, 1989).

Third, replacing the term "psychically destructive" with the term psychological maltreatment leaves the definition subject to too many interpretations. Fourth, the five forms of behavior identified in this definition may not be psychically destructive. Some are, in fact, inappropriate responses, which nearly all parents will inflict upon their children consciously or unconsciously at some time during their children's lives (O'Hagan, 1995).

Each of the five forms of behavior cited would be psychologically destructive if it was active and repetitive over long periods of time. Nevertheless, each need not be psychologically destructive if it is merely an untypical isolated behavior, of which all parents are capable. Therefore, children who experience all of Garbarino's types of psychological maltreatment, repeatedly, throughout their childhood will have their emotional development affected (O'Hagan, 1995).

### Prevalence and Incidence of Verbal Abuse

There has been little research on the prevalence of verbal abuse. Most of the research is from what are called incidence reports which only provide information on the extent of verbal abuse that has co-occurred with other types of child maltreatment known to the Child Protective Services (CPS).

#### Prevalence

According to NCCAN (1996) emotional abuse accounted for approximately 52% of all reported cases of child maltreatment across the United States. The National Incidence Study-3 (NIS-3) indicated that emotional abuse occurs in children ages 8 and older. That data suggested victims of emotional abuse were 53% females and 47% males. Furthermore, the data showed an estimated 77% to 87% of children at risk of being maltreated in all types of maltreatment forms in single and intact parent families. The NIS-3 estimated the number of emotionally abused children was 183% higher than the previous estimate (188,100 cases in 1986 versus 532,200 in 1993).

In a survey of 3,345 parents with a child under 18 years of age, 63% reported one or more types of verbal abuse (Vissing et al., 1991). A study by Claussen and Crittenden (1991) proved that 19% of psychological maltreatment usually co-occurred with physical abuse. Results from a survey by Daro, Abrahams, and Robson (1988) found that 70% of American adults believed that there would be harmful effects on children's emotional development as a consequence of constant yelling and swearing at children.

## Incidence

The NIS-3 (1996) reflected a 67% increase in child emotional maltreatment in cases over the NIS-2 in 1986 and NIS-1 in 1980. The Vissing et al. (1991) study investigated parents' verbal aggression. Results indicated that 63.4% of children had experienced at least one incident of verbal /symbolic abuse. Because the data in the Vissing et al. study are based on self-reports of violent behavior, some parents will not accurately report the number of times they have verbally attacked their children. In addition, Vissing et al. found that 84% of fathers and 90% of mothers acknowledged witnessing verbal /symbolic violence. These results are supported by studies that report frequency of parental verbal abuse at close to 90% (Briere & Runtz, 1988).

However, the absence of operational definitions and true standards of severity suggested that the accurate frequency of emotional abuse is still unknown (National Research Council, 1993).

## Types of Verbal Abuse

According to the American Academy for Child and Adolescence Psychiatry (1998), verbal abuse included acts, or the failure to act, by parents or caretakers that have caused or could cause serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders. This could include parents using extreme forms of punishment, such as a child's confinement in a closet or dark room, being tied to a chair for long periods of time, threatening, or terrorizing a child. Less severe acts, but no less damaging, are belittling or rejecting treatment, using derogatory terms to describe the child, and habitual scapegoating or blaming.

Brassard and Hardy (1997) identified six forms of child maltreatment. The first was called "spurning" which included verbal and nonverbal acts that reject and degrade a child. This included belittling, degrading, and other nonphysical forms of open criticism or rejection. Moreover, spurning also involved shaming and/or ridiculing the child for showing normal emotions such as affection, grief, or sorrow, and consistently singling out one child to humiliate and punish, to perform most of the household chores, or to receive fewer rewards and public humiliation.

The second form was called "terrorizing." This included placing a child in unpredictable or chaotic circumstances; setting rigid or unrealistic expectations with threat of loss, harm, or danger if they are not met; threatening violence against the child; and threatening violence against child objects.

"Exploiting /corrupting" was the third form of maltreatment from parent(s) acts that encouraged the child to develop inappropriate behaviors such as self-destructive, maladaptive behaviors. It also included modeling, anti-social behavior (e.g., substance abuse, violence to or corruption of others); and modeling inappropriate behavior (e.g., living the parent's unfulfilled dreams).

"Denying emotional responsiveness" (ignoring) was the fourth form of maltreatment where the parent(s) ignored the child's attempts to interact and showed no emotion in interactions with the child. Denying emotional responsiveness meant being detached and uninvolved through lack of motivation and failing to express affection, caring, and love for the child.

The fifth form of child maltreatment was "isolating" where the parent(s) consistently denied the child opportunities for interacting/communicating with peers or adults inside or outside the home. Isolating included confining the child or placing unreasonable limitations on the child's freedom within his/her environment, and placing unreasonable limitations or restrictions on social interactions with peers or adults in the community.

"Mental health, medical, and educational neglect" was the sixth and final form of maltreatment where the parent(s) ignored, refused to allow, or failed to provide the necessary treatment for the child's mental health, medical, and educational problems or needs of the child.

The subtype definitions of child maltreatment incorporated family violence under the category of terrorizing or threatening. Some systems included family violence as a separate category of maltreatment while others included it under psychological or emotional maltreatment.

Briere (1992) summarized the major forms of parental verbal abuse by drawing upon the work of several investigators (e.g., Hart et al., 1987): (a) Rejection, causing the child to feel unworthy or unacceptable; (b) degradation, criticism, humiliation, stigmatization, deprivation of dignity, leading to feelings of inferiority; (c) terrorization, in which the child is verbally assaulted, frightened, and threatened with physical or psychological harm; (d) isolation, in which the child is deprived of social contacts outside of the family; (e) corruption, in which the child is encouraged to engage in antisocial behaviors; (f) lack of emotional responsiveness, in which the child is deprived of loving,

sensitive caregiving, or is ignored and neglected; and (g) unreliable or inconsistent parenting with contradictory parental demands.

According to Garbarino et al. (1986), psychological maltreatment took five forms: (a) rejecting, the adult refused to acknowledge the child's worth and the legitimacy of the child's needs; (b) isolating, the adult cut the child off from normal social experiences, prevented the child from forming friendships, and made the child believe that he or she was alone in the world; (c) terrorizing, the adult verbally assaulted the child, created a climate of fear, bullied, frightened the child, and made the child believe that the world was capricious and hostile; (d) ignoring, the adult deprived the child of essential stimulation and responsiveness, stifling emotional growth and intellectual development; (e) corrupting, the adult mis-socialized the child, stimulated the child to engage in destructive antisocial behavior, reinforced that deviance, and made the child unfit for normal social experience.

Garbarino et al. (1986) also argued that each of the five forms of psychological maltreatment had a differential effect on children depending on their passage through the four major developmental stages of infancy, early childhood, school age, and adolescence. Hart, Germain, and Brassard (1987) extended Garbarino's original typology of psychological maltreatment by including two other behaviors: The denial of emotional responsiveness and behaviors which degrade children.

### Etiology of Verbal Abuse

What are the causes of parents' verbal abuse? Why do parents verbally abuse their children? Understanding the causes and reasons for verbal abuse may help efforts to

recognize its negative impacts on children's emotional development and may help prevent it. According to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (1996), a variety of manifestations caused child maltreatment. While there may be less agreement about specific causes, most will agree that child maltreatment occurred as a result of multiple forces that impact the family interactions and eventually resulted in child maltreatment.

Since the 1970s when the socio-cultural context of child maltreatment in families was recognized (National Research Council, 1993), researchers have investigated the effects of parent, child, and environmental factors on maltreatment. Marital configuration and/or family structure have been frequently investigated as social factors which may affect maltreatment. While investigations of single variables, like family structure, have contributed to the identification of essential variables associated with child maltreatment, they have neither produced a causal explanation of child maltreatment nor enabled the identification of causal relationships between factors. Overall, it is generally acknowledged that no single factor can fully explain why maltreatment occurred (National Research Council, 1993; NIS-3, 1996).

According to Holder and Coery (1987), children were at risk of maltreatment as a result of the pattern of interaction between themselves, their families, and environments. It must be emphasized that while certain factors may often be present among families where maltreatment occurred, that does not mean the presence of these factors will always result in maltreatment in another family. In this section, the focus will be on some of the factors associated with child maltreatment. The four factors discussed are (a) child

characteristics, (b) characteristics of parental factors, (c) family configurations (single, intact, step families), and (d) environment factors.

### Child Characteristics

Iwaniec (1995) believed that children of different ages appeared to show differing responses associated with maltreatment. A child's temperament could arouse resentment or helplessness in their parents. In addition, she believed that some children were more difficult than others. Children who were perceived as "different" or "difficult" by their parents were at greater risk for being maltreated. Browne and Finkelhor (1988) believed that the child's behavior, such as unresponsiveness, could increase the likelihood of maltreatment particularly if a parent had a poor ability to empathize with the child and had difficulty controlling his/her emotions.

Bryer, Nelson, Miller, and Krol (1987) argued that some children might unconsciously have contributed to their victimization by their problematic behaviors that made it difficult for the parent(s) to relate to them. Furthermore, they believed that a child who constantly screamed or cried was less capable of soliciting nurturing responses from his/her parents who lacked emotional support and had few nurturing skills.

According to Smith (1984), certain children were more physically and emotionally vulnerable than others to be maltreated by their parents. Factors such as the child's age, physical, mental, emotional, and social development could greatly increase or decrease the likelihood of maltreatment, depending on the interactions of these characteristics with parental factors including the parent-child relationship, single parent families, intact families, and step families.

### Characteristics of Parental Factors

Oates (1996) pointed out a common feature in parents who emotionally abused their children-- they did not know about their children's different developmental stages. She believed that emotional abuse could occur in all families and in all social backgrounds. Furthermore, some parents were unable to meet their children's psychological needs, because they lacked respect for their children's thoughts and feelings. In addition, some parents were inconsistent in their parenting style, and therefore, their children received conflicting contradictory messages and saw their parents as unreliable. She concluded that emotionally abusing parents lacked parenting skills and child management techniques.

Ito (1995) believed that adults (parents) who were victims of verbal abuse might carry intense feelings of repressed anger toward their abusers, which they vented on their own children through cruel or violent behavior.

O'Hagan (1993) believed frequent quarrels between parents, rejection, and cruelty (verbal put-downs) when dealing with their children, and a stressful environment could have devastating impacts on children and their parents. In addition, the family income was an important factor for maltreated children.

Garbarino et al. (1986) stated that the family was a set of developing individuals who were constantly engaged in creating conceptions of who they were, as well as trying to comprehend the situations they encountered. Thus, the family was a social system in its own right. When family members communicated with each other, their behavior showed how they perceived themselves and others. Garbarino et al. concluded that we

need to understand how each family members' perception of self and others influenced the interactions with the previously developed patterns of communication and with general personal characteristics of family members to create unique patterns of interaction and mutual behaviors.

In the United Kingdom, Browne and Stevenson (as cited in Sheerer, 1997) identified numerous factors that may lead to parental verbal abuse. These included: a history of parental indifference, intolerance or over-anxiousness towards the child, family violence, socio-economic problems (unemployment), premature birth or low birth weight of child, a parental history of childhood maltreatment, a step-parent in the family, single or separated parent, young mother, an infant separated from mother for more than 24 hours post-delivery, less than 18 months between the birth of children, an infant never breastfed, and an infants' mental or physical disability.

Much of the research done on parental factors focused on mothers from low socio-economic backgrounds (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1996; National Research Council, 1993). However, little research on verbal abuse has been done on the role of fathers, stepfathers, or other family members, except in the case of sexual abuse (Corby, 1993). Thus, attempts to assess relationships within the family structure and child maltreatment have been somewhat limited.

### Family Configuration

Tomison (1996) stated that the place of children in the family and roles of parenthood have become increasingly complex and problematic. Children are now

significantly more likely to be raised by single families, and large numbers of children live in blended families (step families).

Clulow (1993) believed that in the last 25 years significant changes in family structure have been experienced in countries around the world. Official statistics showed that Australia, the United States, and most European countries have experienced higher rates of divorce, falling marriage rates, and an increase in the number of couples living together outside of marriage. There has been concern about the changing shape of the family, specifically the effects that changes in family structure have on parenting and children's behavior. Corby (1993) argued that these changes to family structure add increasing pressures on families to make society's expectations of adequate family functioning even more difficult to achieve.

Single parent families. Iwaniec (1995) stated that single parents dominated among abusive parents. They were young, immature, and unprepared for the responsibilities they face. They also lacked family support and suffered from social isolation. Therefore, a parent-child interaction in these families was marked by unresponsiveness to the children's needs, who tended to become withdrawn and detached. Iwaniec suggested that mothers were more likely to maltreat their children when fathers were uninvolved in child rearing.

Creighton and Noyes (1989) found that in England one-third of the children reported for emotional abuse resided with a single parent. They concluded that poverty, unemployment, racial segregation, abandoned housing, and female-headed households were all associated with a higher incidence of maltreatment.

Ney (1988) found that maltreated mothers verbally abused their children the same way they had been abused by their parents. Ney research done in 1987 suggested that verbal abuse is more likely to be transmitted intergenerational than physical abuse. Ney concluded that to prevent mothers from maltreating their children, the mothers needed to know that what happened to them during their childhood was abuse, and they needed to understand the effects of the abuse on them. Furthermore, she suggested that verbal abuse left deeper scars than physical and sexual abuse. Biller and Solomon (1986) believed that in a number of single parent families, mothers outnumbered fathers in committing many types of maltreatment, including verbal abuse.

Intact families. Iwaniec (1995) pointed out that in a two-parent family some parents are reserved and undemonstrative. Therefore, the emotional contact with their children is restricted. Some, on the other hand, might be tired and overwhelmed with responsibilities of child rearing and may be depressed so their emotional availability to their children was restricted. This may cause unintentional verbal abuse.

The National Research Council (1993) identified some characteristics in maltreating parents such as low self-esteem, low intelligence, ego deficiency, impulsivity, hostility, isolation and loneliness, anxiety, depression and apathy, rigidity, fear of rejection, low frustration tolerance, narcissism, fearfulness, immaturity, and dependency.

Biller and Solomon (1986) argued that in two-parent families mothers seemed more likely to maltreat or to overprotect their children when fathers did not share parenting responsibilities. Fathers who were very controlling, punitive, and authoritarian were likely to have children who had serious identity and relationship problems. Some

parents, especially fathers in a two-parent family, have difficulty bonding with their child. In addition, the quality of the father-mother relationship factor in a two-parent family was a very important because an imbalance can cause maltreatment to the child.

Garbarino et al. (1986) believed that parents who gave inappropriate responses to a child often did so because they lacked respect for the child's personality, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Such parents often undervalued the child's accomplishments or dismissed the child's limitations and weaknesses. They may have become sarcastic toward the child and conveyed an overall message of personal insignificance and worthlessness. They taught the children that they (the children) were not to be respected and valued.

The most consistent finding in the child abuse literature was that maltreating parents often reported having been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused or neglected as children.

Step families. Though it was widely assumed that children were at greater risk of maltreatment in step families (stepfather), few studies have actually investigated the relationship between step families (stepfather) and maltreatment. The National Research Council (1993) noted that children who had a stepfather were at greater risk of child maltreatment. Furthermore, one study (Abel, Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, Mittelman, & Rouleau, as cited in the National Research Council, 1993) found that 49% of fathers and stepfathers were at risk of abusing their stepchildren and their own children.

Creighton and Noyes (1989) found that in 32% of physical abuse cases the child resided with one natural parent (usually the mother) and one substitute parent (usually

male). Blended families were identified in 15% of neglect cases, 11% of failure to thrive cases, and 36% of emotional abuse cases, and were thus clearly over-represented in the child abuse population. As mentioned above, this over-representation is commonly reported among families suspected of child maltreatment and/or those with a history of maltreating their children (National Research Council, 1993).

### Environmental Factors

According to the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (1996), the incidence of child maltreatment was higher in some cultures, societies, and communities than others. Moreover, what one culture defined as child abuse and neglect may be a socially acceptable interaction in another culture. Economic values concerning the role of the child in the family, attitudes about the use of punishment, and the degree of social support for parents seemed to account for these differences.

In an investigation of the effects of community influences on child maltreatment, Garbarino et al. (1986) stated that families stressed by their everyday living and overwhelmed by their child care responsibilities tended to lose whatever positive coping skills they may have possessed and slipped into an escalating pattern of child maltreatment. Although they may have relationships with other families in the community, Garbarino et al. concluded that since all families suffered from the same situation and none knew how to get out of it, these families did not function as a positive social support. Rather, they served as a mechanism for reinforcing the apathetic and futile worldview that the world is unjust and people like them always suffer. These networks

also reinforced the idea in the parents that child maltreatment was justified under such circumstances.

### Consequences of Parents' Verbal Abuse

Insulting names, degrading comments, and belittling criticism can have dramatic effects on children's emotional development. It is believed that verbally abused children may developed many problems related to the maltreatment in their lives, and many of these problems carried on into adulthood. It is believed that verbal abuse can last over a long time and its effects increased and became more severe. The old saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me" had no truth. A child, teenager, or young adult could have been given the message by parents that showing emotions, especially anger, was wrong, shameful, and weak. Therefore, children internalized the anger that became internalized as self-blame.

Haj-Yahia and Noursi (1998) found maltreated children who witnessed and experienced verbal abuse in their environments had depression, low self-esteem, increased anxieties, and would become abusive parents later in life. Day (1998) also believed an environment of parents; verbal abuse had an effect on children's low self-esteem and other emotional consequences. Day said that verbal abuse could damage children's sense of self-perception from constant belittling and cause anti-social interaction skills. Day noted that babies raised in an emotionally barren environment that were not held or touched in a loving way did not thrive properly. Name-calling or humiliation, threats or other emotional mistreatments were behaviors that produced children who felt worthless and inadequate. Day concluded that from constant

humiliation the victims of verbal abuse would withdraw from others. Conversely, this could limit a child's capacity to learn in school, and the child might become unable to have social interactions.

According to the National Institute of Justice (1997), the consequences of parental verbal abuse on children's developmental stages are as follows: (a) infants had poor health, poor sleep habits, excessive screaming, attachment disorders, and failure to thrive; (b) preschoolers exhibited terror, shaking, stuttering, decreased cognitive skills, regression, aggression, attacking peers in distress, and poor appetite; (c) school-aged children experienced developmental delays, sleep disturbances, speech and hearing difficulties, eating disturbances, psychosomatic complaints, shaking, and nail-biting. They also startled easily, showed low cognition, diminished memory, suppression of affect, hyper-vigilance, and disruptive classroom behavior and aggression; (d) adolescents showed poor school performance (and some may have dropped out of school), as well as precocious sexual behavior, drug use, antisocial behavior feelings of guilt and shame, and problems with peers.

Vachss (1994) believed that a child's stage of development played an important role in whether or not parental actions were considered psychological maltreatment. For example, some specific acts of abuse may have a more devastating effect on a younger child in his/her early stages of development than on adolescents or adults.

Other researchers found additional connections between the consequences of emotional abuse on adult functioning. Erickson and Egeland (1999) believed that emotionally abused children learned at an early age that their emotional needs were not

met, which resulted in a feeling that they were not valuable human beings. They learned not only that they could not trust the adults who should care for them, but also that they were powerless to solicit the care they needed. They (emotionally abused children) were likely to be at-risk for depression or have problems with aggression and self-control.

Although the effects of emotional abuse on adults have not been extensively studied, Sheerer (1997) suggested that emotional abuse appeared to be related to an adult's feelings of depression, hostility, anger, shame, and general social and psychological maladjustment. However, Walker (1994) believed that adults who were victims of repeated trauma (verbal abuse) might have diminished of internal psychological defenses and resources necessary to fend off the negative effects of verbal abuse over time.

Kiser, Heston, Millsap, and Pruitt (1991) found symptoms of depression and severe anxiety in their sample of maltreated children and made similar findings. They believed that a maltreated child might lead a life of incompetence and failure at school, on the job, and in marriage. These were common in the histories of abusive adults. This is a natural accompaniment for a person with low self-esteem, a sense of helplessness, and depression.

Varia, Abidin, and Dass (1996, p. 522) wrote about the effects of maltreatment on both genders:

Men are more likely to utilize a denying coping strategy to deal with past abuse. Men are taught to deny their affect because being emotional is not considered masculine (Huston, 1983; Skitka & Maslach, 1990). Perhaps, the lack of emotional expression can lead to an employment of more avoidance and minimizing coping strategies in an attempt to obscure earlier trauma. Through

societal sex role expectations, males are taught to deal with emotionally difficult events in a very different manner than females. (Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976)

Hart, Germain, and Brassard (1987) believed that boys and girls who lived with verbally abusive parents experienced significant emotional trauma. They experienced fear, anxiety, confusion, anger, and disruption in their lives.

Children in single parent families (mother) suffered numerous consequences of verbal abuse. They could become withdrawn, unresponsive, fearful, anxious, and socially and emotionally isolated (Iwaniec, 1995). Biller and Solomon (1986) said the paternally deprived child's insecurity in interpersonal relationships could contribute to feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem. Bowlby (1980) believed that parents who paid little of attention to the child's needs, or were consistently unwilling or unable to meet the child's emotional needs might lead the child to develop a sense of unworthiness.

Tucker-Ladd (1999) believed that maltreated children usually felt helpless and were more likely to sulk, pout, look unhappy, or lay a guilt trip on something than to get angry. Erickson and Egeland (1999) indicated that early psychological maltreatment may have lasting effects on children, leading them to experience many of the same problems as those who have been physically and sexually abused. They also believed that maltreated children became quickly conditioned to see themselves as worthless and as deserving of the terrible abuse they suffered. They concluded that although abused children may grow physically, emotionally they stay at the level of hurt, angry, and confusion, and they do not trust others.

Hoglund and Nicholas (1995) found that increased exposure to emotional abuse was related to expressed and unexpressed anger. Macpherson (1984) pointed out that all

maltreated individuals had problems expressing anger. Although maltreatment made the individual very angry, he or she was conditioned not to express it in direct or healthy ways. A direct expression of anger was difficult, not only because it might bring retaliation by the parent, but also because it did not seem right. From the child's perspective, the situation looked like this: "My parents are hurting me and this makes me mad; but how can I get angry at them if I also believe they are right and that I deserve to be hurt?" (p. 53).

Osofsky and Fenichel (1994) believed that maltreated children might suffer from cognitive, emotional, and social impairment in addition to physical disabilities. Many studies have pointed to an association between a history of childhood maltreatment and various psychiatric disorders including depression, personality disorders, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal behavior. These studies were notable because they demonstrated that emotional abuse could be even more devastating than physical and sexual abuse. It is possible that emotional abuse served as a mediating factor that had not been considered in other studies of childhood maltreatment and adult functioning.

Consequences of parents' verbal abuse such as depression, anxiety, and antisocial behavior have been associated with disrupted social relations, social isolation, unavailability, a failure to use social supports, and an inability to cope with stress (National Research Council, 1993).

Stone (1993) suggested that emotionally abused children exhibited depressive symptoms sufficiently severe to warrant a depressive diagnosis. He also pointed out that

emotional abuse had more negative effects on children than any other form of abuse (physical, sexual).

According to Vissing et al. (1991), a child who was not hit but was constantly told that he or she was unworthy will have low self-esteem. They believed that parental verbal abuse was directly related to the behavior problems of the child. They believed that the more frequent the rate of verbal abuse for the parent, the greater the probability of psychosocial behavior problems by the child. Vissing et al. concluded that parents' verbal abuse affected all age groups, both sexes, and all families regardless of their socio-economic status.

Moore (1991) believed that less severe forms of early emotional abuse might produce babies who grew into anxious and insecure children who were slow to develop or who might have low self-esteem. Other studies focused on the critical period of mother - infant attachment during the first few months of life, revealing a dysfunctional pattern among depressed parents characterized by low involvement or responsiveness to their children (Sheerer, 1997; Stone, 1993).

Verbal abuse was difficult to define because of wide discrepancies in what people considered verbal abuse. Hart, Germain, and Brassard (1987) suggested that what one child considered as abusive might not be the case for another. Moreover, what one adult would consider abusive behavior, such as yelling, another adult may consider unpleasant but not abusive, and yet a third adult may consider fair game. For example, a person who experienced infrequent degrading by name-calling may not experience this as abuse, but

another person who is criticized on a daily basis for many years may feel devastated by the slightest criticism.

Martin (1980) summarized three main points about psychological consequences of maltreatment. Martin's first point was that abused children were unhappy children and lacked the capacity to enjoy age-appropriate play activities. This could take the form of seriousness, which probably reflected clinical depression. Martin's second point dealt with object relations. He believed that maltreated children had not learned to have healthy age-appropriate relationships with adults or peers. Instead, they (emotionally abused children) had feelings of an impaired sense of trust.

The third and final point is that a healthy environment for the maltreated child was very important for his /her well-being. In such a healthy environment, the maltreated child would be well-adjusted and his/her emotional needs would be considered. Martin concluded that without a healthy environment the abused child's behavior would be shy, fearful, and anxious.

### Summary

There did not seem to be a standard definition of parental verbal abuse or related concepts such as psychological or emotional abuse, nor were there independent studies of verbal abuse because it usually co-occurred with other forms of child maltreatment. Research indicated it was possible that emotional abuse served as a mediating factor that had not been considered in other studies of childhood maltreatment and adult functioning. This idea was based on the contention that psychological maltreatment usually accompanied other forms of abuse and was often more devastating to the child. It was

believed that parents' verbal abuse went unidentified even more often than other forms of child maltreatment. If identified, it was less likely to be recognized, and its effects did not receive serious intervention or results in court involvement. For these reasons, it was contended that studies with samples drawn from the general population provided more accurate estimates of the incidence of parents' verbal abuse.

Furthermore, available evidence indicated that emotional abuse had a more extensive and destructive impact on the development of children than other types of abuse and neglect. The studies also indicated that a large part of the negative impact associated with emotional maltreatment might be more clearly understood in the context of those abusive or neglectful behaviors within the family that constituted psychological maltreatment.

Child maltreatment was a multi-dimensional phenomenon that could not be explained by any one factor. The National Research Council (1993) noted that little was currently known about the specific contributions of individual factors (such as poverty, unemployment, and violent neighborhoods) in families characterized by multiple problems, or about the conditions under which these factors interact with other social and personal factors to produce maltreatment. Within this context, the evidence for family structure as a risk factor associated with child maltreatment was discussed.

Childhood maltreatment appeared to be a risk factor for adulthood psychosocial dysfunction, most notably depressive symptoms, stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Both males and females appeared to be negatively affected by childhood maltreatment, and adulthood problems associated with childhood abuse were similar in males and

females. Severity of the abuse, including the use of threat or force, longer duration, increased frequency, and intrusiveness, seemed to be associated with greater adulthood dysfunction. However, it remained unclear whether specific forms of abuse were more strongly associated with specific problems in adulthood.

The research on parents' verbal abuse pointed out that victims often suffered from depression, anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and negative attitudes toward the parents who abused them. Thus, the focus of this study was to investigate the relationships between parents' verbal abuse and depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and the relationship with parents. The next chapter describes the methodology of the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of four parts: (a) a description of the gender and the age of the participants; (b) a description of the development of the instruments used in the study; (c) an elaboration of the procedure for the data collection; (d) a discussion of the data methods; and (e) a statement of the research questions.

#### Participants

The participants were from five education classes in a mid-sized university in the Midwest. The participants were Caucasians. There were 118 male and female college undergraduate students in the sample, 29 male, and 89 female. Their average age was 19 years old.

#### Instruments

Five instruments were used in this study: the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21), Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, the Verbal Abuse Measure, the Child Attitudes Towards Parents Scales, and the State-Trait Anger Inventory Measure. Each scale is described in detail in the next section.

#### Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21)

The DASS is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress (see Appendix A). The DASS was constructed to further the process of defining, understanding, and measuring the ubiquitous and clinically significant emotional states usually described as depression,

anxiety, and stress. Each of the three DASS scales contains 14 items, divided into subclasses of 2-5 items with similar content.

In addition to the basic 42-item questionnaire (1995), a short version--the DASS 21--was used with 7 items per scale. The scales of the DASS have been shown to have high internal consistency and to yield meaningful discriminations in a variety of settings. The scales should meet the needs of both researchers and clinicians who wish to measure a participant's current state or a change in their state over time. The rating scale is as follows: (0) Did not apply to me; (1) Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time; (2) Applied to me to a considerable degree or a good part of time; (3) Applied to me very much or most of the time. The DASS was designed to provide relatively pure measurer of the three related negative affective states of depression, anxiety, and stress (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

According to Lovibond (1998), the Depression Scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, devaluation of life, self-disparaging, lack of interest or involvement, dispirited, gloomy, blue, convinced that life has no meaning or value, pessimistic about the future, unable to experience enjoyment or satisfaction, unable to become interested or involved, slow, and lacking in initiative. The Anxiety Scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal musculature effects, situational anxiety, and subjective experience of anxious affect. The Stress Scale assesses difficulty relaxing, nervous arousal, being easily upset or agitated, irritable or overactive, and impatient.

Lovibond (1998) found that the DASS scales consisted of 42 negative emotional symptoms. The scales rate the extent to which the participants have experienced each

symptom over the past week, on a 4-point Likert severity/frequency scale. According to Lovibond (1998), the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS) show good convergent validity with other scales designed to discriminate between depression and anxiety. Alpha coefficients for three 14-item DASS scales are as follows: Depression 0.91, Anxiety 0.84, and Stress .90.

According to Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, and Swinson (1998), the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales may hold more promise for distinguishing between anxiety and depression, as well as between symptoms of physical arousal and symptoms of generalized anxiety (for example, tension or agitation). Factor analytic studies with non-clinical (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) and clinical samples (Brown, Chorpita, Korotitsh, & Barlow, 1997) have confirmed that DASS items can be reliably grouped into three scales: (1) Depression (DASS-D); (2) Anxiety (DASS-A), and (3) Stress (DASS-S). The Depression Scale includes items that measure symptoms typically associated with a dysphoric mood (e.g., sadness or worthlessness). The Anxiety Scale includes items that are primarily related to symptoms of physical arousal, panic attacks, and fear (e.g., trembling or faintness). Finally, the Stress Scale includes items that measure symptoms such as tension, irritability, and a tendency to overreact to stressful events.

To date, only one published article has addressed the psychometric properties of the DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). This study suggested that DASS has excellent internal consistency and temporal stability and provides a better separation of the features of anxiety and depression, relative to other existing measures.

In summary, the study by Antony et al. (1998) confirmed previous findings that DASS is a reliable and valid method of assessing features of depression, anxiety, and tension-stress. The DASS appears to be an appropriate instrument for measuring features of depression, hyper-arousal, and tension in clinical and non-clinical groups. Furthermore, the 21-item version of the measure appears to have several advantages relative to the 42-item version, including fewer items, a cleaner factor structure, and smaller inter-factor correlation.

#### Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory

The adult form (for ages 16 and over) of the Coopersmith (1981) Self-Esteem Inventory (CESI) was used in this study as a measure of self-esteem (see Appendix B). It is a brief self-report questionnaire with 25 items measuring evaluative attitudes toward the self in several domains: social (self-peers), school-academic, home-parents, and general self. The items are short statements, generally answered "like me" or "unlike me." Examples of some items are: "I find it very hard to talk in front of a group," "I give in too easily," "I have a low opinion of myself." The CSEI is self-administered and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Scoring the forms takes only a few minutes when the scoring key is used. The examiner needs to sum the number of self-esteem items answered correctly to arrive at a total self-score. For the Adult Form, one needs to multiply the score by 100. High scores in the CSEI correspond to high self-esteem.

Robinson, Shaver, and Wrightsman (1991) reported a Cronbach of .83 for internal consistency on the CSEI. Kokens reported a study of CSEI construct validity, (1974,

1978). Her investigation included over 7,600 school children in grades 4 through 8. Kokens, study confirmed the construct validity of sub-scales proposed by Coopersmith as measuring sources of self-esteem. Regarding the discriminant validity of the CSEI, Kokens found correlations of .75 and .44 with the Edwards and Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scales (Taylor & Reitz, as cited in Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991).

### Verbal Abuse Measure

A modified version of the Parental Love Deprivation Measure (PLD) developed by Al-Mabuk (1990) was used in this study (see Appendix C). The measure's focus was modified from parental love deprivation to indexes of verbal abuse to make the instrument more applicable to this study. A definition of parental verbal abuse, also it included three statements about physical abuse, sexual abuse, and alcohol problems was added.

The measure consists of three parts. The first part has 10 questions to which the respondents answered either "Yes " or "No." Examples include, " Do you resent the way your mother raised you?" "Did you feel love for your father?" The second part of this measure asked participants to provide information about specific incidents of parental verbal abuse, living arrangements, and frequency and intensity of verbal abuse.

This sub-scale provided a definition of parents' verbal abuse so the participants answered the questions using the operational definition of verbal abuse in this study. After reading the definition, participants were asked to list two specific incidents they remembered vividly when they were verbally abused by their parent (s). Next, participants were asked to describe the living arrangement and the people with whom they

lived during their childhood. They were given four responses to choose from: (1) intact family, (2) one-parent family, (3) orphan home, or (4) other (which the participant must specify).

Participants next marked which of the three categories best represented the frequency of their parents' verbal abuse on them. The three categories were: (1) All the time, (2) Some of the time, and (3) Rarely. The final part of this sub-scale dealt with the duration and the period during which the verbal abuse took place. For the duration, the participants selected from four categories (1) Weeks, (2) Months, (3) Years, and (4) Other (which the participants specified). The information obtained through this second subscale served two purposes: (a) to ascertain that participants were in fact verbally abused by their parents when they were younger and (b) to obtain a profile of the commonalities and differences among the participants.

The third part of parental verbal abuse measure has 25 statements that deal with the nature of the participant's relationship with his/her mother. The same scale was used to investigate the relationship with the father. The participants rated themselves on a 5-point Likert scale. The five categories were (5) Strongly Disagree, (4) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (2) Agree, and (1) Strongly Agree.

The three parts of this measure dealt with the nature of the relationship between the participants and their parents. The statements in Part 3 dealt more specifically with the participants' feelings and attitudes about their mother and father. Examples of statements in Part 3 are: "I did and still receive putdowns from my father," "I feel that my father never was sarcastic toward me," "I feel resentful toward my father for saying

cruel things to or about me." A sample of statements from Part 3 include, " My mother hurt my feelings by calling me names when I was a child," " I feel love for my mother, " "I wish that my mother was warm and affectionate toward me when I was growing up," "I would want the same mother to take care of me if I had to do it over again." The range of possible scores of each scale (Part 3) is from a minimum of 22 to a maximum 110. A high score indicated a high level of parents' verbal abuse, and a low score indicated a low level of parents' verbal abuse.

### Child Attitude Toward Parents Measure

The Child Attitude Toward Father (CAF) and Child Attitude Toward Mother (CAM) scales developed by Hudson (1976) were used as a measure of attitudes toward parents (see Appendix D). These two scales were designed to measure the degree of contentment a child (ages 12 and older) has with his/her father and mother. The scale is designed to measure the extent of a relationship problem. Each scale has 25 brief, self-report items. The items are short statements measuring the degree of one's contentment in the relationship with his/her parents. The items are rated on a 5-points Likert scale. The five categories are : (1) Rarely or none of the time, (2) A little of the time, (3) Sometimes, (4) Good part of the time; and (5) Most or all of the time. Some of the statements are formulated in the negative, such as " I dislike my mother," " I feel very angry toward my father." Others are positively worded, such as " I get along well with my father," "I really enjoy my mother."

The author deliberately included positively-worded and negatively worded statements to control for the effect of response set biases. The score on each scale has a

possible range from 0 to 100. A high score in either scale indicated a high degree of conflict or negative attitude toward that parent. The author of these two scales stated that they are both reliable and valid. Each has a reliability of .90, and both have high face, discriminant, and construct validity.

In addition, the two scales have other desirable psychometric requirements including their being short, easy to administer, easy to interpret, easy to complete, easy to score, and do not suffer response decay when used repeatedly over many occasions (Al-Mabuk, 1990; Hudson, 1976).

#### State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory

The State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI) developed by Charles D. Spielberger (1991, see Appendix E) consists of three subsets of items which asked respondents about (a) how angry they are feeling now (i.e., state-anger), (b) how angry they generally feel (i.e., anger-trait), and (c) how they behave when they get angry (i.e., anger-expression). The sample items include "I am furious," "I feel irritated" for the state-anger, "I am quick tempered," "I have a fiery temper" for the trait-anger, and "I control my temper." "I express my anger" for the anger-expression.

Scoring: The Trait-Anger items are rated on 4-points Likert scale, which has four categories such as "not at all," "sometimes," "moderately," or "very much so." The possible scores range from a minimum score of 10 (low anger) to a maximum score of 40 (high anger) in the anger-state and anger-trait items, and from a minimum score of 24 (low anger) to a maximum score of 96 (high anger) in the anger-expression items.

Reliability: The (STAS) has very good reliability. The internal consistency is .93 for the state-anger, .86 for the trait-anger, and .73 to .84 for the anger-expression (Spielberger,1991) . In addition, studies on the validity of the STAXI indicate that the sub-scale of the trait-anger correlates significantly and positively with with three measures of hostility, and measures of neuroticism, psychotism, and anxiety (Fischer & Corcoran, 1994).

### Procedure

The researcher administered the instruments to five undergraduate classes and asked the participants to fill them out and return them the following day. The participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential. They were told not to provide any personal information. To ensure anonymity and maximize honest responses, the students returned the instruments to a designated mailbox. The researcher collected the protocols and made sure that they were filled out properly. Two of the instrument packets had to be discarded because they were incomplete.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The researcher conducted the following methods of data analysis for this study. First, the reliability of the instruments was calculated, then the standard deviation of emotion indexes was calculated. Second, to answer Research Question 1, the Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to see how the variables correlated with each other, and whether differences among the variables would exist or not between parent(s)-child relationships and parents' verbal abuse.

Third, to answer Research Question 2, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine what could be a predictor of the motive for parental verbal abuse, and whether or not verbal abuse could be a factor which may influence such behavior. Fourth, to answer Research Question 3, the researcher conducted an independent simple t-Test to examine gender differences in each variable and to see what variables related to parent (s) verbal abuse. A fifth and final test, one- way- ANOVA was used to answer Research Question 4 to see the differences in the family status (i.e., single family, intact family). For this, the researcher used Bonferroni test.

### Research Questions

This study investigated the following questions:

1. What are the relationships between parents' verbal abuse and the affective variables of depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and self-esteem?
2. Does the child's attitude toward his/her mother/father relate to parents' verbal abuse?
3. Are there gender differences in parents' verbal abuse?
4. Does the family configuration (i.e., intact family, lived with mother/father, foster family, and other stepfather/mother) relate to parents' verbal abuse?

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents the data analysis of the study. It consists of six parts: (a) reliability scores for the instruments used in this study; (b) descriptive statistics of the emotion indexes; (c) reports of the Pearson correlation coefficients, which were calculated to see the inter-correlations of each emotional variable; (d) multiple regression analysis; (e) t-test data of gender differences for each variable; and (f) the results of the one-way ANOVA analysis.

#### Reliability of the Instruments

The internal consistency of the five scales used in this study was examined. The reliability coefficient of each scale is as follows: alpha of .92 for the DASS Questionnaire, alpha of .31 for the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, alpha of .50 for the Verbal Abuse Questionnaire, alpha of .56 for the (You and Your Father) Questionnaire, alpha of .77 for (You and Your Mother) Questionnaire, alpha of .69 for the Child Attitude toward Mother Questionnaire, alpha of .88 for the Child Attitude toward Father Questionnaire, and alpha of .78 for the State -Trait Anger Inventory.

#### Descriptive Statistics of the Emotion Indexes

In this study, indexes were created to represent feelings such as depression, stress, anxiety, anger, self-esteem, attitude toward parents (father/mother), and verbal abuse measure (you and your father/mother). Every index was the sum of all the items in the scale, and the measurement levels of these indexes were all intervals. However, the anger inventory used three different sub-scales of anger (state-anger, trait-anger, and

anger-expression) with three different anger indexes. These indexes were also the sum of each sub-set of the scale, and the measurement level was all intervals.

As a result, there were 10 emotion indexes, consisting of DASS; Child Attitude toward Parents (father/mother); verbal abuse measurement (You and Your Father/Mother); self-esteem; Anger 1, which corresponds to the state-anger; Anger 2, which corresponds to trait-anger; and Anger 3, which describes anger-expression. Table 1 shows the standard deviation and mean of each index.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Emotion Indexes (Standard Deviation)

Index	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Anger1	12	3.9
Anger2	17.2	4.9
Anger3	55.9	6.1
Self-esteem	39.6	2.4
DASS	13.7	9.4
Child attitude toward father	62	5.4
Child attitude toward mother	62.5	5.2
You and your father	96.4	13.3
You and your mother	94.5	9.7
Verbal abuse	7.4	3.3

Note. M represents the average value and SD represents the standard deviation.

Inter-Correlations of Emotion Indexes (Pearson Correlation)

The first question the study investigated was: what are the relationships between verbal abuse and depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and self-esteem? Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to see the inter-correlations of each emotional variable. Table 2 shows the inter-correlations between emotion indexes.

Table 2

Inter-Correlations Between Emotion Indexes (Pearson Correlation)

Index	Anger1	ATF	MEF	DASS	Anger2	VB	Self-Esteem	Anger3	ATM
Anger 1									
ATF	.00								
MEF	-.17	-.03							
DASS	.39**	.06	.15						
Anger 2	.30**	.19*	-.07	.29**					
VB	.30**	-.01	-.33**	.28**	.24**				
Self-esteem	-.21*	-.10	.17	-.38**	-.09	-.20*			
Anger3	.20*	.05	-.24**	.22*	.23*	.24**	-.09		
ATM	-.31**	.45**	-.01	.00	.00	.04	.02	-.04	
MEM	-.14	.11	-.45**	-.21*	-.12	-.36**	.19*	-.02	-.13

Note. \*\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Anger 1 (state-anger), Anger2 (trait anger), Anger 3(anger expression), ATF (Child Attitude toward father), MEF (the relationship between father and child), DASS (depression, stress, anxiety), ATM (Child attitude toward mother), and MEM (the relationship between mother and child), VB (Verbal Abuse)

Table 2 shows a moderate correlation  $p = .39$  at the 0.01 significant level between Anger 1(state-anger) and DASS. There was a low correlation between Anger 1 and Anger 2 (trait-anger) ( $p = .30$  at the level of 0.01), and a low correlation between Anger 1 and verbal abuse ( $p = .30$  at the level of 0.01). There is a negative and low

correlation between Anger 1 and Self-esteem  $p = -.21$  at the 0.01 significant level. A correlation was found between Anger 1 and Anger 3 (anger-expression)  $p = .20$  at the of 0.05 significant level. In addition, a negative and low correlation was found between Anger 1 and Child Attitude toward Mother  $p = -.31$  at the level of 0.01.

There was a slight correlation between Anger 2 and Child Attitude toward Father  $p = .19$  at the 0.05 significant level, and a low correlation between Anger 2 (anger- trait) and DASS  $p = .29$  at 0.05 significant level.

A low correlation occurred between verbal abuse (Part 1, see Appendix C) and Anger 1(state-anger) at  $p = .30$  at 0.01 significant level, and a negative and low correlation between verbal abuse and the You and your Father at  $p = -.33$  at the 0.01 significant level. Low correlations between verbal abuse and DASS were found  $p = .28$  at the 0.01 significant level, and between verbal abuse and Anger 2 (trait-anger) at the  $p = .24$  at the 0.01 significant level.

For Self-esteem and Anger 1 (state-anger) a negative and low correlation occurred  $p = -.21$  at the 0.05 significant level, and between Self-Esteem and DASS  $p = -.38$  at the 0.01 significant level. There was negative and low correlation between Self-Esteem and Verbal Abuse  $p = -.20$  at the 0.05 significant level.

A low correlation was found between Anger 3 (anger-expression) and Anger 1 (state-anger) at  $p = .20$  at 0.05 significant level. A negative and low correlation was found between Anger 3 (anger-expression) and Child Attitude toward Father  $p = -.24$  at 0.01 significant level. There was low correlation between Anger 3 and DASS  $p = .20$  at 0.05

significant level. Also between Anger 3 and Anger 2 of  $p = .23$  at 0.05 significant level, and between Anger 3 and Verbal Abuse  $p = .24$  at 0.05 significant level.

Concerning Child Attitude toward Mother and Anger 1 (state-anger) a negative and low correlation was found at  $p = -.31$  at 0.01 significant level. A moderate correlation occurred between Child Attitude toward Mother and Child Attitude toward Father at  $p = .45$  at 0.01 significant level. In addition, Table 2 shows a slight correlation between Anger 3 (anger-expression) and You and your Mother  $p = .19$  at the 0.05 significant level.

There was a moderate correlation between family relationship the You and your Mother and You and your Father at  $p = .45$  at 0.01 significant level. However, there was a negative and low correlation between You and your Mother and DASS at  $p = -.21$  at 0.05 significant level. A negative and low correlation was found between You and your Mother and Verbal Abuse at  $p = -.36$  at 0.01 significant level.

### Regression Analysis

The second question the study investigated was: Does the child's attitude toward his/her mother/father relate to parents' verbal abuse? A multiple regression with stepwise was used to determine what variables contribute to the explanation of the (dependent variable) Anger 1 (state-anger) and to what degree.

Table 3 shows a summary of regression analysis of variance for variables predicting the level of Anger 1 (state-anger).

Table 3

Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting the Level of Anger 1 (state-anger)

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	<u>Beta</u>
VB	.105	.043	.198
ATM	-.005	.001	-.353
Anger2	.162	.074	.184
DASS	.083	.025	.282

Note. Multiple R = .59, R Square = .35, Adjusted R Square = .33. Stepwise method was used. B = coefficient which tells us the slope predicted (steepness) of the line.

SE = the regression coefficient multiplied by the standard deviation of the Independent variables (VB = Verbal Abuse, ATM = Child Attitude toward Mother, Anger 2 = anger-trait, DASS = Depression, Anxiety, and Stress) divided by the standard deviation of the (Anger 1 = anger-state) measure. Beta = A beta is a regression coefficient that has been standardized, can be thought of as indicators of the relative importance of individual variables within a regression equation.

Table 3 shows that Verbal Abuse and Child Attitude toward Mother, Anger 2 (trait-anger), and DASS were the predictors for the level of Anger 1 (state-anger). The R square of .35 indicated low linear correlations between the criterion variable Anger 1 (state-anger) and the predictors such as Verbal Abuse and Child Attitude toward Mother, Anger 2 (trait-anger), and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS).

The other independent variables such as the You and your Mother/ Father (see Appendix C), Anger 3 (anger-expression), Child Attitude toward Father, and Self-Esteem were not in the equation as predictors describing the linear correlation, therefore, these variables are not predictors.

### Independent Simple t-Test

The third question the study investigated was: Are there gender differences in parents' verbal abuse? The researcher conducted an independent simple t-Test to examine gender differences in each variable. The dependent variables included Verbal Abuse, Anger, DASS, You and your Father/Mother, Child Attitude toward Father/Mother, and Self-esteem. A significant difference was found in the relationship between mother and child (t-value = 2.78,  $p < 0.05$ ). Males had relationships that were more negative with their mothers than females. (The mean for males was = 98.5862, and mean for females was = 93.2472).

Furthermore, to answer the study second question, which was, does the child's attitude toward his/her mother/father relate to verbal abuse? A significant difference was found in child attitude toward mother (t-value = 2.16,  $p < 0.05$ ). Females had a more positive attitude toward their mothers than males (mean for females was = 62.8764, and mean for males was = 59.2857).

### One-Way-ANOVA

The fourth question this study investigated was: Does the family configuration (i.e., intact family, lived with mother/father, foster family, and other step father/mother) relate to parents' verbal abuse? A one-way ANOVA analysis based on the Bonferroni test was used in this step using the three variables (You and your Mother, You and your Father, and Verbal Abuse) based on family configuration variable (see Appendix C).

Table 4, shows summaries of family configuration and the above mentioned variables which were in the equation.

Table 4

ANOVA of Family Configuration

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F-Ratio</u>	<u>F-Prob</u>
Single, Intact, and Other	2	.8889	.4445	14.2755	.0000**
Single(mother), and Intact	2	.0422	.0211	8.8079	.0003**
Intact, and Other	2	596.0849	298.0424	3.2090	.0441**
Intact and Other	2	1102.8860	551.4430	7.0759	.0013**

Note. \*\* Means significance at 0.05 level. Bonferroni was used with significance level 0.05. df = Degrees of freedom, SS = Sum of Squares, MS = Means of Squares. Single means lived with mother/father; Intact means intact family; Other means step family.

Table 4 shows a significant difference between family configurations (lived with mother, intact, and other stepfamily) and parents' verbal abuse (Part 1, see Appendix C)  $p = 0000$  at 0.05 significant level. There is a significant difference between family configuration (Intact and Single family) and the You and your Father (Part 2, see Appendix C)  $p = .0003$  at significant 0.05 level. There was a significant difference between (Intact and Other Step family) and the You and Your Mother (Part 3, see Appendix C)  $p = 0013$  at 0.05 significant level.

Also, there was a significant difference between groups (e.g., Intact family and other Step family) and DASS (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales)  $p = .0441$  at the 0.05 significant level.

In addition, several analyses of variance were performed for the comparison group to determine whether there were differences between verbally abused groups and

In addition, several analyses of variance were performed for the comparison group to determine whether there were differences between verbally abused groups and non-verbally abused groups. No significant differences were found. There were no correlations between parents' verbal abuse and other types of abuse (physical, sexual). In addition, no correlation was found between parents' verbal abuse and parents' problems with alcohol. An interpretation of the data described above is presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

This chapter will first provide a discussion of the results of the study, next state the limitations and strengths of the study, discuss some implications of the study, and finally discuss some directions for future research. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between parents' verbal abuse and depression, anxiety, stress, anger, self-esteem, and relations with either one or both parents for college students. The reliability coefficients of the scales used in this study showed that they were psychometrically sound.

#### Research Questions

As predicted, retrospective reports of parental verbal abuse were significantly related to depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, anger, and child-parent(s) relationships. This finding is consistent with the studies that have demonstrated increased depression, anxiety, stress, and low self-esteem among emotionally abused children. The current study investigated four factors, or variables, related to parental verbal abuse.

#### 1. What are the Relationships between Parents' Verbal Abuse and the Affective Variables of Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Self-Esteem, and Anger?

The hypothesis for the question was that the more participants experienced parents' verbal abuse, the higher will be their level of depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and the lower will be their level of self-esteem.

### Depression, Anxiety, Stress as Outcomes of Parents' Verbal Abuse

Parental verbal abuse is related to depression, anxiety, and stress as the findings in this study indicated (see Table 2). Verbally abused participants who experienced constant belittling may actually be depressed but not know it because they may not always seem sad. It is more likely that the participants' unpleasant surroundings may contribute to them being depressed. Depression can lead to anxiety and stress as the findings indicated. It is possible that anxious participants seem to be tense (stress) because of frequent yelling or degrading. It is also possible that, anxious and stressed children may be quiet, compliant, and eager to please. Their stress may be unseen by them or their parents. In addition, verbally abused participants may have feelings of low self-esteem.

Furthermore, both genders who experienced frequent parental verbal abuse as the findings indicated are more anxious than those who were not abused. Parents' expectations and demands may convey a message to their children that contributes to the children's feelings of depression, anxiety, and stress in later life. Children may believe everything that their parents express to them, and consequently they will believe that they are worthless. They may also blame themselves, feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid, which can then turn into psychosomatic symptoms or low self-esteem.

This study findings are consistent with these studies: Hart and Brassard, 1987; Moore, 1991; Silvern et al., 1995; Stone, 1993. These studies explored the effects of parents' verbal abuse.

### Low Self-Esteem as an Outcome of Parents' Verbal Abuse

The study found a negative and low correlation between self-esteem and parents' verbal abuse (see Table 2). One interpretation was that constant rejection can seriously interfere with participants' positive self-image. Words like "stupid," "dummy," "clumsy," and "lazy" had negative effects on how participants perceived themselves. Constant belittling and degrading could make the participants feel unwanted and not worthwhile.

Many children and adults may simply accept the blame and think that they are the problem and that they are bad or worthless. Emotionally abused children may learn at an early age that their emotional needs will not be met, which can result in them feeling no value as human beings.

This finding is consistent with the following studies: Biller and Solomon, 1986; Erickson and Egeland, 1991; Vissing et al., 1991.

### Anger as an Outcome of Parents' Verbal Abuse

The data showed a negative and low correlation between anger expression and parents' verbal abuse (see Table 2). Participants might not have been sure when it was appropriate to be angry, and they might not have known the reasons for their anger. In addition, it is possible that they do not want to blame their parents for causing their anger. Instead, they might have been blaming themselves for being bad.

Verbally abused participants might have been depressed because they felt helpless and do not know how to express their anger in a way that would not get them in trouble with their parents or express their feelings in a healthy way. In addition, through verbal

abusive parent(s) may convey the message that showing emotions, especially anger is wrong, shameful, and weak. Therefore, participants might internalize their anger and then self-blame. It is possible that verbally abused participants became quickly conditioned to see themselves as worthless and deserving of the abuse. This finding is consistent with these studies: Hoglund and Nicholas, 1995; Macpherson, 1984.

In summary, the participants in this study, who were verbally abused by their parent (s), were found to show more depression, a high level of anxiety, stress, and anger, and lower self-esteem. The literature on verbal/emotional maltreatment suggested that verbally abused children grow into depressed, anxious adults. They may have normal physical development, but the emotional development will most likely be affected by parental verbal abuse.

However, it is interesting that the study participants' answers showed that they did not think that they were abused, for several reasons. Participants objected to the definition of the word "abuse" on the questionnaire because of the stigma attached to the word "abuse." They thought that it was normal to hear words such as "dummy," or "fool" (e.g., " I don't think my father calling me names was abuse," and "It is a normal thing to say, so I didn't consider it as an abuse").

Secondly, the participants did not want to blame their parent(s). Instead, they tried to give excuses about their verbally abusive parent (s)--(i.e., " after all we lived in a farm," "my mother have too much to do," "my father was angry," and "my mom did not mean what she said to me"). Therefore, they may have internalized their feelings and knowledge.

Thirdly, the participants might not have known that they were depressed because of their parents' abuse. Some of the participants' remarks were (e.g., "I do not think my parents are responsible for me being depressed").

## 2. Does the Child's Attitude Toward his/her Mother/Father Relate to Parents' Verbal Abuse?

The finding indicated that males exhibited a more negative attitude toward their mothers than females. Also, the anger variable used as the criterion to predict parents' verbal abuse showed that it would lead to a high levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and have a negative child attitude toward parents, especially toward the mother (see t-Test). There was a moderate correlation between child attitude toward both parents, which was associated with general anger, depression, anxiety, and stress in males and females.

It is possible that mothers are too protective and more possessive with their sons than their daughters. In addition, differential societal treatments of boys and girls may account for this mistreatment of sons. Boys may have more feelings of aggression towards mothers as a proof of their masculinity and because of the stigma in any society that the males are more powerful than females even if the reference is to their mothers.

Males of this generation may feel weakened being under their mothers' strong personality and harsh treatment of them. Other pressures like the stress of a single parent (mother) provider for her family might have been contributed to participants' maltreatment.

Boys who experienced verbal abuse from their mother may have become attached to their fathers, especially if the father was absent. They may have resented

their mothers because the fathers were not involved with the responsibilities of rearing children; therefore, the mothers might have felt more pressure and become verbally abusive.

Constant criticism could make the verbally abused participant think this is normal parental behavior. Verbally abused participants might have confused feelings about their family. If a parent responded inappropriately to a participants' needs, this might increased the likelihood of the participant becoming anxious and insecure in his/her attachment to both parents. The finding of this question was consistent with the following studies: Biller and Solomon 1986; Sheerer, 1997; Smith, 1995; Tomison and Tucci, 1997.

### 3. Are there Gender Differences from Parents' Verbal Abuse?

Based on the data for this study, there were gender differences in the relationship between mothers and males participants. The results indicated that males tended to have more negative relationships with their mothers than females (see t-Test).

It is possible that abuse affects boys and girls in different ways. Because of the stigma in any society for males to be tough, boys may internalize the abuse because they are not supposed to show their affection. Consequently, they (males) might be angry and depressed throughout their lives. Mothers might be stressed out from everyday life problems so they (mothers) might not have time to spend with their sons, especially during the early years in their sons lives. This in part could alienate sons from their mothers.

It is possible that boys living in single mother homes might not only experience the instability of family disruption but, on the average, they also received less supervision

or time with parents than children living in two parent homes. Perhaps maltreating mothers lacked an understanding of their child's behavior and the complexities of parent-child relationships. Perhaps these mothers may have also experienced high levels of stress, were socially isolated or unsupported, and perhaps had a history of inadequate care in their own childhood's.

It may be that boys are the opposite sex of their mothers and developing their masculinity, this may separate mothers and sons. Therefore, mothers widen the gap by making stereotyped assumptions about the nature of masculinity. They might expect their boys to be typical men. Mothers might not understand masculinity. Because the boy child is the opposite sex, it might be difficult for these mothers to adopt another perspective.

Perhaps children (participants) with difficult temperaments, especially boys, are more likely than an easy child to be the target of mothers' coercive, punitive discipline. Moreover, it is more likely that the mother is young, immature, depressed, antisocial, stressed, or has few available social supports. Therefore, their boys might have long-term negative effects from kindergarten to adolescence with unhealthy consequences throughout.

It is possible that boys tend to internalize their emotions. It is not surprising that they can be twice as affected by their mothers' maltreatment as girls as the results in this study indicated (see t-Test).

This finding is consistent with the following studies: Biller and Solomon, 1986; NIS-3, 1996; Smith, 1995; Varia, Abidin, and Dass, 1996.

4. Does the Family Configuration (i.e., intact family, lived with mother/father, foster home, other such as stepfather/mother) Relate to Parents' Verbal Abuse?

The findings in this study showed that verbal abuse is even more likely to appear in different families' configuration (see Table 4). Participants living in intact families who experienced parental verbal abuse may be unaware that the parents' behavior is abnormal because they have no comparison. Thus, participants of parents' verbal abuse may not even mention it to anyone for years because they think it was not abuse. Furthermore, it is possible that many parents from intact families are not aware of the intense damage they do when they humiliate, put down, judge, belittle, ridicule, or criticize their children. Their intentions may be to motivate the children to do better.

Parents from intact and single families may not know that their negative words have powerful, deep, and long-lasting effects on their children. The parents could be raising their children much like they were raised themselves. This explains why the children do not consider it abuse because there is not a role model to imitate.

Some parents, especially fathers, might know nothing of normal child developmental stages and may be unaware of children's needs. In addition, fathers might not recognize the importance of emotional nurturing as a need of the child. It possible that these fathers (parents) came from families where affection was not shown or even discouraged. Some signs of verbally abusive parents such as he /she may not include the child in the family circle; he/she might not allow the child to have an active part in the family decision making; he/ she might seldom speak to the child in an easy way; and may

not acknowledge or reinforce any good behavior or positive actions (Iwaniec, 1995; Smith, 1995).

All family configurations can contribute to potential maltreatment as the results indicate in this study (see Table 4). Perhaps participants view their parents' as role models and their (parents') word counts to the child. Parents' derogatory comments may become the basis for children's sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Both parents may bring with them the legacies of their own childhood and the pain that it still causes in adult life. In stepfamilies, children who have had a stepfather/mother are at greater risk of abuse as in Pillari's findings (1991).

In single parent families, it is almost automatically assumed that the mother is solely responsible for any maltreatment. It could be, because the mothers have the major role in the care of their children. The study finding is consistent with Creighton and Noyes, 1989; National Research Council, 1993.

### Strengths and Limitations of the Study

#### Strengths

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between parental verbal abuse and the participants' emotional development (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and anger). The study results show that parental verbal abuse has both short- and long-term effects on the participants' emotional development. It was important to see the effects of parent(s)' verbal abuse on the participants because of the negative consequences.

The participants may have high levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and unexpressed anger. In addition, the participants may have a negative attitude toward their parent(s) as the findings of this study indicate. In addition, the bond between parent-child may have been damaged. It is important to look at the effects of parents' verbal abuse to recognize the negative consequences and how damaging verbal abuse can be for healthy development. This study illustrates the negative effects of parental verbal abuse as well as highlighting how parent-child relationships can impact the psychological well being of the child.

### Limitations

As in all studies, this study, which investigated verbal abuse and its effects on children, has a few limitations. The study relied solely on the use of questionnaires to gather data. Other methods, such as interviews, would be beneficial to enlighten and allow the researcher and the participant(s) to analyze more carefully the world of verbally abused families, and to see how the participants view the effects of their parents' verbal abuse on their lives.

The study could have included a non-college student population. In addition, it would have been better if the participants were first screened to assess the degree of verbal abuse in their lives. Those with a high degree of verbal abuse could have been chosen as participants.

### Conclusion

Parents' verbal abuse poses risks. It can teach the child that verbal abuse against other members of one's family is acceptable. Eventually, parents who use verbal abuse

are themselves likely to become victims. When verbally abused children become adults, they may be more likely to engage in verbal abuse against their spouses and children. Second, constant criticism tends to undermine the parent-child bond. Furthermore, constant belittling might have a labeling effect because some children will internalize the identification of themselves as "no good" or whatever term the parent tends to favor.

Parents may be emotionally abusing their child without even realizing it.

Constant criticism, verbal put-downs, and physical threats are all forms of emotional abuse. Such comments as "you're fat" can seriously damage the development of the child's self-esteem. Some parents withhold love and affection from a child or make it conditional based on certain behavior or achievements. Other parents simply do not make enough time for their kids. Such neglect is especially sad because otherwise good-intentioned parents may not even realize the damage they may be causing.

The most harmful effect of verbal abuse is that children who are raised in an abusive home often grow up in a constant state of depression and are unable to mature through the normal stages of child development. They grow up thinking that what they experienced is a part of normal interaction between people.

Verbal abuse is a community problem requiring a coordinated community response to prevent and treat it successfully. People must be able to identify and report cases of verbal abuse and be involved in their community's prevention efforts. Therefore, no one agency or individual has the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to prevent and treat child maltreatment. Together, the community can make a difference in the lives of maltreated children and their families.

### Implications and Future Research Directions

Because of the difficulty in defining emotional abuse, we must be very careful not to lump all negative parental attitudes and/or actions under the category of emotional maltreatment. Even the best of parents have occasions when they have momentarily "lost control" and said hurtful things to their children, ignored them during a time when attention needs were critical, or unintentionally scared them.

Although the visible signs of emotional abuse can be hard to find, this type of abuse leaves hidden scars that manifest themselves in numerous behavioral ways. Poor self-esteem, angry acts, depression, and poor development of basic skills can all be possible results of emotional maltreatment. Consequently, verbal abuse and its hidden consequences will always be difficult to be recognize.

It is suggested that verbal abuse has negative and severe impacts on children's emotional development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every member and agency in any community not to promote and encourage verbal abuse. If verbal abuse is encouraged, the victims of verbal abuse will blame themselves for any assaults they have suffered, internalizing the message of the abusers (parents) and believing that they deserve this abuse.

Furthermore, the need to define verbal abuse and its connection between parents' behaviors and the effects on children's emotional development is very important. It is also important to understand the severity of verbal abuse on children later in life. However, verbal abuse is difficult to define because of researchers' uncertainty regarding what to

focus on adults' behaviors, long-term consequences, parenting styles, or the different factors, which contribute to this form of maltreatment.

It is apparent from the literature presented that researchers have yet to fully determine the effects of verbal abuse on individuals. Further research should be conducted on the associations between specific emotions and child maltreatment. Similarly, child protective services should document cases where verbal abuse is occurring in different types of families. Having such data available would increase knowledge of the effects of parental verbal abuse on children.

Gough (1993) believed that such research would provide important information on verbal abuse outcomes. It could lead to a better understanding of the extent of verbal abuse on children later in life. Moreover, it would provide information for the legal establishment and Child Protection Services (CPS) concerning interventions in child maltreatment and help clarify the definition of verbal abuse for intervention programs.

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## APPENDIX A: DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, STRESS SCALES (DASS-21)

Name:	Date:
<p>Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.</p> <p>The rating scale is as follows:</p> <p>0 Did not apply to me at all            1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time            2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time            3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time</p>	
1 I found it hard to wind down.	0 1 2 3
2 I was aware of dryness of my mouth.	0 1 2 3
3 I could not seem to experience any positive feeling at all.	0 1 2 3
4 I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, and breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion).	0 1 2 3
5 I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things.	0 1 2 3
6 I tended to over-react to situations.	0 1 2 3
7 I experienced trembling (e.g., in the hands).	0 1 2 3
8 I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy.	0 1 2 3
9 I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself.	0 1 2 3
10 I felt that I had nothing to look forward to.	0 1 2 3
11 I found myself getting agitated.	0 1 2 3
12 I found it difficult to relax.	0 1 2 3
13 I felt down-hearted and blue.	0 1 2 3
14 I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing.	0 1 2 3

15	I felt I was close to panic.	0	1	2	3
16	I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything.	0	1	2	3
17	I felt I was not worth much as a person.	0	1	2	3
18	I felt that I was rather touchy.	0	1	2	3
19	I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g., sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat).	0	1	2	3
20	I felt scared without any good reason.	0	1	2	3
21	I felt that life was meaningless.	0	1	2	3

The rating scale is as follows:

0 Did not apply to me at all

1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time

2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time

3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time

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APPENDIX B: COOPERSMITH SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY  
(ADULT FORM)

Directions:

On the other side of this form, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, circle the appropriate number, if a statement does not describe how you usually feel, circle the appropriate number. Remember there are not right or wrong answers.

(1) Like Me	(2) Unlike Me
-------------	---------------

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Things usually do not bother me.                                     | 1 | 2 |
| 2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.                     | 1 | 2 |
| 3. There are lots of things about my self<br>I would change if I could. | 1 | 2 |
| 4. I can make up my mind without too<br>much trouble                    | 1 | 2 |
| 5. I am a lot of fun to be with.  | 1 | 2 |
| 6. I get upset easily at home.  | 1 | 2 |
| 7. It takes me a long time to get used to<br>anything new.              | 1 | 2 |
| 8. I am popular with persons my own age.                                | 1 | 2 |
| 9. My family usually considers my feelings.                             | 1 | 2 |
| 10. I give in very easily.  | 1 | 2 |
| 11. My family expects too much of me.                                   | 1 | 2 |
| 12. It is pretty tough to be me.  | 1 | 2 |
| 13. Things are all mixed up in my life.                                 | 1 | 2 |
| 14. People usually follow my ideas.                                     | 1 | 2 |
| 15. I have a low opinion of myself.                                     | 1 | 2 |
| 16. There are many times when I would<br>like to leave home.            | 1 | 2 |
| 17. I often feel upset with my work.                                    | 1 | 2 |
| 18. I am not as nice looking as most people.                            | 1 | 2 |
| 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.                       | 1 | 2 |
| 20. My family understands me.   | 1 | 2 |
| 21. Most people are better liked than I am.                             | 1 | 2 |
| 22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.                       | 1 | 2 |
| 23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing.                       | 1 | 2 |
| 24. I often wish I were someone else.                                   | 1 | 2 |
| 25. I cannot be depended on.  | 1 | 2 |

APPENDIX C: VERBAL ABUSE MEASURE

Part 1 Directions

Below are statements about you and your parents. Please read each carefully and circle the response that best describes your relationship with your parents. Please be honest in your responses. They will be kept strictly confidential.

Do you resent the way your mother raised you?	Yes	No
Do you resent the way your father raised you?	Yes	No
Did you feel loved by your mother?	Yes	No
Did you feel loved by your father?	Yes	No
Has your mother ever physically abused you?	Yes	No
Has your father ever physically abused you?	Yes	No
Has your mother ever sexually abused you?	Yes	No
Has your father ever sexually abused you?	Yes	No
Has your mother ever had a problem with alcohol?	Yes	No
Has your father ever had a problem with alcohol?	Yes	No

---

Verbal Abuse

Verbal Abuse is defined as the communication intended to cause psychological pain to another person, or a communication perceived as having that intent. The communicative act may be active or passive, and verbal or non-verbal.

Name two specific incidents that you remember vividly in which you were verbally abused by either or either your parents or caretaker (s).

1. -----  
-----
2. -----  
-----

Please put a check mark by the category that best describes the living arrangement and the people with whom you lived during your childhood.

- Intact family
- One-parent family
- Orphan home
- Other (please specify)-----
- 
- 

Please indicate which of the following best represents the frequency when your parents' verbally abuse you:

- All the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely

How long did their verbal abuse of you last?

- Weeks
- Months
- Years
- Other (please specify)-----

What your present relationship status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Single
- Cohabiting
- Other (Please Specify)-----

Please indicate if you have been revictimized in adult relationships. (Check all that apply)

- Physically
- Sexually
- Emotionally (verbally)
- Other (please specify)

How has the verbal abuse affected you? (Please Specify)

-----

-----

-----

Part 2 Directions

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Below are statements about you and your father (or primary caretaker). Please read each carefully and circle the response that best describes your relationship with your father. Please be honest in your responses. They will be kept strictly confidential.

(5)Strongly Disagree	(4)Disagree	(3)Neutral	(2)Agree	(1)Strongly Agree	
1. I am very close to my father.	1	2	3	4	5
2. While growing up, my father always made negative remarks of my looks.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I did and still receive negative compliments from my father.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that my father never accepts me for who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I received many hugs and kisses from my father when I was a child.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I do not feel appreciated and cared for by my father most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When I was a child, my father did not paid a lot of attention to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My father always criticizes the way I dress.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My father all the time said thoughtless, unkind, cruel things to or about me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My father was always around when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
11. When I was younger, my father did not praised my achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel love for my father.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My father did not valued and respected me as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel that my father should have displayed more warmth and provided more affection.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel resentful toward my father for saying cruel things to or about me.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My father was generally warm and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Sometimes I feel that my father wishes he never had me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My father and I would do anything for each other.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel unhappy that my father was the sarcastic or belittling type.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My father was often verbally hostile and aggressive toward me.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I love my father.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I wish my father was warm and affectionate toward me when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My father verbally shows his displeasure of or about my failures when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My father generally ignored my needs					

when I was a child.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I would want the same father to take care of me, if I had to do it all over again.	1	2	3	4	5

## Part 3 Directions

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Below are statements about you and your mother (or primary caretaker). Please read each carefully and circle the response that best describes your relationship with your mother. Please be honest in your responses. They will be kept strictly confidential.

(5)Strongly Disagree (4)Disagree (3)Neutral (2)Agree (1)Strongly Agree
--

1. I am very close to my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
2. While growing up, my mother always made negative remarks of my looks.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I did and still receive negative compliments from my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that my mother never accepts me for who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I received many hugs and kisses from my mother when I was a child.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I do not feel appreciated and cared for by my mother most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When I was a child, my mother did not paid a lot of attention to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My mother always criticizes the way I dress.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My mother all the time said thoughtless, unkind, cruel things to or about me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My mother was always around when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
11. When I was younger, my mother did not praised my achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel love for my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My mother did not valued and respected me as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel that my mother should have displayed more warmth and provided more affection.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel resentful toward my mother for saying cruel things to or about me.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My mother was generally warm and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Sometimes I feel that my mother wishes she never had me.	1	2	3	4	5

18. My mother and I would do anything for each other.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel unhappy that my mother was the sarcastic or belittling type.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My mother was often verbally hostile and aggressive toward me.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I love my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I wish my mother was warm and affectionate toward me when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My mother verbally shows her displeasure of or about my failures when I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My mother generally ignored my needs when I was a child.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I would want the same mother to take care of me, if I had to do it all over again.	1	2	3	4	5

---

APPENDIX D: CHILD ATTITUDE TOWARD PARENTS MEASURE

Child Attitude Toward Father

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Female/Male \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of contentment you have in your relationship with your father. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

- 1. Rarely or none of the time
- 2. A little of time
- 3. Sometime
- 4. Good part of the time
- 5. Most or all of the time.

- 1. My father gets on my nerves. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. I get along well with my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. I feel that I can really trust my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. I dislike my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. My father's behavior embarrasses me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. My father is too demanding. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. I wish I had a different father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. I really enjoy my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. My father puts too many limits on me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. My father interferes with my activities. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. I resent my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. I hate my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. I think my father is terrific. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. My father is very patient with me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. I really like my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. I like being with my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. I feel like I do not love my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. My father is very irritating. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. I feel very angry toward my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. I feel violent toward my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. I feel proud of my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. I wish my father were more like others I know. \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. My father does not understand me. \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. I can really depend on my father. \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. I feel ashamed of my father. \_\_\_\_\_

Child Attitude Toward Mother (CAM)

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Female/Male \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of contentment you have in your relationship with your mother. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1. Rarely or none of the time
2. A little of time
3. Sometime
4. Good part of the time
5. Most or all of the time.

1. My mother gets on my nerves. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I get along well with my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I feel that I can really trust my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I dislike my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
5. My mother's behavior embarrasses me. \_\_\_\_\_
6. My mother is too demanding. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I wish I had a different mother. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I really enjoy my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
9. My mother puts too many limits on me. \_\_\_\_\_
10. My mother interferes with my activities. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I resent my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I think my mother is terrific. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I hate my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
14. My mother is very patient with me. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I really like my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I like being with my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I feel like I do not love my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
18. My mother is very irritating. \_\_\_\_\_
19. I feel very angry toward my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
20. I feel violent toward my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
21. I feel proud of my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
22. I wish my mother was more like others I know. \_\_\_\_\_
23. My mother does not understand me. \_\_\_\_\_
24. I can really depend on my mother. \_\_\_\_\_
25. I feel ashamed of my mother. \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E: STATE-TRAIT ANGER EXPRESSION INVENTORY

## Part 1 Directions

A number of statements that people use to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then fill in the circle with the number, which indicates how you feel right now. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but give the answer, which seems to best describe your present feelings.

Fill in (1) for Not at all  
Fill in (2) for Somewhat

Fill in (3) for Moderately so  
Fill in (4) for Very much so

## How I Feel Right How

- |                                     |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am furious.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I feel irritated.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I feel angry.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I feel like yelling at somebody. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I feel like breaking things.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I am mad.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I feel like banging on table.    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I feel like hitting someone.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I am burned up.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I feel like swearing.           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Part 2 Directions

A number of statements that people use to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then fill in the circle with the number, which indicates how you feel generally feel. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but give the answer, which seems to best describe how you generally feel.

Fill in (1) for Almost never  
Fill in (2) for Sometimes

Fill in (3) for Often  
Fill in (4) for Almost always

## How I Generally Feel

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am quick tempered.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I have a fiery temper.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I am a hotheaded person.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I get angry when I'm slowed down<br>by others' mistakes.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I feel annoyed when I am not given recognition<br>for doing good work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. I fly off the handle.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. When I get mad, I say nasty things.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. It makes me furious when I am criticized in front of others.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. When I get frustrated, I feel like hitting someone.                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I feel infuriated when I do a good job and get a poor evaluation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

### Part 3 Directions

Everyone feels angry or furious from time to time, but people differ in the ways that they react when they are angry. A number of statements are listed below which people use to describe their reactions when they feel angry or furious. Read each statement and then fill in the circle with the number, which indicates how often you generally react or behave in the manner, described when you are feeling angry or furious. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement.

Fill in (1) Almost Never

Fill in(3) for Often

Fill in (2) for Sometimes

Fill in(4) for Almost Always

### When Angry or Furious.....

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I control my temper.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I express my anger.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I keep things in.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I am patient with others.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I pout or sulk.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I withdraw from people.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I make sarcastic remarks to others.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I keep my cool.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I do things like slam doors.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. I boil inside, but I do not show it.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I control my behavior.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I argue with others.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I tend to harbor grudges that I do not tell anyone about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I strike out at whatever infuriates me.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I can stop myself from losing my temper.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I am secretly quite critical of others.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

17. I am angrier than I am willing to admit.	1	2	3	4
18. I calm down faster than most other people.	1	2	3	4
19. I say nasty things.	1	2	3	4
20. I try to be tolerant and understanding.	1	2	3	4
21. I'm irritated a great deal more than people are aware of.	1	2	3	4
22. I lose my temper.	1	2	3	4
23. If someone annoys me, I'm apt to tell him or her how I feel.	1	2	3	4
24. I control my angry feelings.	1	2	3	4

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