UNDERSTANDING NONRESIDENTIAL FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the processes by which emerging adults attempt to maintain or change their relationships with their nonresidential fathers. The present study focused on the relationships between 33 emerging adults and their nonresidential fathers. In-depth interviews revealed that some father-child relationships were unchanged by divorce, but most became distant immediately following the divorce. During emerging adulthood these relationships did not necessarily become closer, but communication often increased and stressful interactions decreased for some, especially when compared to childhood. The findings suggest that normative changes that accompany emerging adulthood (e.g., leaving their mother's home, gaining new insight about themselves and their families) may enable the renewal of connections between previously distant nonresidential fathers and children.