GAY FATHERS' COPARENTING EXPERIENCES WITH EX-WIVES

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ABSTRACT

Despite the increasing focus on fathers and coparenting after divorce, little is known about the experiences of gay fathers and virtually nothing is known about their experiences coparenting with their ex-wives. This study examines the post-divorce coparenting experiences of fathers who had children in the context of a heterosexual marriage and later identified as gay. I conducted a grounded theory study of 16 gay fathers who generally described their coparenting experiences as either mostly cooperative or mostly uncooperative. The most salient distinction between the two types of coparenting was father’s perceptions of their ex-wives’ acceptance of their sexuality. When ex-wives accepted them as gay men and good fathers, coparenting was described as cooperative. When ex-wives expressed religiously-based homonegativity, the fathers described coparenting as uncooperative, and they also reported more adversarial divorce proceedings, more intense anger, and less ability of their ex-wives to move on post-divorce.