

# Effects of Marriage on Couple's Relationship

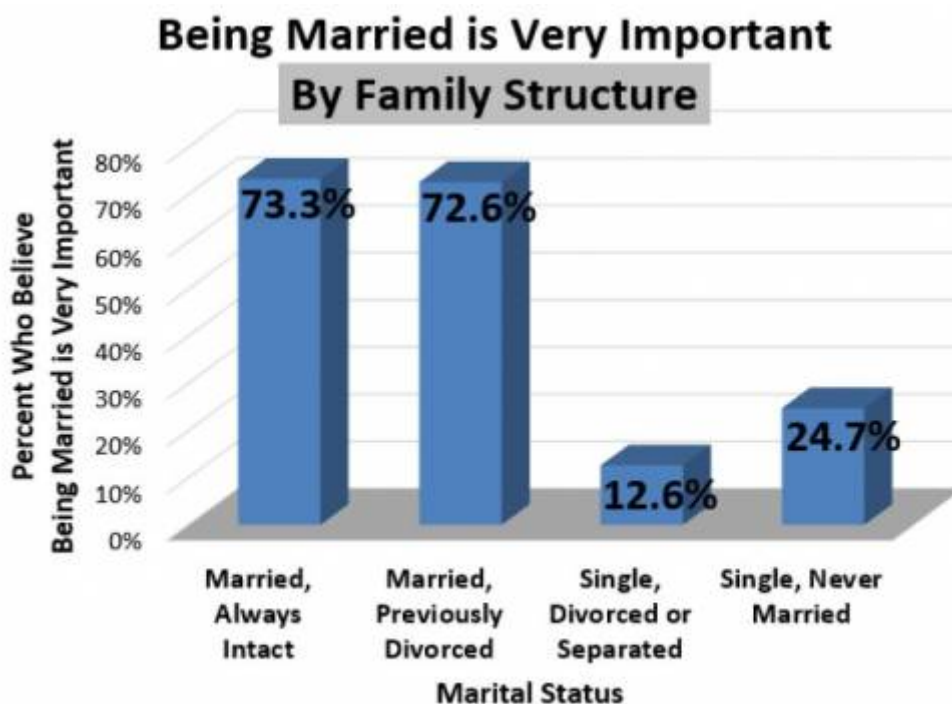
## 1. Happiness

Those who marry experience increased commitment and stability.<sup>1)</sup> Men raised in married families have more open, affectionate, and cooperative relationships with the women to whom they are attracted to than do those from divorced families.<sup>2)</sup> Correspondingly, married mothers report more love and intimacy in their romantic/spousal relationships than **cohabiting** or single mothers.<sup>3)</sup> Those **raised in married families** have higher expectations of eventually marrying,<sup>4)</sup> and a larger fraction of those from intact families than non-intact families are happy in their marriages.<sup>5)</sup> Similarly, a lower percentage of those raised in intact families divorce.<sup>6)</sup>

Daughters raised in intact families are less likely to say they do not plan to have children than daughters living with divorced or remarried mothers.<sup>7)</sup> In contrast, cohabiting couples enjoy diminished relational happiness and fairness and increased relational disagreement and violence, relative to married couples. When duration of cohabitation was factored in, cohabitation's effect became nonsignificant, but increased duration of cohabitation worsened happiness, disagreement, and violence.<sup>8)</sup>

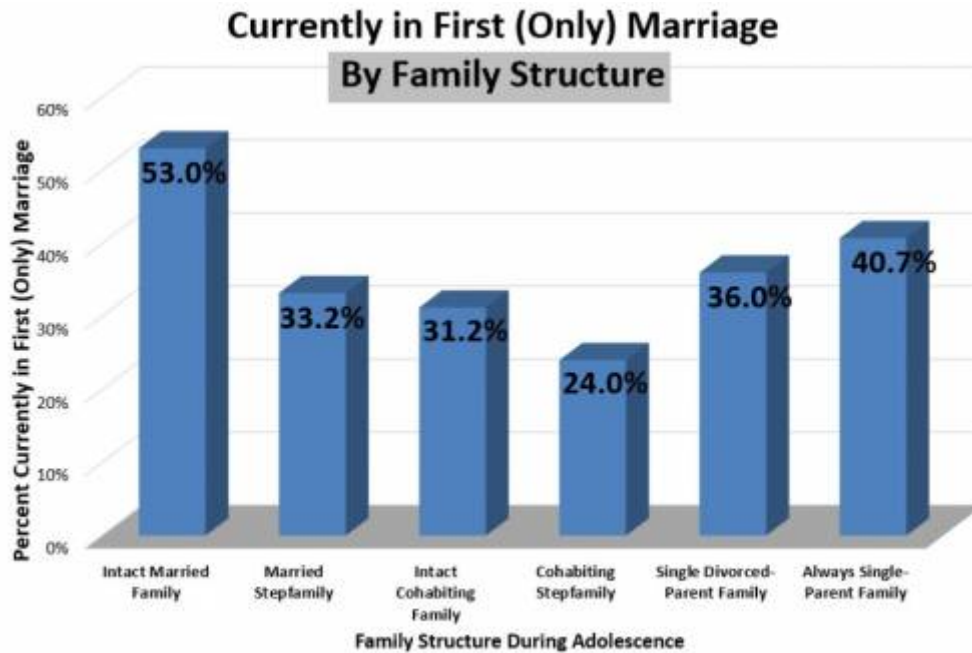
### 1.1 Related American Demographics

A larger fraction of those in always-intact marriages report that being married is very important to them, compared to those who are divorced, single, or remarried (although these may also regard marriage as important).<sup>9)</sup> (See [Chart](#))



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

The 2002 cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth showed that among adults aged 38 to 44, staying in one's first and only marriage is most common among those raised in an intact married family.<sup>10)</sup> (See [Chart](#) Below)



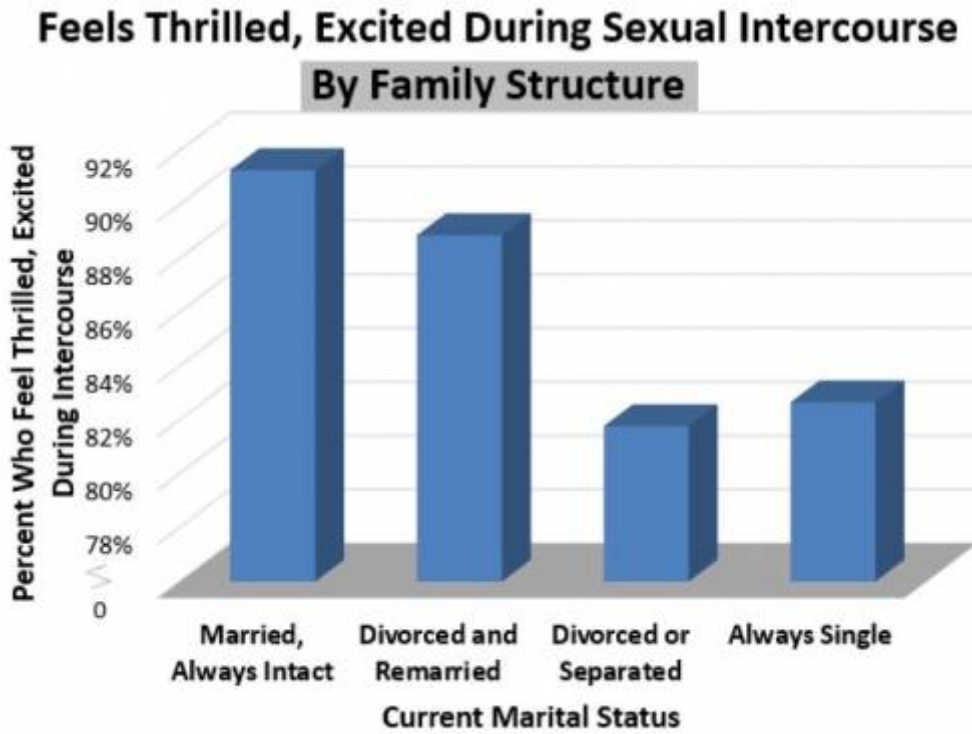
Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2002

## 2. Sexual Experience

Studies show that married men and women report the most sexual pleasure and fulfillment.<sup>11)</sup> Married men and women report having more enjoyable sexual intercourse more often,<sup>12)</sup> and married couples find their sexual relationship more satisfying than cohabiters do.<sup>13)</sup>

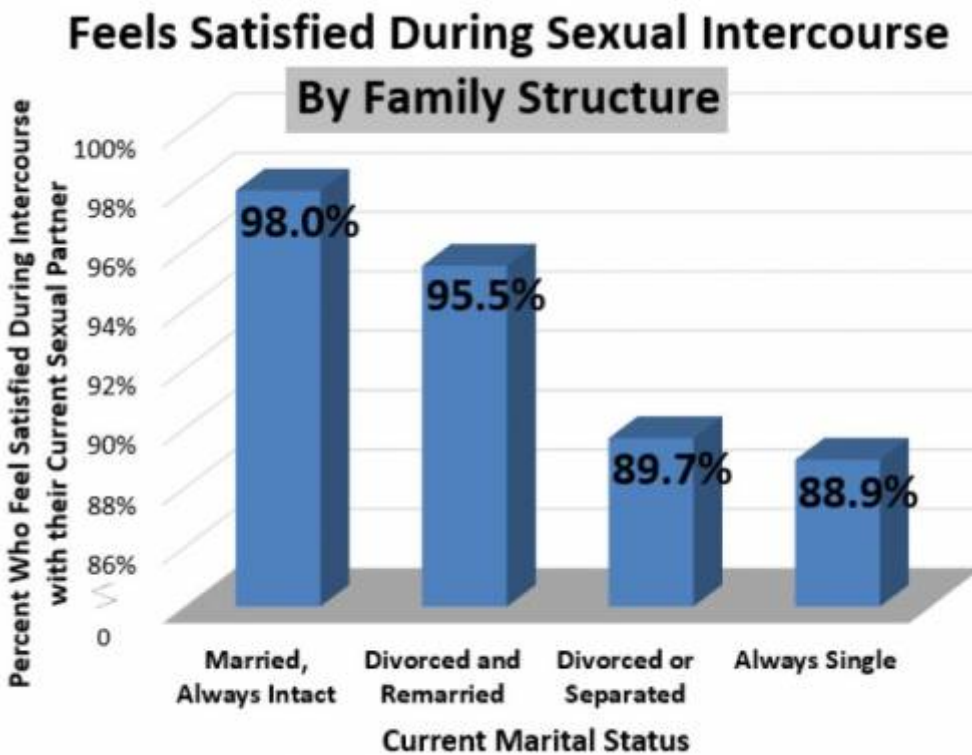
### 2.1 Related American Demographics

The National Health and Social Life Survey shows that those in always-intact marriages were most likely (91.3 percent) to report feeling thrilled and excited during intercourse with their current sexual partner, followed by those who were divorced and remarried (88.9 percent), those who were always single (82.7 percent), and those who were divorced or separated (81.8 percent).<sup>14)</sup> (See [Chart](#) Below)



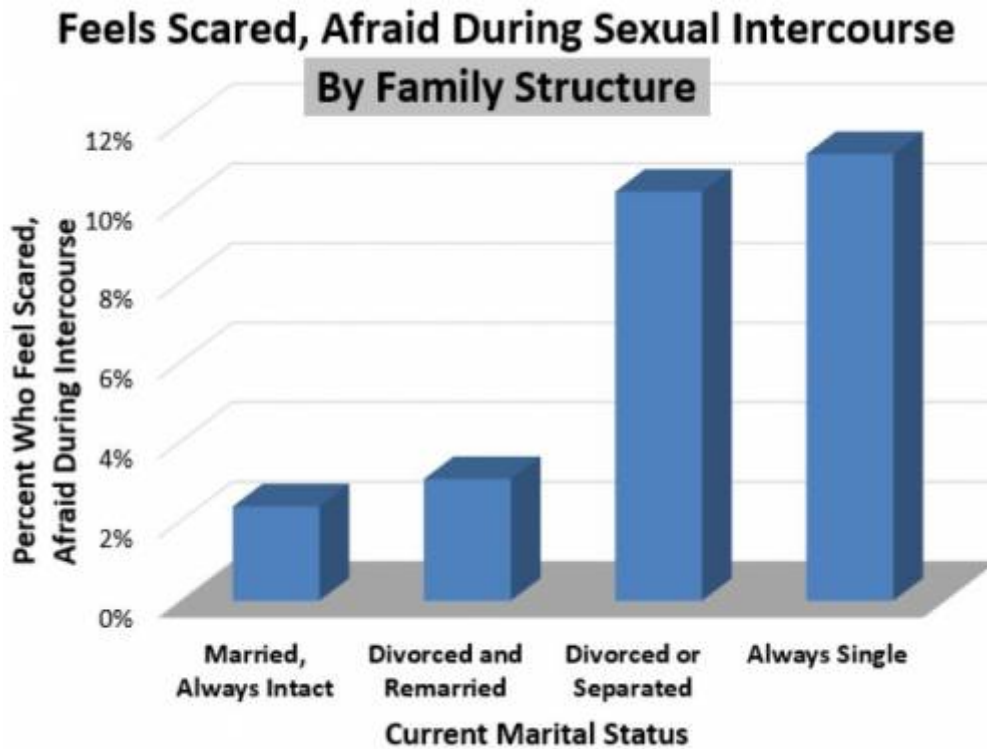
Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

A larger fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report “very, extremely” enjoying intercourse with their current sexual partner.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, a larger fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report feeling satisfied,<sup>16</sup> (See Chart Below) loved,<sup>17</sup> “taken care of,”<sup>18</sup> and thrilled or excited<sup>19</sup> during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in always-intact marriages were most likely to report feeling wanted and needed during intercourse (92 percent).<sup>20</sup> These feelings are less prevalent in non-intact family structures and among singles.



Source: National Health and Social Life Survey, 1992

Correspondingly, a smaller fraction of individuals in intact marriages than always-single, divorced or separated, or divorced and remarried persons report feeling guilty,<sup>21)</sup> sad,<sup>22)</sup> or scared or afraid<sup>23)</sup> (See Chart Below) during intercourse with their current sexual partner. Those in always-intact marriages were the least likely to feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner (6.8 percent). Feeling anxious or worried during intercourse is more prevalent among those in non-intact structures and among singles: 12.1 percent of those who were divorced and remarried, 20.6 percent of those who were divorced or separated, 25.9 percent of those who were always single feel anxious or worried during intercourse with their current sexual partner.<sup>24)</sup>



1) Daniel Lees, "The Psychological Benefits of Marriage," *Research Note* (2007): 1-4. Available at [http://www.maxim.org.nz/file/pdf/psychological\\_benefits\\_of\\_marriage.pdf](http://www.maxim.org.nz/file/pdf/psychological_benefits_of_marriage.pdf). Accessed 27 July 2011.

2) Silvio Silvestri, "Marital Instability in Men From Intact and Divorced Families: Interpersonal Behavior, Cognitions and Intimacy," *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage* 18, (1992): 79-108.

G.K. Rhoades, et al. "Parents' Marital Status, Conflict, and Role Modeling: Links with Adult Romantic Relationship Quality," *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 53, no. 5 (2012): 358.

3) S.R. Aronson and A.C. Huston, "The Mother-Infant Relationship in Single, Cohabiting, and Married Families: A Case for Marriage?" *Journal of Family Psychology* 18, no. 1 (2004): 5-18. As cited by The Heritage Foundation: Family Facts. Available at <http://www.familyfacts.org/search?q=huston%20and%20aronson&type=findings&page=1>. Accessed 1 September 2011.

4) Wendy D. Manning, "The Changing Institution of Marriage: Adolescents' Expectation to Cohabit and to Marry," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69, no. 3 (2007): 559-575. As cited by The Heritage Foundation: Family Facts. Available at <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/22/navigating-the-winding-road-how-family-and-religion-influence-teen-and-young-adult-outcomes>. Accessed 20 July 2011

5) Patrick F. Fagan and Althea Nagai, "Intergenerational Links to Marital Happiness: Family Structure."

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This chart draws on data collected by the General Social Survey, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.

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This age band was selected because tracking family structure is difficult, but the arrangement of the family is more settled [in aggregate, on a national level] around ages 38 to 44

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