



# Resources for Post-Divorce Family Resiliency: What Divorced Parents Think Helped and What Did Not



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## Background

Researchers interested in understanding what helps families successfully overcome the challenges of parental divorce have focused extensively on participation in divorce education programs and the quality of post-divorce coparenting. With results from those bodies of research largely yielding inconsistent results, scholars have begun advocating for broadening the perspective of what resources may promote post-divorce family resiliency. In this study, we provided divorced parents with a list of 17 possible resources and had them indicate if each had been helpful, unhelpful, or neither as their family transitioned to its post-divorce family system.

## Method

Study data were from 340 divorced mothers and fathers in the United States, recruited through Qualtrics Panel Services. Demographic characteristics are provided in Table 1. In addition to rating each potential resource, participants reported if they had participated in a divorce education program and how well they, their former spouse, and their children had adjusted to their divorce.

## Key Takeaways

- ❖ Divorced parents generally see their own parenting, spending time with children, time since divorce, and their own health as key resources for post-divorce adjustment.
- ❖ Accumulating helpful resources is related to divorced parents feeling that they and their children have positively adjusted to parental divorce.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (N = 340).

|  | <i>n</i> or <i>M</i> | % or <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| Father                                 | 182                  | 53.5%          |
| Mother                                 | 158                  | 46.5%          |
| Parent is white non-Hispanic           | 264                  | 77.6%          |
| Parent age                             | 43.08                | 8.71           |
| Household income                       |                      |                |
| \$29,999 or less                       | 102                  | 30.0%          |
| \$30,000 to \$59,999                   | 123                  | 36.2%          |
| \$60,000 to \$89,999                   | 66                   | 19.4%          |
| \$90,000 or more                       | 49                   | 14.4%          |
| Married or cohabiting with new partner | 65                   | 19.1%          |
| Divorced 5 years or more               | 178                  | 52.4%          |
| Number of children with former spouse  | 1,85                 | 0.97           |

## Participation in Post-Divorce Education

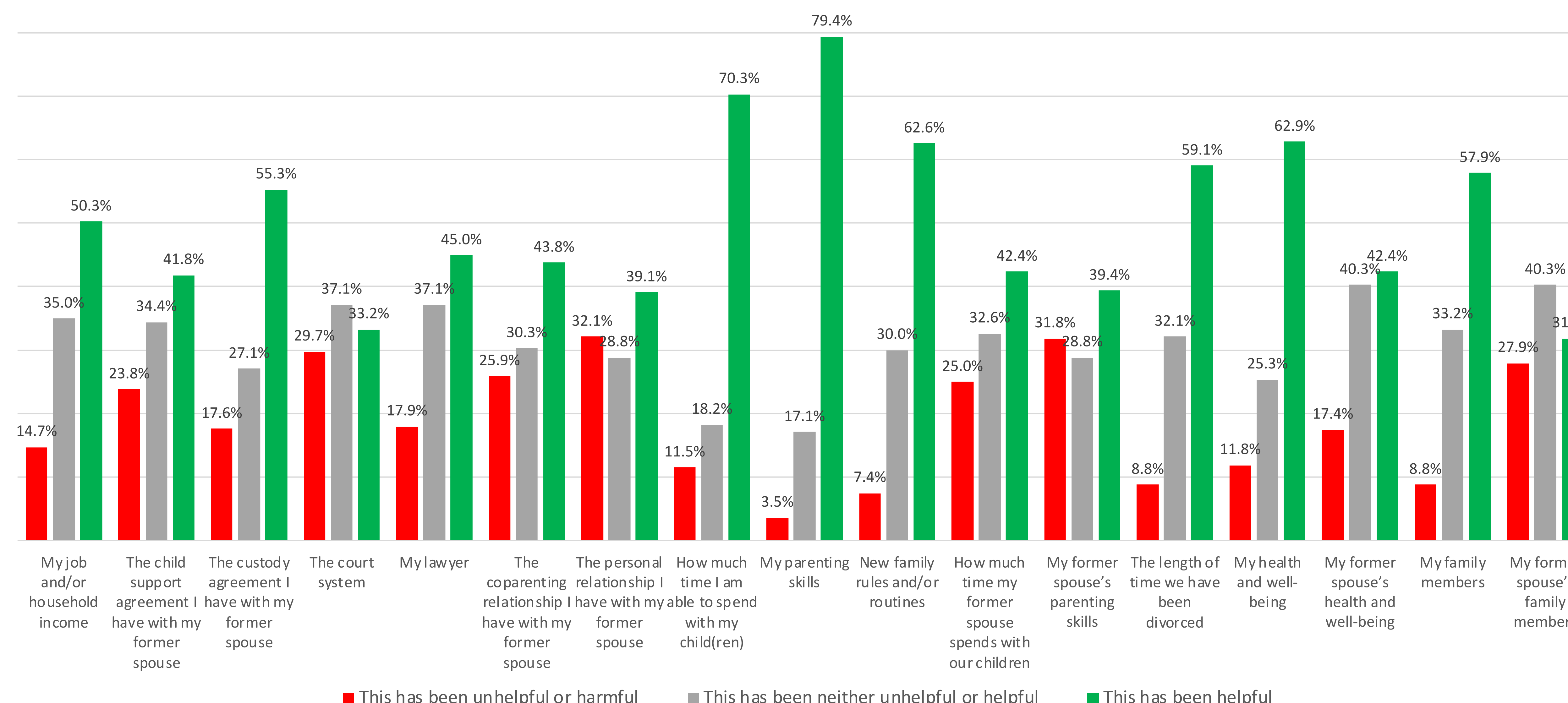
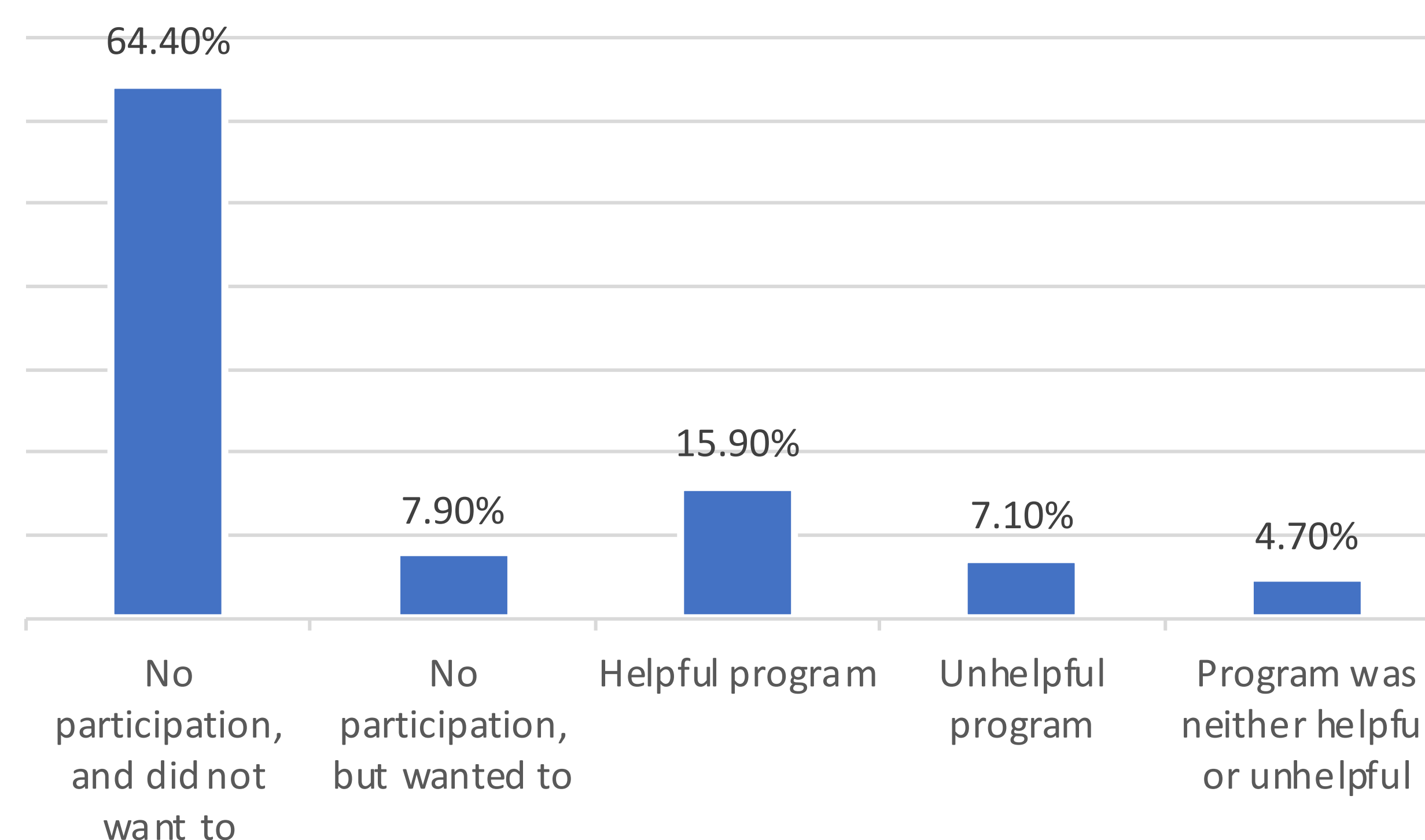


Table 2. Regression Models Testing Associations between Total Number of Helpful and Unhelpful Resources and Adjustment to Parental Divorce (N = 340).

|  | Participants' Adjustment | Child(ren)'s Adjustment | Former Spouses' Adjustment |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|  | $\beta$                  | $\beta$                 | $\beta$                    |
| Divorce education participation (no participation is referent) |                          |                         |                            |
| Yes – not helpful  | -.03                     | -.04                    | -.02                       |
| Yes – neither helpful or unhelpful                             | .01                      | .07                     | .08                        |
| Yes – helpful  | .05                      | .02                     | -.09                       |
| Total # of helpful resources                                   | .14*                     | .24***                  | .07                        |
| Total # of unhelpful resources                                 | -.21**                   | -.25***                 | -.35***                    |
| Model - $F(14, 325)$   | 5.82***                  | 7.62***                 | 6.09***                    |
| Model - $R^2$  | .20                      | .25                     | .21                        |

Notes. Model controls for parent gender, age, and race/ethnicity, household income, time since divorce, number of children with former spouse, and if children primarily live with the participant. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .