

**Divorced at Work: Exploring Associations between Divorce-related Grief, Work  
Outcomes, and Support within the Organization**

**Master Thesis**

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(not meant for publication)

**Abstract**

This study examined whether divorce-related grief is associated with burnout and sickness absence, and whether social support by supervisors and co-workers moderates these associations. A total number of 200 Dutch individuals who had children, divorced in the past three years, and worked at least 12 hours a week, participated. A cross-sectional survey study was used to collect data. Pearson's correlation, as well as moderation analyses, were conducted, and the results showed that divorce-related grief and burnout were positively associated. Next to that, it was found that social support by co-workers was beneficial, as it had a negative effect on burnout and could buffer the association between divorce-related grief and burnout if the grief was low. No relationship was found with sickness absence as an outcome variable or social support by one's supervisor as moderator. The findings highlight that it is important to manage divorce-related grief to prevent burnout. Further research is needed to explore these relationships more and to find suitable ways for employers to support their employees who are going through a divorce.

“We used to marry till death do us part. Today, we marry till love dies”, said psychotherapist Esther Perel. There is truth to this statement, as an average of 40% of marriages in European countries end in divorce, with a strong increase in the last 20 years (Sheykhi, 2020). This is problematic because of consequences, such as decreased health and well-being, but also economic drawbacks (Demo & Fine, 2010), especially in the short term (Lansford, 2009). Most research on divorce focuses on individual outcomes or factors such as co-parenting or economic outcomes (Hald et al., 2020), but research about the potential consequences of divorce at work is still lacking. Often people who divorce have a job, and the divorce likely affects more domains than just one’s family (Leopold, 2018). Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine the association between the consequences of divorce, in terms of divorce-related grief, and work outcomes, such as burnout and sickness absence. Although divorce is typically seen as the legal termination of a marriage (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022), this study recognizes divorce already from the end of the romantic long-term relationship, as has been the case in most previous studies (e.g. Avellar & Smock, 2005; Mortelmans, 2020). Additionally, it is examined whether social support within the organization (from a supervisor and co-workers) may serve as a protective effect for those work outcomes.

Although there is some literature on the effects of divorce on health, studying its effects in the workplace is quite new and rare (Hald et al., 2020; Wilson, 2019). Work-related variables are barely studied in this context, and no study has been found that concretely researched burnout in divorcees (Hald et al., 2020). This research is important to get those insights, especially because employers often do not know how to deal with the personal life events of their employees (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). Organizations could perhaps see the value in supporting their employees who go through a divorce to prevent them from getting burnout symptoms, which could be important for work engagement and performance as well as presentism. Next to that, individuals who go through a divorce could get an idea of how to adjust their working behaviour to lower the risks of burnout themselves, as well as improving their divorce-related grief.

### **Divorce-Related Grief**

Since divorce is a major life event, it comes with consequences. Amato (2010) emphasizes that a divorce is not one single moment but a long process, commonly longer than an

entire year. This marital unravelling typically causes distress, especially short term (Pudrovska & Carr, 2008) but also on a chronic level, such as long-term strain (Rote, 2016). This is often because of the different types of losses one experiences after a divorce.

### ***Psychological Loss***

Divorce is frequently associated with negative consequences on physical and mental health (Demo & Fine, 2010). Divorcees report higher levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, and feelings of incompetence. They have an increased risk of having a psychiatric illness, substance abuse, committing suicide and being involved in motor vehicle accidents (Booth & Amato, 1991; Gähler, 2006).

One loses their identity as a husband or wife, frequently as a friend to the partners' social contacts, and sometimes even their identity as a parent. The stress of this can often lead to the negative consequences mentioned above (Zhang & Hayward, 2006). Furthermore, the loss of a loved one is typically related to meaning, and grief becomes a process in which one reorganizes and changes meaning (Papa & Lancaster, 2015). Hence, it is relevant for one's well-being that this type of loss will be studied.

### ***Social Loss***

Many divorcees experience a loss in social status (Demo & Fine, 2010). They often need to decrease their living standards, change their residence, and experience disruption in their social network, which is often connected with a decrease in social support (Zhang & Hayward, 2006), and thus can lead to lower well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Additionally, they also regularly need to adapt to single parenting and single employment. Many divorced parents also must get used to seeing their children less frequently (Feijten & van Ham, 2007). These consequences are important, and thus important to explore further.

### ***Economic Loss***

Mortelmans (2020) names economic drawbacks as one of the main negative consequences of divorce, especially for women. The economic situation after a divorce is important since it also affects the individual's health and well-being and can cause other challenges. Financial problems after a break-up often cause more problems, also in one's personal and social life. Marriage often provides individuals with financial resources that aid social support and health, (Kreyenfeld, 2020), which is why economic loss is an important factor to consider during and after divorce.

## ***Grief***

Those losses can be combined and defined as divorce-related grief (Klurfeld et al., 2020). Many feelings that divorced people have are similar to the feelings of people who experience the death of a loved one. Examples are social crises, a decline in self-esteem and a struggle to adapt to a new social, marital and economic status (Asanjarani et al., 2017). Divorce-related grief is often disenfranchised grief (Doka, 2008). Wiseman (1975) includes several steps in his model of divorce grieving: denial, loss and depression, anger and ambivalence, reorientation of lifestyle and identity, and acceptance and a new level of functioning. The grief intensity declines, for most people, to a manageable degree after several weeks to months after the most intensive period.

Nonetheless, some individuals, who might have lower coping skills, show severe prolonged grief symptoms for more than six months (Brodbeck et al., 2017). Little research has been conducted on grief in the work context (e.g. Tehan & Thompson, 2013; Wilcox et al., 2015, Wilson et al., 2019), however, to the researcher's knowledge, not about divorce-related grief. Therefore, again, this study will try to close the research gap in this regard.

## **Divorce-Related Grief and Workout Outcomes**

Although not many studies have focused on the association between divorce and work outcomes, it is expected that personal losses probably also affect the workforce (Wanberg et al., 2022). According to the spillover theory, a person's attitudes, emotions and behaviours in one domain can flow, 'spill over', into another domain (Lee & Sirgy, 2019). Indeed, several studies show that experiences at home are related to experiences at work. For example, relationship conflict can impact work outcomes, and having preschool-aged children at home was associated with negative work outcomes too (Crouter, 1984; Dilworth, 2004; Stevens et al., 2007). Furthermore, divorce-related grief has been studied in the past, but it should also be researched concerning work in order to see how impactful the spillover is and how much one's work outcomes can be associated with grief. On the other hand, positive work and work outcomes might also spill over into one's private life, which can help in improving divorce-related grief.

## ***Burnout***

Burnout complaints are incredibly prevalent in Dutch society these days. In 2021, 1,3 million Dutch people, which is around 17% of the country's population, had burnout symptoms (NOS, 2022). The World Health Organization (2018) defines burnout as energy decrease,

exhaustion, increased mental struggles, negativism, or cynicism related to one's work situation. Common symptoms are also helplessness, paranoia, insecurity, sleeping problems, fear and loss of appetite (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Severe stress, especially after stressful and traumatic life events, can increase the risk of burnout (Mather et al., 2014). Often because stress related to traumatic life events is accompanied by increased negative emotions and ruminative thoughts (Eisma et al., 2013), which are both related, but also risk factors for burnout. It is thus very likely that higher burnout symptoms are due to the emotional burden of going through a divorce (Kołodziej-Zaleska & Przybyła-Basista, 2016; Symoens et al., 2013). Although no research so far has been done on the relationship between divorce and burnout (Daily, 2019), it is expected that burnout symptoms are higher when one suffers more from divorce-related grief, and that divorce-related grief increases with higher burnout symptoms.

### ***Absence from Work***

Another work outcome in this study includes absence from work or sickness absence. Sickness absence is a period in which an employee is permitted to stay absent from work while still being paid. Divorce increases the probability of taking leave (Couch et al., 2015; Tamborini et al., 2016). Next, there was a higher absence found among divorced and separated people than among married individuals (Isacsson et al., 1992). It is expected that divorce-related grief and absence from work are associated, meaning that one takes more days off from work when they suffer from higher grief, but also that one's grief is higher if they are more absent from work.

This could have several reasons; marriage has a positive effect on health and well-being. For instance, spouses provide each other with emotional support and encourage health-monitoring and health-promoting behaviours, while discouraging unhealthy behaviours. Dahl et al. (2015) also found that there is an increasing sickness absence rate leading up to the divorce; that the sickness absence in the year of the divorce is high, and that it decreases again in the years after the divorce. This could be the case since sick leave enables the individual to have more time for their emotional recovery, but also for appointments, for example, with their lawyer, and it permits time for rest and recovery (Vingård et al., 2004).

However, sick leave also has various negative consequences. Taking extended periods of sickness absence might lead to social isolation, and lower (retirement) income and is related to depression and low self-esteem (Kreyenfeld, 2020). This is why more research must be

conducted on which factors might influence sickness absence, and when sickness absence can be beneficial and when it is harmful.

Although there is some research about sickness absence in regard to divorce, these have been mainly with Scandinavian samples (e.g. Dahl et al., 2015; Hallberg & Mattsson, 1992; Voss et al., 2015) and this research aims to find out whether the findings are similar in the Netherlands. This could become important for the employer in order to plan work activities and maybe even to find a temporal replacement. Next to that, it might also show whether short-term sickness absence can help avoid a long-term absence. Furthermore, divorce-related grief has not yet been studied in the context of sickness absence. According to Wilcox et al. (2015) grieving death can lead to around 30 days of sickness absence. However, it has not yet been researched whether this is also the case for divorce. Due to this and the other factors above, it is relevant to research sickness absence in the context of divorce-related grief, as it is expected to be positively associated with each other.

### **Social Support within the Organization**

What can organizations do to reduce the impact of divorce on work outcomes? There might be moderating factors that buffer the relationship between divorce-related grief and work outcomes. An interesting candidate may be organizational support, specifically social support from co-workers and supervisors. This can be defined as the individual's belief that their organization values them and cares about their well-being and is making them part of a social network (Cobb, 1976). It is important to include this in order to find a protective factor for negative work outcomes, as well as help organizations respond to their divorcing employees. It is expected that social support can have a buffering effect on the association between divorce-related grief and negative work outcomes. Literature shows that social support at work can be especially essential when reducing family-to-work conflicts (van Daalen et al., 2006). Social support from co-workers and supervisors is also related to lower psychiatric sickness absence (Stansfeld et al., 1997) and Nilsson et al. (2013) found that social support at work is related to lower sickness absence in breast cancer patients.

Next to that, social support from one's supervisor can moderate the association between distress and absence (Nielsen et al., 2019). It can also facilitate recovery from psychological distress after a traumatic event, such as divorce (Birkeland et al., 2017). Furthermore, social support from a supervisor or leader can lead to higher performance (Bhanthumnavin, 2003), but

also to more positive job-related communications. There is a buffering effect from the support of one's supervisor which decreases strain from job stressors (Beehr et al., 1990) and might also decrease strain from stressors caused by one's personal life.

Besides social support from leaders, one can also receive support from one's co-workers. This can lead, on the one hand, to higher feelings of accomplishment (Greenglass et al., 1997) but having at least one intimate relationship at work is related to less distress (Henderson & Argyle, 1985). Social support from co-workers can also reduce social and work-related burnout (Rogers et al., 2016), which is why it is expected that it will also have a buffering effect after a divorce.

It is predicted, that social support can buffer the association between divorce-related grief and work outcomes, based on those previous studies. Social support is expected to reduce psychological and psychosomatic strains and stressors, anxiety and headaches (Robblee, 1997), fatigue and even burnout (Cropanzo et al., 1997), as it influences employees' general level of stress (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Since social support is related to lower levels of burnout (Etzion, 1984), organizational support from co-workers and supervisors could be useful too, in reducing burnout levels and absence from work after a divorce. Therefore, it is beneficial to include social support in this study.

### **Present Research**

The increasing divorce rates, as well as their possible consequences, create the urgency for more research on divorce, divorce-related grief and its work outcomes. Therefore, the proposed study aims to give insight into how some of those work-related variables, namely burnout and absence from work, are associated with divorce-related grief. Furthermore, social support within the organization is considered a moderating effect.

The main research question of this research asks: *To what extent does social support by the organization moderate the association between divorce-related grief and work outcomes?*

The following hypotheses have been formulated:

H1a: *divorce-related grief is positively associated with burnout symptoms*

H1b: *divorce-related grief is positively associated with the absence of work*

H2a: *social support from one's supervisor buffers the association between divorce-related grief and burnout symptoms*

H3a: *social support from co-workers weakens the association between divorce-related grief and burnout symptoms*

H2b: *social support from one's supervisor buffers the effect of divorce-related grief on sickness absence*

H3b: *social support from co-workers buffers the effect of divorce-related grief on sickness absence*

These hypotheses were tested in an online survey study among divorced individuals.

## Methods

### Participants and Design

For the data collection, the ISO-certified Dutch panel of the research agency Flycatcher ([www.flycatcher.eu](http://www.flycatcher.eu)) was used. This panel consists of more than 10,000 Dutch people aged 18 and older who have volunteered to participate in online surveys. Participants were approached if they divorced less than three years ago, had at least one child, worked at least 12 hours a week, and were at least 18 years old. Since the study had a cross-sectional design, participants filled in a questionnaire at just one moment in time. The final sample consisted of 200 participants, out of which 129 completed all important elements for this study. The age ranged from 21 to 67 years, averaging 41 years ( $SD = 9.7$ ). In total, 52% were female. Regarding education level, 19 participants had no or low education, 84 had medium education, and 94 were highly educated. Participants worked in diverse areas (for more details, see Appendix A).

Characteristics of the divorce were also assessed. A total number of 127 participants (63.5 %) were already officially divorced, and the remaining participants were still in the process of getting divorced. Most of the participants lived with their children without a partner (44%) or with their children and a partner (26%) or alone (20%), and 115 participants (57.5%) had no new partner. The average number of children the participants had with their ex-partners was 1.75. The working hours of participants ranged from 0 to 46 hours per week ( $M=32.15$ ;  $SD=11.11$ ) before the divorce and increased slightly afterwards ( $M=33.83$ ,  $SD=13.44$ ).

### Procedure

First, participants received an introduction to the online study and had to sign an informed consent form (Appendix B). Then they filled in a questionnaire (Appendix C), which took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Afterwards, they were debriefed about the study and asked to give feedback about the survey.

### Materials



All questionnaires were administered in Dutch. The questionnaire used for the study included more scales than mentioned here, as it was joint research. However, only the ones described here were used for this study.

**Divorce-Related Grief.** To assess divorce-related grief, a combination of the Texas Revised Inventory of Grief (TRIG) by Faschingbauer et al. (1977) and the Inventory of Complicated Grief Revised Scale (ICG-R) by Boelen et al. (2003) was used. Participants were asked to rate their agreement to 14 statements on a seven-point Likert scale (1= *completely incorrect*; 7= *completely correct*). Example items were *Sometimes I miss my ex-partner a lot*. The internal validity was excellent ( $\alpha=.94$ ) and the factor analysis revealed one underlying component.

**Burnout.** To measure burnout, the 11-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was used. Participants had to rate the frequency of the statements on a seven-point Likert scale (0 = *never*; 6 = *always/daily*). Five statements assessed *emotional exhaustion* (e.g., *I feel emotionally drained from work*) and six items *personal accomplishment* (e.g., *I have the feeling that I do my work well*). The internal consistency was good ( $\alpha=.87$ ), and factor analysis revealed indeed two underlying components (emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment).

**Sickness Absence.** Based on Demerouti et al. (2004) sickness absence was assessed through three open questions that asked about whether the participant is currently absent due to sickness, and how many days they have been absent during the last two months and during the last year.

**Social support within the Organization.** First, participants were asked, “*Have you received help or support from your employer?*”. It was also asked by whom specifically they received this.

**Social Support from Supervisors.** To measure the social support, one received from their supervisor, three statements (e.g. *My supervisor tried to really help me when I went through my divorce*) were assessed on a seven-point Likert scale (1= *completely disagree*; 7=*completely agree*). The scale had a good internal consistency ( $\alpha=.82$ ).

Participants were also asked whether they talked about the divorce with their supervisor, and if yes (66%), how satisfied they were with the supervisors’ response on a scale from 1=*not satisfied at all* to 7=*very satisfied*.

**Social Support from Co-workers.** The social support participants received from their co-

workers was measured through three statements too (e.g., *I can talk with my co-workers about my divorce*) that were also assessed on a seven-point Likert scale (1= *completely disagree*; 7=*completely agree*). The scale's internal consistency is good ( $\alpha=.89$ ).

**Financial Disruptions.** *Financial disruptions* were measured through two questions, “*What was your monthly net income before your separation?*” and “*What is your monthly net income now?*”. The difference between those two amounts indicated possible financial disruptions.

### **Data Analysis**

IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26) was used to analyse the data. First, some preliminary analyses were conducted (descriptive, reliability, factor, and Pearson's correlational analyses). Next, confirmatory analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. To test the first and second hypotheses, a Pearson's Correlation test was conducted. To test the third hypothesis, the SPSS plug-in “PROCESS macro” was used to conduct a moderation analysis. Six analyses were carried out to test the moderation of social support from one's supervisor and the moderation effect of *social support from one's co-workers*. Here, the dependent variables were *burnout* and *absence from work*, and *divorce-related grief* was the independent variable.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Research**

Before the hypotheses were tested, some preliminary research had been conducted.

#### ***Social Support***

First, the received social support by one's organization has been measured, and the responses can be found in Table 1. In total, 32.5 % of the participants received support. Furthermore, participants added that they received further organizational support in the form of more flexibility, more free days, good and solution-oriented conversations, and financial support. It was also measured, when the participants talked to their supervisors about their divorce, which is shown in Table 2. The respondents were generally satisfied with the support they have received ( $M=5.11$ ;  $SD=1.62$ )

**Table 1**Received Social Support ( $N=65$ )

Item	Frequency	%
Support by Employer	3	3.2
Support by Corporate Social Work	13	9.8
Support by Confidant	29	22
Support by Company Doctor	15	11.4
Support by Absence Case Manager	7	5.3
Other	13	10.7

**Table 2**Time of Talking to Supervisor about Divorce ( $N=132$ )

Item	Frequency	%
Days after the Decision to Divorce	40	30.3
Weeks after the Decision to Divorce	19	14.4
Months after the Decision to Divorce	9	6.8
“I don’t remember”	64	48.5

***Financial Disruptions***

Next, financial disruptions were measured by comparing the participant's monthly income before and after the divorce (Table 3). In general, the income decreased for most participants and the difference was significant ( $t=41.72$ ;  $p<.001$ ).

**Table 3**Financial Disruptions (*N*=129)

Item	Category	Frequency	%
Gross Monthly Household Income Before the Divorce			
	€0-€1000	8	4
	€1000-€2000	20	10
	€2000-€3000	42	21
	€3000-€4000	58	29
	€4000-€5000	39	19.5
	More than €5000	33	16.5
Gross Monthly Household Income now			
	€0-€1000	10	5
	€1000-€2000	37	18.5
	€2000-€3000	86	43
	€3000-€4000	40	20
	€4000-€5000	17	8.5
	More than €5000	10	5

**Table 4**

Means, standard deviations and correlations.

Variable	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Divorce-related Grief	1.00-6.29	3.12	1.39							
2. Burnout	1.00-5.36	34.54	0.94	.55**						
3. Support by Co-workers	2.00-7.00	5.30	1.25	-.37**	-.50**					
4. Support by Supervisor	2.00-7.00	5.03	1.27	-.16	-.40**	.70**				
5. Financial Disruption	-2.00-4.00	0.76	1.22	-.12	-.10	.21*	.11			
6. Current Sickness Absence		1.05	0.23	-.04	.11	-.00	-.12	.13		
7. Sickness Absence in the Last Year	0-365	11.43	40.10	-.03	.08	.06	-.11	.11	.51	
8. Sickness Absence in the Last 2 Months	0-61	3.47	8.35	.04	.18*	-.07	-.12	.04	.70**	.83**

*Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. \* indicates  $p < .05$ ; \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

Descriptive statistics and correlations can be found in Table 4. Divorce-related grief had a slightly higher mean than in a study by Carlsson and Nilsson (2007) ( $M=2.52$ ), which used the TRIG, while still being within the standard deviation. The same was true for a study by Prigerson et al. (1995), which used the ICG and had a mean of 1.74. The mean score for burnout was quite

high ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=.94$ ) and was thus considered high burnout (Chiron et al., 2010). Support by supervisors, as well as by co-workers was quite high and financial disruptions ( $M = .76$ ;  $SD=1.22$ ) were rather low.

### **Confirmatory Research**

As expected, a significant association was found between divorce-related grief and burnout, ( $r(180) = 0.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), such that more divorce-related grief was associated with more self-reported levels of burnout. Therefore, H1a can be accepted. Contrary to expectations, the association between divorce-related grief and sickness absence was not significant. Hence, H1b needs to be rejected. Furthermore, no significant associations were found between financial disruption and burnout, sickness absence, or divorce-related grief. Thus, further analyses were conducted without taking financial disruption into account.

Next, it was tested whether the association between divorce-related grief and burnout was moderated by, respectively, support from supervisors and co-workers.

#### ***Support from Supervisor***

The model with divorce-related grief as an independent variable, burnout as the dependent variable and support from the supervisor as moderator was statistically significant ( $F(3.128) = 27.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Support from one's supervisor had a weak, negative ( $B = -.32$ ) but significant ( $t = -2.73$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) main effect on burnout. This means that burnout is slightly lower if someone receives support from their supervisor. Divorce-related grief had no significant main effect on burnout, and there was also no significant interaction effect. Hence, H2a must be rejected.

#### ***Support from Co-Workers***

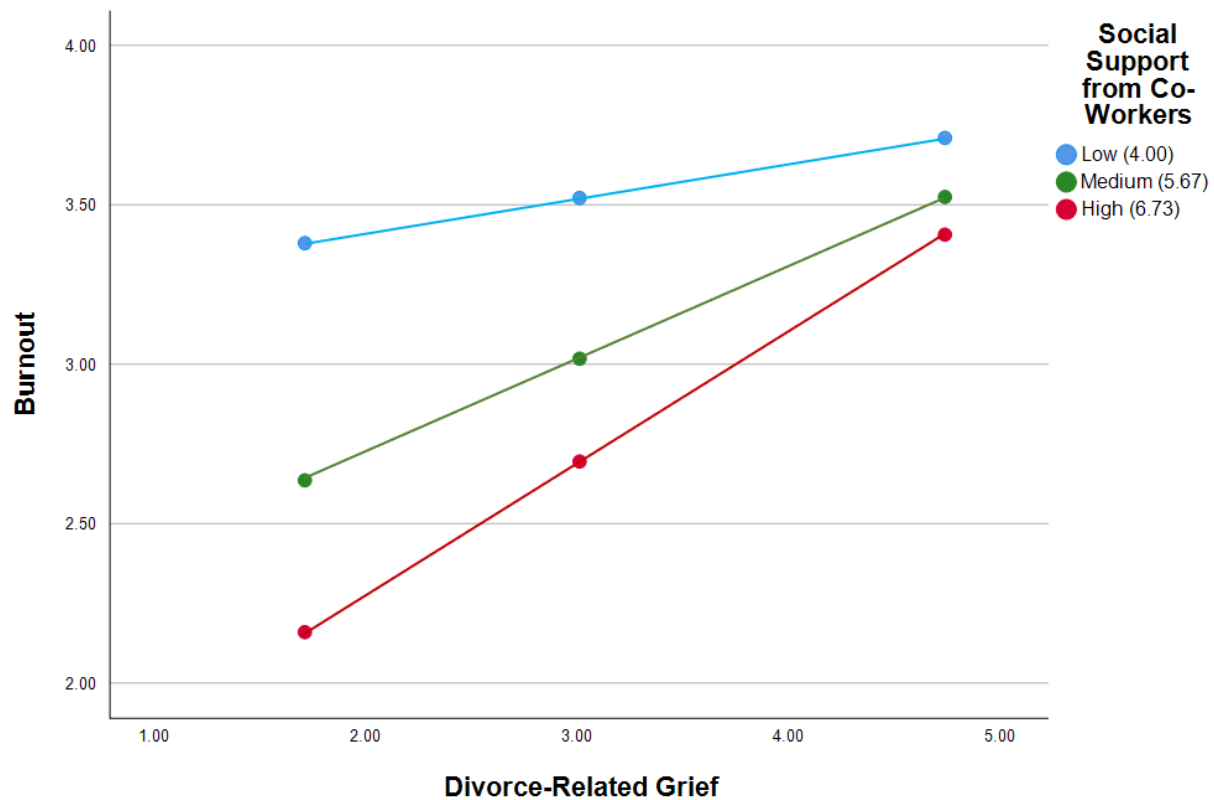
To test H3a, another moderation analysis was conducted. Again, divorce-related grief was the independent variable, burnout the dependent variable and support from co-workers served as the moderator. The model was statistically significant ( $F(3.125) = 29.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It suggested that social support from co-workers had a moderate and negative ( $B = -0.63$ ) but significant ( $t = -4.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ) main effect on burnout, while no significant main effect of divorce-related grief could be found. This indicated that in this sample, burnout was not affected by divorce-related grief when social support by co-workers was taken into account as well.

In line with the hypothesis, a weak interaction effect of social support by co-workers on the relationship between burnout and divorce-related grief ( $B = .11$ ) was determined, which was

significant ( $t=2.80, p=.01$ ). Post-hoc analysis showed that the association between divorce-related grief and burnout depends on the level of social support from colleagues. If it was medium or high, divorce-related grief and burnout were significantly associated ( $B=.29, p<.001$ ;  $B=.41, p<.001$ ), and not when it is low ( $B=.11, p=.14$ ). In other words, the more social support one received from co-workers, the less burnout symptoms one experienced. Low support levels did not lead to increased burnout scores if someone had high grief. However, high and moderate support was not beneficial for the participants if their grief was high, but it was if grief was low. This was not in line with the hypothesis, and therefore H3a needs to be rejected.

### Figure 1

Moderation Effect of Social Support by Co-workers on Divorce-related Grief and Burnout



### Exploratory Research

#### *High and Low Divorce-Related Grief*

The interaction effect can also be explored from a different perspective, that is, for high compared to low levels of divorce-related grief. To do so, a moderated regression analysis was

performed. The variables high grief (+1SD from the mean) and low grief (-1SD from the mean) were computed, interacted with standardized support values, and regressed onto burnout. Results indicated that there was a significant negative effect of support by co-workers on burnout ( $B=-.69$ ,  $SE=.17$ ,  $p<.001$ ) when grief was low, while there was no significant effect when grief was high, ( $p =0.19$ ). This suggests that support from co-workers was only helpful in reducing burnout symptoms when one's grief was low.

Since there were no significant correlations between divorce-related grief and sickness absence, no moderation analyses have been conducted with these variables.

### ***Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment***

As the MBI-11 had two different components for burnout, namely emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment, it was tested whether there would be a difference between the factors regarding their association with divorce-related grief. A two-tailed Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted. First, it showed that emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment had a low correlation ( $r(180) =0.31$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Moreover, emotional exhaustion was moderately correlated with divorce-related grief ( $r(180) =0.51$ ,  $p<.001$ ), while personal accomplishment and divorce-related grief had a low correlation ( $r(180) =0.36$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

## **Discussion**

The aim of the study was to assess whether divorce-related grief is associated with work outcomes, namely burnout and sickness absence. Next to that, it was tested whether social support by one's supervisor and co-workers would have a buffering effect on this relationship. This research is important to gain insight into how someone's work is affected by divorce and how employers can support their employees in this situation so that potential negative outcomes can be reduced.

### **Divorce-related Grief**

This study is unique as it uses a novel approach to assess divorce-related grief by merging two already existing scales (TRIG and ICG-R), that typically measure grief in the context of death. This approach is innovative and can set a tone for future research, as present research has not yet explored divorce-related grief in the work context, which makes this study distinct. Furthermore, in this way, it can be looked at the consequences of divorce differently. Commonly, divorce is measured by conflict or by stress, but not so much by the losses one



experiences, which can be defined as grief. This study found that grief as one underlying factor of divorce is associated with burnout after the divorce.

### **Work Outcomes**

Spillover effects have been studied between family and work outcomes, and it has been shown that home situations indeed can affect work outcomes (Crouter, 1984; Dilworth, 2004; Stevens et al., 2007). However, spillover in the context of divorce, especially divorce-related grief, received less attention. Hence, this research was investigating the potential spillover effects of divorce-related grief on work outcomes. The analyses revealed that divorce-related grief was positively associated with burnout. This means that if someone had higher grief after their divorce, they were more likely to also have higher burnout symptoms. This outcome is in line with previous research. For instance, Dahl (2015) found that marriage had a protective effect on health and that divorce leads to temporary stress, which makes burnout after a divorce more likely. Next to that, previous studies have suggested that married people enjoy better mental and physical health than divorced people (Gähler, 2006; Williams et al., 2008). Brüggmann (2020) adds that the loss of a spouse includes many aspects, such as loss of social support, that increase someone's burden and stress which will lead to unhealthy behaviours, and often to stress and burnout. These are all indications of spillover happening from divorce to work life.

Additionally, Maslach et al., (2001) found that burnout symptoms were similar to trauma symptoms. This also explains the positive relationship between burnout and divorce-related grief, since both grief and divorce can be classified as traumatic events.

The research shows no relationship between divorce-related grief and sickness absence in the past year, past two months and at the time of the study. This is contradicting most research that has so far been conducted. For instance, Hald et al. (2020) found sick days were higher in people who faced divorce-related characteristics. This is in line with research by Rael et al. (1995) who found that separation, but also marital problems, strongly predicted sickness absence. One suggestion on why this study found different results could be that most previous studies focused on divorced individuals in general and not on divorce-related grief, however, it is difficult to find a correct explanation.

This research also explored the role of social support within the organization, thus the effect of social support by one's supervisor and co-worker was also tested as a moderator on burnout. There was a negative effect of social support by co-workers on burnout, which suggests

that social support by co-workers can be beneficial for employees who struggle with burnout symptoms. An explanation for why there was only a significant effect of support by co-workers, could be that one is usually closer with co-workers than with one's supervisor. Hence, support by co-workers could be more comparable to support from friends. Furthermore, it was found that there was only an effect if divorce-related grief was low. This suggests that participants, who had support from their co-workers and low divorce-related grief, had the lowest burnout scores. This main effect is in line with previous research. Previous studies suggested that social support was a protective factor for divorcees (McTear, 1990; Schaufeli & Taris, 2013; Wilder, 2016), and could have moderating effects of social support on burnout. This is in line with the stress-buffering hypothesis, which states that social support protects employees from the negative pathological consequences of stressful experiences (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

However, social support can also increase stress (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986), since discussing emotions and feelings with co-workers was related to more distress (Elfering et al., 2002). This could be because being shown sympathy may increase the risk of focusing too much on the negative aspects of one's divorce (Beehr, 2014). Similar outcomes have been found for sickness absence. Rael et al. (1995) found that high levels of support from a close person predict higher levels of sickness absence and suggested that high emotional and social support may increase illness behaviours. Next to that, it is possible that if divorce-related grief is high, more organisational support is needed than just social support from co-workers.

Conclusively, it can be said that research on the effect of social support at the workplace differs a lot. This could be because someone with burnout symptoms might be biased about the quality of social support they have received. However, it is difficult to give a clear explanation, which is why more studies need to be conducted on what makes social support beneficial or not for the individual.

### **Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research**

The strength of this study was that many divorced individuals participated and that the scales had high psychometrics, which makes the results both more reliable and valid. Next to that, as already mentioned, not a lot of research has been conducted on the relationship between divorce-related grief and work outcomes, and not with social support as a buffering factor. Most of the research is also rather old. Hence, another strength of the study is its uniqueness and explorative character.

Nevertheless, the present research comes with some limitations as well. First, the study is cross-sectional, which is not ideal, since it cannot determine the causes and effects of relationships and cannot be used to analyse effects over a longer period of time (Myin-Germeys et al., 2018). Second, although all participants divorced no longer than three years ago, the results are based on a self-report. Hence, memory bias, such as hindsight bias or egocentric bias, might be involved when filling in the survey (Hogarth et al., 2007). Next to that, the present research asked for sickness absence up to the last year, while some participants were already divorced for three years. It could have been the case that some of them had a higher absence during the time of their divorce. Furthermore, it might be the case that part of the higher sickness absence of divorcing individuals is due to appointments with lawyers, moving or needing more time to take care of their children, aspects that usually improve over time. Similarly, divorce-related grief and distress are common reactions, however, typically, the intensity of the grief decreases after several weeks or months (Brodbeck et al., 2019), which is why divorce-related grief might be lower in some participants. These limitations could all be avoided by using the experience sampling method or a diary study for individuals who are currently going through a divorce (Hundt et al., 2013).

There is still quite some research that needs to be done in order to understand the topic better. Regarding burnout, it would be beneficial to understand which factors of divorce predict burnout the most. For instance, does having children, or one's living situation influence burnout symptoms (André et al., 2019)? Further, it could be studied which factors of the divorce might actually lead to sickness absence, since there are many different indicators (Donaldson et al., 1999). There could be influencing factors such as divorce-related stress or having children (Dahl et al., 2015). Moreover, variables such as divorce context or reasons for the divorce could be taken into account when studying burnout and sickness absence, but one could also conduct a partner study, in which both partners of a divorce are interviewed.

Next to that, the present study only focused on social support, and it would be beneficial for employers to know which other forms of organizational support can be constructive for grieving employees. It is expected that offering paid off-time (Goodson, 2016) or counselling would have a positive impact (Eyetsemitan, 1998). However, as already mentioned, sometimes support can have a negative effect, so it would be useful to research in which cases support is helpful and when it is not. Here it is expected that social support might have negative effects if

the support is unwanted, or the receiver is getting different reactions than desired (Palant & Himmel, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between divorce-related grief, burnout, sickness absence and social support in the workplace. The findings indicated that higher levels of divorce-related grief are related to higher levels of burnout. Social support by colleagues can be beneficial to decrease burnout symptoms, however, only if one's grief is low. The ultimate goal of the research is to help organizations deal with divorces among their employees. This is relevant since divorce rates are increasing. Divorces can have a negative impact on work outcomes; hence, it is in the organization's interest to prevent this. This was the first study which focused on work outcomes of divorce-related grief and support seems crucial, but it is suggested to conduct more research on this topic and to find more ways in which employers can support their employees.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A

#### Work Characteristics (N=182)

Item	Category	Frequency	%
Working Hours Before Divorce			
	1–5 Hours	5	2.5
	6–10 Hours	5	2.5
	11–20 Hours	17	8.5
	21–30 Hours	25	12.5
	31–40 Hours	123	61.5
	More than 40 Hours	8	4
Working Hours After Divorce			
	1–5 Hours	5	2.5



6–10 Hours	2	1
11–20 Hours	12	6
21–30 Hours	26	13
31–40 Hours	126	63
More than 40 Hours	10	5

#### Role at Work

Leadership Role	53	26.5
No Leadership Role	129	64.5

#### Work Sector

Agriculture	4	2
Mineral Extraction	3	1.5

Industry	16	8
Electricity, Natural Gas and Energy	5	2.5
Water and Waste Management	1	5
Construction	7	3.5
Car Industry and Repair	16	8
Transportation and Trade	5	2.5
Logistics, Food and Drink Provision	4	2
Information and Communication	11	5.5
Financial Institution	17	8.5
Real Estate	3	1.5

Advice and Research	12	6
Renting Vehicles	2	1
Public Boards, Governmental Services and Public Insurances	10	5
Education	16	8
Health and Wellbeing	30	15
Culture, Sports and Recreation	3	1.5
Other Services	10	5
Other	7	3.5

#### Size of Organization

1 Person	8	4
Less than 5	5	2.5

5-9	7	3.5
10-49	43	21.5
50-99	34	17
100-499	35	17.5
500 or more	50	25

#### Work Function

Owner	12	6
Director/Board Member	7	3.5
Free Profession	14	7
Farmer or Gardener	4	2
Higher Job Level	95	47.5

Medium Job Level	43	21.5
Lower Job Level	7	3.5

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## **Appendix B**

### **Information, Selection and Informed Consent**

## **Selectieonderzoek UU – welzijn en ouderschap na scheiding**

Pagina 1

Vanwege kwaliteitsdoeleinden stellen we u de volgende vraag.

**Deze vragenlijst is bedoeld voor [naam panellid]. Bent u deze persoon?**

- ja
- nee

Pagina 2

Voor een onderzoek dat we op korte termijn gaan uitvoeren, zijn we op zoek naar een specifieke doelgroep binnen ons panel. Om te kijken of u binnen de doelgroep van dit onderzoek valt, willen we u enkele korte selectievragen stellen.

**1. Bent u in de afgelopen drie jaar gescheiden, d.w.z. dat in de afgelopen drie jaar door u en/of uw ex-partner is besloten om uit elkaar te gaan? (NB. het maakt hierbij niet uit of u gehuwd of ongehuwd was, het gaat om de beëindiging van een langdurige relatie)**

- ja
- nee [naar pagina 6]

Pagina 3

**2. Heeft u kinderen samen met uw ex-partner?**

- ja
- nee [naar pagina 6]

**3. In welke leeftijdscategorie(en) vallen de kinderen met uw ex-partner? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- 0-3 jaar
- 4-11 jaar
- 12-18 jaar
- 19-25 jaar
- ouder dan 25 jaar [achteraf in databestand de groep excluderen die uitsluitend kinderen in deze leeftijdscategorie hebben]

Pagina 4

**4. Verricht u op dit moment betaald werk?**

- 36 uur of meer per week
- 20 t/m 35 uur per week
- 12 t/m 19 uur per week
- minder dan 12 uur per week
- nee

Pagina 5

De Universiteit Utrecht wil graag onderzoek doen naar welzijn en ouderschap na een scheiding. Hiervoor is het van belang dat u één vragenlijst volledig invult. In de vragenlijst worden vragen gesteld over uw scheiding, veranderingen in uw leven sinds de scheiding, uw welzijn, het contact met uw ex-partner en uw werk (indien van toepassing). Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt

ongeveer 25 minuten. Indien u binnen de doelgroep valt en aan het onderzoek wilt deelnemen, ontvangt u binnenkort de vragenlijst.

Zoals altijd worden alle gegevens vertrouwelijk behandeld en anoniem verwerkt. Niemand anders dan u krijgt uw antwoorden te zien. De onderzoekers krijgen alleen de geanonimiseerde antwoorden te zien.

**5. Wilt u deelnemen aan dit onderzoek?**

- ja, ik wil deelnemen aan het onderzoek
- nee, ik wil niet deelnemen aan dit onderzoek

Pagina 6

Controleer uw gegevens. Indien de gegevens niet meer correct zijn, wordt u na het versturen van de vragenlijst automatisch doorgeleid naar een pagina waar u deze kunt aanpassen.

[paspoortje weergeven]

Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking! Indien u tot de doelgroep van het onderzoek behoort en u wordt geselecteerd voor het onderzoek, ontvangt u binnenkort de uitnodiging voor de vragenlijst.

Klik op Volgende om uw antwoorden te versturen.

## Appendix C

### Questionnaire

## Vragenlijst onderzoek "Divorce as loss"

Selectie deelnemers: 18 jaar of ouder, in de afgelopen drie jaar uit elkaar gegaan, met kinderen tot max 25 jaar.

### Overzicht variabelen:

- Introductie + informed consent
- **Achtergrondgegevens:** Geslacht, geb datum, geb land, geb land vader/moeder, opleiding, woonsituatie (samenstelling huishouden), kinderen uit/thuis, leeftijd kinderen, eigenaar huis/huur, betaald werk, aantal uren, leidinggevende functie, sector, omvang org, soort functie, bruto jaarinkomen huishouden

#### 1. Vragen over de scheiding; plm 20 vragen

- Wanneer is de beslissing genomen?
- Hoe lang samen geweest?
- Sinds wanneer leven ze gescheiden?
- Initiator status
- Progressie formele scheiding (incl. Juridische processen)
- Hulp bij scheiding (mediator, ONS, SCHIP)
- Nieuwe partner (ja/nee, woonsituatie)
- Kinderen (aantal, leeftijd, woonsituatie)
- Inkomen: voor en na scheiding (indien niet in achtergrondgegevens)
- Werkuren voor en na scheiding
- Contactfrequentie en kwaliteit met kinderen
- Contactfrequentie en kwaliteit met ex

#### 2. Vragen over veranderingen (verlies/winst) en rouw

- Veranderingen sinds de scheiding (loss/gains) (zelf ontwikkelen; IV)
- Grief (ICG-R (Boelen et al., 2003; Boelen & Van den Hout 2008) (IV) 10 items

#### 3. Vragen over co-parenting

- Co-parenting communication (DV); 10 items
- Ouderlijk conflict – frequentie en ernst (DV); 4 items
- ~~Negatieve attributies (med); → attributies tav verlies;~~
- ~~Emoties: anger, fear, sadness (Med); 12 items~~

#### 4. Vragen over werk; 19 of 32 items

- Burn-out; Maslach Burnout Inventory (DV); 11 items
- Ziekteverzuim; Demerouti et al., 2004 (DV); 2 items
- Werktevredenheid; 1 item
- Organizational support (Mod); 6 items



## Vragenlijst versie Flycatcherpanel

### Pagina 1

Vanwege kwaliteitsdoeleinden stellen we u de volgende vraag.

**Deze vragenlijst is bedoeld voor [naam panellid]. Bent u deze persoon?**

- ja
- nee

### Pagina 2

Wij vragen uw medewerking voor een onderzoek naar welzijn en ouderschap na scheiding bestaande uit één vragenlijst. U kunt meedoen aan dit onderzoek wanneer u gescheiden (of aan het scheiden) bent, kinderen heeft met uw ex-partner en het moment dat besloten is om uit elkaar te gaan niet langer dan drie jaar geleden is.

#### Het onderzoek

Deze online vragenlijst maakt deel uit van een onderzoeksprogramma van de Universiteit Utrecht en onderzoekt hoe veranderingen na scheiding het welzijn, werk en het contact tussen ouders beïnvloedt. Uw medewerking is van groot belang om inzicht te krijgen in de effecten van scheiding, onder andere om ouders en kinderen beter te kunnen helpen, nu en in de toekomst. In deze vragenlijst worden vragen gesteld over uw scheiding, veranderingen in uw leven sinds de scheiding, uw welzijn, het contact met uw ex-partner en uw werk (indien van toepassing).

#### Vertrouwelijkheid gegevens

De UU werkt volgens de ethiek-code van het Nationaal Ethiek Overleg Sociale en Gedragswetenschappen (<https://www.nethics.nl/Gedragscode-Ethical-Code/>). De gegevens die u tijdens dit onderzoek elektronisch doorgeeft, zullen worden verwerkt en gebruikt voor onderzoeksdoeleinden. De verkregen onderzoeksgegevens worden altijd vertrouwelijk behandeld en anoniem opgeslagen. De resultaten worden slechts op groepsniveau gerapporteerd.

#### Deelname aan onderzoek

U kunt aan dit onderzoek deelnemen indien u 18 jaar of ouder bent. Als u niet wilt deelnemen, dan hoeft u daarvoor geen reden te geven. Ook als u nu toestemming geeft, kunt u op elk gewenst moment stoppen met het invullen van de vragenlijst. U kunt ook tussentijds stoppen en later doorgaan.

#### Contact

Als er achteraf nog iets is dat u wilt bespreken of uiten naar aanleiding van dit onderzoek, dan kunt u contact opnemen met Prof. Dr. Esther Kluwer ([e.s.kluwer@uu.nl](mailto:e.s.kluwer@uu.nl)). Voor formele klachten over het onderzoek kunt u terecht bij een onafhankelijke klachtenfunctionaris ([klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl](mailto:klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl)).

### Toestemmingsverklaring

Indien u bereid bent om uw medewerking aan dit onderzoek te verlenen, vink dan aan dat u toestemming geeft en klik op Volgende om verder te gaan naar de volgende pagina.

- Ik geef toestemming voor gebruik van mijn gegevens voor wetenschappelijk onderzoek en ga akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoek.
- Ik geef geen toestemming (u kunt dan niet deelnemen aan het onderzoek) (door naar buiten de doelgroep pagina)

### Pagina 3

Allereerst stellen we u enkele vragen over de relatie met uw ex-partner en de scheiding. Hiermee bedoelen we in deze vragenlijst het moment dat u en uw ex-partner definitief de relatie hebben beëindigd.

#### 1. Wat is het geslacht van uw ex-partner?

- man
- vrouw
- overig

#### 2. Hoe lang heeft de relatie met uw ex-partner geduurd?

\_\_\_\_ jaar

#### 3. Hoe lang geleden is door u en/of uw ex-partner besloten om uit elkaar te gaan?

\_\_\_\_ jaar

\_\_\_\_ maanden

#### 4. Hoeveel kinderen heeft u met uw ex-partner?

\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Wat was uw leefsituatie met uw ex-partner voordat u uit elkaar ging?

- gehuwd en samenwonend
- gehuwd en niet samenwonend
- ongehuwd en samenwonend (door naar vraag 7)
- ongehuwd en niet samenwonend (door naar vraag 7)

#### 6. Bent u op dit moment officieel gescheiden, dat wil zeggen dat u voor de wet gescheiden bent?

- ja
- nee

### Pagina 4

#### 7. Wat is uw huidige woonsituatie met uw ex-partner?

- wij wonen nog samen (door naar vraag 9)
- wij wonen apart

**Pagina 5****8. Wat is de huidige woonsituatie van uw kind(eren)? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)****Ons kind is/onze kinderen zijn...**

- altijd bij mij
- vaker bij mij dan bij mijn ex-partner
- even vaak bij mij als bij mijn ex-partner
- vaker bij mijn ex-partner dan bij mij
- altijd bij mijn ex-partner
- uit huis

**Pagina 6****9. Heeft u momenteel een nieuwe relatie?**

- nee
- ja, ik woon samen met een nieuwe partner
- ja, maar ik woon niet samen

**10. Heeft uw ex-partner momenteel een nieuwe relatie?**

- nee
- ja, mijn ex-partner woont samen met een nieuwe partner
- ja, maar mijn ex-partner woont niet samen
- weet ik niet

**Pagina 7****11. Soms willen beide partners de relatie beëindigen en soms wil de ene partner dat meer dan de ander. Geef aan welk antwoord het beste uw situatie beschrijft.**

- ik wilde de relatie eindigen maar mijn ex-partner wilde dat niet
- ik wilde meer dan mijn ex-partner de relatie eindigen
- we wilden allebei de relatie eindigen
- mijn ex-partner wilde meer dan ik de relatie eindigen
- mijn ex-partner wilde de relatie eindigen maar ik wilde dat niet

**12. Hoe vaak heeft u contact met uw ex-partner (persoonlijk, telefonisch, e-mail, sms/WhatsApp, etc.)?**

- (vrijwel) nooit
- minder dan 1x per maand
- 1x per maand
- een paar keer per maand
- meer dan 1x per week
- dagelijks

**13. Hoe tevreden of ontevreden bent u over het algemeen over het contact met uw ex-partner?**

- heel ontevreden
- ontevreden
- een beetje ontevreden
- niet tevreden of ontevreden
- een beetje tevreden
- tevreden
- heel tevreden

**14. Hoe tevreden of ontevreden bent u over het algemeen over de relatie met uw kind(eren)?**

- heel ontevreden
- ontevreden
- een beetje ontevreden
- niet tevreden of ontevreden
- een beetje tevreden
- tevreden
- heel tevreden

**Pagina 8****15. Kunt u aangeven hoe het gezag in uw situatie is geregeld?**

- gezamenlijk ouderlijk gezag
- ik heb een-ouder gezag/eenhoofdig gezag
- mijn ex-partner heeft een-ouder gezag/eenhoofdig gezag
- het gezag is (nog) niet geregeld

**16. Welke van de onderstaande situatie(s) is/zijn op u van toepassing? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- wij hebben een definitief ouderschapsplan
- wij hebben een definitieve contactregeling (omgangsregeling, afspraken over waar uw kind woont en hoe vaak hij of zij bij u en uw ex-partner is)
- wij hebben een definitieve kinderalimentatieregeling
- wij hebben een definitieve partneralimentatieregeling
- wij hebben definitieve afspraken over financiën, woning en inboedel
- wij hebben (nog) geen definitieve afspraken gemaakt (overige opties grijs)

**17a. Loopt er op dit moment een gerechtelijke procedure met uw ex-partner?**

- ja
- nee (door naar vraag 18)

**Pagina 9****17b. Sinds wanneer loopt deze gerechtelijke procedure?**

maand: \_\_\_\_\_

jaar: \_\_\_\_\_ (min 2000, max 2023)

**17c. Waar gaat deze procedure over? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- gezag
- contactregeling/omgangsregeling
- hoofdverblijf kind(eren)
- financiën
- anders, namelijk: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pagina 10****18. Heeft u sinds uw scheiding gebruik gemaakt van een of meerdere vormen van hulpverlening? (meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- nee (overige opties grijs)
- ja, mediation bij scheiding
- ja, jeugdhulpverlening
- ja, coaching of therapie samen met mijn ex-partner (bijv. Ouderschap Na Scheiding, SCHIP)
- ja, individuele coaching of therapie
- ja, anders, namelijk: \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Wat was het netto besteedbaar inkomen per maand (uit betaald werk en/of uitkering) voordat u uit elkaar ging, in totaal voor uw huishouden? Indien variabel, neem dan het inkomen van een gemiddelde maand.**

- €0-€1000
- €1000-€2000
- €2000-€3000
- €3000-€4000
- €4000-€5000
- meer dan €5000

**20. Wat is op dit moment het netto besteedbaar inkomen per maand (uit betaald werk en/of uitkering), in totaal voor uw huishouden? Indien variabel, neem dan het inkomen van een gemiddelde maand.**

- €0-€1000
- €1000-€2000
- €2000-€3000
- €3000-€4000
- €4000-€5000
- meer dan €5000

**Pagina 11****Veranderingen sinds de scheiding**

Als partners uit elkaar gaan verandert er veel, zeker als er ook kinderen zijn. Dit kunnen zowel positieve als negatieve veranderingen zijn.

**21. In het geheel genomen, hoe kijkt u op dit moment aan tegen de veranderingen in uw leven sinds u en uw ex-partner uit elkaar zijn, vergeleken met daarvoor?**

**Vergeleken met voordat we uit elkaar gingen, vind ik mijn leven over het geheel genomen...**

- veel slechter
- slechter
- iets slechter
- niet beter of slechter
- iets beter
- beter
- veel beter

**22. Over het geheel genomen, hoe goed vindt u dat u zich aanpast aan de veranderingen sinds de scheiding?**

- heel slecht
- slecht
- redelijk slecht
- niet goed of slecht
- redelijk goed
- goed
- heel goed

**Pagina 12**

**23. Geef voor elk van de volgende zaken aan of zij sinds de scheiding beter, slechter of onveranderd zijn ten opzichte van voor de scheiding (dat wil zeggen: het moment dat u uit elkaar ging). (stellingen randomiseren, scrollmatrix)**

Sinds de scheiding is de hoeveelheid tijd die ik besteed met mijn kinderen ...

Sinds de scheiding is de kwaliteit van de relatie met mijn kinderen ...

Sinds de scheiding is de kwaliteit van het contact met mijn ex-partner ...

Sinds de scheiding is de hoeveelheid sociale contacten (vrienden, bekenden, familie, etc.) die ik heb ...

Sinds de scheiding is de steun die ik krijg van mensen in mijn omgeving ...

Sinds de scheiding is de kwaliteit van mijn sociale contacten (vrienden, bekenden, familie, etc.) ...

Sinds de scheiding is mijn werksituatie ...

Sinds de scheiding is mijn financiële situatie (hoeveel u te besteden heeft, of u goed rond kunt komen) ...

Sinds de scheiding zijn mijn vaste lasten ...

Sinds de scheiding is wat ik te besteden heb naast mijn vaste lasten ...

Sinds de scheiding is het vertrouwen dat ik in de toekomst goed rond kan komen ...

Sinds de scheiding is mijn woonsituatie (de kwaliteit van uw woning en directe leefomgeving) ...

Sinds de scheiding is de sfeer in huis ...

Sinds de scheiding is het maken van mijn eigen keuzes ...

Sinds de scheiding is mijn zelfvertrouwen ...

Sinds de scheiding is de tijd die ik heb voor mijzelf (incl. sport, hobby's, etc.) ...  
 Sinds de scheiding is mijn zelfstandigheid ...  
 Sinds de scheiding is mijn gevoel over wie ik ben en wat ik wil met mijn leven ...  
 Sinds de scheiding is mijn gevoel van zekerheid en veiligheid ....

veel slechter; slechter; iets slechter; niet beter of slechter; iets beter; beter; veel beter

### Pagina 13

**24. In hoeverre bent u het eens of oneens met de volgende uitspraken?** (scrollmatrix, randomiseren)

Soms mis ik mijn ex-partner heel erg.  
 Ook nu nog is het pijnlijk om herinneringen aan mijn ex-partner op te halen.  
 Ik verberg mijn tranen als ik aan de scheiding denk.  
 Ik kan niet voorkomen dat ik aan de scheiding denk.  
 Dingen en mensen om me heen herinneren me nog altijd aan mijn ex-partner.  
 Af en toe heb ik nog steeds de behoefte om te huilen om de scheiding.  
 Ik kan de scheiding niet aanvaarden.  
 Ik voel een zeer sterk verlangen naar mijn ex-partner.  
 Ik voel me verbijsterd of verdoofd over de scheiding.  
 Sinds de scheiding vind ik het moeilijk om mensen te vertrouwen.  
 Ik vind het leven leeg en zonder betekenis sinds de scheiding.  
 Ik voel me boos of bitter gestemd over de scheiding.  
 Ik heb het gevoel dat de toekomst geen betekenis of doel heeft sinds de scheiding.  
 Ik voel mij gespannen, prikkelbaar of schrikachtig sinds de scheiding.

helemaal mee oneens; mee oneens; beetje mee oneens; niet mee eens of oneens; beetje mee eens; mee eens; helemaal mee eens

### Pagina 14

**25. De volgende vragen gaan over het contact met uw ex-partner over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kinderen.** (scrollmatrix, randomiseren)

Wanneer u en uw ex-partner contact hebben over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kind(eren), hoe vaak eindigt dit in onenigheid?  
 Wanneer u en uw ex-partner praten over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kind(eren), hoe vaak komt het voor dat de sfeer dan vijandig of boos is?  
 Wanneer u en uw ex-partner praten over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kind(eren), hoe vaak is het gesprek dan stressvol of gespannen?  
 Wanneer u en uw ex-partner praten over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kind(eren), hoe vaak komt het voor dat het gesprek dan ontspannen en vriendelijk verloopt?  
 Hoe vaak verschillen u en uw ex-partner fundamenteel van mening over de zorg en opvoeding van uw kind(eren)?  
 Als uw ex-partner een verandering moet aanbrengen in de contactregeling, probeert u hem/haar dan tegemoet te komen?  
 Komt uw ex-partner u tegemoet als u veranderingen moet aanbrengen in de contactregeling?  
 Denkt u dat uw ex-partner uw behoeften als ouder begrijpt en steunt?  
 Denkt u dat u de behoeften van uw ex-partner als ouder begrijpt en steunt?  
 Wanneer u hulp nodig heeft met betrekking tot uw kind(eren), vraagt u dit aan uw ex-partner?

vrijwel nooit; zelden; soms; regelmatig; vaak; zeer vaak; vrijwel altijd

### Pagina 15

#### Conflicten

**26. De onderstaande vragen gaan over conflicten met uw ex-partner. Daarmee bedoelen we een ruzie, meningsverschil, onenigheid, of stevige discussie waarin u het oneens bent.** (scrollmatrix)

Hoe vaak hebben u en uw ex-partner conflicten?

Hoe vaak bereiken u en uw ex-partner een oplossing voor deze conflicten?

Hoe vaak gaat u uw ex-partner uit de weg (vermijd u contact met uw ex-partner)?

Hoe vaak hebben u en uw ex-partner conflicten in het bijzijn van de kind(eren)?

vrijwel nooit; zelden; soms; regelmatig; vaak; zeer vaak; vrijwel altijd

**27. Hoe ernstig zijn de conflicten met uw ex-partner over het algemeen?**

- helemaal niet ernstig
- niet ernstig
- een beetje ernstig
- redelijk ernstig
- vrij ernstig
- ernstig
- zeer ernstig
- n.v.t, we hebben nooit conflicten

### Pagina 16

#### Emoties

De onderstaande vragen gaan over uw gevoelens ten aanzien van de scheiding. (scrollmatrix, woorden randomiseren)

**28. Wanneer u aan de scheiding denkt, hoe vaak voelt u zich dan ...**

verdrietig

boos

bang of bezorgd

schuldig

beschaamd

vijandig

terneergeslagen

teleurgesteld

voldaan of tevreden

vastbesloten

krachtig

blij

opgelucht



optimistisch

hoopvol

vrijwel nooit; zelden; soms; regelmatig; vaak; zeer vaak; vrijwel altijd

#### Pagina 17

**29. Hieronder staat een aantal uitspraken dat betrekking heeft op uw situatie en de relatie met uw ex-partner. Wilt u aangeven in hoeverre u het met deze uitspraken eens of oneens bent?**

(scrollmatrix)

Ik kan me erg kwaad maken over wat mijn ex-partner mij heeft aangedaan.

Mijn ex-partner is de oorzaak van de veranderingen in mijn leven.

Mijn ex-partner is schuldig aan de moeilijkheden en problemen die ik nu heb.

Het komt door mijn ex-partner dat ik me nu voel zoals ik mij voel.

De persoonlijkheid van mijn ex-partner is de oorzaak van mijn problemen.

Als ik me boos of verdrietig voel, wordt dat meestal veroorzaakt door mijn ex-partner.

helemaal mee oneens; mee oneens; beetje mee oneens; niet mee eens of oneens; beetje mee eens; mee eens; helemaal mee eens

#### Pagina 18

##### Werk en inkomen

Ten slotte volgen nog enkele vragen over werk.

**30. Verricht u momenteel betaald werk?**

- ja, in loondienst
- ja, als uitzendkracht of oproepkracht
- ja, als zelfstandige
- nee (door naar pagina 25)

**31. Hoeveel uur per week verrichtte u betaald werk voordat u uit elkaar ging?**

\_\_\_\_\_ uur per week

**32. Hoeveel uur per week verricht u momenteel betaald werk?**

\_\_\_\_\_ uur per week

#### Pagina 19

**33. Bent u momenteel (wegens ziekte of iets anders) met verlof?**

- nee
- ja, ik ben met ziekteverlof, sinds: \_\_\_\_\_
- ja, anders (bijv. zwangerschapsverlof), namelijk: \_\_\_\_\_

**34. Gedurende het afgelopen jaar, hoeveel werkdagen heeft u niet gewerkt omdat u ziek was?**

\_\_\_\_\_ dagen

**35. Gedurende de afgelopen twee maanden, hoeveel werkdagen heeft u niet gewerkt omdat u ziek was?**

\_\_\_\_\_ dagen

**36. Hoe tevreden bent u in het algemeen met uw werk?** (matrix)

1 (uitermate ontevreden) tot 10 (uitermate tevreden)

#### Pagina 20

**37. Hierna volgen uitspraken over werkgerelateerde gevoelens. Lees elke uitspraak zorgvuldig en beslis of u zich de laatste tijd zo over uw werk voelt. Kies de optie die het best beschrijft hoe vaak u zich zo voelt.** (scrollmatrix, randomiseren)

Ik voel me mentaal uitgeput door mijn werk.

Een hele dag werken vormt een zware belasting voor mij.

Aan het einde van de werkdag voel ik me leeg.

Ik voel me vermoeid als ik 's morgens opsta en weer een werkdag voor me ligt.

Ik voel me 'opgebrand' door mijn werk.

Ik weet de problemen in mijn werk goed op te lossen.

Ik heb het gevoel dat ik met mijn werk een positieve bijdrage lever aan het functioneren van de organisatie.

Ik vind dat ik mijn werk goed doe.

Als ik op mijn werk iets afrond, vrolijk dat me op.

Ik heb in deze baan veel waardevolle dingen bereikt.

Op mijn werk blaak ik van zelfvertrouwen.

nooit, sporadisch / een paar keer per jaar of minder, af en toe / eens per maand of minder, regelmatig / een paar keer per maand, dikwijls / eens per week, zeer dikwijls / een paar keer per week, altijd/dagelijks

#### Pagina 21

**38a. Heeft u over uw scheiding gesproken met uw leidinggevende?**

- nee (na vraag 38b door naar vraag 41)
- ja (door naar vraag 39a)

**38b. Wat weerhield u ervan om dit met uw leidinggevende te bespreken?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Pagina 22

**39a. Hoe tevreden bent u over de manier waarop uw leidinggevende dit heeft opgepakt?** (matrix)

- heel ontevreden
- ontevreden
- een beetje ontevreden
- niet tevreden of ontevreden
- een beetje tevreden
- tevreden
- heel tevreden

**39b. Wanneer heeft u dit besproken?**

- \_\_\_\_ dagen na het besluit om te scheiden
- \_\_\_\_ weken na het besluit om te scheiden
- \_\_\_\_ maanden na het besluit om te scheiden
- weet ik niet meer

**39c. Heeft u hulp of ondersteuning gekregen vanuit uw werkgever? (indien ja, meerdere antwoorden mogelijk)**

- nee (overige opties grijs)
- ja, namelijk van:
  - bedrijfsmaatschappelijk werk
  - vertrouwenspersoon
  - bedrijfsarts of praktijkondersteuner
  - case manager verzuim
  - anders, namelijk: \_\_\_\_\_

**40. De volgende vragen gaan over de hulp en steun die u op dit moment in uw werk ervaart met betrekking tot de scheiding. In hoeverre bent u het eens of oneens met de volgende uitspraken?**

Mijn leidinggevende probeert me echt te helpen als ik met de scheiding zit.

Ik kan over mijn scheiding praten met mijn leidinggevende.

Ik kan op mijn leidinggevende rekenen als er dingen fout gaan in mijn persoonlijke leven.

helemaal mee oneens; mee oneens; een beetje mee oneens; niet mee eens of oneens; een beetje mee eens; mee eens; helemaal mee eens

**Pagina 23****41a. Heeft u over uw scheiding gesproken met uw directe collega's?**

- nee (na vraag 41b door naar pagina 25)
- ja (vraag 41b overslaan en na vraag 42 door naar pagina 25)

**41b. Wat weerhield u ervan om dit met uw directe collega's te bespreken?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**42. De volgende vragen gaan over de hulp en steun die u op dit moment in uw werk ervaart met betrekking tot de scheiding. In hoeverre bent u het eens of oneens met de volgende uitspraken?**

(scrollmatrix)

Mijn collega's proberen me echt te helpen als ik met de scheiding in m'n maag zit.

Ik kan over mijn scheiding praten met mijn collega's.

Ik kan op mijn collega's rekenen als er dingen fout gaan in mijn persoonlijke leven.

helemaal mee oneens; mee oneens; een beetje mee oneens; niet mee eens of oneens; een beetje mee eens; mee eens; helemaal mee eens

**Pagina 24** (buiten de doelgroep pagina)

U heeft ervoor gekozen om geen toestemming te geven voor deelname aan dit onderzoek. Bedankt voor uw interesse.

Klik op 'Volgende' om de vragenlijst af te sluiten. U gaat nu naar uw persoonlijke pagina. We vragen u om uw gegevens op uw persoonlijke pagina te controleren, aan te passen (indien nodig) en vervolgens te bevestigen. Dit doet u door op de knop 'Wijzig gegevens' te klikken en daarna op de knop 'Bevestigen'. Alvast heel erg bedankt voor het bevestigen van uw gegevens!

**Pagina 25** (evaluatievragen)

Graag willen wij u nu nog enkele vragen stellen over de vragenlijst die u zojuist heeft ingevuld. Uw mening kan ons helpen toekomstige vragenlijsten verder te verbeteren. Als u deze vraag wilt overslaan, klikt u gewoon op Volgende om door te gaan naar het einde van de vragenlijst.

**Wat vond u van de vragenlijst?**

interessant onderwerp - oninteressant onderwerp

te kort - te lang

duidelijke vragen - onduidelijke vragen

prettig om in te vullen - onprettig om in te vullen

**Indien u nog opmerkingen heeft over het onderwerp van deze vragenlijst, kunt u daarvoor de ruimte hieronder gebruiken.**

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**Pagina 26** (paspoortje)

Controleer uw gegevens. Indien de gegevens niet meer correct zijn, wordt u na het versturen van de vragenlijst automatisch doorgeleid naar een pagina waar u deze kunt aanpassen.

[paspoortje weergeven]

Hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking!

Klik op Volgende om uw antwoorden te versturen.