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## **The Experience of Being Loved: Physical Affection From Parents As Remembered From Childhood**

Ellen Senter Denny  
*University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

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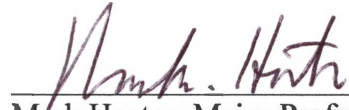
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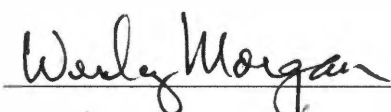
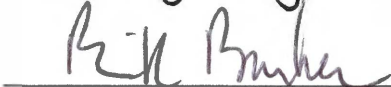
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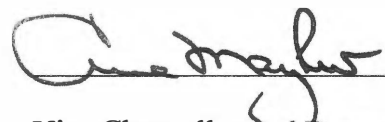
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Mark Hector, Major Professor

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Acceptance for the Council:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice Chancellor and Dean of  
Graduate Studies

Thesis  
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THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING LOVED: PHYSICAL AFFECTION FROM PARENTS  
AS REMEMBERED FROM CHILDHOOD

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ellen Senter Denny  
December 2006

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and affectionate children,

**Kendra, Phillip, Jessica, Blake, and Meredith.**

What a marvelous privilege to mother such decent and authentic human beings. They were the inspiration for this study... and my most precious gifts.

And to my dearest friend

**Katie Rea Smith**

Whose love, affection, listening, understanding, laughing, and beauty are priceless to me. Katie truly knows what the holding environment is all about. I am eternally grateful.

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The 21 participants who offered their time to speak to me openly and candidly about their experience of physical affection from childhood. I owe them much, as this study would not have been possible without their stories.

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## ABSTRACT

This project provided a description of the experience of physical affection as remembered from childhood. In-depth, non-directive interviews were conducted with 21 adult participants who were asked to describe their experiences of receiving physical affection from their parents during childhood. The raw data consisted of transcriptions of the interviews, and a method informed by phenomenology and hermeneutics for the purpose of describing the thematic structure of the experience was employed.

The ground of Being Loved provided the context upon which three themes became figural. It included the awareness of feelings that participants experienced, such as love, security, being cared for, warmth, and so forth, as a benefit of physical affection.

The first theme, From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received, included descriptions of those giving the physical affection to the participant. The two sub-themes included physical affection from Parents and physical affection from Grandparents. The descriptions of physical affection from parents typically included a comparison between the mother and father (or stepfather). The second theme, Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection, captured the participant's awareness of the acts of touching behavior directed toward them by their parents which were experienced as physical affection. The participants described a range of behaviors that were experienced as physical affection and included the following sub-themes: Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands, and Holding, Snuggling/Cuddling, Rocking. The third theme, Non-Physical Expressions of Affection, captured the participant's awareness of non-touching behavior directed toward them by their parents that was nevertheless experienced as a part of the experience of physical affection. The theme of Non-Physical Expressions of Affection included the sub-themes

of Verbal Affection and Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, and Other Activities. In addition to the ground and three themes, there were two topics that sometimes emerged as participants described the experience of physical affection. First, punishment was described by the participants as either an awareness that punishment was often followed by physical affection or an awareness that punishment was a part of physical affection as a demonstration of caring. Second, change in the experience of physical affection over time, reflected the participants' awareness of the way in which physical affection changed during the period of adolescence as a result of the participants' growing autonomy from their parents.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Physical affection is a familiar concept that is understood and described by most individuals. One might reasonably assume that consistent definitions or descriptions of physical affection would be provided by those speaking the same language. However, although terms such as physical anthropology, physical chemistry, physical education, physical examination, physical geography, physical science, and physical therapy can be found in most dictionaries (Concise Oxford American Dictionary, 2006; Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 2005; & Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2005) the term *physical affection* is absent. This term is also absent from the index of many books pertaining to affection, touch, love, parenting, attachment, child development, adult development, and so forth. Nonetheless, combining the words *physical* and *affection* seems to generate a meaning of tender feelings toward another expressed by way of physical touch.

According to the English version of the Encarta Dictionary (2004), *affection* is defined as “a fond or tender feeling toward somebody or something” and “feelings of fondness or tenderness.” *Physical* is defined as “being of the body; relating to the body rather than the mind, the soul, or the feelings.” Additionally, *physical* is defined as the act of touching: “tending to touch people or involving touching, especially in an affectionate or sexual way.” *Touch* is defined as “to put the body in contact with something” and “to have an effect or influence on somebody or something.”

Quite simply, physical affection involves touch. The sense of touch is the most basic aspect of the human nervous system. As such, it is a primary function of our largest

sensory organ and is the first system of response to become operational in the process of human development (Montagu, 1986; cited by Stack and Muir, 1992). Furthermore, the conventions of language have extended use of the word *touch* beyond the denotation of physical contact to infer impacting affective experience. For example, the phrase *I'm touched* is often used metaphorically to describe a personal emotional reaction, as if the tactile sense provides the best descriptor of the experience. Montagu enumerated the additional following examples: rubbing people the wrong way, stroking them the right way, a magic touch, the personal touch, a human touch, the feminine touch, the delicate touch, being in touch or out of touch, being touchy, or thin skinned.

Winnicott (1965) viewed the sense of touch, literally and metaphorically, as a critical aspect of human maturation. He coined the term *holding environment* to depict not only a mother's physical holding of the infant securely in her arms, but also to refer to the emotional connection between a mother and her child. He proposed that this connection establishes a secure base upon which the child can mature physically and emotionally (Monte, 1999).

Attachment theorists (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969) identified maternal physical contact as a necessary component for normal infant growth and development. Evidence from both general observation and documentation of real-life circumstances wherein infants were deprived of touch confirmed that touch is fundamental to human survival and developmental processes. Infants need touch and physical nurturing to promote physical survival and to establish a sense of security on which emotional growth depends. Examples of research programs that brought attention to the role of physical affection in normal infant development include: (1) Bowlby's

(1969) study of the damaging effects to infants who were separated from their mothers and deprived of maternal contact, (2) Harlow's (1959) examination of physical contact between infant and mother monkeys, and (3) Ainsworth et al's (1978) exploration of infant attachment styles resulting from maternal responsiveness, including physical touch and proximity.

Little research has focused on physical affection across the life cycle, so there is limited knowledge about the need for and effects of physical affection beyond infancy. Barber and Thomas (1986) pointed out this paucity of research on physical affection, stating that "physical affection has not played an important role conceptually or operationally in parent-child research... given the long-standing literature on the positive influence of physical contact" (pp. 785-786). Yet Harlow (1958) stated, "The affectional ties to the mother show a lifelong, unrelenting persistence and, even more surprising, widely expanding generality" (pp. 673-674).

The purpose of the present study is to explore a thematic structure of physical affection from childhood memories of young adults. In preparation for the study, the researcher attempted to identify and bracket her own assumptions about the nature of the experience of physical affection in childhood. Unstructured qualitative interviews were used with the research participants. The initial interview question was designed to reflect a minimal set of a priori assumptions about the content of the participants' experiences. Participants were simply asked to describe their experience of the physical affection that they received from their parents during childhood. The goal of the interview was to give each of the participants freedom to describe their own experiences in any manner they chose. Near the end of each interview, the researcher summarized what she had heard

from the participants. The participants were then given the opportunity to clarify the summaries of the researcher. The summaries were always based on the words actually used by the participants as they described their experiences of receiving physical affection.

In Chapter II, a review of the literature is presented in two parts. First, the literature on physical affection during infancy is reviewed so as to establish a rationale for the importance of examining the presence of physical affection during childhood. The research in this area is limited and generally consists of observations made by those caring for infants who were deprived of physical affection. Research on structured observations with quantitative data on touch deprivation, as well as the study of the presence of touch is included in this section. The second part focuses on physical affection during childhood. The research in this area is also limited, and this author found only one qualitative study on the topic.

Chapter III also consists of two parts. In the first part, a discussion of the theoretical and methodological assumptions that underlie the procedures used in this study is presented. In the second part, the procedural steps of the current investigation are described. Chapters IV and V present the results of this study and a discussion of the results, respectively.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

The literature related to physical affection during childhood is limited to research focusing on the deprivation of physical touch and holding during infancy and their consequences. These studies came about after the recognition in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that the death rate among infants in foundling homes was noticed to be as high as 100% (Montague, 1986). The detrimental impact of touch deprivation began to be recognized, and researchers began to focus on the presence of touch and holding during infancy. Naturally, these studies of infants relied on observational data, as infants are not able to verbally report their experiences.

Although much more limited, several researchers have examined the presence of physical affection during childhood. Most are quantitative studies which rely on children's and young adult's responses on questionnaires that do not contain specific measures of physical affection, although one measure of physical affection has been developed. One qualitative study that includes the experience of physical affection has been identified.

#### **Observational Studies of Physical Affection Deprivation in Infancy**

John Bowlby theorized that the infant is born with an innate, biological need for close contact with its mother and that deprivation during this period stunts psychological development (Coleman, 2001). Montagu (1986) describes early studies of infants hospitalized in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The death rate for infants under one year of age in foundling institutions in the United States was nearly 100% in the late 19<sup>th</sup>

and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Montagu (1986) reported on Brennemann's (1932) discovery that physical affection is vital to the infant's survival. Brennemann was a hospital pediatrician who had attended a foundling home, and had noted that for infants admitted to foundling homes the mortality rate was near 100% in the first year of life. At Bellevue Hospital in New York, he instituted a "mothering" procedure, in which every baby would be picked up and carried around several times a day. Subsequently, the mortality rates for infants on the pediatric wards fell from 30 to 35 % to less than 10% by 1938. It was concluded that in order to prosper infants must experience the handling, carrying, caressing, cuddling, and caregiving (Montague, 1986).

Several researchers have reported on the detrimental effects of deprivation on young children. Most of the children in the reported studies were hospitalized or institutionalized (Provence & Lipton, 1962). Citing the works of Margaret Ribble (1943), Rene Spitz (1945), Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham (1943), William Goldfarb (1947), John Bowlby (1973, 1979, 1980), and James Robertson (1958), Montagu (1986) describes how these studies

drew attention to the untoward effects of maternal deprivation and, although in most cases there was hardly a reference to touching, it is quite clear from each of these studies that a principal component in producing the ill effects upon the children was the lack of contact with their mothers. (p. 203)

As cited by Jones (1994), Spitz (1946) used the term *marasmus*, derived from a Greek word meaning *withering away*, to identify a condition resulting from the lack of physical touch. Spitz noticed this phenomenon while reviewing statistical records of orphaned and abandoned children. These children were more likely than other children to die within the first year of life. Spitz "discovered that touch was a critical factor. For

example, in one European village where women came regularly to a foundling home to hold and caress infants and young children, Spitz observed that the withering away did not occur” (Jones, 1994, p. 12).

Montagu (1986) emphasized the tactile experience as fundamentally important in the growth and development of all mammals. In a report to the World Health Organization, Bowlby (1951) drew attention to the effects of early stimulation and deprivation in a summary of the world literature on maternal deprivation. He described the early childhood effects on the capacity for love and sympathy in adult life and speculated that maternal deprivation may stunt the growth of love. Bowlby describes the deprivation damage as a progressive deterioration. Yet the literature on early deprivation focuses little attention on the variety of symptoms (Provence & Lipton, 1962). In preparing the World Health Organization report, Bowlby organized his findings into a theory that attempted to explain the effects of early separation and deprivation on young children. Subsequently, a theory of attachment was born (Parkes, Stephenson-Hinde & Marris, 1991).

As cited in Parkes et al. (1991), Bowlby presented his theory to the British Psychoanalytic Society in 1957 in the form of three papers. In one aspect of the attachment theory, he identified *Primary Object Clinging*, which hypothesizes that infants innately seek touch and clinging to a human being independent from feeding. Further, he postulated that proximity to the mother becomes a set goal as part of the development of attachment and that a mother’s ability to accept clinging from the child leads to favorable development (Bowlby, 1969).

Provence and Lipton (1962) provided empirical evidence on the specific deficits and effects of deprivation on the institutionalized child, and they provided a description and evaluation of infants institutionalized within the first year of life. They also described the institutionalized infant's environment, making comparisons with infants raised within a normal family setting. Provence and Lipton studied 75 infants in one institution over a five-year period. The following is a general description of the institutional setting: The group of infants that were 4 days to 8 months of age were kept in cribs most of the day. One attendant was responsible for the caretaking of seven to nine babies at a time. The babies were fed in their cribs with bottles that were propped up. When cereal and fruit were added to the diet, it was given to the babies in pureed form, also in a propped up bottle. Age appropriate toys were gradually added to each infant's cribs. The room that the cribs were in was kept clean and light with adequate heat and ventilation. A radio placed in the room provided soft music. The bathing, dressing, and diapering were carried out by the attendant in a central work area. The twenty infants who were nine to 24 months stayed in their cribs unattended for 16 hours a day, and were cared for by two attendants during the remaining eight hours.

The comparison group of 75 babies reared in families were subjected to the same criteria for selection and studied with the same methods as the institutionalized group. Provence and Lipton observed, however, that the "poverty and the infrequency of the personal contact were the outstanding deficits in the experience of the institutionalized babies" (p. 47). In comparison, the babies from the family setting had more experiences of being lifted, touched, and held by the mother. The institutional environment provided no association between feeding and being held, as did the family environment.

Two investigators examined the babies and observed their environment, using the Gesell Developmental Examination (Gesell & Amatruda, 1947). They also gathered data such as height, weight, head and chest circumference, and recordings of observations of behavior and reactions. There were interviews with the persons caring for the babies with regard to developmental progress, health, and behavior. Birth and family histories were obtained. Only those babies free from congenital handicaps, including mental and physical, neurological disorders, and acute or chronic diseases were included in the study.

Provence and Lipton (1962) reported that at the end of the first year of life the institutionalized infants were found to lack emotional attachments to people, and to rarely seek help, comfort, or pleasure. There was an inability to defer immediate gratification, a retardation of speech, impoverished play, excessive rocking, and failure to progress normally in spite of normal neurological processes. Provence and Lipton also reported on the differences between the institutionalized babies and the babies raised in a home environment. Babies raised in the home environment showed greater interest in walking, were able to communicate their wants and feelings, recognized their mothers and exhibited attachment behaviors, enjoyed playthings and learned ways of doing things for themselves. Provence and Lipton concluded that, although the infants in the institutional setting were meticulously cared for physically, babies require more personalized care for optimal development. The personalized care includes more touching and holding than what was received by the institutionalized infants.

Harlow (1958) and Harlow and Mears (1979) identified and described the importance of body contact with research on rhesus monkeys. Using cloth and wire surrogates to determine if body contact or activities associated with feeding were more

important to development, Harlow discovered that body contact was significantly more important. Harlow studied eight newborn monkeys placed in individual cages, each having access to two contrived surrogate mothers: one a cloth mother and the other a wire mother. Four of the infants received nourishment from the cloth mother and the other four from the wire mother. Observed results showed that those monkeys that were fed from the wire mother spent only the amount of time required for feeding, whereas both groups of infant monkeys spent significantly more time climbing and clinging on the cloth-covered mothers than the wire mothers. As they grew older, an increasing amount of time was spent clinging to and cuddling with the cloth mothers. Harlow and Mears (1979) found that clinging to the mother was a more important variable for contact comfort than nursing. Harlow's discovery was in opposition to Freud's theory that the origin of attachment was in the satisfaction of the need for nourishment. Furthermore, infant monkeys obtained emotional security with the cloth surrogates. This security was evidenced by the cloth surrogate monkey's tendency to explore strange situations and manipulate available physical objects that were not observed in those with the wire surrogates.

Harlow was also interested in whether the infant monkey who was exposed to a stressful situation would seek out the surrogate mother for comfort and security. Strange objects were placed in the cages, which included a mechanical teddy bear that moved forward while beating a drum. During this stressful period, the monkeys overwhelmingly sought comfort from the cloth surrogate, clinging to her and rubbing their bodies against her. Once the monkey was physically attached to the mother, the monkey would turn and look at the object seemingly without a sign of fear. When the monkeys were placed in a

room that was larger than the cages and filled with unfamiliar objects, the monkeys would rush and cling to and rub the cloth mother. Their fear would appear to vanish, and subsequently the monkeys would begin to leave the cloth mother and investigate the objects. In the absence of the cloth mother, the infants would display extreme emotionality by throwing themselves on the floor, screaming and clutching their heads and bodies. It was evident that the wire mothers provided no security for the monkeys, as evidenced by the monkeys running to a wall or corner of the room, clutching their heads and bodies as they rocked (Harlow, 1959).

Harlow's monkeys that were raised in isolation and deprived of contact with surrogate or real mothers showed disturbance related behaviors. If kept in isolation for the first three months of life and then subsequently placed with other monkeys, infants stayed rooted to where they were and would not eat. Although monkeys kept in isolation for the first three months did show some recovery and eventually played with other monkeys, those kept in isolation for six months did not show any recovery. Those kept in isolation for up to six months, when placed with other monkeys, crouched, hugged themselves, and rocked for at least two to three years (Bowlby, 1969).

Harlow's work with mother and infant monkeys challenged the behaviorist views of reinforcement that were popular during the time Harlow began his studies. One of Harlow's most important findings was that babies appear to crave a soft touch and that contact comfort is critical to healthy development (Blum, 2002).

Ainsworth (1961/1982) was inspired by Harlow's work on infant attachment and exploratory behavior and she elaborated further on Bowlby's theory of attachment (Parkes, Stevenson-Hinde, & Marris, 1991). As a social anthropologist interested in

Bowlby's work, she emerged as a prominent proponent of attachment theory. Her early work included a field study examining the development of infants in Uganda (Ainsworth, 1967), which has come to be known as the first empirical study of attachment (Goldberg, Muir, & Kerr, 1995). In the Ainsworth (1967) study, observations of 28 babies over a period of several months included interviews with mothers regarding the methods of infant care they employed. The purpose of the study was to describe the customs of infant care during the first fifteen months of life, to examine early interpersonal relations and particularly the infant's attachment to the mother, and to determine the effect of infant care practices upon development. Data were collected by way of interview and direct observation, and included household facts, birth, feeding, elimination, cleanliness, sleeping, motor development, vocalization, crying, distribution of mother duties, interpersonal relations, sexual behavior, aggression, punishment, dangers and concerns, play, health and medical care, weaning, and separation. The Gesell Development Schedule (Gesell & Amatruda, 1947) was administered to the infants. Ainsworth observed the infants for two hours every two weeks for over nine months. Maternal sensitivity was evaluated. Highly sensitive mothers were categorized as those who were excellent informants and provided spontaneous detail, in comparison to other mothers who were imperceptive to the subtle differences in their babies. Three attachment styles were noted: (a) infants securely attached who displayed little crying and seemed secure to explore the environment in the presence of the mother, (b) infants insecurely attached who explored little and cried frequently even when held by the mothers, and (c) unattached infants who were indifferent to the mother. Ainsworth found a significant correlation between attachment and maternal sensitivity. Babies of the sensitive mothers



were likely to be securely attached, and babies of less sensitive mothers were more likely to be insecure.

Ainsworth further elaborated on Bowlby's theories of attachment as she developed the classifications of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent patterns of maternal-infant attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). In what was named the Strange Procedure, Ainsworth and Wittig (1965) developed a laboratory observation procedure to study attachment and exploratory behavior. They were interested in the infant's exploratory behavior in the presence and absence of the mother, and found that babies more actively explored toys in the playroom in the presence of the mother than when a stranger was present. However, it was the reunion behaviors that Ainsworth observed when the mothers returned that led her to define discrete behavior patterns. Infant behaviors were categorized as either secure, avoidant, or ambivalent-resistant (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). The secure infant uses the mother as a secure base, explores when the mother is available, seeks proximity and contact with the mother upon reunion, and attempts to maintain contact and resists release. He or she is interested in contact with the mother and greets her with a smile or a cry upon approach. The avoidant infant explores, is minimally distressed at separation, and does not seek contact with the mother upon reunion. The infant turns away, moves past, and averts his or her gaze. When picked up by the mother there is no tendency to cling. The ambivalent-resistant infant minimally explores, displays contact and interaction resisting behaviors, but also seeks proximity and contact, attempting to maintain the contact once gained. This infant may demonstrate passivity or anger. The proximity behaviors between mother and baby were measured by the percentage of pick-up behaviors in

which the mother kissed, hugged, or caressed the baby (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

Ainsworth and Wittig's (1965) measure of the Strange Situation Procedure has been used in subsequent studies. Egeland and Stroufe (1981) used the Strange Situation Procedure as one of three measures to compare attachment outcomes on two sub-samples of mothers and their infants: inadequate care (abuse/neglect), and excellent care. The mothers in the inadequate care group did not provide for basic needs of the child and the excellent care group actively encouraged the child's growth and development. A second measure was the Child Care Rating Scale (Egeland & Brunquell, 1979), which provides ratings for evidence of violence in the household, poor physical care, unsanitary conditions, neglect, and failure to thrive. The Child Care Rating Scale was administered at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after delivery. The third measure was Ainsworth et al.'s (1978) Cooperation Interference and Sensitivity Scales. Results of the Egeland and Stroufe study indicated that at 12 months of age, the excellent care group consisted of 16% avoidantly attached, 9% ambivalently attached, and 75% securely attached. In the inadequate care group there were 24% avoidantly attached, 38% ambivalently attached, and 38% securely attached. Upon further analysis of the same population of subjects, Egeland and Farber (1984) found that the mothers of the avoidantly attached infants avoided physical contact with their infants except when feeding. Mothers of ambivalently attached infants tended to be better caregivers than those mothers with avoidantly attached infants, but demonstrated an insensitive and unskilled style of caregiving. They too, avoided physical contact with their infants except when necessary.

The securely attached infants had mothers who exhibited greater sensitivity and held their infants in an affectionate fashion.

Main and Stadtman (1981) found a strong positive relationship between a mother's aversion to physical contact and signs of infant conflict. The study examined the infant response to rejection of physical contact, specifically looking for evidence of anger or conflict behavior in the infant. The three samples included in the study consisted of a total of 94 infant/mother dyads from a population of white, middle class mothers. The mothers were asked to respond to their child in an initial ten minutes of free play. After that time, an adult woman entered the room in an attempt to interact and play with the child. A final ten minutes in which the mother was asked to play with her child naturally and comfortably was recorded. Based on slow-motion film analysis, two observers provided narrative records of mother-child interactions during the two time periods. Conflict behaviors were recorded and were defined as any behavior that was odd or disturbing or any behavior that seemed odd or disturbing because it occurred out of context. A seven-point scale assessed the mother's aversion to physical contact, evaluating those mothers who withdrew as the child approached, blocked access by the child, stiffened while holding the child, or postured themselves to avoid contact with the child while playing. Infants responded immediately with conflict behaviors upon rejection by the mother. Additionally, the mothers who exhibited aversion to contact with the infant in the presence of the stranger handled the infant roughly during the play sessions. Results of the Main and Stadtman study also indicated that a mother's aversion to physical contact is stable over the first year and that conflict behavior is related to the mother's aversion to contact with the infant nine months previously.

Attachment theory is founded on early observations of deprivation of physical contact between the caretaker and the infant. The observations of infants deprived of physical contact provide evidence that there are adverse affects to infants who are deprived of touch. Attachment theory purports that infants have a biological need for physical contact and that touch is fundamental to infant development. Traina (2005) states that “the difficulty of establishing a right to be touched is that the consequences of touch deprivation are not as immediately obvious as those of food deprivation” (p. 7).

### **Observational Studies on the Presence of Touch During Infancy**

Touch is a primary component of most care-giving behaviors (Kaitz, Lapidot, Bronner, & Eidelman, 1992), although it is among the less researched components of the parent-infant relationship (Feldman, Weller, Sirota, & Eidelman, 2003). There is evidence that the sense of touch is so well developed that mothers are able to recognize their babies simply by touch. Kaitz et al. found that women can identify their newborns by touch alone as they learn to discriminate their baby from others during routine mother-infant interactions. Forty-six women who had given birth within 5-79 hours were blindfolded and subsequently asked to identify their infant by stroking the dorsal surface of three newborn infants, one of which was theirs. The majority of women were able to identify their own infants. The physical touch of a mother for her infant, and vice versa, are salient components of attachment theory. Physical touch is recognized as a requirement for normal development. In the overall assessment of attachment, attachment theorists include proximity to and holding by the mother. Montagu (1986) has also suggested that although studies have evaluated deprivation, which includes a

lack of touching or holding of the infant, the presence of touch by itself is rarely mentioned or studied alone.

While the early researchers of physical touch typically focused on deprivation, some have concentrated on the effects of the presence of touch. Ainsfield, Casper, Nozyce, and Cunningham (1990) examined the differences in attachment and maternal responsiveness between infants carried in a soft infant carrier close to the mother and a control group of infants carried in the usual plastic infant seat. The study included a total of 49 mother-infant dyads (23 subjects in the experimental group and 26 in the control group). Mothers who had just given birth were recruited to participate in the study in which those mothers in the experimental group (more physical contact) were given soft infant carriers to carry their babies. The mothers in the control group (less physical contact) were given infant seats in which to carry their babies. When the infants were 13 months of age, the Ainsworth Strange Situation procedure was administered. The researchers found that there were significantly more securely attached infants in the soft infant carrier group than the control group, and that the mothers using the soft infant carriers responded more frequently by vocalizing than did the controls. These findings suggest that not only does increased physical contact achieved by use of a soft baby carrier promote more secure attachment, but that carrying the babies close in a soft baby carrier also makes the mothers more responsive. A potential weakness of this study was the need to rely on mother's self reports of the amount of time that infants were carried by the mother in the soft infant carrier. The researchers, however, anticipated this limitation and sewed pedometers inside of the soft infant carriers.

Many of the studies described above rely on Ainsworth's Strange Situation procedure as a way to determine the quality of attachment behavior between mother and infant. Van Ijzendoorn and De Wolff (1997) conducted a meta-analysis on parental antecedents of attachment security. They were interested in determining if those studies implementing the Strange Situation procedure would show stronger associations than those studies which diverged from the procedure. They found that in the 21 studies in which the Strange Situation procedure was used, there was a moderately strong association. This finding lends greater credibility to the procedure and possibly explains why the procedure has continued to be used in a number of attachment studies.

Korner and Thoman (1972) examined the calming of infants by way of various forms of touch. The subjects included 40 male and female newborn infants who were healthy and full-term. Common types of maternal interventions which entailed contact and vestibular-proprioceptive stimulation (rocking) was initiated in order to determine which interventions are more effective in soothing infants. A control group received no contact. The experimental group received interventions involving contact, including containment, warmth, olfactory stimuli, and ventral body contact, with the same person doing all the interventions. Crying time was measured during and immediately following interventions. The analysis showed that contact had a significant effect, although rocking had a more powerful soothing effect than physical contact. They suggest that this finding might be explained by the highly mature vestibular system which begins functioning by 21 weeks of gestation. They also note that during most caretaking acts, infants are moved in space as they are being touched.

Field, Schanaberg, Scafidi, Bauer, Vega-Lahr, Barcia, Nystrom, and Kuhn (1986) evaluated the effects of tactile/kinesthetic stimulation on weight gain, sleep/wake states, and the Brazelton Neonatal Assessment Scale (Brazelton, 1973) of preterm neonates. The Brazelton Scale measures several aspects of infant behavior. In addition, daily weight, formula intake, frequency of voiding and stooling, average respiration and heart rate, body temperature, number of apneic episodes, and parent visits were recorded. The stimulated infants averaged a 47% greater weight gain per day even though formula intake was the same for both groups of stimulated and non-stimulated infants. On the Brazelton Neonatal Assessment Scale, the stimulated infants showed more mature habituation, orientation, motor, and range of state behavior. The stimulated baby's hospital stay was, on the average, six days shorter than the non-stimulated babies.

Feldman, Weller, Sirota, and Eidelman (2003) also studied infants in the neonatal nursery. They found that when the infant's parents participated in *Kangaroo Care* (Whitelaw & Sleath, 1985), a form of skin-to-skin contact, the mothers and fathers were more sensitive and responsive than those parents not participating in *Kangaroo Care*. Included in the measurement of sensitivity and responsiveness was the measurement of the acknowledgement of infant's signals, maintaining of eye contact, warm and positive affect, and appropriate vocal quality. Parents participating in *Kangaroo Care* were also less intrusive than the non-*Kangaroo Care* parents as measured by physical manipulation of the infant's body. Differences between the parent groups were also found on the variables of interruption of infant activities, breaking gaze while infant is looking, disregarding the infant's signals, amount of infant negative affect, and the family style

cohesiveness. The *Kangaroo Care* families more frequently engaged in affectionate touch of the infant, and the spouses remained in closer proximity.

Stack and Muir (1992) found that five-month old infants responded positively to active tactile stimulation even when they were looking at a stranger who displayed a sober face. The study employed the Still Face Procedure (Tronick, Als, Adamson, Wise, & Brazelton, 1978), a procedure in which the individual interacting with the infant is void of expression (still-faced) and silent. Infants exposed to the Still Face Procedure will repeatedly try to elicit a response from the mother. When the mother refuses to respond, the babies try to self-comfort through thumb sucking, smiling, gurgling, and reaching. However, after repeatedly confronted with a blank expression, the children stop trying. Stack and Muir found that when the infants were actively touched, they often smiled more frequently and grimaced less frequently during the Still Face Procedure. The study demonstrated the importance of active touch in the early adult-infant social interactions.

As noted earlier, Winnicott emphasized the importance of intimate contact between mother and baby, especially in the form of gazing and touching, and claimed it was essential to the process of healthy development (Traina, 2005). Winnicott (1987) stated that “it is the physical holding of the physical frame that provides the psychology that can be good or bad. Good holding and handling facilitates the maturational processes” (p. 62).

In summary, researchers eventually began to identify the physical and emotional effects of physical contact on infants. Physical contact not only seems to influence actual growth and physiological responses of the infant, but there is also evidence that the infant’s emotional development is impacted by the presence of touch. Many of the



studies on examining the impact of touch on infants were inspired by the World War II era studies of neglected children and the Harlow monkey studies, all of which identified touch deprivation as a factor leading to permanent psychological damage (Traina, 2005).

One of the limitations of the above studies which focus on the effects of touch and other caretaking behaviors received by infants from their mothers, is the inability to capture the lived experience of the infants as described by children and adults. Obviously, infants are not able to verbalize their experiences of touch and other caretaking behaviors that are directed at them. Researchers, therefore, must rely on observations and subsequent interpretations of infant behaviors (crying, seeking proximity, eye contact, etc) and physical indicators (weight gain, heart rate, development). Studies on infant responses to touch must make assumptions about what the specific infant responses subjectively mean.

Not only is the research on physical affection in childhood scant, but the research on fathers' demonstrations of physical affection during infancy is lacking all the more. "Historically, the possible influence of fathers' behavior has been largely ignored" (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001, p. 383).

### **Physical Affection During Childhood**

Affectionate touch is important to infant growth and development, as has been supported by observation and research. Much less is known about the impact of physical affection during childhood. Nonetheless, several studies provide evidence that physical affection continues to have an effect on children and adolescents. Traina (2005) asserts that "Touch is a condition of human flourishing, in many circumstances – especially in the nurture of children – physical affection is not only permitted but required by the

obligation to offer care” (p. 5). Bowlby (1969) reported that although after three years of age most children show a decline in attachment behaviors, it still remains as a major part of behavior. He states: “When out walking, children of five and six, and even older, like at times to hold, even grasp, a parent’s hand, and resent it if the parent refuses... If more than a little frightened, they seek immediate contact” (p. 206). Bowlby reports that although the trend in decreasing attachment behaviors continues in childhood, it never completely goes away.

Barber and Thomas (1986) examined parental physical affection provided by parents as reported by 527 male and female college students. They found physical affection to be one of four different dimensions of parental supportive behavior. The other three dimensions included general support, companionship, and sustained contact. Sustained contact was identified as physical contact that covers a longer period of time than a hug or kiss, and included the items of “let me sit on his/her lap,” “picked me up for fun,” and “picked me up for safety reasons.” Another finding of the study was that fathers provided more sustained contact with their daughters than their sons. Hollender, Duke, and Nowicki (1973) also found differences between males and females when they investigated physical affection and interpersonal closeness with others. The results of their study of two samples (third and fourth grade students and college students) indicated that maternal physical affection promoted closeness to other people for males, but not for females.

Field (1995) has studied the role of touch in human development and in 1992 established the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami, School of Medicine. By examining verbal and physical intimacy from parents toward their children, Field

(2002) developed a model of violence and intimacy. The model proposes that violence in children and adolescents exists partly because they lack verbal and physical intimacy with their parents, peers, and other adults. Field describes how her model supports Prescott's (1990) theory of Somatosensory Affectional Deprivation (SAD) that states:

The failure to develop affectional bonds in human relationships is the primary cause of human violence. The beginning of this failure is the parent-offspring relationship where sensory deprivation of the emotional affective senses (tactile, vestibular, olfactory sensory modalities) is permitted to occur. (p. 95)

The theory was based on cross-cultural studies of 49 pre-industrial cultures (Prescott, 1979). The principal source of his cross-cultural studies was Textor's (1967) *A Cross-Cultural Summary*. Prescott also used the *Human Relations Area Files*. It was found that in those cultures in which there was much physical affection there was a low incidence of theft and killing, torturing, or mutilation of enemies. There was also low religious activity and belief in reincarnation was absent. Prescott identified the *absence of killing*, the *absence of torturing*, and *negligible mutilation of the enemy* as the three cultural variables supporting his theory that deprivation of infant physical affection is inversely associated with adult physical violence. He postulated that adult violence is more prevalent in cultures that exhibit minimal physical affection toward their young children, and cultures that exhibit high physical affection toward their children have very little adult violence. Therefore, Prescott promotes the idea that cultural differences in violence and aggression are directly related to the amount of physical affection given to young children within a culture.

In their study of self-esteem among children in the fifth through eighth grades, Felson and Zielinski (1989) found that, for girls, physical affection was a dependent

variable of self-esteem. Included in the measures of self-esteem and parental support, children were asked the question “how often does your mother (father) hug you?” Possible responses included “often, sometimes, rarely, and never.” The results suggested that when compared to boys, girls are more strongly impacted relative to several parental variables. Girl’s self-esteem is more likely to be higher when they believe they can communicate with their parents. Girl’s self-esteem was also higher when parents demonstrated physical affection, when parents did not criticize them often, and when they did not feel less favored than a sibling. Barber and Thomas (1986) also found that the association between physical affection and (dependent variable) was stronger for females than it was for males. Thus, daughters’ self-esteem was best predicted by the father’s physical affection, whereas for sons, physical affection was not found to be a predictor of parental supportive behavior.

In a study investigating the risk factors associated with depression among adolescents, Field (2001) found less than optimal relations with parents among 79 high school seniors reporting depression. Compared to non-depressed seniors, the depressed seniors reported less physical affection with their parents, more paternal depression, and inferior verbal intimacy with parents. Interestingly, in a stepwise regression, physical affection explained the highest percentage of the variance in depression scores.

A theory of acceptance and rejection (PARTheory – Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory), developed by Rohner (1960, 2004), postulates that there are four classes of universal behavior that convey the message that parents or other attachment figures love the child. The classes of behavior include perceived warmth-affection, hostility–aggression, indifference–neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Rohner (2004)

defines the warmth dimension as having to do with affectional relationships between parents and children. These include the physical, verbal, and symbolic behaviors that parents use to express feelings. One end of the dimension is parental acceptance and it refers to the “warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love, that children can experience in their relationship with parents and other attachment figures” (p. 831). The other end of the continuum is parental rejection, and it refers to the “absence or significant withdrawal of these feelings and behaviors and by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and affects” (p. 831). PARTheory relies upon a phenomenological approach to the study of acceptance-rejection of children, assuming that human responses are impacted more by the perception of the individual, rather than the objective experience. It is the child’s subjective experience of warmth that has been examined by Rohner.

Rohner (1986) includes in the warmth dimension two expressions of affection: physical and verbal. Physical affection includes “hugging, fondling, caressing, approving glances, kissing, smiling” (p. 21). Verbal affection includes “praising, complimenting, saying nice things to or about a child, singing songs, telling stories to a young child, and the like” (p. 21). Rohner postulates that accepting parents provide combinations of all of these behaviors. He includes, however, that even warm parents will become angry, impatient and occasionally rejecting with their children.

Rohner (2004) asserts that evidence from cross-cultural research supports the conclusion that children and adults who experience their relationship with parents as rejecting tend to report psychological maladjustment that includes the measurable characteristics of (a) problems with management of hostility and aggression,

(b) dependence or defensive independence, (c) impaired self-esteem, (d) impaired self-adequacy, (e) emotional unresponsiveness, (f) emotional instability, and (g) negative worldview. Traina (2005) supports Rohner's theory and states that "some subjects say that 'good' touch satisfies at least in part because it communicates 'I accept you' or, I affirm you' (p. 11).

In summary, the presence of physical affection appears to have positive effects beyond infancy. As Montagu (1986) suggests, "skin hunger" becomes less crucial to survival beyond infancy, and therefore is probably overlooked as an important need across the life span.

### **Measures of Physical Affection**

Barber and Thomas (1986) investigated physical affection as a dimension of mothers' and fathers' supportive behavior and presented evidence that the expression of physical affection was one dimension of parental support. Additionally, the dimension of physical affection has often included non-physical expressions such as smiling, verbal affection, and approving glances. Upon closer examination of the literature, Barber and Thomas concluded that the behaviors of hugging and kissing most accurately exemplify physical affection.

Previously, physical affection had not been examined conceptually or operationally in the parent-child literature. In a review of the ten most frequently cited parent-child studies, Barber and Thomas (1986) found that five measured physical affection in the form of kissing, hugging, or cuddling (Coopersmith, 1967; Heilbrun, 1964; Schaefer, 1965; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957; Sears, Rau, & Alpert, 1965). Barber and Thomas utilized The Parent Contact Scale (Hollender et al., 1973), finding it

to be the only instrument specifically designed to measure physical affection that children receive from parents. This instrument assesses levels of parental kissing and hugging, touching of the child's hand, touching of the child's back or shoulder, and picking the child up. Additionally, items include the child sitting in parents lap, playful contact behavior from parent to child, and tucking the child in bed. To date, the Hollender Parent Contact Scale remains the only measurement of physical affection identified by this author.

Few studies have investigated physical affection as a distinct dimension of parenting behavior. This research slowly emerged during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, countering the medical ideal and behaviorist views of parenting, which discouraged holding and responding quickly to infant demands (Traina, 2005). The purpose of the present investigation is to explore the experience of physical affection as a distinct dimension of the parent-child relationship as reported by young adults as they reflect back on their childhood experience of physical affection received from their parents. A phenomenological approach is used in an attempt to capture the essence of the experience as perceived and described by the participant, without preconceived notions of results that might emerge. The purpose of the study was not to address the experience of inappropriate touch such as physical or sexual abuse.

### **A Note on Appropriate Versus Inappropriate Touch**

Touch within a context of physical affection is an intimate expression communicated with certain behaviors. However, all cultures have taboos surrounding touch (Jones, 1994). As Jones describes:

There are two kinds of touches that are so universally objectionable that the taboos they violate have become formalized, written down in laws, or in the rules of organizations. One is the taboo against unwanted sexual touches.... The other formal taboo is the one against a threatening or physically aggressive touch. In many states, 'a touch in anger' is the legal definition of assault. It does not require that the toucher actually hit or physically abuse the other person, only that a threat be implied by the touch. (p. 132-133)

Jones cites the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (1978) with a definition of child sexual abuse: "contacts between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person" (p. 2). The definitions of physical and sexual abuse help to clarify the differences between physical/sexual abuse and physical affection.

Traina (2005), who argues that touch is a condition of human flourishing, states however, that

A culture or society that does not define and proscribe bad touch also violates its members' rights to healthy touch. This standard will vary according to the culture.... Minimally, however, the following kinds of touch must be forbidden: touch that inevitably produces harmful biochemical consequences; touch that damages or threatens to damage physically or harms emotionally within the syntax of a culture or its relational history; and touch that transgresses the limits of appropriate relationship, especially between unequals. (p. 19)

The purpose of the present investigation is to study physical affection in the context of normal and appropriate expressions of fond and tender feelings from parents towards their children. The phenomena of child physical and sexual abuse will not be a focus of the current study. In the present investigation, this point was clearly made in writing to the participants before they consented to be interviewed for the study.

Potential participants were provided with names and numbers of professional psychologists to call if they wanted to discuss an experience of physical or sexual abuse.



## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### **Introduction**

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first part, the theoretical rationale for phenomenology as a research method will be described. The second part will present and describe the procedural steps devised for this study.

#### **Phenomenology as a Research Method**

Approaches that rely upon qualitative analysis of data are based upon different assumptions about the nature of reality than those held in natural science. Quantitative researchers build and test theoretical models; phenomenological researchers rely on descriptions of lived experience and narrative reports to constitute their data.

The phenomenological approach comes out of the joint traditions of existential philosophy, founded by Soren Kierkegaard, and phenomenology, founded by Edmund Husserl (Valle, King, & Halle, 1989). Existential philosophy focuses on fundamental themes of human experience, such as aloneness, freedom, meaninglessness and death. Phenomenology implies the study of human consciousness as it is given in experience, and it involves the systematic study of experience of human meaning (Hein & Austin, 2001). Husserl (1954) “viewed experience as consisting of both concrete particulars and categories of meaning to which they belong” (Hein & Austin, p. 4). Husserl formulated the methods unique to the investigation of human experience and behavior (Wertz, 2005). He used two procedures called epoches, which attempt to eliminate influences that bias the descriptions. The first is the epoche of the natural sciences. The researcher abstains from the use of theories, hypotheses, explanations, and conceptualizations of the topic

under study. This allows the researcher to study the phenomena in as pure form as possible, without use of prior scientific preconceptions. Husserl's description of this epoche was "to the things themselves." The first epoche then allows for the second epoche: natural attitude. The natural attitude seeks knowledge of human experience by a reflection on the life-world as presented and without preconceived beliefs of the phenomena being studied. The researcher enters the lived world of the other so as to understand the meanings as they are given.

Husserl refers to the focus on experience (apart from issues concerning the existence of what is experienced) as the phenomenological psychological reduction ...because it 'reduces' the investigative field to the psychological. The presence of the psychological allows the investigator to reflectively describe the meanings and psychological performances of lived-through situations. (Wertz, 2005, p. 168)

The phenomenological movement at first provided almost no formal procedures or methodological specifications. Influenced by Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Giorgi developed a structured method for conducting phenomenological research (Wertz, 2005). Giorgi (1970) emphasized the relevancy of the phenomena of human life, and stated that "in order to be studied adequately, rigorously, and as they were experienced, these phenomena required conceptions, techniques, and procedures that natural scientific approach could not provide" (p. 52). Using participants' descriptions of experience, narratives are analyzed to reveal general structures for groups of people (Polkinghorne, 1989). Polkinghorne states:

the purpose of descriptive narrative research is to produce an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals or groups use to make sequences or events in their lives or organizations meaningful... the research does not construct a new narrative, it merely reports already existing ones. (pp. 161-162)

Interview narratives provide the human sciences with a method for developing theory construction that incorporates an understanding of complex relationships changing through time (Mishler, 1986).

Giorgi (1997) states that in order to understand the phenomenological method, particular terms must be understood:

Consciousness refers to the awareness of the system, “embodied-self-world-others,” all of which (and aspects and parts of which) are intuitable, that is, presentable; and precisely as they are presented, without addition or deletion, that is the strict meaning of phenomenon. Phenomenon within phenomenology always means that whatever is given, or presents itself, is understood precisely as it presents itself to the consciousness of the person entertaining the awareness. Intentionality means that an act of consciousness is always directed to an object that transcends it. Phenomenology is concerned with the phenomena that are given to experiencing individuals, because nothing is possible if one does not take consciousness into account, but all of the givens must be understood in their given modalities, as phenomena, that is, not as real existents. Within phenomenology this is possible because one is concerned with the objects of intuition to which consciousness is necessarily directed, and these objects do not have to have the characteristic of being “real.” (p. 238)

Wertz (2005) outlines a process developed by Giorgi (1989) for analyzing descriptions provided by research participants. Four steps are involved, which include (a) reading the entire description as a way to first gain a sense of the whole, (b) re-reading the descriptions in order to identify specific “meaning units” within the text, (c) reflecting on the meaning units and discerning what the meaning units might reveal about the phenomenon being investigated, and (d) synthesizing the meaning units into statements that exemplify the psychological structure of the experience.

Research steps developed by Giorgi (1970) and Colaizzi (1978) have commonalities which include the following:

1. The researcher immerses herself or himself in the data by reading the transcript several times to develop an overall sense of the phenomena.

2. Statements relevant to the phenomena are identified. Each non-repetitive statement is thematized so as to capture its meaning.

3. Concepts and themes are used to develop a description of the phenomenon.

If there is more than one participant, these steps are repeated and compared across transcripts. A general structural description is developed that shares the common themes of the phenomenon experienced by the participants. The themes rely on actual words used by participants, using the factual data from the participants (Hein and Austin, 2001). These steps of the phenomenological method come from the hermeneutic tradition of interpretation, which evolved from methods of Biblical interpretation. Hermeneutics is the study of understanding texts by way of a personal, existential engagement with the text (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). As cited by Valle, King, and Halling (1989), “Hermeneutics seeks to elucidate and make explicit our practical understanding of human actions by providing an interpretation” (Packer, 1985, p. 1086).

Bracketing, common to qualitative research, is an essential component to phenomenological research, as it provides a mechanism in which the researcher reveals and lays aside previous biases regarding the phenomenon being studied. It is essential to the process so that the emerging themes are as given by the participant. The researcher is interviewed by a co-researcher who asks the same question as that given to the research participants. The same steps as those used in analyzing the participant interviews are used in the bracketing interview. The researcher’s themes are identified so that the

researcher becomes aware of the presuppositions and biases that need to be laid aside during the analysis of participant interviews (Colaizzi, 1978). Gilgun (2005) states that:

It is better to state clearly what our assumptions, values, and hypotheses are so that we can test them against the texts we produce. Unchecked, naïve empiricism can result in researchers shaping findings in ways they do not recognize and missing potentially important analyses. (p. 41)

The identification of the topic is the first step in the research project. There are questions of interest that psychologists in the natural science procedure cannot address in a satisfactory way (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Alternatives to natural science can afford the answers to such questions. Questions might include the descriptions of lived experiences, such as the experience of regret, divorce, discrimination, abortion, and so forth. The researcher reviews existing knowledge and identifies the gaps between what is known and what is not, and the ways in which qualitative knowledge can help to fill in those gaps (Wertz, 2005).

Participants are selected “whose experience most fully and authentically manifests or makes accessible what the researcher is interested in” (Wertz, 2005, p. 170). The number of participants is not fixed beforehand. While it may be possible for one participant to accomplish the goal of the research, the researcher typically recruits additional participants until a saturation of findings is reached (Wertz). The interview usually begins with an open-ended question “please tell me about your experience of \_\_\_\_\_.” Verbal or written descriptions are then given by the participant. No other leading questions are asked, except to clarify what has been stated or to request the participant to say more about a statement already made by the participant.

The results of research studies are sound if they have a high degree of correspondence with “objective” reality (Pollio et al., 1997). The soundness of the results of phenomenological studies can be judged according to the following criteria:

(a) internal validity, or the degree to which relationships between variables are correct; (b) external validity, or the degree to which the findings are generalizable to the population from which the participants were drawn; (c) reliability, the degree to which the results can be replicated; and (d) objectivity, the degree of confidence that the findings are reflective of the subjects and not the researchers biases or prejudices (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In phenomenological research, internal validity is the degree to which participants agree with the descriptions. External validity is the degree to which others who have had the similar experiences agree with the descriptions (Hector, 2003).

Gilgun (2005), however, offers the term *trustworthiness* over the terms of validity and reliability as she states that “issues of reliability and validity are important but most of us prefer not to use these terms because they connote distance from meanings and lived experience. Instead, most qualitative researchers use the term *trustworthiness*, which requires that researchers demonstrate how they arrived at their analysis and conclusions” (p. 41). Polkinghorne (1989) offered five criteria to aid the reader in evaluating phenomenological research:

First, did the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects’ descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects’ actual experience? Second, is the transcription accurate and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview? Third, in the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Fourth, is it possible to go from the general structural description to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents

and connections in the original examples of the experience? Fifth, is the structural description situation-specific or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations? (p. 57)

Asking these questions demonstrates the concern for fidelity when conducting phenomenological research and the commitment to understanding what the participant is describing and how well their point of view is being represented (Gilgun, 2005).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The data collection and data analysis procedures are described in the following sections:

#### **Bracketing**

Bracketing is vital to the phenomenological investigation. The researcher attempts to identify and make explicit the personal presuppositions about the topic being studied and expectations for the analysis. Prior to the data collection, the researcher must use bracketing techniques to examine why the topic was chosen, the development of the research question, and the preparation for conducting the interview.

Colaizzi (1978) proposed that the researcher should question the topic for investigation by asking “why am I studying this phenomena?” and “how might the factors of my unique personality be related to my selection of this particular phenomenon to investigate?” The researcher should also ask the question: “what are the hidden gains that I might acquire in investigating the topic, and investigating it this way?” (Colaizzi, p. 55).

Gilgun (2005) brings up an additional consideration for the researcher who has chosen to conduct a study involving family research:

With few exceptions, the conduct of qualitative family research involves highly personal and sometimes painful topics that can evoke powerful emotions in researchers and informants. In such evocative situations, researchers have opportunities to explore deep meanings of the phenomena of interest and thus develop new theories and understandings that have rich and nuanced dimensions. At the same time, researchers have a significant task in managing their own emotions. (p. 47)

The current study involves family research. It was important that the researcher was aware of the potential emotions that might be evoked as she listened to the descriptions of the participants. Acknowledging the differences between the researcher's responses and the views of the participants was vital to the interpretation of the interview data (Gilgun, 2005).

There are several reasons for my interest in the topic I chose for investigation. First, I became attentive to the role of physical affection with the birth and rearing of my own five children. Second, in my previous career as a nurse, I spent many years working alongside certified nurse-midwives throughout the pregnancy and birth process. I observed first-hand the interactions between mothers and babies shortly after birth and in the immediate postpartum period. I also observed the physical affection of the mothers for their babies. My education in the field of maternity nursing included the study of literature on infants and the role of touch and proximity to the mothers. The third reason is my interest in the positive psychology approach, which includes relationship dynamics that contribute to, rather than detract from, emotional health. Given these reasons for my interest, I chose the topic of remembered experiences of receiving physical affection from parents.

After reflecting upon these experiences related to physical affection during my childhood, I realized that I might be predisposed to make assumptions about the meaning



and impact of physical affection during childhood. I needed to be aware of this predisposition when conducting the interviews and analyzing the data. Having routinely observed close contact between mothers and their babies, and as one who tends to be physically affectionate with my own children, there is a possibility that I would have had a hidden agenda for validating my own experience of physical affection.

Bracketing also occurred with regard to the development of the interview question. The question can reveal biases the researcher has about the phenomena. The focus of the study was physical affection, as opposed to physical abuse. In order to assure that participants would not be misled regarding the nature of the study, physical affection was defined by the researcher as “fond and tender feelings expressed through physical touch.” This question reflects certain biases: it presupposes that physical affection is always experienced as fond and tender. Thus, participants who did not experience physical affection as fond and tender may have omitted aspects of their experience or altered the report of their recollections while participating in this study. Furthermore, some participants may have been excluded for the same reason.

A bracketing interview was conducted in order to determine the interviewer’s presuppositions with regard to the topic. An experienced phenomenological reviewer conducted the bracketing interview. The researcher was asked the question “Can you please tell me about your experience of physical affection from you parents during childhood?” A transcript of the interview was made from the audio-tape. The transcript was analyzed by a research interpretive group and themes were identified. The research interpretive group consists of individuals meeting on a regular basis whose sole purpose is to read and thematize phenomenological research transcripts. Thematizing the

bracketing interview allowed me to become aware of my perspective regarding physical affection helped me not to introduce my own biases during the data collection process.

In the bracketing interview, several themes emerged:

1. Descriptions of physical affection received by my mother and my father.
2. Comparison between mother and father. I consistently described the differences in the amount and type of physical affection received from my mother versus my father.
3. Defining physical affection – hugs, holding, and holding hands. I provided these usual descriptions of physical affection as well as acts that did not involve touch, such as travel and activities.
4. Feelings evoked from the memories of physical affection. The physical affection received in childhood was described as feelings of warmth and being cared for.
5. The change in physical affection received over time. There was a decline during adolescence. I described the change that occurred in the amount of physical affection given to me during the adolescent period.
6. Experience with own children. Although the question regarded physical affection from my parents, I included descriptions of the physical affection I provided to my own children.

The bracketing interview was useful, as I was able to be more aware of the way in which I functioned throughout the participant interviews. Nowhere in the interviews did I describe my own experience of physical affection I received from my parents or descriptions of physical affection I have given to my children. I did not describe any

preconceived notions about the meaning or impact of physical affection, nor about the various ways in which physical affection is demonstrated.

### Selecting Participants

According to Colaizzi (1978) and Polkinghorne (1989) the essential criteria for selecting participants for a phenomenological investigation are that the participants have experienced the phenomena and are willing and able to articulate their experience. Flyers describing the study were distributed in introductory psychology classes at The University of Tennessee (Appendix A). The flyer was an invitation for the potential participant to talk about their experience of physical affection from their parents. A definition of physical affection was given in the invitation, along with a clarification that the study would not examine the experience of physical or sexual abuse. A snowball method for obtaining participants was also employed as a way to include those who heard about the study from the researcher and/or the participants. Participation in the study was limited to males and females ages 18 to 30 years. An upper age of 30 was arbitrarily chosen by the researcher so as to capture those whose memories of childhood might be more salient. McLean (2005) states: “personally important autobiographical memories are the smallest unit of the life story, which begins to emerge in adolescence” (p. 683). McLean defines late adolescence as ranging in age from 16-27. Because participants were recruited from a pool of university students, primarily freshmen level, all participants had at least a high school education. No effort was made to recruit or exclude potential participants on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, family-of-origin demographics, nationality, or sexual orientation.

While there are no rules about the specific number of participants needed for a phenomenological study, the researcher should continue conducting interviews until saturation of the thematic structure has occurred. In the present study, interviews were conducted beyond saturation of the themes as a result of participants having been scheduled for the interviews. Rather than canceling those interviews that remained scheduled, the researcher chose to continue with those already scheduled. For this study, 21 participants, comprising 13 females and 8 males, responded to the solicitation to participate in the study. Fifteen of the participants responded to a flyer distributed in the introductory psychology class, and six contacted the researcher by word of mouth. Extra credit was offered to those participants recruited from the introductory psychology class.

### Interviewing

According to Polkinghorne (2005) the typical qualitative interview lasts about one hour. Each of the 21 interviews for this study lasted approximately 20 to 25 minutes, even though participants were informed they would have up to one hour or longer if needed.

The interviews took place in secure locations insuring privacy. The informed consent form was handed out and signed by the participant before the interview was conducted (Appendix B). The informed consent included the permission to audio-tape the interview. A copy of the informed consent was kept by the researcher and another copy given to the participant. The participants were encouraged to ask questions regarding their concerns about the study or about any component of the study that they did not understand. They were reminded of their right to stop the interview process at any time. They were also informed that the interview would be taped, but that the taping

could be stopped at any time. The research participants were also informed of the steps of the data analysis.

The interview began with the question “Can you please tell me about your experience of physical affection you received from your parents during childhood?” Beyond the initial question, the interviewer’s comments and questions were kept to a minimum, and no other leading questions were asked. The purpose of any follow-up questions or comments was for clarification, or to ask the participant to say more about a particular experience. When the participant stated that he or she had nothing more to say about the topic, or there was a long pause that indicated completion, the interviewer asked the participant if the interview was complete. Once the participant stated that he or she had nothing more to describe, the interviewer provided a verbal summary of what she heard during the interview, using words that the participant had provided. At that time the participant could clarify descriptions or provide additional comments. The participant was given a post-interview debriefing form (Appendix C) to sign, and a copy was given to the research participant.

### Data Analysis

The usual steps in phenomenological data analysis were taken. First, the bracketing interview, as previously described, was transcribed from the audio-tape verbatim and read by the research group. Common themes were identified as the researcher’s perspective and biases regarding the experience of parental physical affection during childhood. Second, a verbatim transcript was created from each audio-tape of the participant interviews. The interviews were transcribed by either the researcher or a transcriptionist, who signed a confidentiality statement (Appendix D). All

identifying information, such as specific names or places, was removed from the transcript and replaced with the letters XXXX.

Transcripts were presented to the interpretive research group which included eight individuals. The research group met on a regular basis, with no fewer than three members present at any given meeting time. Each group member signed a confidentiality statement wherein they agreed to protect the confidentiality of the participant (Appendix E). Each group member received a copy of the participant transcript. One member read aloud the part of the interviewer and another read aloud the part of the participant. Throughout the reading of each transcript, the group paused periodically to identify and discuss the themes identified in the preceding section. No new themes were added by the researcher that were not identified by the research group, and no themes were deleted that the research group identified.

Upon completion of the reading and thematizing of the transcripts, the research group members returned each copy of the transcript to the researcher. The researcher reviewed the transcripts again, identifying the common themes that emerged across the transcripts. Evidence to support these themes was drawn from the text of each interview. Upon completion of the identification of common themes and supporting statements, the research group was presented with the findings. Discussion of each theme ensued, and the research group verified the accuracy of the findings.

In the final step of the data analysis, the researcher developed a thematic structure and wrote a comprehensive description of the experience of physical affection during childhood. Participant statements were included as examples of the themes and sub-

themes identified within the experience. The results of the final step of the data analysis are presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

In this section, results of the study of the experience of physical affection from parents as remembered from childhood are presented. The section begins with a description of the participants in the study followed by the summary of the themes that emerged from the narratives.

#### **Description of the Participants**

At the time of the interviews, the 21 participants ranged in age from 18 – 29 years. The median and modal age was 19. Twelve of the participants ranged in age from 18-19 years, three from 20-21 years, one from 24-25 years, four from 26-27 years and one from 28-29 years.

Both males and females were solicited to participate. Thirteen females and eight males agreed to participate in the study. Twenty of the participants were identified by the researcher as Caucasian, and one appeared to be African American. All of the 21 participants described characteristics of their family structure in the course of the interview. Twelve of the participants grew up in families in which the biological parents remained married, and were still married at the time of the interview. Another six of the participants described their parents as having divorced during the course of the participant's childhood. Another participant grew up in a household in which the parents were divorced and a stepparent was in the home. Another participant described growing up in a household in which her father had died and a stepfather was in the home. Another participant stated that his mother had been a single mom and he made no mention of a



father or stepfather. Three of the participants who discussed family-of-origin structure also stated that they, themselves, were now married, and mentioned their spouse in the course of the interview. None of the participants mentioned having their own children. The twenty-one narrative summaries are presented in Appendix F.

### **Phenomenological Analysis**

The following thematic structure emerged from the participants' recounted experience of receiving physical affection from parents during childhood (Figure 1). Three main themes developed in the context of a ground, or context, in which the themes are described. The ground was Being Loved and the three main themes were From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received, Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection and Non-Physical Expressions of Affection. The figure consists of the three major themes of the physical affection experience, located on the ground that provides the context in which the themes become figural. The ground of Being Loved is represented by the outer circle. The lines connecting the themes indicate that each theme is interrelated to the others. Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection has been placed at the top of the circle because it interrelates most strongly with the other two themes. Each of the three themes included sub-themes (Figure 2). The first theme, From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received, included two sub-themes: (a) Parents and (b) Grandparents. The second theme, Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection, included two sub-themes of (a) Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands and (b) Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking. The third theme, Non-Physical Expressions of Affection, included two sub-themes of (a) Verbal Affection and (b) Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities.

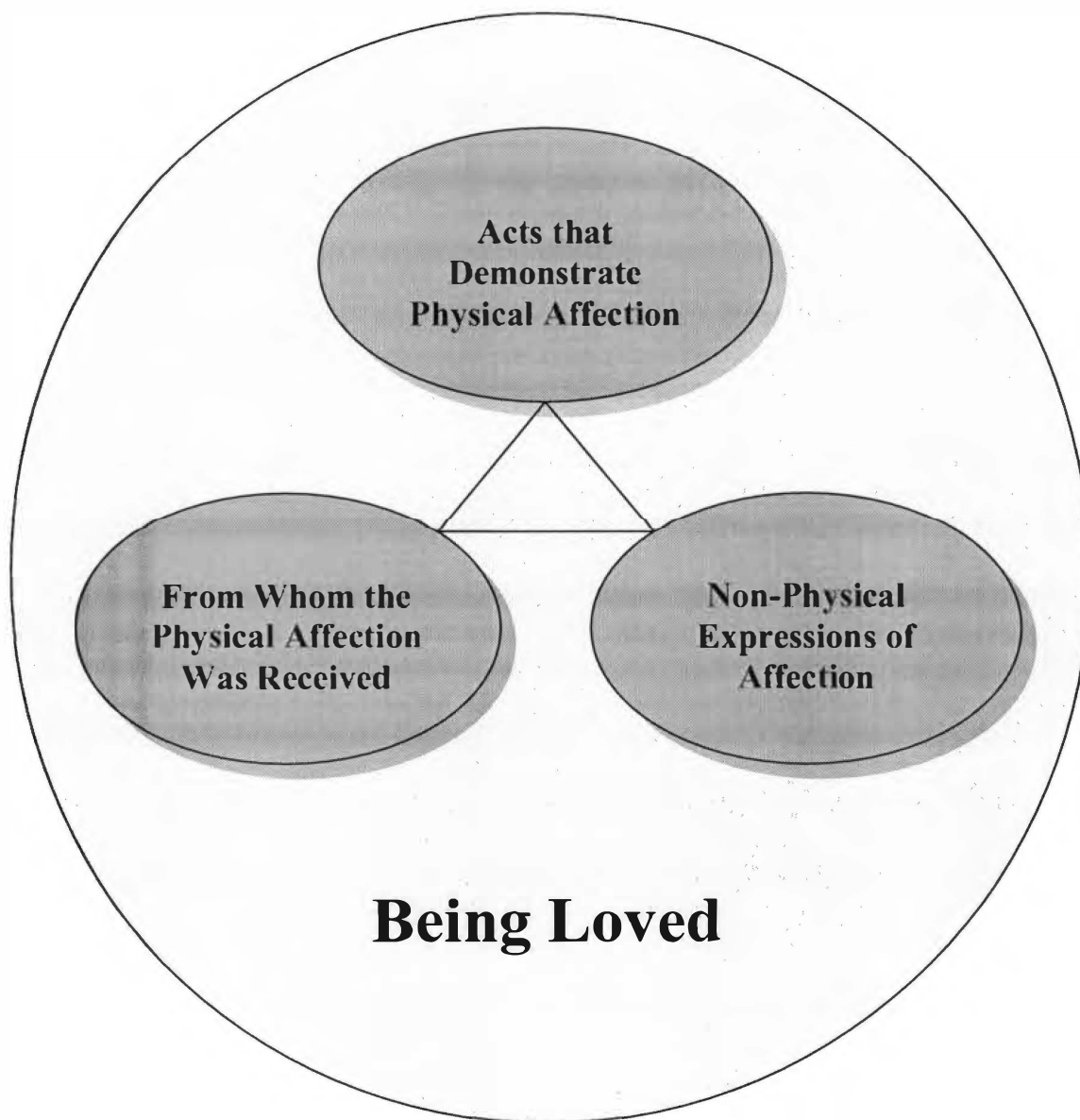


Figure 1. Thematic Structure of the Experience of Physical Affection From Parents as Remembered From Childhood

Physical Affection from Parents as Remembered from Childhood

- Ground:        Being Loved
- Theme 1:       From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received
- (a) Parents
  - (b) Grandparents
- Theme 2:       Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection
- (a) Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands
  - (b) Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking
- Theme 3:       Non-Physical Expressions of Affection
- (a) Verbal Affection
  - (b) Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities

Figure 2. Outline of Thematic Structure of the Experience of Physical Affection

Participants consistently described feelings of Being Loved associated with physical affection. The term *affection* implies positive feelings, yet the overall context of descriptions of physical affection lies within a context of Being Loved. Each of the themes was also described in the context of being loved. The acts of physical affection became the mechanism by which the other themes were described. The two themes of From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received and Non-Physical Expressions of Affection derived from the participant's narratives typically included descriptions of the acts of physical affection.

### Ground

#### Being Loved

The ground of Being Loved provides the context upon which three main themes became figural. As participants described experiences of physical affection, they included descriptions of being loved. Many of the participants used the word "love" to describe the feeling of being loved, while others used words that are typically used in the context of describing love, such as loving, affectionate, and caring. Some provided descriptions of being told they were loved. Some related that being loved felt good, close, warm, snug, or secure. The following excerpts from the transcripts are examples of various ways in which participants reported Being Loved:

Well, my parents were very affectionate. When I compare my parents to other parents, I always thought my parents were very loving.... They would always hug us and kiss us when we were little. And let us know that they loved us.... My parents were always doing, always offering to give that love. (Participant #2)

When I was growing up, my parents were always affectionate and caring towards me. I actually talked to one of my friends the other day, talked about how my family is like a "full house" family, we give hugs a lot. They were very affectionate towards me, and caring. (Participant # 4)

My parents were always really affectionate. My mom always hugged us before we left. She always hugged us in the mornings... and we always had family dinners. We always, we had a pool, so my dad always played in the pool with us, like played games. So they were always around, always telling us that they loved us. (Participant # 5)

No matter where I am, I always feel, okay, she's [mother] gonna be mad if I do something wrong, but on the other hand, she's just gonna give you a hug and be like 'I still love you, but you can't do that.' Just something along those lines, cause she always tells me that. 'No matter what you do, I'll still love you.' (Participant # 7)

My dad was very loving and caring and my mom was, too. My mom took care of us, and my dad worked, so my mom was around when we got home from school. They were very loving.... There was never a time when they did bad stuff, always loving, caring..... Yeah, and see my dad died when I was 11. So my mom was wanting to hug us all the time. She just got more protective. We were always loving each other and everything. (Participant # 8)

My parents... they were just really loving. We always sit really close to each other. You know, so my brother was born and so then we became the family of five. But we always hated pulling a chair up to the table, I don't know why, so we'd always smush into a booth... but we were like that a lot, we kind of didn't mind being smushed together. (Participant #13)

But with my stepfather, we were being hugged and held. Just like when you are flirting or something and someone pats you on the shoulder... they make some sort of a physical connection. It shows some interest or desire or love. But there was no touch with my father. With my stepdad, he was in there with us. Hugging us, playing with us, more a sense of touch that showed connection. A lot of interaction with my stepdad was playful. Get you down, tickle you, very loving. A direct touch.... I remember when we moved to XXXX, my sister was in kindergarten and I was in second grade, and my mom would play tapes for us before we went to bed. They would be fairy tales. I remember Rumpelstiltskin, and when I think about it I feel warmth because it was very soothing to have these same stories every night to fall asleep to. (Participant #15)

A hug was always thought of as not just a friendly gesture, but that there was more to it than that. It was a sense of love or a sacred move, and not just something you would do to a friend you hadn't seen in a couple of weeks. (Participant #16)

I was in somewhat I guess you could call it a loving household. It's not like they just kind of let me be, they tried to be involved in a lot of stuff we did.... So

growing up, the occasional hugs from time to time. There was never any major, I guess you call it, you know, love fest. It wasn't nothing big. It was just small positive reinforcement. I think they just felt it important to keep a bond between them and their children. (Participant # 17)

I guess they would show affection by hugging, and saying "I love you." I guess, like, my mom is really affectionate. (Participant # 18)

And Dad and I still hug quite a bit. It's nice... I mean it feels good. When Dad hugs, he hugs for real. He'll give you a solid hug. It feels good to be close like that. (Participant # 1)

[Physical affection] meant a lot to me. I think it's because of the feeling you get. You feel warm and snug when you are being hugged. Or being held. It gives you not just a knowledge of security but a physical feeling of security. (Participant # 20)

Of the 21 participants, two did not consistently describe the experience of being loved. Both of these participants reported not receiving much physical affection. One of those participants described her experience of not wanting much physical affection from her parents, but knew it was available and was comforted by knowing that it was there.

She stated:

I was very independent as a child. I could play for hours and hours alone... so when my brother would go seek attention and affection from my parents, he would get it and they would give it, but I was kind of off doing my own independent thing.... I think if I had wanted the affection or attention I think it would have been available to me... because I saw the physical affection with my brother, it was comforting to know it was there. That is a huge difference.... So just knowing it's available, knowing I could get it if I wanted it. (Participant # 19)

Although participant #19 did not use words such as love, caring, or warmth, she did state that she felt comforted knowing that physical affection was available to her. In contrast, another participant described the experience of not receiving enough affection when growing up and described feelings of the fear that she experiences when she is alone:

There wasn't a lot of affection when I was growing up... my mom, she just didn't want to be around and do all that stuff.... I really wanted to be held. I hate being alone. It really scares me now. I don't really know why. If I'm not with someone, I feel scared and alone. So I make sure I go out of my way to have a few people around all the time. I feel...just kind of abandoned... I was lacking someone just holding my hand, and just being hugged. (Participant # 9)

### Themes

In this section, each of the three themes of the Experience of Physical Affection from Parents as Remembered from Childhood, along with examples from the interviews that illustrate themes and its sub-themes from the interviews, are described. Within the text of each interview, three themes emerged in the context of the ground of Being Loved. Identified themes were found in over half of all transcripts. Although the themes are discussed separately to provide clarity, at times more than one theme is found in the text chosen to illustrate a particular theme.

#### From Whom Physical Affection Was Received

The first theme discussed here is From Whom Physical Affection Was Received. The research question asked of each participant included the phrase "physical affection from parents." Therefore, all participants described physical affection from their parents. Descriptions also frequently included a comparison between the amount of physical affection provided by the mother versus the father or stepfather.

#### Parents

The following examples illustrate the sub-theme of Parents:

Physical affection from mom and dad, I have several, I have a lot of early memories.... and so from mom and dad there was always a kiss goodnight. So whenever we brushed our teeth at night we would then go kiss them goodnight. (Participant # 1)

Well my parents were very affectionate. When I compare my parents to other parents, I always thought my parents were very loving.... Affection was pure from my parents when I was younger... My parents were always doing, always offering to give that love.... I think my parents always sacrificed for us. (Participant #2)

I guess I need to break it up and talk about one and then the other [mom and dad]. (Participant # 3)

My parents were always really affectionate. My mom always hugged us before we left. She always hugged us in the mornings. (Participant # 5)

My dad was very loving and caring and my mom was, too.... They would always be holding me and hugging me and stuff like that. Always informed me they were there for me. (Participant # 8)

Well, from my parents... My parents got divorced, so physical affection I received from my father was extremely limited because I rarely ever saw him. Of course when I was around my father, it was never, I never felt any limitations as to the love I could receive through physical affection even though I wasn't necessarily around him enough to know him very well. But I guess with my mom, I mean, as far as physical affection goes, always hugging... (Participant #11)

My mom tucked me into bed until I was about in fourth grade with a kiss and a hug. And then I kind of grew out of that.... and she hugs me, my parents both hug me when I come back. (Participant # 20)

Many of the participants also provided descriptions of the comparison between the mother and the father or stepfather. The research question solicited descriptions of physical affection received from parents during childhood. Naturally, all participants provided descriptions of those experiences with each parent. Participants in the current study also provided comparisons between their mother and father (or stepparent).

Mothers were typically described as providing more physical affection than Fathers. The first two examples below state that the father provided more physical affection than the mother. The next eight examples are the reverse.



Let's see, I was more of a daddy's girl. I would say something to my dad, and whenever I got something right he always hugged me, you know. We'd always go, like, fishing and he would always come to all my sporting events. My mom worked a lot, so she always thought my dad was trying to turn me into a boy, she always used to get mad at him for that. But my mom was always there, she was just, she was more like the pants in the family I guess.... My dad was the one that taught me to write and to read, but my mom did a lot of the school work. You know my dad's like the one who has a physical education degree. He wanted to actually home school me, cause he wanted me to be around more. But my mom decided that he wasn't a good enough teacher for me.... I think my mom got jealous a lot, about how much time I spent with my dad.... I talk to my dad more on a different level than I do my mom. (Participant # 6)

One time me and my brother got in trouble for something, and we both got a whipping, and my mom was always the one to give it, not my dad. He never did. My mom would do it, and I'd run straight to my dad. And he would hold me. I mean, most kids do that. One gets on you, and you run to the other. (Participant # 8)

Well our family has always been really close. A really tight knit family.... And I'll have to say I probably got more from my mom because I was her only son. (Participant # 10)

With my mother, me and her always got along, a lot more than I did with my dad... which is probably mostly how a lot of people are. I mean my dad was the one that took, you know, like give the belt every now and then... that's why the reason for my affection toward him is different than my mom. (Participant # 12)

I guess I'm a lot closer to my mom, we're more affectionate with each other. My dad's kinda more quiet too, so that might be a reason, but I just always felt like my mom was always more of my friend when I was younger, and she like took care of me, and my dad just kind of was the disciplinarian. (Participant # 14)

I know she [mother] used to put us to bed at night and read to us and touch us and hug and kiss us goodnight. Maybe in contrast to my father, he is pretty much a removed person, not very affectionate at all. It's weird too, because the level of affection sort of reflected the level of interaction in general. My mom, when we were around her, we were with her and doing things together. With my dad, it was more simply we were all in the same house, but we weren't interacting. (Participant # 15)

I would say my mother was fairly physically affectionate. She was a big hugger and if you had a bad day or something like that. My dad was much less so. Great guy, but not very involved, not very physically affectionate, not very verbal.... I never felt particularly close to him and I don't know if that's because my mom

had such a strong personality that it interfered, or what it was, but I think I felt closer to him the older I've gotten.... But it was my mom who was more the nurturer. (Participant # 17)

I guess we didn't have a lot of physical affection growing up. Mostly I think because my dad wasn't that way. It wasn't because he didn't love us, or was cold or aggressive, or anything like that. I think he was raised to not have physical affection, to not touch, to not show his emotions in any way, shape, or form. So angry, sad, happy, he didn't show affection at all. My mom was the exact opposite. She was very physical, very affectionate.... (Participant # 19)

There's less about my Dad. Cause he, uh, whenever I was, like, growing up more towards when I don't remember, all the way til, oh, when was it, six, seven, twelve, he was an alcoholic. And, I never saw him that much. It didn't really affect me, just cause I never saw it. My mom made sure I was never around it. Like, I didn't really even know til I was in high school. And uh, I mean, looking back, like some memories, I'm like "oh that makes more sense now." But, um, he just wasn't there. And now he's been sober for seven or eight years. So... and that's probably why we don't have as close a relationship as my mom did, just cause whenever me and my mom were getting really close, he just wasn't around. (Participant # 3)

The above examples illustrate that when participants provide descriptions of physical affection from parents, they address each parent separately as they compare and contrast the differing types and amount of physical affection received from each parent.

### Grandparents

Although descriptions of grandparents were not solicited, grandparents were consistently included within the context of the narratives. If participants had reported that grandparents had been the primary care providers during childhood, it might be expected that descriptions of grandparents as parent substitutes would be provided. However, none of the participants reported that grandparents had been the primary care providers for the participants during childhood. Nevertheless, participants consistently described experiences of receiving physical affection from grandparents. Many of the participants asked the researcher if they could talk about their grandparents. Others did so without

asking. Important to note within the context of several descriptions of grandparents is the ground of Being Loved and the comparisons that participants often make between the various grandparents. Examples of the sub-theme of Grandparents include:

My grandfather, I always liked his hugs, they meant a lot to me.... I guess he would say 'I love you' and stuff, but he wasn't a real, not much, he didn't talk much about emotions or what people meant to him, but when he hugged you, a lot was conveyed when he hugged you. The way he held you. Even when I was in my twenties, before he died, it was his hugs that conveyed a lot that I think he couldn't say.... I think it was definitely his intention to communicate something. (Participant # 1)

Well my mom's side of the family, like my grandparents, are not affectionate. Like they'll give us a kiss and a hug when they first see us, but they don't really care to know anything about us.... But then my dad's side of the family it's the complete opposite. His parents are very affectionate and they are always involved like we always have like big, huge family gatherings. Like at least once a month we get together. And everyone has to hug everybody and kiss everybody, when you come and when you leave. (Participant #5)

Well, whenever she'd [mother] be gone to class or work, my grandmothers would come over. My grandmother, my mom's mom, was the same way as my dad. She was always like putting me in her lap. She always used to fall asleep, though, when I was in her lap. I never used to fall asleep on her, she used to fall asleep on me, so I would just kind of sit there. (Participant # 6)

But when I was a kid, my whole family was like that. Always wanting to pick me up and hold me. Like my grandma and aunts and uncles and stuff.... My grandmas, they were just always playing with me, putting me on their shoulders and doing something like that. (Participant # 8)

My grandparents... they were very affectionate... like they would always hold me and hug me and that was really nice. When I got to go over there and visit them, especially my grandmother, she loved holding me when I was a kid. And hugging was a big thing with them. Every time I would come over they'd hug me and cuddle up. And it was really sweet, and I'd really miss that when I didn't get to spend a lot of time with them... and even now, I kind of miss them. Because they were very loving. (Participant # 9)

I remember liking to sit in my grandparents' laps and stuff, especially my grandpa, because he used to do the little horsey thing where you bounce up and down, and that was just completely a gleeful experience. (Participant # 11)

My mom's parents, I only saw them a couple times a year so I didn't know them as well, but I was just as comfortable around them as I was my dad's parents. They [my dad's parents] lived close by and every time I went to see them they would just give me hugs and kisses whenever I got there, as with my dad's parents. But, I was still as comfortable with my mom's parents even though I didn't see them as much. (Participant # 14)

His [my father's] mom, I remember when we would go visit her, it actually got on my nerves, because she was one of these who would sort of hold your cheeks [demonstrates] and sort of give you several kisses on your cheeks, and that felt invasive to me.... My mom's parents I would say they were moderately physically affectionate. (Participant # 16)

In summary, the first theme of From Whom the Physical Affection was Received included descriptions of parents and grandparents. When describing the physical affection received from parents, participants typically compared the amount and type of physical affection from each parent.

#### Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection

The second theme is Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection. Although the most frequent description of physical affection included "kisses" and "hugs," all of the participants described other acts of touching that were a demonstration of physical affection. For this discussion, acts that demonstrated physical affection were categorized into two sub-themes: (a) Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands, and (b) Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking. The first sub-theme includes those acts that were described as discrete acts of physical affection. The second sub-theme includes those demonstrations of physical affection that involve acts of various types of holding. The first set of quotations illustrates the sub-theme of Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands. Following these quotations is another set to illustrate the sub-theme of Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking.

## Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands

And so from mom and dad there was always a kiss goodnight. So whenever we brushed our teeth at night we would then go kiss them goodnight. I remember hugs from Dad. I remember Dad bending down and giving hugs and stuff.... And I remember holding Dad's hand.... I remember having walked somewhere and holding Mom's hand, and that was something I am pretty sure I initiated. (Participant # 1)

The first thing I think bout is a story of when my dad would drop us off for school. He would always kind of joke with us and kid, you know "come give daddy a hug and kiss"... but you know they would always hug us and kiss us when we were little. (Participant # 2)

My mom tucked me into bed until I was about in fourth grade with like, a kiss and a hug.... One time I had surgery... they [parents] went to the hospital with me, and before I went under, they had to put me through anesthesia, or whatever. I had I.V.s in my hands, and they just stood there. My Dad held my hand and just squeezed while they put the I.V. in me.... And then one time... I think I was something like six or seven, I ran into the coffee table, and I had to get stitches in my head.... My Dad took me.... I held his hand that time, too. (Participant # 4)

Every night before I went to bed they would kiss me on the cheek. And as I got older, and they still tried to hug me as much as they could, pat me on the back and all that stuff... there were times like when I was sad, they were always there for me to you know, if I wasn't having a good day, my mom would give me a hug, and try to make me feel better. That hug or kiss on the cheek would always make me feel better.... Whenever I was a kid and we'd go to the mall, my mom would always hold my hand. (Participant # 8)

I kissed my mom, and she would always kiss me goodbye when I went to school in the morning. And I would always kiss her goodnight when I came in, and my dad would always hug me before he went to work. I would always hug them goodnight when I came in. (Participant # 10)

I remember a lot of Halloweens for some strange reason. I remember always having to hold one of my parent's hands and them being very cautious as to wanting to walk up to the door with me, and watching me the whole time. (Participant # 11)

They, you know, started out holding our hands, and, you know at times it was often a safety thing, but then you know they'd just do it all the time....They [parents] would come in at night, every single night, and we would all do prayers together by the bed, and they would always hold our hands and give us a hug...we

would actually get reprimanded if we didn't hug and kiss our parents and tell them goodbye. Every time we left, from the car, wherever. (Participant 13)

We will hug each other. When I was younger it was more than now... we would you know, hug each other when we leave the house, and I'd give my mom or dad a peck on the cheek... or vice versa. (Participant # 14)

I know she [mother] used to put us in bed at night and read to us and touch us and hug and kiss us goodnight.... My mother would be very affectionate and we would hug and kiss.... (Participant # 15)

#### Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking

In addition to Kissing, Hugging, and Holding Hands, participants also described Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, and Rocking. This sub-theme seems to describe various kinds of holding activities, including holding or sitting on the parent's lap. Examples include:

I can remember one time when I was about twelve probably, I was having a rough night and was upset about something and my mom came in and held me like a baby really, and just kind of rocked me.... She put her arms around me and just kind of held me and rocked me until I calmed down.... I remember a funny thing that happened. When I was probably five or six, we had an old wooden rocking chair that my mom had rocked my older brother in, and had rocked me in, and I still liked to be rocked a lot at five and six, and she was rocking me, and the rocking chair fell apart, and we both hit the floor. (Participant # 20)

I think mom always wanted to hold me a lot. I even remember being a teenager and she was like "you're not too big for me to hold." And I was way too big for her to hold! And she would try, and she would try to rock me and I would say "Mom, this is crazy!" And I remember being little and I was in Kindergarten, having to learn a bunch of memory verses, and I remember sitting on her lap while she held the Bible, and that was usually a really good experience. (Participant # 1)

When we were little we would all lie on the couch and I remember we would lie on the floor and watch T.V., and I guess cuddle is the word, when we were little. (Participant # 2)

And I remember when I got in my first car accident, I wrecked my first car. And I like hit my head on the steering wheel, and the air bags had like burned my arms and stuff. And both my parents came, and it was like one o'clock in the morning,

and both my parents came.... My mom was like very comforting and holding me while I cried and was like “You’re gonna be okay, it’s gonna be okay.”  
(Participant # 5)

When I was, I guess, about four or five years old, there was a rocking chair. And in my bedroom and right before I would go to sleep I would always sit in my dad’s lap in that rocking chair and go “rocky daddy, rocky daddy”... and he would always sit there and rock me until I go to sleep. (Participant # 6)

I can go to her [mother] and you know she’d hold me and be like “it’s okay”... and it kind of helped me out that way, and sort of made me feel better.... My senior year, I was running track and I had a big meet and everything.... I got hurt, and I went to the emergency... and she was there the whole time, just scared cause I was in so much pain.... And she just held me as I couldn’t move at all.  
(Participant # 7)

I remember always wanting to be held as a child, always wanting to be picked up even when I was told I was too big to be picked up, I still wanted to be picked up.  
(Participant # 11)

... just like hop in the bed, you know, just snuggle, put my arm around her, my leg around her... I would snuggle her, just like my other brothers do.... But back to the snuggling, I mean we’d just snuggle, not like a boyfriend and girlfriend snuggle, totally different. (Participant # 12)

My mom used to hold me in her lap for a long time when I was way too big and too old to be held and all that, but she was still doing it. But we would cuddle... there was no harm or no bad connotations with it or anything....She would just rock me, and sometimes I would be like “okay Mom,” because I wanted to grow up faster and wanted to be older... and there would be somewhat of baby talk with the rocking and the cuddling. (Participant # 21)

The sub-themes of Acts that Demonstrate Physical Affection include the touching behaviors that participants perceived as demonstrative of physical affection. The acts of physical affection were frequently described in the context of times of transition during a day, such as leaving and coming home, going to bed for the night, and unexpected events. Leaving and coming home was often met with hugs and kisses. Unexpected events, which seemed to require a need for comfort, were often met with holding. Going to bed at night often included rocking and holding as well as kissing and holding hands.

## Non-Physical Expressions of Affection

The third theme discussed is Non-Physical Expressions of Affection. The original description of the research study provided a definition of physical affection as “fond and tender feelings expressed through physical touch.” Participants consistently described aspects of the experience of physical affection not anticipated in this definition. Within this theme of Non-Physical Expressions of Affection are the two sub-themes of

(a) Verbal Affection, and (b) Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities. The

following are the two sub-themes with examples from the transcripts given for each:

### Verbal Affection

For as long as I can remember my mom gave me a hug and a kiss and told me she loved me every night when I went to bed.... I always give him a hug when I leave, and tell him I love him. But sort of just random times in the day he may walk over and give me a hug, and tell me that he misses me. (Participant # 20)

Always lots of hugs, kisses, but the verbal piece was always there.... We always ate dinner as soon as we got home from school, like five o'clock. And my mom would make us all sit down. Like we couldn't go out and play, like we always had to have dinner together. And she would like ask us about our day, and she always wanted to know exactly what we did, how was school. (Participant # 5)

She would always tell me that “no matter what you do, I'll still love you.”  
(Participant # 7)

They would show it by telling you, but by affection, too.... Like as a kid, sometimes you may not understand the verbal, so you need the physical, too.  
(Participant # 8)

I guess they would show affection by hugging, and saying “I love you.”  
(Participant # 18)

Dad gets, he gets so like overly excited, that he always wanted to hug and talk and talk and he has all kinds of questions.... And just all kinds of questions, questions, questions, questions, questions.... When I first started working I remember the first day, like the second day of work I came home crying because some girl was really mean to me at work. And she [mother] was like “oh its gonna be okay,



you'll just go back tomorrow and it will be better.".... Just comforting with words. She tries to talk it out, and say what she thinks. (Participant # 4)

### Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, and Other Activities

When the participants recalled memories of physical affection from parents, they described a wide array of activities. Participants frequently stated that they were unsure if particular acts could be defined as physical affection. Others noted that they knew particular descriptions were not actual descriptions of physical affection, but wanted to provide the descriptions anyway. Others stated that although physical touch was not involved, they perceived the demonstrations to be a part of affection. Examples from the transcripts include the following excerpts:

I remember Mom coming to get in bed with me in the morning, laying really close to me. (Participant # 1)

He [father] was always involved with my sports when I was growing up, and my mom would always come and watch, and my dad would coach or help if he could.... But he was always there and always involved.... And we always liked football, and we would always block each other, like in the hallway, like just out of nowhere, he would just buck shoulders.... And then my mom will just shake her head and like "don't break anything." He loves it; it is affection. (Participant # 2)

I guess another sporting thing, the first time I ever hit [a ball], not like any kind of touch, but it touched my heart, I guess you could say. My dad, like I didn't think he was there, like when I hit it. And like he had just pulled up on his, uh, this motorcycle he had just gotten or something. And he was watching from the parking lot when I hit it, and he honked his horn when I was going around second. That was really cool. (Participant # 3)

We are a huge competitive family, so like contact sports and football, and riding the waves at the beach. We'd all, this is what I mean, for some reason we don't all think to get six different floats, we all wrestle over one... and we'd go camping, and we would sleep in tiny, tiny tents all together. And even, even when we got a bigger tent, we would all end up, cause it would be cold, we would all end up in one big ball in the middle... and they were very affectionate, I grew up in a very affectionate family. And nobody was scared to be affectionate. (Participant # 4)

We would play like games in the pool, where like my dad would be like the monster or something, you know. So we would be like running around the pool and you have to dive in and get out before he can get you. And we would play for like hours I remember. And we would be characters. I was always Sailor Moon or something, so I was like, could fly through the water.... So we would play just all night until it got dark. (Participant # 5)

I used to sleep with her [mother] until I was seven or eight or something like that. She was always there. So just any kind of interaction with her, it was always warm, it was never negative or anything.... We had an apartment, and it was one bedroom, and I just slept in her room.... I slept with her for awhile until, I want to say, probably second grade. I stopped when I got my own bed. (Participant # 7)

And when we would go to bed, both my, my mom would come into my room first, and my dad would go into XXXX's room. And they would tuck us in and bring us water or apple juice.... And he would tuck me in one more time and give me a kiss goodnight. (Participant # 11)

My father loved to play with my hair all the time. He loved our hair.... He couldn't fix it, that was terrible, but he would definitely love to play with our hair. And I grew up in a Christian home, and so they would come in at night, every single night, and we would all do prayers together by the bed... we would do double horseback riding you know.... We'd do those bikes where everyone rides on one.... My sister and I always rode in those seats behind my parents' bikes, and we loved that. (Participant # 13)

Well my mom used to lay in the bed with me every night until I fell asleep, I remember that. And, cause I was scared of the dark when I was little. And sometimes like if I would wake up in the middle of the night and had a nightmare, I would get up and go down and get in the bed with her. And I did the same with my dad, but I don't think my dad was as comfortable with it. (Participant # 14)

....I guess that I was a daddy's girl. He was an avid runner, and I used to run with him a lot. I would run and go outside with him... I would just follow him around and watch... and could talk about any activities for hours and I was intent on listening to him. (Participant 21)

The third theme, Non-Physical Expressions of Affection, includes descriptions of various aspects of physical affection that were not included in the research question and the definition of physical affection provided by the researcher. Several participants seemed to be aware that they were providing descriptions not typically thought of as

physical affection and asked the researcher if it was okay to provide the descriptions.

Others stated that they were describing certain aspects that they perceived as being a part of physical affection. Yet others described aspects without any type of clarification.

There were two noteworthy topics that sometimes emerged in the text of interviews: the experience of punishment as it related to physical affection and the change in physical affection over time. The focus of the current study was physical affection, defined as “fond and tender feelings expressed through physical touch.” The invitation to participate in the study provided a definition of physical affection and specifically stated that this was not a study on physical or sexual abuse. Although none of the participants described experiences of abuse, most provided descriptions of punishment within a context of physical affection. While some participants remembered the physical affection they received after they had been punished, others described punishment as a demonstration of caring. The following examples are excerpts from the transcripts:

I remember before I would be spanked, Dad would talk to me about why I was going to be spanked, and if I understood, and it was because he loved me not because he wanted to hurt me. And then after I was spanked I would be crying, and Dad would say ‘can you give me a hug?’ And I don’t remember exactly, but I remember a lot of times there was a hug afterward.... (Participant # 1)

...if they would be mad at us for example, they would be yelling, always a lot of yelling in the house, like that was common, but then like I’d go in my room sad and crying, and then my dad would come back into my room later after he had cooled off, and apologize and say he loved me and give me a hug. (Participant # 2)

I think one time me and a couple of friends were doing something wrong and my mom got mad, but instead she just gave me a hug because, she got mad, because I left my aunt, when it was her, like, before a wedding or something. She just was like “you know, you can’t do this” and just gave me a hug and held me and

explained it to me and then I kind of understood it from there. I remember that because it was pretty big, she was pretty mad. (Participant # 7)

Considering punishment... I knew what would happen, so it wasn't like I was being mistreated or anything. I just knew the punishment if I did something, and I did it, so fair game.... I would say it is showing affection as far as my parents caring for me. And knowing I did the wrong thing, and reinforcing punishment on me.... Because my parents wouldn't do it unless they loved you. (Participant # 10)

And after we were reprimanded, my parents always came in and hugged us and told us how much they loved us. And this, you know, hurt them more than us, and all that stuff. (Participant # 13)

I mean if you want to go on a tangent of physical affection, you'd go with maybe not to say negative affection, I guess you could call it punishment. Like let's say I did something bad as a kid, I mean I don't know how you want to look at it. I mean, if you want to go toward that end of it, I found that necessary as a child growing up. (Participant # 17)

Participants in the current study sometimes described the changes that occurred regarding the amount of physical affection received during the adolescent years. Most of the participants who described changes in physical affection reported that they, themselves, initiated the change with their parents.

Examples from the transcripts include the following excerpts:

And then maybe like adolescence, there is that phase when you don't want to have any contact with your parents in public. Distance yourself from them. Then growing out of that and becoming more mature. (Participant # 2)

I guess when we moved out like I had reached a certain age, that it kind of stopped with age, and I was less dependent on her in the morning that I could get up and do it on my own, or at least I wanted to. (Participant # 7)

Definitely a change with age. Not so much hugging from him [father] anymore as I remember being younger. (Participant # 11)

I know one thing that happened is that I sort of became a caretaker to my mom after she went through the divorce. I ended up taking care of my sister a lot. And I guess I grew up too quick, and wonder if my own need for physical affection

became less because I needed to hold back to make sure she was going to be okay. Maybe I didn't want to ask that of her. (Participant # 15)

I know when I was, like, getting older I was like, "well I don't want to do that in front of school," or give her a kiss in front of school.... It was like middle school, just when you're, like, embarrassed in front of your parents. (Participant # 18)

Results of the current study indicate that the experience of physical affection received from parents during childhood includes a ground and three themes. The ground of Being Loved provided the context upon which the themes became figural. It included the awareness of feelings that participants experienced, such as love, security, being cared for, warmth, and so forth.

The first theme, From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received, included descriptions of those giving the affection to the participant. The two sub-themes included affection from Parents and affection from Grandparents. The second theme, Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection, captured the participant's awareness of the acts of behavior directed toward them by their parents which were experienced as physical affection. The third theme, Non-Physical Expressions of Affection, included descriptions of awareness of non-touching behaviors that came to mind as participants recalled memories of physical affection from their parents.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to explore and thematize young adult's descriptions of receiving physical affection from parents as remembered from childhood. Twenty-one participants (13 females and 8 males) described their experiences during an in-depth interview. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and these transcriptions served as the data source for this study. Analysis of the interviews revealed the following thematic structure of parental physical affection as remembered from childhood: (1) From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received, with two sub-themes of (a) Parents and (b) Grandparents; (2) Acts of Physical Affection, with two sub-themes of (a) Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands and (b) Holding, Cuddling/Snuggling, Rocking; and (3) Non-Physical Expressions of Affection, with two sub-themes of (a) Verbal Affection; and (b) Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities. The three themes were contextualized within the ground of Being Loved.

The discussion of results for this study will proceed as follows: First, the ground and the three major themes and their corresponding sub-themes will be reviewed separately in terms of their relationships to previous research. New empirical or theoretical sources will be introduced when it is evident that previous findings make the current study more comprehensible. Second, the procedural steps that were used for this study will be evaluated for strengths and weaknesses. Finally, practical applications of the current findings will be discussed.

## **Major Findings: Physical Affection From Parents as Remembered From Childhood**

### Ground

#### **Being Loved**

As participants described their experiences of physical affection as remembered from childhood, they were aware of feelings that were evoked by the physical affection they received. The words most frequently used were “feeling loved,” although additional descriptions were given that also denoted the experience of being loved. Examples include: “warmth,” “security,” “connection,” “feeling important,” “safe,” “comforted,” “touched my heart.” The three themes of From Whom It Was Received Received, Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection, and Aspects of the Experience of Physical Affection all included descriptions of the feelings that were evoked by the physical affection received.

The experience of love is not easily measured (Walsh, 1996). Scientists have little to say about it (Fine, 1985). Maslow (1954), however, described the need to love and be loved as not just a desire, but also a profound need. He believed that human needs form a hierarchy. At the lower end of the hierarchy are the basic physiological needs for human survival. Progression to the upper end results in what he called self-actualization. The five levels he identified were: basic needs of physical survival, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and self actualization.

Harlow (1974) defined love as affectional ties. In a recent biography of Harlow, Blum (2002) describes Harlow’s frustration with the scientific community for its lack of recognition that his work with infant monkeys was really about the study of love. Blum writes of Harlow:

Experimental psychologists have been rejecting the notion of love as good research material for years. Powerful psychologists have made it clear that fuzzy and sentimental emotions are the stuff of fiction, not of research reports. Researchers who study human relationships prefer to avoid using the l-word. You can still open the acclaimed history of *Psychology in America*, by Stanford's Ernest Hilgard, and find the word "love" missing entirely from the subject index. So it's a professional gamble for the small man in the lab coat even to have this conversation. He *is* an experimental psychologist – a stubborn, scruffy, middle-aged researcher named Harry Frederick Harlow who happens to believe that his profession is wrong and doesn't mind saying so. Of course, he's often been told that the problem lies with him. The unexpectedly outspoken son of a poor family from Iowa, he's developed a habit of scrapping with mainstream psychology. Professor Harlow has already been asked to correct his language: He's been instructed on the correct term for a close relationship. Why can't he just say "proximity" like everyone else? Somehow the word "love" just keeps springing to his lips when he talks about parents and children, friends and partners... There's music in the way Harry assures us that it is possible to make real what had previously been undefinable and unmeasurable. (pp. 2-3)

Blum (2002) claims that "what attachment theory essentially says is that being loved matters – and, more than that, it matters who loves us and whom we love in return" (p. 58). Attachment theorists changed the course of how we think about love by claiming that love was not simply the result of hunger needs being met (Ainsworth, 1967). Montague (1995) states that "love and touching are two faces of the same thing" (p. 3).

Other researchers have understood the problem of the use of the word love when reporting research findings. As cited by Walsh (1996), Prescott (1975) avoided using the word love, although reportedly he used "somatosensory stimuli" as a synonym for "tender loving care." Fine (1985) reported that more recent research permits a definition of what he called "mother love," which included "a friendly feeling," "adequate physical contact," "mutual enjoyment," and "a loving family in a loving culture" (p. 175). Montague (1995) asserts that research on brain physiology indicates that without experiencing love, brain development is delayed. He reports on his attempts to deliver a



lecture entitled “Radiology and Love” to medical schools, and being repeatedly turned down as sponsors did not believe there could be a connection between brain physiology and love.

In a phenomenological study of love, Lang (1997) provides evocative thoughts about the experience of love:

Despite all the attention devoted to it, there are few aspects of human experience more puzzling, paradoxical, or problematic than that of love.... Regardless of how it is defined, the manner in which one loves, or fails to love, is a form of self-expression inseparable from what is usually termed *character, identity, or personality*. The manner in which one loves may be seen as an expression of pathology and immaturity or, alternatively, as one of integration and maturity. To understand what love means in the life of an individual is to understand something about who he/she is as well as to have some sense for the significant events, experiences, and relationships characterizing his or her life. (pp. 227-228)

Lang recognizes the difficulty in understanding the human experience of love. One of the themes identified in Lang’s study on love was that of *closeness*, involving a sense of interdependence and desire to be and do together, a sense of affection, enjoyment, serenity, and satisfaction. Bodily closeness, including touching, was an aspect of the theme of closeness. Participants of Lang’s study described bodily closeness and touching as an aspect of the experience of loving.

Rollins and Thomas (1979) examined the construct *Parental Supportive Behavior*, using the term “support” to describe the child’s experience of acceptance and approval by the parent. Barber and Thomas (1986) summarized parental supportive behavior as consisting of praising, approving, encouraging, helping, cooperating, expressing terms of endearment, and physical affection. Ellis, Thomas, and Robbins (1976) examined parental supportive behavior as reported by children, using a measure of physical affection that included acts of physical affection (hugs and kisses) and verbal expressions

of love (tells me how much he/she loves me, believes in showing love for me). The focus of their study was not to determine if physical affection made one feel loved, but included the measure of love as a component of the physical affection measure.

Although being loved has not been directly examined in the context of physical affection, Winnicott (1965) used the term *holding environment* to depict both the mother's physical holding of the child and the emotional connection between mother and child. Rohner's (2004) Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART) identifies perceived warmth given by way of affection to convey the symbolic message that "my parent loves me." Rohner emphasized the importance of the phenomenological perspective when examining the child's experience of being loved. The child may feel unloved without any evidence from outside observation, and conversely, an outside observer may report behavior that appears to be rejecting, but the child may not feel rejected. Rohner stated "what humans define as real, has real consequences" (p. 831).

On a website devoted to parenting tips, Bortolotti (2006), recently posted a top ten list for the goals of instilling love, respect, and morality in children. Fifth on the list is "Touch your child" with the following explanation:

No one needs to remind parents to cuddle their infants. But like bedtime stories, hugs and kisses often taper off as kids get older and find them embarrassing. Even so, physical affection doesn't have to mean giving your 12-year old a zerbert on the belly while his skateboarding pals are visiting.... It may be lying down together at bedtime, a relaxed hairbrushing, a wrestling match or even a half-hour on the couch in front of the tube.

Bortolotti advocates the notion that one of the ways in which children experience being loved is through physical touch. The participants of the current study describe experiences of physical affection during childhood, and they, too, seem to make the

connection between physical affection and the emotional connection subsequently made with the one providing the affection. Participants frequently described feelings of love, warmth, comfort, security, and so forth in the context of describing experiences of physical affection.

It emerged in the current study that when individuals described physical affection received from parents during childhood, they also described feeling loved. It seems that physical affection is one of the ways in which parents convey to their child that they are loved and cared for.

### Themes

#### From Whom It Was Received

The study specifically asked participants to describe the physical affection they received from their parents during childhood. The interviews would naturally be expected to include descriptions of parents as the givers of physical affection. Not surprisingly, therefore, the first sub-theme of From Whom It Was Received was Parents. All participants provided descriptions of each parent in the home. Most common in each transcript were descriptions of the mother and father, although several also provided descriptions of step-parents. The descriptions also entailed comparisons between parents, usually stating that less physical affection was received from the father. One participant made a comparison between the amount and type of physical affection received from the father versus the stepfather, and reported that the stepfather provided more, not only in quantity, but also in the variety of acts demonstrative of physical affection.

Studies on attachment behavior have typically included only mothers and the ways in which they cared for their infants. There is a sparseness of research on fathers

(Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). A large proportion of the research on fathers examines father involvement, defined as the amount of time that fathers spend with their children, the extent to which they are available to their children, and the amount of responsibility they take in their children's care (Lamb, Pleck, Chernov, & Levine, 1987). Rohner and Veneziano describe the importance of father love, which they describe as the demonstration of love-related behaviors. However, they do not specify the measures for "love-related behaviors." Rohner and Veneziano state: "the word *mothering* elicits, for many, a warm, fuzzy, nurtured feeling, whereas the term *fathering* elicits feelings of something stronger, colder, harder, and less affectionate" (p. 385). He notes, however, that it was not until the 1990's that behavioral scientists began to fully recognize the importance of including fathers in the studies on parent-child relations.

Most of the participants of the current study described receiving physical affection from both their mother and father. It was only in the comparison between the mother and father that participants usually identified the father as having given less in quantity. The results support the finding of Van Ijzendoorn and De Wolff (1997) that children construct separate and independent attachment relationships with each parent. Perhaps Blum (2002) correctly asserts, "it may be unfair to load all our expectations and needs onto one parent, anyway" (p. 276).

Interestingly, there was no gender difference in the descriptions of physical affection from parents; themes identified among male participants matched those of females. The absence of gender differences is in contrast to the findings of Barber and Thomas (1986) and Hollender et al. (1973). Ferreira and Thomas (1984) and Barber and Thomas compared the differences in the physical affection that mothers and fathers gave

to sons and daughters, finding that fathers typically demonstrated less physical affection to sons than daughters. In the current study, no theme was identified that would indicate that the males in the study received less physical affection than the females. However, it is important to note that overall, participants did not provide descriptions of differences between the physical affection they received versus what a sibling received.

More surprising, because it was not part of the research question, was the second sub-theme of Grandparents. The research question asked for participants to describe physical affection received from parents in childhood, and no leading question was asked to solicit descriptions of grandparents. The descriptions of grandparents included the acts of physical affection by the grandparents, as well as the meaning that the participant believed was conveyed by the physical affection provided by grandparents. Several mentioned the lack of physical affection from grandparents, or as one participant stated “my grandfather wasn’t particularly physically affectionate,” and another stated “My maternal grandmother... she could be slightly cold at times.” Other participants were aware that their parent’s level of physical affection given to the participant was the result of what they received from their own parents. One of the participants stated “My parents were real close with us because they were with their parents.”

Levy (2005) examined the contribution of grandparents to grandchildren’s lives in a study of 86 male and female college students over the age of 18 and from intact family structures. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents reported that grandparents had made a significant difference in their lives, 76% indicated expressively caring relationships with their grandparents, and 71% reported receiving something unique from their grandparents.

Although participants in this study were asked to describe memories of childhood affection from parents, the question clearly evoked recollections of memories with grandparents. The current study indicates that grandparents frequently play a significant role in the lives of their grandchildren. When asked to describe memories of physical affection from parents, participants frequently remember experiences with grandparents as well. This finding may support Levy's (2005) finding that grandparents play a significant role in the lives of children. What is also significant about this finding is that participants did not describe physical affection from siblings, who most likely would have been in the home with the participant.

#### Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection

In the current study, participants described specific acts that demonstrated physical affection. The two sub-themes of Kissing, Hugging, Holding Hands and Holding, Snuggling/Cuddling, Rocking are similar to previous studies which identified specific actions that constitute displays of physical affection. Barber and Thomas (1986) report on five studies (Coopersmith, 1967; Heilbrun, 1964; Schaefer, 1965; Sears et al., 1957, 1965) that focused on and measured physical affection in terms of the behaviors of kissing, hugging, or cuddling. Barber and Thomas note, however, that other non-physical behaviors such as mother's play with the child, praise for good table behavior, and use of reasoning were also included in the measurement. The previous studies mentioned above were quantitative by design; therefore, the researcher specified the acts that demonstrated physical affection. In the current study, physical affection was defined as "fond and tender feelings expressed through physical touch." The research participants were free, however, to identify the acts they perceived as demonstrative of physical affection.

While the descriptions included acts identified and measured by previous researchers, other descriptions of physical affection also emerged.

### Non-Physical Expressions of Affection

Many participants of this study described a range of activities under the rubric of physical affection that were non-physical expressions of affection. Several participants seemed aware that they were recounting behaviors that were not “physical,” per se, yet they went on to describe the behaviors anyway. The first sub-theme of Non-Physical Expressions of Affection was Verbal Affection. Participants described having received verbal expressions of affection. Several acknowledged that it was part of physical affection and that it was hard to differentiate between the two. As one participant described, “the level of affection sort of reflected the level of interaction in general.” Barber and Thomas (1986) described the limitations of research on physical affection because the measurement typically includes non-physical types of behaviors such as verbal affection. Physical affection was one of the four dimensions of parental supportive behavior that Barber and Thomas (1986) studied. Field’s (1995, 2001, 2002) research on the role of touch in human development, depression among adolescents, and violence among adolescents also includes measures of verbal and physical intimacy. Rohner’s (1986) description of physical affection, within the warmth dimension of the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Theory (PARTheory), includes approving glances and smiling along with kissing, hugging, fondling, caressing, and so forth. The warmth dimension also includes the verbal expressions of affection. It seems that researchers and participants are not typically interested in differentiating physical and verbal behaviors that are experienced as affectionate in general.

The current study seems to indicate that verbal and physical affection are part of the same dimension, and might be more profitably studied as affection in general. Participants do not seem to make a clear differentiation between the two experiences of verbal and physical affection.

The second sub-theme, Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities includes a range of other activities described by the participants. Participants frequently stated that these descriptions were not usually thought of as physical affection, but that they perceived them as part of a context for physical affection. Occasionally participants asked the research investigator if it was okay to describe these other experiences. This finding supports Rohner's (2004) claim that accepting parents provide various combinations of physical affection, verbal affection, and positive activities with children.

Participants described play in the form of games, playful wrestling, and engaging in physical activities with parents. The parents' presence at and reaction to organized sporting events were frequently described. Other activities such as parents reading to the participants and family dinners together were also described. Most participants described bedtime routines such as nighttime prayers and hugs and kisses goodnight, and frequently included descriptions of sleeping with parents. This finding is noteworthy given the cultural expectation that children in America should sleep separately from parents. Thevenin (1976) reported on the positive effects of infants sleeping with parents and that in 48 of the 56 societies studied, babies slept with their mothers for at least the first year of life. She acknowledged that the practice is taboo in America. In a review of the literature on children sleeping in the same bed with their parents, Rath and Okum (1995) found that the prevalence of co-sleeping with parents has been underestimated.



The current study may indicate that co-sleeping with parents is happening in greater frequency than expected, although perhaps not typically discussed by parents and their children.

The findings of the current study indicate that there are other activities that seem to be experienced as part of the experience of physical affection. As in the frequent descriptions of verbal affection, it appears that activities such as sports, play, bedtime routines, and other activities are non-physical expressions of affection that belong in the same area of affection along with verbal and physical affection.

Although not identified as a theme or sub-theme in the present study, a rather surprising topic that emerged in the interviews was punishment. All participants were provided with a definition of physical affection. All participants were informed that the study was not an investigation of physical or sexual abuse. However, many of the participants described punishment within the context of describing physical affection. Participants described either the belief that punishment was a form of physical affection because it showed caring, or that physical affection frequently followed punishment. For example, one participant stated “Considering punishment, ... I would say it is showing affection as far as my parents caring for me... I wouldn’t look at it as a negative thing, because parents wouldn’t do it unless they loved you.” Although some of the participants specifically mentioned being spanked, overall the participants who described punishment tended to do so in a general sense, without detailed descriptions of how they were punished. It appears as though the descriptions of punishment were given in the context of physical affection that followed punishment or as a way to connect it to being loved.

To date, no research has been conducted on the relationship between physical affection and punishment. Knafle and Plomin (2006) found that parents who had positive feelings toward their children and provided positive non-coercive discipline tend to have children who are more pro-social. Ateah and Parkin (2002) found that of 436 university students, 75% reported receiving corporal punishment as children, and 40% believed it to be necessary. In the current study, the participants who described punishment seemed to perceive it in a positive light. This finding may support Felson and Zielinski's (1989) finding that punishment did not have an effect on self-esteem for children in the fifth through eighth grades. They concluded that punishment is not perceived by children as a negative evaluation from their parents, and that low levels of punishment might indicate low parental attention. They speculated that the effect of punishment could depend on the type of punishment given. Rohner (1986) emphasizes the importance of the phenomenological perspective when investigating parental acceptance and rejection for the reason found in the current study. He described the importance of understanding that human behavior is affected by the way individuals perceive, interpret, or construe events, rather than the objective events themselves. The participants in the current study describe punishment within a context of describing the experience of physical affection.

Another topic that sometimes emerged during the course of the interviews was the change in the experience of physical affection over time. The participants described changes that occurred in the desire for physical affection, usually initiated by the participant, during the period of adolescence. Several participants used the words "embarrassment" and "wanting to grow up" to describe the need to change and resist physical affection received from their parents. Several participants alluded to peer

pressure with statements such as "... there is that phase when you don't want to have any contact with your parents in public," and "I know as I was getting older I was like 'well I don't want to do that in front of school, or give her a kiss in front of school.'"

According to Erikson (1963), this change is to be expected. He described the developmental task of adolescence as *Identity vs. Role Confusion*. The adolescent becomes more concerned with how they appear among their peers, with the influence of cliques and crowds becoming more important than parents. Hunter and Youmiss (1982) found that parents are the primary source of intimacy and support in childhood, but friends become more important in middle and late adolescence. Reis, Collins, & Berscheid (2000) describe relationships as developmental in nature, progressing from one level of interdependence to another, especially during adolescence and adulthood. They cite several studies (Collins, 1997; Cooper & Cooper, 1992; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985) that report that adolescence in general has been viewed as a time in which the adolescent strives to separate from parents at the same time the importance of peer relationships increases. McGue, Elkins, Walden, & Iacono (2005) found that between the age of 11 and 14, all aspects of warmth between parents and adolescents also decline. Jones (1994) describes the period of adolescence as a time when touching "hits bottom, both in quality and quantity" (p. 76). Jones provides explanations for the decline:

Two explanations have been offered for the comparative lack of physical contact between parents and teenagers. One is that the "incest taboo" prevents touching, even between a parent and child of the same sex... The other explanation, which pinpoints the overriding influence, is that the teenager has a need to establish him- or herself as an independent person. (pp. 76-77)

From the descriptions of the participants in the present study, the participant's desire for physical affection from parents changed during the period of adolescence when

the adolescent initiated greater autonomy and attempted to identify more strongly with the peer group. Several of the participants also described the return to a previous level of physical affection after the period of adolescence. As one participant stated, “mom’s not embarrassing anymore.” Jones (1994) explains this phenomena: “A seemingly miraculous event occurs when young people have moved out and then return for a visit: They find they can hug their parents again and feel good about it” (p. 78).

The current study provided descriptions of the experience of physical affection from parents as recalled by young adults as they reflected back on childhood. Descriptions included those who provided the physical affection, a wide range of activities involving touch that were perceived as demonstrative of physical affection, activities that did not involve touch and yet were described as expressions of affection, and the feeling of being loved that the experience of physical affection provides.

Findings of the current study could be interpreted as supportive of what has previously been described in this study as Winnicott’s views on the holding environment. Participants described a range of physical and non-physical behaviors as they recalled memories of physical affection. Winnicott described *holding* of the infant as not only a physical holding, but a psychological holding as well. He theorized that the holding environment made the infant feel safe and secure. His metaphorical term included the mother’s physical holding of the infant and emotional communication occurring by way of the mother’s facial expressions and reactions. Winnicott theorized that for babies, holding tends to be associated with physical care but also the common ground created by the interplay between mother and baby (Monte, 1999). As cited by Monte:

Playing, not games, but the interplay between mother and baby constructs a “virtual space” or common ground between them. It is not physical play space, as in a specific area of the floor or table top, but an interactive “secret place” built from gesture and nod, affection and enjoyment. It is a “no-man’s-land” that is each man’s land, the place where the secret is....” (Winnicott, 1987, p. 100)

As participants of the current study recalled memories of physical affection during childhood, they provided descriptions of feeling loved. It is important to not ignore, however, the detailed descriptions of other aspects of the experience that do not include physical touch. As participants describe other aspects of physical affection such as verbal affection; play, sports, bedtime routines, other activities; and punishment, consideration should be given to the possibility that a description of the holding environment is being given. Perhaps as participants described the experience of physical affection, they were also describing other ways in which they feel held.

Parkes and Stevenson-Hinde (1991) concluded that “research findings should discourage future investigators from considering discrete attachment behaviors – for example, smiling, vocalization, crying, approach, and touching – as separate behavioral measures independent of their environmental and behavioral contexts” (p. 6). The current study provides additional evidence that physical affection provided during childhood is demonstrated in a variety of ways, and is but one of many discrete behaviors directed at children. These behaviors contribute to children feeling loved and cared for. The current study also provides evidence that physical affection is not a distinct dimension, but is merely one of the many ways in which children experience an overall pattern of affection in general.

## **Evaluation of the Procedure**

The procedure used for this study was phenomenological. The strength of a phenomenological study is that it allows participants to describe the experience in their own words to the degree of detail they choose. Beyond presenting the research question, no subsequent leading questions were asked. When participants asked if they might talk about certain aspects of their experience of physical affection, participants were told they could talk about whatever came to mind when they thought about physical affection from their parents during childhood. Participants were provided with a summary of the interview, and all participants verified that the summary was an accurate description of the experience they had recalled and described. There were several participants who expanded upon their interview after hearing the summary, commenting that they had thought of something else. One participant requested that the tape be turned back on when, after the interview was complete and summary provided, he thought of additional comments. One participant felt a need to make a clarification on a particular point when she was provided with a summary of her interview. She emphasized that it was important that the researcher understand what she meant when she described an aspect of her parent's physical affection toward her.

It is possible that providing a definition of physical affection to the participants created a reporting bias. Although the purpose in providing a definition was to clarify that the study did not concern physical or sexual abuse, it is possible that only those participants who experienced physical affection as "fond and tender" chose to participate. However, one participant described not getting enough and another described choosing not to receive it.

Another potential bias in phenomenological research, as in other research methods, is the bias of the researcher. The phenomenological researcher must be aware of and bracket his or her own biases regarding the topic. The bracketing interview was vital in the process of the current study. By discovering and acknowledging my own themes of the experience of physical affection in childhood, I could take steps to insure that those same themes were not mistakenly included in the participant's themes.

What emerged from my own bracketing interview was that my experience of physical affection during childhood had similarities and differences to those of the participants. Although there were themes in the bracketing interview that were also found in the participant's interviews, there were also themes found among the participants that had not emerged in the bracketing interview. The bracketing interview included the ground of Being Loved, described as feelings of warmth and being cared for. The bracketing interview, however, did not include the actual words of "feeling loved," as was found in the current study. Although the theme of From Whom the Physical Affection Was Received did emerge as a theme in the bracketing interview, the sub-theme of Grandparents did not. The bracketing interview included a comparison between the mother and father. The theme of Acts That Demonstrate Physical Affection emerged from the bracketing interview, although not all of the sub-themes described by participants emerged in the bracketing interview. The bracketing interview did not include descriptions of Snuggling/Cuddling or Rocking. Regarding the theme Aspects Of The Experience of Physical Affection, the bracketing interview did not include the sub-theme of Verbal Affection and Punishment; however, it did include the sub-themes

of Play, Sports, Bedtime Routines, Other Activities; and Change In the Experience of Physical Affection Over Time.

It is possible that in analyzing the participant's transcripts, the researcher's own themes created a bias. The safeguards against this occurrence included the researcher's awareness of the potential biases and the objective interpretation by the research group, who took a more active role in thematizing the transcripts than the researcher did. It is also important to note that several themes were found in the participant interviews that were not found in the researcher's bracketing interview. Researchers who are concerned that the researcher led the participants, are encouraged to read carefully the verbatim transcripts (Appendix F). A detailed reading of the transcripts shows clearly that the ground and themes and sub-themes that emerged in this study genuinely came from the research participants and not the researcher.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The participants in this study provided numerous descriptions of acts of physical affection that include more than kisses and hugs. Previous research has indicated that kisses and hugs most frequently describe physical affection. However, the research question "Please tell me about your experience of physical affection you received from your parents during childhood" evoked descriptions of parent behavior that is not typically identified as physical affection, such as verbal affection, play, games, sports, activities, and for some, punishment. Perhaps this provides an explanation for why a measurement of physical affection has been difficult to conceptualize. Previous research has frequently employed measures that include verbal affection and other activities that indicate parental involvement. Perhaps the confusion surrounding the definition of



physical affection and how it might be measured is because of the wide range of behaviors typically included in descriptions of physical affection. Results of the current study could prove helpful in developing a current measure of physical affection, depending on how the researcher defines physical affection. Perhaps it is affection, in general, that is more realistically studied, as it appears that subjects frequently experience physical affection, verbal affection, and other activities as the same construct.

Although the research question specifically asked for descriptions of physical affection from parents, over half (11) of the participants mentioned grandparents. Although a greater number of research studies have examined the frequency and outcomes of grandparents raising grandchildren, few have examined the impact of grandparents on those grandchildren they are not raising. This may be a reason to focus more attention on the importance of extended family in the lives of children.

As a way to eliminate potential bias in future research on physical affection, it would be beneficial to ask the question about the experience of physical affection without providing a definition of the term. Although there is the possibility there would be descriptions of abuse, anticipation of this possibility could alert the researcher to the possible need for providing greater support and referral for those who become troubled by the memories. When recruiting subjects the researcher might also clarify that participants who had the experience of receiving too much, too little, or no physical affection are also invited to participate. Only one participant in the current study described the experience of not receiving the physical affection that she desired. She also described feelings of abandonment and fear. Similar findings may or may not emerge among additional subjects who report not receiving enough physical affection.

Another consideration for future research might be the study of the experience of *giving* physical affection. Whereas most participants described the *receiving* of physical affection from parents, many described the reciprocal nature of the acts of physical affection. One participant frequently described his experience of giving physical affection to his parents.

Researchers interested in the study of attachment behaviors might consider a closer examination of the role of physical affection in the attachment process. Much of the attachment research uses the terms “touch” and “proximity” when describing the physical interaction between caregivers and infants rather than the term physical affection. Therefore, it is unclear whether the same construct is being measured, as touch and proximity may or may not be perceived as affection. As Traina (2005) states:

Research contains several discrete but related kinds of evidence that touch is necessary for human flourishing... and evidence is growing that humans, especially children, have a physical, psychological, and spiritual need for a steady diet of touch. We are also wired to enjoy it. (p. 8)

If this is true, it may be important to know how to define touch that is considered an expression of physical affection.

Also limited in the attachment literature is the study of attachment beyond infancy. The results of this study indicate that the experience of feeling cared for as a result of physical affection continues past infancy. Infants communicate with a behavioral response; children, adolescents, and adults have words to describe the meaning of the experience.

Further research on the experience of being loved might expand our knowledge on what makes children feel loved. If Harlow, Bowlby, Ainsworth, and others are

correct, and if Rohner's (2004) PARTheory has merit (that parental acceptance versus parental rejection universally directs the course of psychological adjustment or maladjustment), then research on the child's experience of being loved deserves greater attention. Blum (2002) writes on Harlow's frustration with the psychological community's unwillingness to study love:

The only books that seemed to address love were written by fiction writers, by poets and novelists, and they were fixated on adult love. It was as if the whole world were colluding to pretend that our first loves, those of childhood, don't matter at all. (p. 170)

The current study indicates that recalling memories of physical affection evokes memories of being loved. Participants also recognize in their descriptions that other activities demonstrated by parents also made them feel loved. Perhaps further research on the experience of being loved will expand our knowledge further.

### **Implications for Therapists**

The current study has implications for therapists to consider. One, physical affection, or the lack of it, is one important aspect of personal and emotional growth for everyone. When addressing parenting issues either within a therapeutic context or when providing psycho-education, psychologists need to consider the importance of addressing physical affection as one of the many ways that children feel loved and cared for. Adults seeking therapy frequently describe memories of experiences in childhood that made them feel unloved. Therapists should consider the possibility that adults who were not provided with physical affection and other expressions of affection have suffered developmentally. The current study might help therapists to have greater insight and understanding of the problems experienced by those who did not receive adequate

physical affection. The experience of physical affection during childhood could be an important topic during therapy.

The phenomenological method used in this dissertation provides the therapist with a powerful tool with which to help clients. The method is not directive; it provides a way of listening and reflecting back to the client what has been heard and understood. Clients often enter therapy in order to talk about experiences in which they are seeking ways to feel listened to and validated. After completion of a phenomenological interview, participants frequently thank the interviewer for listening to and understanding their experience.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

#### **The Experience of Parental Physical Affection: A Phenomenological Analysis**

You are invited to participate in a study of the experience of parental physical affection, defined as fond and tender feelings from your parents expressed through physical touch. This is not a study on the experience of physical or sexual abuse. If you have had an experience of physical or sexual abuse and would like to speak with someone regarding the experience you may contact Dr. Mark Hector at 974-1984.

You will participate in a tape-recorded question-and-answer interview in which you would describe your personal experiences of physical affection from your parents. The interview will last approximately one hour.

Participating in this study could involve some risk or discomfort on your part. Since the topic of the interview is your experience of physical affection from your parents, you may recall information of a potentially sad, embarrassing, or emotionally painful nature. If you participate in this study you will be provided a list of contact resources for dealing with those feelings should they arise.

Your participation in this study would be completely voluntary, and you would be permitted to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you have been offered extra credit for your participation and choose to withdraw from the study during the interview, you will not lose your extra credit points. The information you share will help provide the foundation for further research on the experience of parental physical affection. The location of the interviews will be arranged in an office in the Austin Peay Psychology Building at the University of Tennessee.

Upon completion of this study, the researcher will provide you with an explanation of the findings, if you desire.

**If you would be willing to participate in this study, please contact Ellen Denny at 865-719-7524 (cell) or by email at [esdenny@earthlink.net](mailto:esdenny@earthlink.net).**

**Thank you very much!**

## APPENDIX B

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

#### The Experience of Parental Physical Affection

##### A Phenomenological Analysis

I have been invited to participate in a study of the experience of physical affection I received from my parents during childhood. My part in this research will involve participating in an unstructured question – and – answer interview in which I describe my own experience of physical affection from my parents. The interview will last approximately one hour. Since my participation in this study involves a question – and – answer interview there should be no risk or discomfort on my part. My participation in this study is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The information I share about my experience will help provide the foundation for further research on the experience of parental physical affection during childhood. My identity will in no way be revealed to anyone other than the interviewer at any time. The American Psychological Association ethical guidelines require certain constraints on what I describe when I talk about my experience of parental physical affection. If my description involves how I have in the past or plan in the future to harm someone else or myself, confidentiality assurances will not be maintained.

The audio tapes will be numerically coded before they are transcribed in order to maintain my confidentiality. I understand that any information identifying me will be deleted from transcripts and written reports. I understand that I will be offered the opportunity to review the transcript that is prepared from the audio taped interview. I understand that portions of what I say in the interview may be reproduced in written

reports. All original tapes will be erased after they have been transcribed. Signed consent forms will be kept for three years after the completion of the study. The informed consent forms and transcripts will be stored in a locked file box in the office of Dr. Mark Hector at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Upon completion of this study, the researcher will provide me with an explanation of the findings, if I so desire. Any questions I may have about this study may be answered by contacting Ellen Denny at (865) 719-7524 or e-mail [esdenny@earthlink.net](mailto:esdenny@earthlink.net), or Dr. Mark A. Hector at 974-1984 or e-mail [mhector@utk.edu](mailto:mhector@utk.edu). If as a result of participating in this study, I want to discuss personal issues, I will contact Dr. Mark A. Hector.

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Name

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Date

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Address

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Phone number

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Signature

## APPENDIX C

### POST INTERVIEW DEBRIEFING

#### Post Interview Debriefing

Thank you for completing the interview. Your participation has been helpful in contributing to existing knowledge about parental physical affection.

For the Research Participant:

I am not currently planning on harming myself or anyone else. I promise to use the following phone numbers if I later feel the need to talk to someone.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator (witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### Resource List

Dr. Mark A. Hector	974 – 1984
24-hour Emergency Contact Number (CHS)	1-800-826-6881
CONTACT 24-hour help line	1-800-784-2433 (toll free)
	865-523-9108 (Knoxville)
Mobile Crisis (24 hours)	865-539-2409

I understand that I may also call 911 or visit local hospital Emergency Rooms.

## APPENDIX D

### TRANSCRIBER'S PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

#### The Experience of Parental Physical Affection

#### A Phenomenological Analysis

I understand that I will be listening to audio tapes of confidential interviews. Based on these audio tapes, I will be preparing transcriptions. The information in these transcriptions has been revealed by research subjects who participated in this project in good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information in these transcriptions with anyone except the primary investigator of this project, Ellen Denny (719-7524), the co-principal investigator, Dr. Mark A. Hector (974-1984) or other members of this research team. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

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**Transcriber**

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**Date**

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**Signature**

## APPENDIX E

### RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

#### The Experience of Parental Physical Affection

#### A Phenomenological Analysis

As a member of this project's research team, I understand that I will be reading transcriptions of confidential interviews. The information in these transcriptions has been revealed by research subjects who participated in this project in good faith that their interviews would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information in these transcriptions with anyone except the principal investigator of this project, Ellen Denny (719-7524), the co-principle investigator of this project, Dr. Mark A. Hector (9741984), or other members of this research team. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Research Team Members:

Date:

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## APPENDIX F: NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

### Participant #1

(I) So you can you tell me about your experience of physical affection you received from your parents during childhood?

(P) Yeah, um, physical affection from Mom and Dad, I have several, I have a lot of early memories. One of the things I remember, I was five at this point. Mom was quite a bit overweight. We lived in Mexico, and I was about five years old. And we were lying on her bed, like, in the middle of the day. And she said to me, 'I'm going to loose weight. I'm going to get thin.' And I started crying. [Laughter] And I thought 'no!, you can't do that!' [laughter] I remember that as plain as day. 'You can't do that, you can't loose weight!' And she just looked at me, like, what in the world?, And she said 'why, XXX, you don't want mom to be thinner?' And I said 'no, because then you won't be as comfortable.' And I didn't want to trade anything for that I guess! [Laughter] I guess I didn't care how she looked as long as she felt good. And, but I think I was always... mom was always more physically close than dad. I remember mom coming to get in bed with me in the morning, lying really close to me. We come from a family that kissed on the mouth, so whenever you saw grandparents or aunts and uncles, you kissed on the mouth when you said goodbye. And so from mom and dad there was always a kiss goodnight. So whenever we brushed our teeth at night we would then go kiss them goodnight. I remember hugs from Dad. I remember Dad bending down and giving hugs and stuff. I remember too, that hugs came after being spanked. I remember that, especially from Dad.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Yeah, well, I remember before I would be spanked, Dad would talk to me about why I was going to be spanked, and if I understood, and it was because he loved me not because he wanted to hurt me. And then after I was spanked I would be crying, and Dad would say 'can you give me a hug?', and I don't remember exactly, but I remember a lot of times there was a hug afterward. I think I remember once or twice, like this is when I was older, I wasn't a little kid anymore, probably nine or ten, which is about the last time I got spanked, but when I was a little older, um I remember wanting a hug afterward, and Dad hugging me, but it didn't feel too real. And it felt kind of forced. Almost like I could tell he wanted the discipline to continue by withholding the affection, or he was upset with me still. He was still angry.

(I) So you were aware in that situation when you were nine or ten years old when you were being spanked and you were used to getting a hug afterward, and that it didn't come in the same way.

(P) Right. It wasn't the same. It was different. But I don't remember anything like that happening when I was a little kid. When I was little, my memories of hugs after spanking were really warm. A great time. But not the same later. Let's see, what else do I remember about physical affection growing up? Um, do you want me at all to talk about physical affection between my parents?

(I) If that is something that comes to mind.

(P) I remember Mom and Dad, they showed physical affection in front of us. I mean not like make-out sessions or anything, but you know, kissing, holding hands, hugging each other. They did that quite a bit. They were always real open with that. And I remember holding Dad's hand. I remember falling asleep after church, I guess during church services, the night services. We had a truck, and we just had one seat. And all four of us would sit on that one seat. I remember being carried to the truck, and then on the way home, laying my head on Dad's lap. Sleeping on the way home. I remember that. I don't know how much of that is physical affection, but that stuff sticks out. I think Mom always wanted to hold me a lot. I even remember being a teenager and she was like 'you're not too big for me to hold.' And I was way too big for her to hold! [Laughter] And she would try, and she would try to rock me and I would say 'Mom, this is crazy! [Laughter]. And I remember being little and I was in Kindergarten, having to learn a bunch of memory verses, and I remember sitting on her lap while she held the Bible, and that was usually a really good experience. But she would sometimes get frustrated with me for not being able to memorize the verses. As far as younger than that, physical affection, I can't really remember specifics.

(I) So not many memories before kindergarten.

(P) No, I have a lot of memories before age five, but not of physical affection. Not that I can think of. I'm sure I could make something up, but [laughter]. Physical affection now with Mom and Dad. Mom still, it's been strange since I've grown up, especially since I've gotten married. I wouldn't call it strange, but I don't see Mom and Dad often, I'd say about every 18 months, and Mom will sit next to me on the couch and she'll be looking at me. And I can tell she's like so in love, you know, with her little boy, and she just has to sit there. And I'll say, 'Mom, you can get closer if you want', and she'll say 'is that okay?' [Laughter]

(I) So she sits with you on the couch, but there is distance.

(P) Yeah, there is a little bit of distance, but I can tell by looking at her that she is just dying, and to be closer or to put her arm around me. And I'll be like 'its okay' and she'll say, 'well you're married', and I'll say 'its okay, its okay!' But she doesn't have a whole lot of experience with me since I've been married. There hasn't been a whole lot of time to be with me to kind of get to, not just since I've been married, I think it was some that way before I was married. I left home at 18 and when you see Mom every 18 months, it's tough to learn new patterns.

(I) So you left home at age 18 and weren't home consistently, you started to see a change in the way she related to you physically, and even more so once you got married.

(P) Yeah, it was like she almost fearful of embarrassing me or she didn't know how close she could be without it bothering me. And it's never bothered me. Of any sort.

(I) Physical affection never bothered you.

(P) Nope. And I still hug Mom, and I still kiss Mom on the lips some, but Dad I don't think I kissed on the lips after 12 or 13. It just got weird. I don't know if it was weird, I don't know if I picked up on his thinking, but I don't know, I knew it wasn't comfortable anymore. And Dad I still hug quite a bit. It's nice.

(I) It's nice. Can you say more about that?

(P) I mean it feels good. When Dad hugs, he hugs for real. He'll give you a solid hug. It feels good to be close like that.

(I) You used the word 'for real'.

(P) Well, I mean some people you hug and I think yesterday comes to mind. Some friends of ours were visiting with their parents. They're from the XXXX, and the kind of thing where you hug. And it was kind of 'that's not a hug, we could have had a better handshake than that!' It's kind of 'don't get too close, and make sure it's just our shoulder that touch', and that's almost more, in my thought that makes more distance than closeness. But Dad's not that way. My grandfather was never that way. My grandfather, I always liked his hugs, they meant a lot to me, too.

(I) So the hugs from your grandfather meant a lot.

(P) Yeah, a lot. My grandfather wasn't the type to, I guess he would say 'I love you' and stuff, but he wasn't a real, not much, he didn't talk much about emotions or what people meant to him, but when he hugged you, a lot was conveyed when he hugged you. The way he held you. Even when I was in my twenties, before he died, it was, his hugs conveyed a lot that I think he couldn't say. Maybe that, maybe he put more into than was actually there, but I don't think so. I think it was definitely his intention to communicate something.

(I) The words you used were that physical affection conveyed a lot that he wasn't able to verbalize.

(P) Yeah, it seemed so. That was nice. I wouldn't ever want to leave their house without a hug from him. But then he never wanted to say good-bye without a hug.

(I) So the desire to hug him when leaving, you knew was mutual.

(P) Yeah, definitely. And Mom and Dad, other physical affection, I mean I think I was in my upper teens, maybe in my twenties, with Mom I remember if Mom was visiting, because a couple of times Mom has visited without Dad, and there was a couple of times I remember having walked somewhere and holding Mom's hand, and that was something I am pretty sure I initiated that. I think she would have been too shy, too afraid, too not knowing whether that would be okay with me or whether that would be embarrassing. I think when I was in high school, I went through what a lot of teenagers go through where Mom was kind of embarrassing, Mom wasn't that cool, Mom 'don't drop me off right at the doors of the school, if you don't mind. Your hair's not fixed yet this morning,' and I think later, after you get through that stage, it changes. Mom's not embarrassing anymore. [Laughter] You're proud, 'hey this is my Mom', this is the person, without her, I'd probably be a beggar on the streets. [Laughter] So it changes, and so I think, like holding Mom's hand in public, putting my arm around her, I think part of that too is I think I'd be false if I said that part of that is about Mom I'm sorry there was that period when it was embarrassing. So this is a way of almost trying to make it better. I think at one point I realized it would have been tough for a mom, you know this is a kid who didn't even want you to lose weight because he was afraid you wouldn't be as cuddly, the child that you've done everything you could for, and you guys have been best buddies, and pals, and then all of a sudden Mom is embarrassing. That would have been horrible to go through as a parent. But then the kid comes around. So it ends up being okay in the end. And I can't think a whole lot more about physical affection.

(I) Let me summarize what I've heard so far.

(P) Okay, it's not a very coherent story.

(I) When you first started talking about physical affection you talked about your Mom and Dad and early memories. And the first thing you talked about was a memory of your Mom when you were about five years old and you were laying on the bed and you were aware of the fact that she was overweight and she mentioned she wanted to loose weight. That was disturbing to you. You had a fear that there wouldn't be as much of her. You liked it the way it was. You talked about your mom was more physically close than your dad. She got in bed with you and got close to you, kissing on the mouth when coming and going. You said that with your Dad kissing on the mouth stopped by age 12 or 13. Something about that seemed weird. And so there was a change. You talked about hugs from your dad, and the hugs that came after the spanking. Before the spanking there was communication about the purpose of it, and that it was because you were loved. The hug that came afterward was warm. You described a memory when you were nine or ten and you had been spanked and the hugging didn't come. And that it didn't feel good to you. It didn't have the same warmth. You also said that your parents showed physical affection towards each other. You described a memory of church and falling asleep and being carried out to the truck and laying your head on your Dad's lap while driving home. You also talked about becoming a teenager and your mom wanting to continue to hold you. You were aware of feeling to old. You described the stage you went through as a teenager when you wanted more distance, but then it coming around after the teenage years. You talked about sitting on your mom's lap with the Bible and the warmth in her lap. You talked about what happens when you see your Mom now. You only see them about every 18 months. Your mom will sit next to you and seems hesitant to get too close. You let her know its okay. You also said that you still hug and kiss now on the lips and with relatives. You still hug your Dad quite a bit, and that he hugs for real. You described a situation with friends in which the hugging didn't seem real, and you said a good handshake would have been better. You also talked about your grandfather, and that his hugs also felt real, and the fact that he conveyed feelings through touch. You talked about being in your twenties, and when your Mom visits now, you initiate holding her hand.

(P) And that she enjoys that.

(I) So that's what I heard you say. Is there anything you would like to add or clarify?

(P) No, I don't think so. That's what I said. I think that's all I've got.

## Participant #2

(I) Can you please tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Well, my parents were very affectionate. When I compare my parents to other parents, I always thought my parents were very loving. Very open, you know, the first thing I think about is a story of when my dad would drop us off for school. He would always kind of joke with us and kid, you know 'come give daddy a hug and kiss', [laughter], you know in the lineup of all these cars, and you know it would always be

embarrassing in front of everyone. But you know they would always hug us and kiss us when we were little. And let us know that they loved us. If we were out, or when we were little we would all lie on the couch and I remember we would lay on the floor and watch t.v., and I guess cuddle is the word, when we were little. And I remember we would lie and jump in the bed with them on a Saturday morning and just kind of hang out. So that was always there. I guess, they would always put their arms around us, and do it in public, and still to this day, I would give my dad a hug. You know some kids don't give their dad a hug, but more of a handshake, but still to this day I would give even my dad a hug. My dad is very... my parents are XXXX, you know outgoing with emotions, and so if they would be mad at us for example, they would be yelling, always a lot of yelling in the house, like that was common [laughter] but then like then I'd go in my room sad and crying, and then my dad would come back into my room later after he had cooled off, and apologize and say he loved me and give me a hug. He'd always let me know that it wasn't me, that he was just taking it out. Something like that. So that's the way I grew up.

(I) So even though he would get angry, he would always follow that up with affection.

(P) Yeah, he would let me know, and that sometimes he was going to blow up at times, and to just take it, and to kind of leave, and he would come back and apologize. And that's still kind of current today. He'll give me a little pat on the back, [laughter], and I just kind of shake my head, like alright, 'it's all good.' 'It's all good, dad.'

(I) Can you say more about 'even in public?'

(P) Yeah, I think about little league, he would give me a hug after a game. Sometimes I would be embarrassed by it, and sometimes I was mature enough to handle that. You know, that phase where you want to be cool and you don't want to be around your parents [laughter]. And there was like the phase in the mall when we'd be in the mall together but I wouldn't walk with them. You know what I mean. Then there is also the phase where it was fine, I was comfortable giving my parents a hug. Like when they dropped me off at college I was comfortable with them giving me a hug in front of the dorm. I didn't care that everyone was sitting there watching them help me move in and watching them giving me a hug. I was comfortable with that.

(I) So you talked about the phase...

(P) There was that phase and then I grew out of it. In college, I don't know, it was way before college, but I just remember that, that I grew out of it. There was a time when I was little and didn't realize it was uncool to... it was pure. Affection was pure from my parents when I was younger. And then maybe like adolescence, there is that phase when you don't want to have any contact with your parents in public. Distance yourself from them. Then growing out of that and becoming more mature. Then just really appreciating what I had.

(I) You talked about affection being really pure in childhood.

(P) Yeah. Just, you know, innocence. Not thinking. Just doing what you want to do. I love my mom she loves me. I'm going to hug her and let her hug me. My parents were always doing, always offering to give that love. So, they'd do anything for us. I was thinking about how they would do anything for us and one thing my dad said me once... was you know with my history, like money always kind of came into play with affection,

because I think my parents were always felt bad that they couldn't give me more. So they tried to do anything they could do.

(I) So the affection was part of that?

(P) Yeah, I think they always felt bad that they couldn't show... I think they would show affection through food, give me food and gifts and show affection that way. I think they would, for example, when everyone's parents were buying them a car, and my parents couldn't do that. I remember very distinctly a point where all my friends were applying to Ivy League schools, and I had thought about that, but I knew I wasn't going to do that to my parents. I knew I was going to apply to a state school. And I think my parents figured that out because I only applied to one school. Because it cost money to apply to schools. So my mom was mad and hurt by that.

(I) By...

(P) By me not applying to an Ivy League when all my friends were. And, so my dad told me he would sell our house. So they would do anything for me. So it was kind of a pressure I had to. To not let them know there was something I wanted. Because I think they would have felt bad, and they would want to do anything for me. So I think money... they are just very giving. They would give anything they had and when they didn't have it they would feel bad. That they couldn't. I think that they would do anything they could, yet money was a place they couldn't do just anything. They couldn't show me they loved me by buying me a car. Or sending me to an Ivy league school. Or taking us on a bunch of vacations. I think that hurt them. But at the same time we knew they loved us. They gave us everything we needed. But like I said, my parents were always very willing to show us how much they loved us.

(I) And you described a lot of physical affection.

(P) Yeah, yeah, always lots of hugs, kisses, the verbal piece was always there. I know this is about physical. They would always give me gifts at Christmas and birthdays. And my dad was an artist, and when my mom or dad packed my lunch he would draw all over my bag. Like before a game he would draw me scoring a touchdown. Like dunking before a basketball game. And he sent me a card recently, and he drew me all over the card. [laughter] Like he would do like when I was in school. Always really thoughtful.

(I) Well let me tell you what I've heard so far. You talked about when you think about comparing your parents to others, you see your parents as very affectionate.

(P) Definitely

(I) They gave you a lot of hugs, and kisses that you experienced when growing up.

(P) Yeah, I think my parents always sacrificed for us. Like we had only one car, they shared a car, so we could go to private school. And my dad never buys new clothes. He's had the same clothes since I was a baby, he wears the same stuff. My mom has expensive tastes, but she thwarts that so we can do stuff. They would just do, like in our house, when I would go to friends houses when I was little, they wouldn't be allowed to touch stuff, or wouldn't be allowed to go in certain rooms, wouldn't be allowed to ride their bikes in the yard, but we would be allowed to do whatever the heck we wanted to do in our house. Our house was our house. I felt that. This house is my house. When I'd have friends over I knew it was my house. If we broke something I knew it wasn't the end of the world. I was able to breathe. You go in other houses and they are so nice and you get yelled at for every little thing. So I thought that was affection on their part. They



thought of us. They wanted to have a yard we could play in. And they wanted a flat driveway so I could play basketball in the driveway. I had a friend whose parents said 'well you can just go to a friend's house and play.' They were always thoughtful of us like that. Just doing things to have us in mind. The physical acts that they did. Choices they made, sacrifices.

(I) You talked about the experience of your dad, and joking. And when the family was together on the couch watching T.V. and cuddling. And on Saturday mornings being in the bed with them.

(P) Yeah, and watching cartoons. They don't have that anymore.

(I) You always talked about them never being hesitant to put their arms around you in public.

(P) Yeah, they were probably more, they always wanted to be affectionate, but I think they were more hesitant during our adolescence, because my brother and I always wanted to be cool. Tough. So it was always there on their end.

(I) You also talked about emotion in the family, they could really yell, but always come back and apologize and give you affection.

(P) Yeah, like this comes out in my dating, like girls will see how I act, and just think its crazy to yell, but its so normal for me to yell and be outward with that kind of stuff. And then I don't understand, like what's wrong with that. Actually fun. [laughter] Very liberating.

(I) You talked about the public affection, Little League games, your dad wanting to give you a hug.

(P) Yeah he was always involved with my sports when I was growing up and my mom would always come and watch and my dad would coach or help if he could. And as I got older, they kind of moved away and got more serious. But he was always there and always involved.

(I) You talked about the various phases and during adolescence you were embarrassed by it.

(P) Yeah.

(I) But then that phase passed and you were okay with it. You described childhood, being really pure and that seemed to be a comparison to when you got older.

(P) Yeah, there was that hesitancy. Like get away from me you gross old man!

And my dad, we always liked football and we would always block each other, like in the hallway, like just out of nowhere, he would just buck shoulders. Push each other. And we still do that. Like I'll be home and just out of nowhere he'll just give me a little shot. And then I'll give him one back, and then it will escalate. And then my mom will just shake her head and like 'don't break anything XXXX!' He loves it, it is affection. I'll do that sometimes with my roommates.

(I) Another theme that came up was that you were aware of your parent's financial limitations, and that they would want to do whatever they could to make up for what they felt were limitations. It included affection, physical affection, a lot of sacrifice, and you were able to name a lot of things they did.

(P) I don't think the physical affection was part of that. I think it was just who they are. I think they just didn't treat themselves to stuff. Like never vacation without us or eat out by themselves.

(I) You talked about always knowing they loved you, not just physically but verbally, doing what they could. You didn't want them to know you were aware...

(P) Yeah.

(I) You were aware of being able to breathe in your house, and even if you broke something it was okay.

(P) Yeah, I always knew I was a priority. Some of my friend's parents would go on vacation during the Little League games, but my parents always knew I loved the games and sports. So we would go on day vacations, but they would never consider going when I had a game. I was a priority. In my house I was a priority.

(I) And you were aware of the physical acts that they did to show you affection.

(P) Yeah, it was the norm. And where we shared the most life lessons was shooting out on the driveway [basketball]. My dad would come out and shoot with me. And we would talk and he would kind of teach me like life lessons. After school... and like we had a light over our garage, and shooting baskets late, and he would always come out. It was a good natural time, it was casual. And he would always let me know he loved me out there. Spending time with me and my friends. He would always play football or basketball with me and my friends. And his office was in our house, so I was lucky in that sense. Letting me know he cared.

### Participant #3

(I) Okay, so could you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Uh, yeah, um I guess I need to break it up and talk about one and then the other. I could talk about my mom then...

(I) Yeah, if that's what helps you.

(P) Okay, um, well with my mom, everything was great. I, I have the best relationship. She's the best relationship I probably have with any woman, to this day. Um, whenever I like got in trouble when I was little, she wasn't, she never was the one to punish me. She just yelled at me, and that got me, you know enough. Um, she always gave me hugs and stuff after my uh, any kind of sporting event when I was younger, and my dad never-didn't always come to all of them, cause of either work or whatever it might have been that would draw him away. Um, and...um, I guess to go on further about my mom, she always you know kissed me on the cheek before she uh dropped me off for school or something. Um, and uh, it's not really a physical touch with my dad, but me and him always played basketball, or threw baseball together uh whenever we were on the weekends. And then, to the weekends, he'd always take me camping or something, just the two of us. And, me, him and my brother would go out, and sometimes my mom would come too. And that was fun. Um, I guess sort of in a sad sort of note, um, if ever were to get spanked when I was little-that might have happened twice-I just remember it because of that, he was the one that did it.

(I) Okay, dad did the spanking.

(P) Right. Um, one time I almost cussed in front of my mom, like I didn't even get it out, I was just like "da-", and she knew what I was gonna say, she washed my mouth out with soap, That's a bad memory. Um, [long pause, deep breath], oh um I guess sort of



in a traumatic sort of way, one time I was messing around with one of my sister's Barbie uh, like house things, and I got it in my throat, and I fell, and I got cut really bad. And my mom is a nurse, and she was just like really calm, and soothing the whole time, was just like cleaning the blood out of my throat. And, just like I had to get stitches, it was a really serious thing, but the whole time I felt like really safe, just because she was holding me, and I think I was probably about eight, eight or seven. Somewhere in there.

(I) Okay, so, she held you and soothed you during that injury.

(P) Yeah, like I was sitting on the couch, just over her lap, and she was cleaning up blood. Um, trying to think of some other things. Um, um, I guess to go on further about my, my sporting events, and my mom always being there. I can remember every time I ever hit a homerun when I was younger, she would always come to the dugout that inning, and like give me a hug. That was embarrassing then, but as I look back on it, I'm glad she did it.

(I) So, embarrassing at the time at the time, but as you look back it was a positive thing.

(P) Yeah, it was a good thing. And a funny sort of way, and she always spilled one of the drinks she had when I hit one. I guess another sporting thing, the first time I ever hit, not like any kind of touch, but it touched my heart, I guess you could say. My dad, like I didn't think he was there, like whenever I hit it. And like he had just pulled up on his, uh, this motorcycle he had just gotten or something. And he was watching from the parking lot when I hit it, and he honked his horn when I was going around second, that was really cool.

(I) So you remember feeling um, real touched by that.

(P) Yeah, like it was, because he didn't make it to a lot of my games, like when he was there, I really wanted to do well. And it was just kind of a bad luck sort of thing, I never really played well when he was there.

(I) Okay

(P) Um, I guess my family just didn't touch too much. It was more uh, I don't know how to say it, ha. Um, I guess we all just kind of have like an understanding of like each other's boundaries so to speak, and like to this day, I think I probably have only told my dad I love him like three times, but he definitely knows I do. Like it's not like a...

(I) So it's other ways...

(P) Yeah, and not until like this past year, I didn't even start saying that to my mom on the phone, we've never really been that affectionate. I'm trying to think of a specific event, just because it wasn't ever really that big of deal. Like, I don't remember that many times where, like on consistent basis, they were always in contact. Maybe my mom, I can't believe I forgot about that, for like two years when I was in middle school, uh, she used to stay up and read me stories, like in the same bed. I mean I got a really big bed [laughs].

(I) She'd read you stories in bed?

(P) Yeah, like she'd pick out, what do you call it, the books that have the silver medal, like- [pause]

(I) Like Newberry award winners?

(P) Yeah, she would pick out that one and read it to me cause I hated reading.

(P) There's less about my Dad. Cause he uh, whenever I was like growing up more towards when I don't remember, all the way til, oh when was it, six seven, twelve, he was an alcoholic. And, I never saw him that much. It didn't really affect me, just cause I never saw it. My mom made sure I was never around it. Like I didn't really even know til I was in high school. And uh, I mean looking back, like some memories, I'm like "oh that makes more sense now." But, um he just wasn't there. And now he's been sober for seven or eight years. So...and that's probably why we don't have as close a relationship as my mom did, just cause whenever me and my mom were getting really close, he just wasn't around.

(I) Okay, so you just have more memories with your mom.

(P) Right. But uh, I guess me and him, we got a lot better in the last couple years, just as we spent more time together. Yeah. Like we weren't on good terms for a while.

(I) Okay, could you say more about that? About the change that's gone on in the relationship with your dad.

(P) Um yeah, and it has a lot to do with, my mom and him actually split up. They didn't get a divorce but they split up about two years ago, I think. And they have been ever since, and here recently they've been kind of back together, and he's been acting more the way I guess I think he should, cause I'm real protective of my mom. Momma's boy. And that, and not that uh, it shouldn't make a difference, but it sort of does. He got diagnosed with cancer, and uh, I think his doctor actually gave him like six months to live. And that was like four or five months ago, and he seems to be doing great by the way. I guess that would bring people together. Um... me and my dad I guess to elaborate more um haven't, we didn't really have that much when I was, or anything. And here recently we're on the handshake basis, you know, had a few hugs here and there. So that's definitely good.

(I) So handshake, and then some hugging.

(P) Mhmm. Ummm, and I guess now me and my mom hug just about every time we see each other. Or whenever I leave, just because she won't let me get away without grabbing me and kissing me.

(I) Okay.

(P) Um, I wish I had more childhood things to say.

(I) You want me to summarize what I heard you say, and if you can add, if there's anything you think of, you want to add to it, you can correct me if I didn't get it right.

(P) Okay.

(I) When you first started talking, the first thing you said was, you know, there's mom versus dad. And you start talking about your mom, and you say with her, everything was great, best relationship ever. She never really punished you, she yelled at you, but you and she had a real close relationship. You remember hugs after sporting events, and that she was always there. Your dad wasn't always there. And um, and then you remember your mom kissing you on the cheek before you went to school. Then, you said your dad would play basketball with you, and baseball, and took you camping sometimes, and sometimes your mom would go. But it was your dad that did, if there was spanking to be done, he was the one that did it. And um...um, oh and you did have a memory of starting to say a cuss word and having your mouth washed out with soap. You described a trauma that you had, an injury, um and you remember your mom being present,

comforting you and soothing you and holding you during that time. Um, and then you talk about in sporting events, like when you got a homerun, she would come up to the dugout and give you hug, and it was embarrassing at the time. But as you look back on it it's a good memory. And you also have a memory of your dad coming to sporting event on a motorcycle, and he wasn't there that much but as you're running around he was honking and that felt really good. You said your family really didn't touch that much. You had an understanding of boundaries. You didn't really say you loved each other that much, but it was kind of just understood. And um, um, and then you talked about this time in middle school, when you remember your mom reading, like Newberry award books with you. Um, you described your relationship with your dad, he was an alcoholic, so he wasn't around much. But he's been sober for the last seven or eight years. And with that's been more of a change in the relationship. Um, more handshaking and hugs occasionally. You talk about being real protective of your mom, and that you know for you your dad is acting more the way he should now. And um, and then you also talked about your mom like every time you leave now she always hugs and kind of pulls you back and makes sure she gives you a kiss. So, those are the things I heard, is there anything else you would add to that?

(P) Um, I just thought of another instance and my dad honking at me. He used to take me to school in middle school, and uh every day before like when I got out of the car, he I guess when he went through his mid-life crisis, he bought a Mazda Miata, I uh think that's funny haha. And its got this horn on it that's really loud. And um, when he dropped me off for school you know, cause my mom has a tendency to be late and my Dad was always off to work at like seven in the morning so I'd ride with him. And uh, he'd drop me off and just blow this really annoying horn. And I'm not sure what kind of memory that was, I still wish he wouldn't have done that.

(I) Hmm, okay, so that, when you look back on that memory, your not sure what to think of it.

(P) But it definitely, cause it happened every single day for like two years.

(I) Ok, well anything else. Okay. Thank you.

#### Participant #4

(I) Um, can you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(I) When I was growing up, my parents were always affectionate and caring towards me. Um, I actually talked to one of my friends the other day, talked about how my family is like a "full house" family, we like give hugs a lot. Um, but they were very affectionate towards me, and um caring, usually. My mom tucked me into bed until I was about in fourth grade with like a kiss and a hug. And then I kind of grew out of that. But, um, now that I'm in school, it's always a hug. And she hugs me, my parents both hug me whenever I come back 'cus I don't get to go home very often. Um, yeah. [long pause].

(I) So you said that your mom tucked you into bed until you were about in the fourth grade when there was a change.

(P) Um, yeah. Um I don't know. I guess I kind of just started, I used to sleep with the cracked, liked a little bit ajar. And then I think when I was in fourth grade, I started

shutting my door. I kind of, just I guess I figured I just grew out of getting tucked into bed. Um...[long pause] Like besides, like I can't specify like a single hug or anything. Like I'm not sure...of any single memory of that, really. I'm sorry.

(I) But you have general memories of being tucked in bed at night, being hugged, okay. Any other general memories?

(P) Um, I don't think so. I mean I never like held hands with my parents or anything. With my, wasn't really, I guess we just never held hands. Was like, if you ever walk, some times you see a mom and a daughter holding hands or a father and daughter holding- we never did that. Um, my dad's always, he's kind of, he's overly affectionate actually. He some times, it would, he's just really, he gets really excited about his family. Cause whenever I was growing up, I was born in XXXX and um my dad, we got transferred down here when I was eight. When I was in third grade. And my mom had told me that, cause my dad had moved down here for like nine months, and like stayed in XXXX on the weekends. And then he was working down in here, whenever, like during the weeks. And my mom said that the reason why dad gets, he gets so like overly excited, that he's like always wants to hug and talk and talk and he has all kinds of questions. And it kind of, I know it like bothers me, just cause its kind of annoying. But my Mom thinks that he just got, he was so, he missed us a lot when he had to live away from us for nine months. That he just kind of, it made him real excited-

(I) And it was after that nine month time period that he wanted more?

(P) Yeah, he always yeah. He does do that. I mean its not that I don't like hug him back. I always give him a hug and a kiss on the cheek back. But then sometimes, he just wants to ask all kinds of questions. And, its just, I don't know. And it kind of like, upsetting to me cause I know that it upsets him when I'm not as like affectionate back. Or if I just turn away real quick and like go to my room or something. But like, I don't think he just doesn't like get that its really annoying for me. And, he just never stops. But, it's not like we have a horrible relationship or anything. He just sometimes, he's just overly affectionate.

(I) Can you say more about that, like what overly affectionate?

(P) Um, we just like, oh, he's just like oh "XXXX come here, come here, come here." And real big hug. And just like "I missed you." And all this, so "Alright, I missed you too Dad." And then he would just start like, so "how was the drive?", "its good," "how's school been?", "its good," "how's work?", "its good." And just all kinds of questions, question, question, questions, questions. Um, kind of, its kind of what he does. And sometimes it will be like, he'll just start asking all kinds of questions like, in the middle of, I could be watching T.V. or something. He'll just ask all kinds of questions, and I'll just get short with him, because he, I'm in the middle of doing something and he just gets frustrated and he'll say "oh fine, oh you never want to talk to me, you never want to talk to me." Some of my friends, two of my really good friends have said that their Dad will ask all kinds of questions too, so I didn't know if it was kind of like a dad thing to ask all kinds of questions. But, um, we always compared stories on how our Dads always ask us all kinds of questions. So my friend XXXX, she says, her Dad will ask her questions. And like, she said she stops, almost doesn't even respond to his questions anymore. Cause, all of his questions will be like, "oh", um he like makes a comment and then say

“doesn’t it” or “isn’t it.” And then she’s like “yes” and “yes” and forcing her to answer questions. But that doesn’t really have to do with my family, haha.

(I) Anything else you can recall?

(P) Ummmm. (long pause) Ummmm. I think that’s pretty much the general how it is in my family.

(I) Okay, well I’ll tell you what I heard and if you want to correct me, you can, add to it. You said that your parents were always affectionate and very caring. They gave hugs a lot. Your mom tucked you into bed until you were about in the fourth grade, and then you seemed to grow out of that. You never held hands with your parents, like mother-daughter holding hands, or father-daughter holding hands. You talked about your dad being overly affectionate. He gets really excited about his family, and you talked about the nine months you were separated. Your mom explained, she thinks that’s why. But, he wants to hug and talk. But, you do give him hugs and kisses back, but he wants to ask all kinds of questions and he tends to be annoying at times when he does that. And sometimes you feel bad about that, and you feel like he gets frustrated because you don’t want to talk more than you do. And you talked about your friends comparing stories between, with your friends, about the dads. And they’ve also said that the dads tend to ask too many questions. And um, those are the things that I’ve heard, is there anything else?

(P) Um, Um, I’m not sure, like what, is there any examples of like times, like you want specific times when. Like when I’ve been upset about something, like my mom’s always like, pretty much, like comforted me, and like hugged and done all that stuff. But I, me and my mom, well neither of my parents really specifically like my mom, we don’t have like, a really, like, we don’t discuss like my personal life together. I know some girls say their mom is their best friend, and that’s just not the case with me. It really just weirds me out, like talking about personal stuff with my mom. Um, I think like, I just remember like when I started my period, the first thing I did, well it wasn’t the first thing I did. I think I told my mom like two days after I started my period. And she was like “oh its okay, its okay.” Cause I was upset about it, um but really it’s probably the most personal issue I’ve like, talked to my mom about, was like starting my period. I don’t like talk about boys, or boyfriends. Sometimes she’ll ask me like “Do you have a boy that you like.” “No mom,” just, just ignore it kind of. But um, she’s always like, if I’ve had a hard day at work its like, when I first started working I remember the first day, like the second day of work I came home crying because some girl was like really mean to me at work. And she was like “oh its gonna be okay, you’ll just go back tomorrow and it will be better.” And-

(I) So comforting with words.

(P) Yeah, yeah, yeah she just comforting with words. She tries to talk it out, and say what she thinks. It’s good. Some times I don’t know if her advice is the best. Sometimes when I talk to her on the phone, just about everyday things, she just, I don’t even know how to describe it. Like, she’ll just...she’s just, sometimes I’ll ask her questions, like, we were just talking about her cell phone situation just now. And I called my dad this morning, and asked him what we were doing cause they’re getting new cellphones, and they live in XXXX, and I live here. I was like, they have to get me, like a new cellphone. So I was like “Are you guys gonna like ship me my phone?” And my

Dad was like no, no we're not gonna ship you your phone, um maybe we'll bring it out there. You only live two and a half hours away." I was like, "I thought it would be easier if you just shipped me the phone." And he was like "No, I don't think we're gonna do that." And then I had to go to work. Then I called my mom when I got off work, cause my sister sent me a text message about activating and deactivating our phones. My mom said um, she said, oh well she explained the situation about they're gonna deactivate my phone, reactivate it or something. And...I said "Okay, so you guys are gonna, are you guys actually gonna ship me my phone. Or what are we gonna do." And she's like "yeah, yeah." Like mom, "you didn't actually answer my question, your just agreeing with me." And she's like "oh, um, yeah, we'll, okay, we'll ship you your phone." It's just sometimes I feel like she does not comprehend what I'm saying. I'm like mom, answer my question.

(I) So you have to listen, too, sometimes.

(P) Yeah. Yeah. So um, that happens, but that's not really physical affection. I mean. Um, I forgot what the point of that story was, um I don't know though. Its kind of...sometimes my mom is like that, and sometimes over the phone, or like at home she'll just be like "yeah." I'm like "mom that was a question, elaborate on this some for me." And like, that's not physical affection, I'm, I don't know why I told this story.

(I) That's what came to your mind.

(P) Um, and I'm not sure if I can think of other specific instances. One time I had surgery, I had sinus surgery on my nose, and um, it was when I was a senior in high school, so two years ago. They went to the hospital with me, and um, before I like went under, they had to put me through anesthesia or whatever. I had I.V.s in my hands, and they just stood there. My dad held my hand and just squeezed why they put the I.V. in me. And-

(I) So you remember him holding your hand?

(P) Yeah, he did, he told me to squeeze at the end, but it didn't really hurt that bad. And then one time when I was in, I wonder how old I was. I think I was, it was something like six or seven, I ran into the coffee table, and I had to get stitches in my head. And um, we went to the hospital that night, and I had to get stitches and everything. My Dad took me so, he was there, I remember him. I held his hand that time too...at the hospital, cause it hurt really bad, ha ha, with the stitches.

(I) So you remember a holding, or a hand holding when you were injured.

(P) Yeah. Definitely safe to say when I was injured. Is this good, like, do you want these specific instances.

(I) Yeah that's good.

(P) Okay, um, I'll try to keep thinking...(long silence). Not sure.

(I) Anything that's come to mind?

(P) Um, not really specifically.

(I) Okay, yeah that's fine. Thank you



Participant #5

(I) Could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Um..you mean when I was younger? My parents were always really affectionate. Um, my mom always hugged us before we left. She always hugged us in the mornings. And uh, we always did like, we always had family dinners. We always, we had a pool, so my dad always played in the pool with us, like played games. So, they were always around, always telling us that they loved us.

(I) Can you say more about the play, you said he was always playing with us.

(P) Um, well we would play like games in the pool, where like my dad would be like the monster or something you know. So we would be like running around the pool and you have to dive in and get out before he can get you. And we would play for like hours I remember. And we would like be characters. I was always like sailor moon or something so I was like could fly through the water, and my brother would be like the Baywatch guys, and he would do the dive you know. So we would play just all night until it got dark.

(I) Okay. When you think of physical affection from your parents you're reminded of games in the pool where there would be touch involved with that.

(P) Yeah. And they would always hold us down and tickle us until we like couldn't breath.

(I) They?

(P) Yeah. They thought it was hilarious.

(I) You talked about family dinners. Can you say more?

(P) Um, we always ate dinner as soon as we got home from school like five o'clock. And my mom would make us all sit down. Like we couldn't go out and play, like we always had to have dinner together. And she would like ask us about our day, and she always wanted to know exactly what we did, how was school. She was always really involved in our lives. Like she always wanted to know who our friends were, who we were hanging out with, stuff like that.

(I) So when you think about physical affection, you think of that also including sitting down with the family together, and talking with each other, and talking about your day, and that you had to be there together.

(P) Yes. I remember one time, we were at my grandparents house in XXXX. I always think about this. And me and my cousin XXXX, we were playing, you know like that red mud that they have. Well they have like mounds of it behind their house cause they were like construction building the other house. Well me and my cousin were playing in it, we weren't supposed to, but we were like sliding down it because it was raining. And we fell like really hard and the rocks messed up our knees and our elbows and stuff. And so we went running back to the house, and we told her Dad was there, my Uncle and my Dad. And we told them what happened, and her dad all he said was like "Well you shouldn't have been playing" like where they said not to play. And my Dad like picked me up and he liked held me while I cried and like fixed me up and bandaged me up and like told me he loved me and I need to be more careful. And I just remember that, it has always stuck in my mind because if my dad would of done what her dad did, I would just

been like, devastated. I wouldn't have known what to do. Like my Dad was always like the one, the protector.

(I) Okay. So the memory of when you were injured, you and your cousin were injured at the same time. It always stands out to you when you both went to your parents, whereas her parent, her Dad didn't respond much. Your Dad was very responsive and picked you up and cared for you, and that stood out to you at that time. And that he was the protector. You felt like he was the protector.

(P) Right. So like to this day like if I get in trouble or if I get hurt, or if I like got in a car accident or something, I know he's like the first person that would come to help me.

(I) Okay. Anything else come to mind?

(P) Umm, trying to think. Well when I got hurt, it was usually my dad that would like fix me up and stuff because my mom worked a lot when I was younger.

(I) So difference between mom and dad?

(P) Well when we moved here, like four years ago, it was my sophomore year in high school, no six years ago now. And I remember when I got in my first car accident, I wrecked my first car. And I like hit my head on the steering wheel, and the air bags had like burned my arms and stuff. And both my parents came, it was like one o'clock morning, and both my parents came. And my dad wouldn't even talk to me, like he was so mad that I'd wrecked my car. But my mom was like very like comforting and holding me while I cried and was like "You're gonna be okay, its gonna be okay." And I kept asking "Why is Dad so mad?" And she was like "I think he's mad about like the money situation." Like I just wrecked the car and it was my fault. And then like the next day he came into my room, and he was like "I'm really sorry." Like my dad's first reaction was the money. But then he realized he was just glad I was okay. But my mom was the first one to be like holding me and being like "are you okay, I'm really sorry this happened." But my dad, I just remember my dad was so, I mean I was afraid of him, I was like "he's so mad."

(I) But then you remember the next day...

(P) Yeah, he always does the next day, where he's always like really nice and he came in and gave a hug and a kiss and was like "I'm really sorry I reacted like that."

(I) So he apologized?

(P) Yeah. And I remember when I got my new car, I was on the interstate, and I hit like a haystack...in the middle of the interstate. And I got home, well, there's two trucks on both sides of me so I can't do anything about it. And I got home and I told my Dad and he was so mad. He was like, he thought I was lying. He was like "Where were you at for real?" And I was like "I was really on the interstate." And he got really mad and like reacted the same way he did when I got in my car accident and like screamed at me. So I like went upstairs like balling and crying. He came up like an hour later, and like gave me an hour and cracked some joke about how the cow's owner wants to know where his hay is. Or something like that. But like, he always reacts first to the money situation, how like, what its gonna cost him now. Because I cost him a lot of money haha. But then he's always really affectionate later.

(I) So he gets angry but he always comes back and is physically affectionate with you. Okay. Anything else?

(P) I can't really think of anything else.



(I) Alright. Well let me kind of summarize what I've heard to this point. If you want to add anything or if it sparks any memory, don't hesitate. You started off my saying that your parents were always very physically affectionate, and talking about hugs in the morning and that type of thing-

(I) Oh we always did, like at night, we always did like a ritual where me and my brother would like fight to get into the bathroom. Cause we had two sinks and it would be the cool thing to have the left sink next to the door. So we would like run when they said it was time to get to bed, to get to the first sink. And I remember my parents would like chase down the hallway to see who would get there first. We'd brush our teeth and wash our face really, really fast. And when we would go to bed, both of my, my mom would come into my room first, and my dad would go into XXXX's room. And they would like tuck us in and bring us water or apple juice. We used to drink juice, but then the doctor said we should drink water. So they started bringing us water. And then they would switch and he would be like "let me really tuck you in." And he would tuck me in one more time and give me a kiss goodnight. I remember that.

(I) Okay. And then you also talked about the difference between your mom and dad. You talked a lot about your dad and the games he would play. Especially like in the pool, you'd play for hours. Umm, games, diving in and avoiding each other. Touch involved, and you would have characters and that type of thing. You talk about family dinners as being a part of physical affection because you are always required to be there for family dinner, and you always talked, and talked about your day-

(P) Even to this day we still have family dinners.

(I) Okay. And then you also said that both your parents would hold you down and tickle you a lot. And, you talked about the experience of going to your grandparents house, um which I've already mentioned before that both of you being injured but your dad's response being very different from your cousin's. And that really stood out to you. You always sat beside your dad as the protector. First person to care for you. Um, and you talked about your mom, your dad was there more because your mom worked a lot. Um, but then you also talked about getting in car wreck, you talked about two different times, in a car situation. In which your dad's response then was anger, and it was your mom who was holding you, comforting you, you know it was all okay. But then later your dad came and apologized and hugged you, and kind of made amends with you afterwards. So um, let me see. And then you added to that the bedtime ritual, running to the bathroom, fighting over the sink. And that your parents were a part of that, they kind of played into that. And then tucking both of you and your sibling in, and then switching off. And giving you hugs and making sure you have water or juice or whatever. Okay.

(P) Um well since we moved here my dad got a boat, and my mom doesn't really, she'll go out for a couple of hours, but its not a big deal, and my brother spends too much time with his friends. So me and my dad during the summer when it's warm, me and my dad spend a lot of time together on the lake, just talking about everything. I mean he knows everything about me, like more than my mom. And so we have like that relationship and that's nice, he's like a best friend. But uh, and I call him every day, even if I'm like, cause I moved out of my house for six months, and we talked every day, there wasn't a day that went by that I didn't call my mom or my dad. Um, they make us kiss them before we leave the house every day, even if we're late. They'll make us come all the

way back in the house and give them a kiss goodbye before we can leave. And like they even wrote a note on the outside of the door, that was like a “A kiss and hug before you leave every day.” So every morning when I leave I have to kiss and hug them, or at night when I leave or when I come home, like before I go to bed, I always have to kiss and hug them. So its like a rule.

(I) So it’s a big rule when you leave or going to bed.

(P) My brother even comes into my room and gives me a kiss goodnight before we go to sleep. So we’ve always been like really close.

(I) So you and your brother are physically affectionate with each other as well.

(P) He always hugs me, he likes attacks me hugs me. But we used to hate each other, but now we’re like best friends though. We spend a lot of time watching movies, playing games, video games, stuff like that. So we have that relationship now.

(I) Okay.

(P) Usually when I get in trouble and I know I’m gonna be in trouble, I usually go to my brother first. And he’ll give me a hug and be like “It’ll be okay, I’ll help you tell them.” Stuff like that. So he, we’re really close. I can’t really think of anything else right now.

(I) Okay. Well anything else you want to add?

(P) Um are you just talking about my immediate family?

(I) Whatever comes to mind.

(P) Well my mom’s side of the family, like my grandparents, are not affectionate. Like they’ll give us a kiss and a hug when they first see us, but they don’t really care to know anything about us. They don’t care to be involved or anything. I mean I was like sixteen, and they sent me crayons and a coloring book for Christmas. I mean they like don’t care, and you can tell when you hang out with them. They’re not physically, even to my mom, and it really hurts her feelings, they’re not very affectionate. I think that’s why she is so affectionate cause they weren’t. But then my dad’s side of the family it’s the complete opposite. His parents are very affectionate and they are always involved like we always have like big, huge family gatherings. Like at least once a month we get together. And everyone has to hug everybody and kiss everybody, when you come and when you leave.

(I) Okay. But you’re aware of your mother’s mother not being very affectionate so that’s why your mother is. And then your dad coming from a family that is very affectionate, always getting together and hugging each other.

(P) Yeah. So we’re all really close. I can’t really think of anything else.

(I) Okay that’s great.

#### Participant #6

(I) Could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Lets see I was more of a daddy’s girl, I would say something to my dad, and whenever I got something right he always hugged me, you know. We’d always go like fishing and he would always come to all my sporting events. Um, my mom worked a lot, so she always thought my dad was trying to turn me into a boy, she always used to get mad at him about that. But my mom was always there, she was just, she was more like

the pants in the family I guess. She wasn't like the loving tender mother that was always around, because when I was like two years old she was trying to finish up her degree. And then she went straight, she's an interior designer, she went straight into interior designing. She's like a workaholic, so um...I mean she was still like, you know, she was still like you know always hugged me and there when I needed her. But just like it wasn't like that excessive amount that most kids get from a mom, my dad did that instead. Anything...

(I) When you think back on physical affection with your parents, do you have specific memories?

(P) I guess clarify what?

(I) You talked about being a daddy's girl, could you clarify more on that?

(P) Oh okay, I have one. When I was I guess about four or five years old, there was a rocking chair. And in my bedroom and right before I would go to sleep I would I would always sit in my Dad's lap in that rocking chair and go "rocky Daddy, rocky Daddy." And he would always sing this song he made up about me, like a little fantasized song to make me go sleep. And he would always sit there and rock me until I go to sleep. That was, is that good enough.

(I) So you have a memory of being there in the rocking chair with him, with him singing a particular song with him, that was kind of a habit.

(P) Yeah. Um, I used to always, he used to always carry me on his hip when we would go on the big rocks to fish and everything.

(I) Okay.

(P) Um, I guess not really one bad memory, I was in a car wreck with my dad. This old woman had hit him, and he had hit his head, and like had a nasty like started bleeding, and I hit my lip but I didn't worry about it. But I crawled over into his lap real quick and tried to wipe the blood off of his forehead, not knowing that my own lip was bleeding all the way down my chin. I just kept crying cause I thought I saw his blood, not mine. Um, that was when-

(I) So soon as the car wreck happened, you saw what happened to him, and crawled into his lap, to try and help him.

(P) Yeah. Yeah. Um, I'm trying to think of some stuff about my mom. That's weird, my mom was never like, the more I think about it, my mom was never like, she was touchy feely, but she wasn't like, I didn't go to her a lot. She let me have some of her stuff play with, but that was, she always had a nanny over there, or my grandmothers.

(I) Over, what did you say, at your grandmothers?

(P) She'd always leave me at my grandmother's, or she'd have my grandmothers come over and take care of me.

(I) Okay. Can you say more about that?

(P) Um, well whenever she'd be gone to class or work, my grandmothers would come over. My grandmother, my mom's mom, was the same way as my dad. She was always like putting me in her lap. She always used to fall asleep though when I was in her lap. I never used to fall asleep on her, she used to fall asleep on me, so I would just kind of sit there. I guess my mom was always the punisher, like if I ever did something bad, she would always yell at me or spank me or something. She still sort of is. Umm, I don't know ask me a question.

(I) Anything else come to mind?

(P) Trying. Um.

(I) I can tell you what I've heard so far, and tell me if anything else comes up? Um when you first started talking, you said you were a daddy's girl. And um, you were talking about there was this difference between your mom and your dad, the way they both kind of were. And um, uh, talking about you know, talking about specific instances with your dad. He'd always hug you when something was right. You'd go fishing with him, and sporting events with him. Um, whereas your mom was always working so she was not always as loving and tender as he was. But you do remember her as being touchy feely, but not the one you would go to in situations. And then, your dad just seemed to do more than your mom. And you described a memory with your dad, when you were four or five years old, having to do with the rocking chair. Um, being rocked by him to go to sleep, and him singing the same song every time. You also talked about your dad carrying you on his hips when you were fishing walking down big rocks. You have a memory of that. You also described a memory of being in a car wreck in which both you and your dad were injured, but the first thing you did was to get up and go get in your dad's lap, and try to help him because he had blood on his head. Um, and then you talked about how your grandmothers often took care of you, so you had a memory there. You talked about your grandmother would fall asleep before you did when you were being rocked. But that you also described your mom's mom as being more like your dad, in terms of the physical affection. You also talked about how your mom was more of the punisher of the two. You kind of said your mom wore the pants more in the family. But and you said she still kind of is, in terms of the one who more usually punishes.

(P) Yeah kind of ironic, my dad's mom is more like my mom. She's more like the...except my dad's mom is more very snobby. She's always asked to have our shoulders back and always has to be very, very proper, same way my mom is. So like, its kind of weird how that goes. Like interchanged.

(I) Your moms is a lot like your dad's mom.

(P) Yeah, but she a hates hers. So, um because of that. Um, my dad was the one that taught me to write and to read, but my mom did a lot of like the school work. You know my dad's like the one who has a physical education degree. He wanted to actually home school me cause he wanted me to be around more. But my mom decided that he wasn't a good enough teacher for me. And, I mean its no big deal, I'm fine now but just, she never, I think my mom got jealous a lot, about how much time I spent with my dad. Like I still even though I don't get to see him as much, I talk to my dad more on a different level then I do with my mom. Because he was always there for me and everything. So, um. Um, my mom's way of showing how she cared about me was she always used to put my in pageants when I was little to show me off, and so did my nanny, my dad's mom, at the same time. And she always used to try and make me a girl, she put me in ballet classes, and just you know tried to show me you know its okay to be a girl. But when it was time for me to actually be a girl, like wear makeup, and start having my period and everything, she freaked out. Like she'd never seen it before or something.

(I) So she changed with puberty?

(P) Yeah, as soon as I hit puberty, it was all downhill from there cause I realized I could say no to her. Um, my dad was still always real lenient with a lot of things, like if I got a

C on something he'd be like "oh good job." You know. Like always like "way to go." Um, now if I don't get an A on something my mom usually would of gotten an A on, she'd be like "Well that's terrible. We're gonna take this, your car away from you for like three days." And my dad would end up compromising with her and be like for three hours, or something. It just kind of like, it kind of showed a little bit, how he was always there. Um, my dad would always take me a lot to see his family. Cause even though some of them were like in Alabama, or you know wherever else, out in the boondocks of Tennessee. Um, he'd always want me to be really close with them, in case he was not there. My mom, on the other hand, it was totally different, it was her mom trying to tell me to do that. She was always just too busy with work. That's basically all I can remember right now.

(I) Okay. Anything else?

(P) I guess the one thing I do remember about being punished all the time, when I used to play with my Barbies without clothes on. I didn't know any better, I didn't know they were supposed to have clothes on. But my mom like freaked out, she was like "you're telling these Barbies to have sex, she's learning about sex XXXX." That's my dad's name. And he's like "no she's not, she's just playing with her Barbies." Like that's how anal retentive she was. So, that's basically it.

(I) Okay. Sounds good.

#### Participant #7

(I) Could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Um, well I was in a one parent household, so it was mainly my mom. And I'd have to say that anytime that I've felt down or felt bad my mom would just give me a hug, it always made my day better. Um, that she was always there. So in a sense I'm a momma's boy. Any time I call her, her voice can be a physical touch to me cause it brings back those emotions of her being there.

(I) So her voice can be a physical touch to you?

(P) Mhmm. Yeah, just knowing that she's there can help things get better.

(I) Can you say more about that.

(P) Um, like last, I think last semester, I had a rough time with certain things and I'd call her and she would talk me through it. And help me out. It was like she was here cause when I was kid she was always there for me to either hold me or ya know help me out if I needed her. And so just talking to her since I moved here without her having to drive. And we have a very open relationship. We can talk about anything, so I guess that kind of helps.

(I) So freedom to talk about anything, so you recall that when you think about physical affection you think about what you all talked about. Um, can you say more about when you were a kid?

(P) Um, like when I played soccer when I was younger, anytime like when we'd lose or something, I didn't have any kind of like father figure to you know whip you in to shape sort of. I can go to her and you know she'd hold me and be like "its ok" blah blah blah.

And uh, it kind of helped me out that way, and sort of made me feel better. And um, like when, I used to sleep with her til I was like seven, or eight or something like that. She was always there. So, just any kind of interaction with her it was always warm, it was never negative or anything. It was always better.

(I) Okay. Can you say more about how you slept with her until you were seven or eight.

(P) Yeah, like since we, she was a single mother, and just me. Um, we had an apartment, and it was one bedroom and I just slept in her room. And then when we moved in with a friend of ours um, I slept with her for a while until I want to say probably second grade I stopped when I got my own bed. It was a big bed.

(I) So it was a change.

(P) Yeah it was big change, and I wasn't used to it, then I finally got, kind of got away from it. But I still felt like if I needed anything I could go to her.

(I) Okay. So it sounded like you had to adjust to that but once you did it still felt like, you always knew you could go to her.

(P) I always knew, it never, it's like the feeling never left.

(I) Okay. You described being helped by her as you recall physical affection.

(P) Um...like I know that, I have like tapes of when was really, really young. But that's where I don't really remember doing it. But like on the tapes she'd be there, and she'd be just playing with me with toys and stuff and she'd always be there. She'd pick me up and like run with me and I would throw a basketball or something. Things like that. It was always, I always watch them and think wow, she was always there. And uh, most kids don't have that and I always felt special in that sense because she was always playing with me.

(I) You said when you described that, you don't have a memory of that but you watched it.

(P) Yeah I watched it but I can't really remember it.

(I) Anything else you remember?

(P) Um, let's see. I remember, I think one time me and a couple of my friends were doing something wrong and my mom got mad, but instead she just gave me a hug because, she got mad because I left my aunt, when it was her like, before a wedding or something. She just was like you know "you can't do this" and just gave me a hug and held me and explained it me and then I kind of understood it from there. Um, I remember that because it was pretty big, she was pretty mad.

(I) So she was really mad and she was disciplining you but she was also hugging you at the same time.

(P) Yeah. Yeah. She was mad but then she, I guess figured I didn't understand why she was mad. So she was instead of just yelling, just told me in a better sort of way. Um, and I always get that from her. No matter where I am its, I always feel, okay, she's gonna be mad if I do something wrong, but on the other hand, she's just gonna give you and hug and be like "I still love you, but you can't do that." Just something along those lines, cause she always tells me that: "no matter what you do, I'll still love you."

(I) Okay. So even when you think about her getting mad at you, you still know that she's always going to say that she loves you too and that she'll give you a hug.

(P) Yeah. I don't know if this really counts as physical touch, but when I was a kid, she'd always have my breakfast in front of me as soon as I woke up. And to me it was



kind of like the physical touch was her preparing the food I guess. I remember why she would get ready for work I'd eat Ninja Turtle cereal and Funions. Which is a weird breakfast, but I'll remember that. And uh, hmm. That's all I can remember from that house. It kind of stopped after that.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Like the house?

(I) You said it kind of stopped after that?

(P) Oh, I guess when we moved out like I had reached a certain age, that it kind of stopped with age, and I was less dependent on her in the morning that I could get up and do it on my own, or at least I wanted to. Um, I'm not really sure if it's one reason or the other, but when we moved into our own house it was more okay well she had to get up and leave for work earlier. I had to kind of do things by myself and at the same time I had neighbors that were like family friends since I was born. So I would always eat breakfast or whatever and then go over there and wait for the bus. So it was less of a contact with her, but she still woke me up and still made sure I was awake and went to get breakfast. Um...it's something I could use here to get up and go to class. Um...see it didn't, we didn't really do much after that. Like I was more independent. After moving into that house, I wanna say I was like nine. But, uh, or some, we lived there for like a year. Yeah at like nine I was more independent. And uh, we used to always play board games, I mean that's not really physical touch but it's a surrounding I guess. Um, I used to play sorry, monopoly. I always hated monopoly. I think everybody hates that game cause its so long.

(I) We all just pretend we like it because it was cool right?

(P) Yeah at one point. We always played this card game, spike mouse. Um, we used to play that forever and like every night we'd play it. Um, I also remember uh she used to sew, so I'm a Bills fan which is unfortunate because they never win, but uh she had this helmet, this Bills helmet that she sewed for me. And I was always there sitting right at her feet as she did it, like watching T.V. or something. I have that on videotape.

(I) Okay

(P) She always like leaned down and rubbed my head or something just to make sure I was still there. And like...

(I) While she was sewing?

(P) Yeah why she was sewing. And like every Christmas we'd like build something and she'd let me help her build it. And if I was like screwing in a screw or something, she would help me screw it in whatever, kind of always like a guiding hand I guess. Make sure I did it right. Lets see, so many things to try to remember. Oh this one's big. I remember it was my senior year, two years ago, and I was applying for the Air Force Academy and my counselor didn't...counselors are supposed to, they have this list of things they are supposed to do. And uh, soon as I told her I wanted to apply for the Air Force Academy, she didn't follow the list, she like just, I, I don't know, didn't do it. And I asked her, and she was like "well you never told me this?" And I'm like "You're required to do it, if I say anything along these lines, it should automatically spark in your head 'I got to do this'." And I know like eight other people in my graduating class did that. So they didn't say anything, they got it and they were fine. Well she didn't do some of the things. My mom kept calling her and asking her and trying to get her to do it. And

she finally did it and she was like “all right whatever.” Well she spends all this time doing it and then she doesn’t send it off the day it was due. So I missed that which was big, but I kind of got over it. Well instead of, like my mom didn’t say anything, she just came home, gave me a hug and said, ‘sorry, I did everything I could, but the Air Force Academy is out.’ And I just cried and screamed and just I hated it cause something else messed up the rest of my life and I didn’t have control over it.

(I) Yeah. Wow.

(P) And she just kept trying to tell me its okay, that it will be all right, and she just kind of came in my room, burst in and just grabbed me make sure I didn’t hit anything because I was so mad. But, um that’s the biggest thing recently I would say.

(I) So you remember that in that huge life disappointment, she was hugging you and consoling you with her words.

(P) Yeah she was there. Ha. That was big.

(I) Yeah, sounds like it.

(P) But I got over it now, I’m doing something else. I’ll be all right.

(I) Anything else you want to say?

(P) Oh. I don’t know if this really fits into like physical touch but more of a scary touch I guess, ha. Uh, also my senior year, I was running track and I had a big meet and everything. Something, like I got hurt, and I went to the emergency room, and the emergency room was full, I mean on a Saturday night, just full. And she was there the whole time, just scared cause I was in so much pain. And uh, when I finally, I started hyperventilating and like if you’ve ever seen anyone that has no oxygen in there body, they start to go into the fetal position. Well, I was locked in that and I couldn’t move, and she, my mom jumped up, jumped over chairs and yelled “somebody get in here.” And she just came back and grabbed me and started crying. And just held me as I couldn’t move at all. Yeah that was pretty intense. Because I couldn’t do anything cause I couldn’t stop breathing that way. And just, mm, I remember that because she was crying and screaming and yelling at every one to ‘Get in here.’ And uh,...

(I) So those are two big times that are really hard times for you, and it stands out for you that she was right there with you and touching you.

(P) Yeah, she’s always been there, like every time I’ve been sick. Like if I’ve had strep throat she’s there, she’s been there like you know, if I, um, need a bucket say, she’s there to get that. She’s there if I’m really not feeling well at all, she’ll be there to like rub my back or something. Just always being a mother I guess. (Long Pause) That’s, those are the main times I can think of that she’s been there, I mean other than that its just everyday little bity stuff. Um.

(I) Well I’ll summarize what I’ve heard you say. And uh, as far as anything else, don’t hesitate to let me know. Um, you started off by stating that you came from a one parent family it was your mom, so your memories are all about your mom. And that your mom would always give you a hug when you were down. She was always there. And you talked about her voice being like a physical touch to you as well. You gave an example of having a rough time last semester, and even though she wasn’t here, it was almost like was because she was saying all the things that were helpful like she had done when you were younger. You said that as a kid, she always held you and that you could talk about anything like in sports, with soccer, you could go to her and she would hold you and



make you feel better in situations. And you talked about sleeping with her until you were seven or eight years old. Um remembering warm interactions with her, um, uh, and the feeling never left you. You always knew that you could go to her. And um, you talked about watching videotapes, like not having some specific memories but then being able to watch the videotapes where she's playing with you, picking you up, running with you, and it always made you feel special. Um, you also talked about when your mom got mad. She would give you a hug, and you described a specific instance where she was mad at you but she did it by way of hugging you and talking to you. Um, yet you knew that she was mad, but how she would tell you that she loved you too. And then you also included as part of that physical affection um, that she would like put breakfast in front of you as soon as you woke up and that was almost like a physical touch to you. You talked about change that occurred around nine years old, and also occurred with the move. But you were aware that you became less dependent on her, doing more things by yourself. Um, you know having more contact with neighbors, but like when your mother was going to work early, and she had, she would wake you up to say goodbye, but then had to go so there was less contact. You talked about the memory of playing a lot of board games, and you named specific games: sorry, monopoly, and you mentioned a card game that you played almost every night. Um, you remember her sewing for you, sewing a helmet for you. And that while she was sewing, she would reach down, and kind of rub your head. You know, make sure you were still there. You talked about her having you help with her building things, and she would you know put her hand on yours and kind of be a guiding hand. You talked about the experience of your senior year applying for Air Force when the counselor really didn't follow through on what she should have done. And your mom was aware of how upset you were gonna be so was there for you and hugged you and gave you the right words when you were very angry and upset about that. Um, there was the case in the emergency room where you remember her jumping over chairs to get people to help you, and her being very, very scared. And you also remember that when you were sick she was always there, um, just you know always being a mom. And then you also mentioned that every day you're aware of little things that she does. Is there anything else you would add to that?

(P) Um, like, uh, if she sends me little package she'll always put in a little note. She never did the lunch thing where she put a note in, cause I didn't really take my lunch, I bought school food until at a certain time in high school I started packing healthier lunches for track and stuff. But she'll like send a package and she's like "I'm proud of you." Just little things like that. We may not talk everyday. But she'll send a message to kind of remind me of her. She did like that last month, last week I think, and I called her and talked to her for like twenty minutes. I mean just every now and then she'll do something like that. I guess cause she thinks I forgot about her.

(I) Okay. So she does gestures to show that she's still there.

(P) That's the only other thing that I can think of.

(I) Okay all right. Anything else you want to add?

(P) Um, no that's it. That's my mom in nutshell.

Participant #8

(I) So if you will tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Um, my dad was very loving and caring and my mom was, too. My mom took care of us, and my dad worked, so my mom was around when we got home from school.

They were very loving. We would get in trouble here and there, they would punish me and stuff, but there was never any hitting or any uncalled for stuff. But, I mean, I played sports, and they were really encouraging and they were with me. Is this what you mean?

(I) Well, when you think about physical affection from your parents if you could describe what comes to mind when you think about the physical affection from your parents, the warm and tender feelings expressed through touch.

(P) They always would be holding me and hugging me and stuff like that. Always informed me they were there for me.

(I) So verbalized, too.

(P) Yeah, and every night before I went to bed they would kiss me on the cheek. And as I got older, and they still tried to like hug me as much as they could, pat me on the back and all that stuff.

(I) So as you got older, they would still try to...

(P) Yeah. I mean, just try to keep me you know, keep me going. Let me know they were there for me. Like after basketball games, even if I didn't play well, they would still come up to me and give me hugs, even if I played my worst game.

(I) So you played basketball, and no matter how you did, when the game was over they would come give you a hug.

(P) Uh huh. Yeah, I mean my mom, she knew basketball, so she was like my coach, and sometimes we'd get into it, but other than that she would always end up giving me a hug. But other than that, they were always there for me.

(I) When you think back to physical affection when you were growing up, can you remember a time... what that was like?

(P) Yeah, I remember when I would go outside and play and I'd come back in and I'd be all nasty, and sweaty, and they would still hug me. Always making me feel good. There was never anything bad. Me and my brother, one time we got in a fight. And he was older and they treated him different. And they treated me, I was the youngest. And we would get in a fight, and we would get in trouble. They might treat me different because I was a girl and I was the youngest one.

(I) Can you say more about treating you different?

(P) Yeah. Like, kind of protecting me more. If I got hurt, or wasn't doing something, or when my brother because he was older and they thought he should be more responsible. And me I could get away with more. That he should know better. I was the sweet, innocent little girl. There wasn't a difference between me and my brother, I mean they still loved him and hugged him and stuff. There was never really a time when they did bad stuff, always loving, caring. When I was about five or so, they were always around and watching us, and I remember we were on the beach and walked off and got lost. I kept walking down the beach. And I kept walking back and I couldn't find them. And

they had been searching for about four hours. And I was young. And they, as soon as I got back they weren't mad at me. They just grabbed me and hugged me.

(I) So you were lost on the beach for about four hours and when they found you they just embraced you, and weren't angry at you.

(P) Yeah. And there were times like that. And there were times they told me it wasn't the right thing to do. They would come up to me and put their arm around me, but it was kind of like trying to teach me.

(I) So are you saying that at times when they were trying to discipline you and teach you they would put their arm around you as they told you.

(P) Yeah, and see my dad died when I was 11. So my mom was more, wanting to hug us all the time. She just got more protective. We were always loving each other and everything.

(I) So after he died she became more protective.

(P) Yeah, and my brother. And my stepdad was kind of different when she remarried. I was 12, and he was like my basketball coach. And he wasn't as huggable as my dad was. But when I was a kid, my whole family was like that. Always wanting to pick me up and hold me. Like my grandma and aunts and uncles and stuff. We'd have Christmas, and as a kid, every time I ran around, she would be playing with me and was wanting to hold me, and I would be wanting to play, and she would be wanting to hug me and hold me, and rub my head or my arm or something. And growing up, my dad used to put me to sleep by rubbing my arm. But back to my grandma, they were just always playing with me, putting me on their shoulders and doing something like that. My uncles and stuff, too. Swing me around, having fun and whatever. They would always, I mean I got whippins and stuff, but not a lot, just a couple of times. I was used to them always holding and hugging me, and then when I would get a whipping it would make me think. Because it would hurt. And it made me think that I wouldn't do it again. I mean there was times when they had to discipline me. But feelings didn't change. One time me and my brother got in trouble for something and we both got a whipping, and my mom was always the one to give it, not my dad. He never did. My mom would do it, and I'd run straight to my dad. And he would hold me. I mean, most kids do that. One gets on you and you run to the other. My mom was like the, I mean she was with us all the time, and my dad went to work. They were always encouraging and stuff. They would show it by telling you, but by affection too.

(I) So verbal and physical?

(P) Yeah, and that just made it more understandable. Like as a kid, sometimes you may not understand the verbal, so you need the physical, too. Things like that, they would pat me on the back, give me high fives, pat me on my head. There were times like when I was sad, they were always there for me to you know, if I wasn't having a good day, my mom would give me a hug, and try to make me feel better. That hug or kiss on the cheek would always make me feel better. As I've gotten older, and I'm off at college, I don't get to see her as much, and when I see her, it's like a big hug and kiss on the cheek. And I'm not embarrassed or ashamed when my mom comes up and gives me a hug. And I know they always tried to encourage me. That's the main thing. They always let me know they were there for me, no matter what. Whenever I was a kid and we'd go to the

mall, my mom would always hold my hand. It would keep me from running off, too! It let me know that she knew I was there.

(I) Well, I will go ahead and summarize and if you have anything to clarify or add, you can do that.

(P) Okay.

(I) Well, you started off by talking about how your mom and dad were very loving and caring. Your mom was always around and your dad was working. You described a lot of holding and hugging. That they verbalized they were always there for you. Every night before you went to bed there was a hug and kiss on the cheek. You talked about physical affection in relation to playing sports. No matter how you did in basketball they always had a hug for you. Your mom knew a lot about basketball and would give you constructive criticism, and would always give you a hug. You said that even when you were nasty and sweaty they would still hug you. You talked some about your brother and how the two of you would fight, and they treated you a little different, and you had a sense that you got away with more. You emphasized that with your parents there was never any bad stuff. You talked about discipline and that sometimes you would get spanked, you called them whippings, once in awhile, but that it was never bad stuff, but something you needed. And you have a memory of when your mom who was the one who carried out the discipline, you would run to your dad and he would hold you and comfort you. You described a memory from five years old when you got lost on the beach. It was for a long period of time, about four hours. When your parents found you again they weren't angry, but they just hugged you. And you said there were times they were teaching you things and disciplining, and they would put their arm around you. And you sensed that was a different kind of touch that was going on.

(P) Yeah.

(I) You talked about when your dad died when you were 11 years old. And after that happened your mom wanted to love on you more. She became more protective. You described your stepfather and that he wasn't as huggable as your dad. You talked about grandparents and aunts and uncles. They would pick you up and hold you and carry you on their shoulders. You described a memory from a Christmas. You were running around and your grandma wanted to chase after you and hold you. You talked about them putting you on their shoulders, swinging you around and holding you. You talked about your parents being very encouraging. There was a kind of connection between physical and verbal. The physical made the verbal understandable. You talked about the pats on the backs, the high fives, the pat on the head, the rubbing, always there when you were sad, hugging you after school, always asking you about how your day was. You talked about the change of coming to college, and not being around your mom as much. And so when you are around you can hug, and you don't feel embarrassed. You described walking through the mall and holding your mom's hand. You realized it was so you wouldn't get lost, but there was something more to it than that. So those are the main things that I heard, is there anything else?

(P) No, it was just always encouraging me and always making me feel important. That they loved me and were there for me.

(I) So when you think about physical affection when you were growing up, you also think about the love, encouragement, support, making you feel important.

(P) Yeah, they were always right there.

Participant #9

(I) So, can you please tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during your childhood?

(P) Okay, um, there wasn't a lot of affection when I was growing up, mostly because my mother worked 24 hours on and 24 hours off, because she's a paramedic. My dad was never around, and he ended up leaving when I was three, I think. So obviously I didn't know him very well. Yeah, but my mom, even when she was around and not working, she kind of shied away from physical affection. I don't know why, for any reason, because I new her parents, my grandparents, and they were very loving and affectionate. So I don't know why she came out that way. But I know she thought it was a sign of weakness, to hug and stuff in public. And stuff like that. But, even when we were at home, I'd want to sit down and watch a movie and cuddle up with my mom when I was a toddler.

(I) Cuddle up with her?

(P) Yeah, and occasionally she would, but then she would be like, 'well, watch cartoons, and I'm going to go lay down.' Which is why I think now I really crave affection. I kind of go out of my way to be around a lot of people. I love being hugged and stuff now, and when I was a kid it was never there.

(I) So you are saying that now you tend to crave physical affection.

(P) Oh, yeah. I do. It's like, especially lately. And for a while I went through a period where I agreed with her, that it was kind of stupid, and I shied away from it, and kind of antisocial and wanting to be in my own world all the time. But now its like, I really crave being around lots of people, and I love going to social events. I even go home with people I don't know very well, just so I can be around somebody. I love being held, I love it.

(I) You love being held.

(P) Oh yeah, it's probably my favorite thing, I just love it. I love, I don't know, especially if I'm dating someone, I definitely want to be held, and to curl up and watch TV. And I'll go out of my way to make that person feel comfortable and special, and hopefully they will reciprocate. The same thing. I think that's because my Mom, she just didn't want to be around and do all that sort of stuff. Even just sitting there and watching TV. I really want to be held. Or going out and holding someone's hand. I hate being alone. It really scares me now. I don't really know why. If I'm not with someone, I feel scared and alone. So I make sure I go out of my way to make sure I have a few people around all the time. I feel like not that no one loves me, but just kind of abandoned.

(I) So when you think about the experience of physical affection with your mom, you now think about being with people.

(P) Yes. And for awhile there, kind of when I was going through my antisocial thing, probably when I was about 16, almost 17, and um, I was kind of going through a gothic phase, wearing a lot of black, and I was sleeping with a lot of people, just so I could have



that feeling. But I didn't really care about it, and I always felt sad afterwards, and I didn't really know why. It's like I can't do that. I just wanted to be held and appreciated. (I) So during that time you were sleeping with a lot of people but didn't feel good about it.

(P) Yeah, it was like one night stands. I would go out, meet somebody, and that would be that. I realize what I was lacking.

(I) Can you say more about 'what I was lacking?'

(P) Well, I was lacking someone just holding my hand, and just being hugged.

(I) You were lacking that from your parents?

(P) Yeah, just anything like that. And of course my dad wasn't around, so I didn't have like a father figure in my life, or a male figure, except for my mom's boyfriends. Who would come around occasionally. I definitely realize that I missed that while growing up. So now I like to be around a lot of guys. Because it makes me feel safe in a way. I don't know why. And like people caring about me. Because I didn't feel that way growing up. Unless I was around my grandparents.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Yeah. They were very affectionate with each other. They would love to sit around and read newspapers together and watch TV. together. They'd always go out together and hold hands and kiss and be very loving and affectionate. And they kind of rubbed that off on me. Like they would always hold me and hug me and that was really nice. When I got to go over there and visit them. Especially my grandmother, she loved holding me when I was a kid. And hugging was a big thing with them. Every time I would come over they'd hug me and cuddle up. And it was really sweet, and I'd really miss that when I didn't get to spend a lot of time with them. Because I was usually just at home or something when my mom was working. And even now, I kind of miss them. Because they were very loving. And I realize I definitely want that, more than I want my Mom's life. I want to have a partner who I can feel is loving, and care about.

(I) So you are saying that the love and affection you got from your grandparents is what you want.

(P) Yes. Because it makes you feel special and loved and happy. And I don't necessarily need marriage for that, but just someone I care about. And I realize that if I have kids, I want to give them a lot of affection, and as much of my time that I could.

(I) So you want to give your kids a lot of physical affection.

(P) Yeah, well, I mean obviously not too much. You have to let them cry and stuff. But I just can't imagine not wanting to hold your child and love them.

(I) Anything else you can think of?

(P) I'm trying. I know I want a big family. Oh yeah. I want to adopt a lot of kids. Because they don't get as much love. I want to adopt kids from Africa, who have been abandoned with AIDS and stuff. And give them what they never would have had. Good schooling and love. Because they never get held over there. And people really need that. I think that's why I like working in a hospital so much. So I can take care of people. Especially our AIDS patients. They don't get that, and it's very sad.

(I) Anything else come to mind?

(P) I guess for my conclusion, I think people really do need affection, because it will have an outcome. I know there is the nature, but you also have to have the nurture. You

do. I think you do. And I think I'm pretty lucky that I got out of my whole gothic phase. I think in America people want to be unemotional and don't want to be attached. But I love it. I love having my friends and being close.

(I) You use the word attach as you talk about physical affection.

(P) Yeah. I don't think it's something you can throw off.

(I) Well, let me tell you what I heard you say, and you can add to it or clarify if you'd like. You started off the interview by saying that you didn't have a lot of physical affection when you were growing up, and that your mom had worked a lot of hours. She was working 24 on and 24 off, and so she wasn't there a lot, and didn't give you a lot of physical affection. And you said your dad was never around, that he left when you were three. You talked about your mom shying away from physical affection, and you talked about your experience of her curling up on the couch with you, and then she would leave to go lay down or something. And you can remember wanting to be held and cuddled at that time. And you can remember that from an early age. You also talked about your grandparents, that they were loving and affectionate toward you. And I noticed from your non-verbal communication when you talked about your grandparents, you kind of lit up and your eyes sparkled and you smiled a lot as you talked about them. You described them as being very loving and affectionate with you and with each other. Holding hands and doing a lot of things together. You talked about wanting to be like them. And when you have children you want to be like them. You also said that your mom thought of physical affection as a sign of weakness, and that you don't. You talked about now craving physical affection and of the importance of closeness to other people now. Being with people is really important to you. You notice when you aren't with people you get lonely and seek out others. You like to touch and being held. You described a phase you called your gothic phase, a time with you were sleeping with a lot of people. And that it would mean nothing, it would be a one night stand. But that you grew out of that phase and now you recognize the importance of being held and touched. You talked about what you were lacking growing up. You were lacking the hand holding, and being held, and that you missed the physical affection. You also described physical affection as making you feel safe. You said your grandparents made you feel special and loved. You also talked about when you have your own kids you want to be physically affectionate with them and give them time and do things with them. You said you want to have lots of kids. And not just having your own but adopting them. Adopting kids who haven't had the opportunity to be held and cared for. You want a big family. You concluded by saying that people really do need affection. That they have to have the nurture. You used the word attachment and the need to know that others care. You gave the example of working in the hospital. Particularly AIDS patients and the need for them to know people care. So those are the things I heard you say. Is there anything you would add to that?

(P) Not really. But I do think people need to know that other people care about them, by being around them, holding them. Letting them know you understand how they feel. AIDS patients, cancer patients, anyone like that. People who are suicidal. They need to know people are there for them. And a lot of times I notice they don't get that feeling. It's just sad they can't get that.

(I) So when you are talking about caring, are you talking about touch?

(P) Oh, yeah. I think people need touch. I think pets help with that. I read a study where people with AIDS do better with pets. They seem to feel better and heal faster. You need touch. It helps people feel comfortable.

Participant #10

(I) So, can you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during your childhood?

(P) Um, well our family has always been really close. A really tight knit family. I have a half brother, and we have the same dad but different mothers. And I'll have to say I probably got more from my mom because I was her only son. And my dad was always really close to my brother because they had five years where it was just those two, and nobody else, so they've always been real close together. So as far as physical affection goes, I mean, as long as I lived there, like high school, you don't show anyone that you're showing physical affection with anyone, but I always had the decency to tell my Mom that I loved her, if I was around anyone or anything like that, like I never really worried about it or anything. I know a lot of people that get embarrassed with stuff like that. I never had a problem with it. As far as being around my friends. Probably I have to say since I've gone to college, they call me every day, and my mom told me she wouldn't call me every day. And she got around to it, and so she told me to call her whenever I needed something, but then later she said that was a bad idea. So she just decides two weeks into school that she starts calling me every day. And I said 'what happened to our deal?' And she said 'what deal?' And I said 'when you said you weren't going to call me every day and that I would call you whenever I needed something or just wanted to say hi or something.' And she was like 'I don't remember anything about that.' And I said 'we had an agreement.' She just completely denied it. But every night when I would come in, no matter what time it was, if I was, when I went out when I was in high school, every night when I came in they would always wait up for me, my mom and dad. And I guess my sobriety test when I came in was kissing my mom goodnight. But I'd always done that since I was little so I always did it anyway, kiss her goodnight, and tell my dad goodnight, and they've always been real strict on me. Always wanting to know what I'm doing and where I'm going and what's going on there. And we always had a really close family with my parents, and with their parents. And it's just pretty tight knit and I can't really, as far as physical affection goes, are you considering this positive affection and negative affection? Like punishment, are you considering that?

(I) I'm defining physical affection as fond and tender feelings expressed through physical touch. So when you think back to physical affection, it's okay to talk about whatever comes to mind.

(P) I never really, the only time, I mean I kissed my mom, and she would always kiss me good-bye when I went to school in the morning. And I would always kiss her goodnight when I came in, and my dad would always hug me before he went to work. I would always hug them goodnight when I came in. That was about the extent of it. What I was asking about was like when, like considering punishment, the way their parents punish them. When I got up here, I dated a girl up here, and one day she said 'that kid needed to be grounded.' And I said 'grounded?' And she said 'yeah, grounded, he was acting up.'



And I said 'grounding does nothing for a kid.' And she was like 'what do you mean by that?' And I said 'I was grounded about twice when I was a kid, and lived at home.' And she said 'so you never got in trouble?' And I said 'yeah, I always got in trouble, but I just, my parents just knew better, because all it does it make you think about what you want to do to make them mad next. That's about all it's worth. I always got paddled, or whatever it took, and I knew what would happen, so it wasn't like I was being mistreated or anything.' I just knew the punishment if I did something, and I did it, so fair game. And I know, she has a problem with parents who she refers to as 'beating their kids.' And I never really had a problem with it. I think it works pretty well, because I can think of like the way I look at things and the way my friends look at things, and they always talk about being grounded, and me being whipped when I got in trouble. You could tell that they look at things a little different, a little more widespread, and don't really worry about their parent's opinion of things, and they want to do just what they want to do. And like that's like the first thing that comes to my mind, like what do I need to do that my parents would want me to do.

(I) So when you originally asked about the punishment, you asked about my question of being positive affection or negative affection, so are you describing the physical punishment as a type of negative physical affection?

(P) Well, I wouldn't really say negative affection, because I would say it is showing affection as far as my parents caring for me. And knowing I did the wrong thing, and reinforcing punishment on me. So I've never seen it as a bad thing, I've always happened and I always knew it was going to happen. If I did this, I would get punishment. I wouldn't look at it as a negative thing, because parents wouldn't do it unless they loved you. So if they didn't do it to me, or if they didn't call me every day I would be worried. Because that would be what I would worry about, if they didn't show they cared. Just different things. Just showing interest is probably the most affection that we do on a regular basis now. As far as physical affection, I always kiss my Mom when I come home. That's about it.

(I) Okay. Anything else come to mind?

(P) I'm trying to think. No, I can't think of anything.

(I) Okay, let me tell you what I heard you say and then if you want to add anything then you can. First thing you said when you started talking about physical affection from your parents is that you said your family is very tight knit. And you said that you have a half brother, and that you have more physical affection from your mom, and then your brother had more from your dad, because he had five years with him before you came.

(P) Well, it wasn't a thing where they insisted on it, it's just that I became accustomed to my mom because my dad and brother were going through this thing with his mom about custody of my brother. So it's not really like a pick and choose thing, you know how you are just closer to someone so you can talk a little better? I guess I should have said I can talk to my mom better than my dad.

(I) Okay, I'm glad you clarified that. You talked about that as a teenager you didn't have a problem with affection from your parents, but you were aware of how some people would get embarrassed but that never bothered you.

(P) I just thought it was funny that some people would get embarrassed.

(I) And you said that since you have come to college, you said your mom had called you every day. And you described the situation in which she called you every day and then you made this agreement that you would just call her when you needed something, but then she seemed to forget about it and continued to call you every day.

(P) Yeah, she forgot about it real quick.

(P) You talked about how every night when you were a teenager your parents would wait up for you and you remember kissing your mom goodnight ever since you can remember.

(P) And they still wait up for me until I come home. Like when I stay with them, when I go back home, my mom still waits up for me. I don't have to kiss her goodnight or anything, but when I walk in and just say 'I'm home, go to bed, love you, goodnight.' That's just, when I first get home, they jump up and hug my neck. Happy to see me and my brother.

(I) Okay. You talked about how your family was a strict family and a close family. And you also said it was your parents and your parent's parents.

(P) Well, I was just saying that my parents were real close with us because they were with their parents.

(I) Okay. And then you remember your mom kissing you goodnight, and then kissing you when you went to school, and then your dad hugging you before he went to work. And then you also talked about the punishment issue, you were aware that a lot of your friends were punished by grounding, and you were punished by a physical punishment. But also talking about it as showing affection, that they wouldn't have done it unless they were caring and that they loved you. You also talked about how much they showed interest.

(P) Yes, they always show interest in everything I do. They are very supportive. About everything we do. And always making sure we are making the right decisions. Try to keep very close on our lives.

(I) Okay, anything else.

(P) No, that's all I can think of.

(I) Well, thank you very much.

#### Participant #11

(I) Could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during your childhood?

(P) Well, from my parents. My parents got divorced, so physical affection I received from my father was extremely limited because I rarely ever saw him. Of course when I was around my father, it was never, I never felt any limitations as to the love I could receive through physical affection even though I didn't, was not necessarily around him enough to know him very well. But, I guess with my mom, I mean, as far as physical affection goes always hugging, always I mean, I'm not exactly sure what constitutes physical affection.

(I) Whatever comes to your mind when you think about it, what is it that you think about from your mom or...

(P) Well I, hmm, I don't think physical affection necessarily has to be touching, but as far...[not audible]

(I) And that's fine, if that's what comes to your mind, that's fine.

(P) It's always comfortable, like, I always feel like there's affection coming from my parents when I'm around them. Um, I always feel, in sensitive and comforting situations, I could always come to them with my problems. A very open relationship with both of my parents...can talk about anything. I never really lacked, or neglect of any sort of affection growing up. Um, I know, I thought it was weird when I was younger, the first time I ever got a kiss from my dad, that I recall, was on my mouth, it was really weird. But it was not by any means sexual or anything like that, just cause it was on your mouth. And then his parents were from Europe, so they used to always do the double cheek kisses. Um...let's see. Um..my mom...umm. I'm starting to think about like sportsmanship, like conduct and stuff like that as far as affection goes. My mom was always, I don't know, coaching in a way, but I never really got involved in extra-, not extracurricular activities, but physical activities as far as sports go. Um, I kind of feel like I'm rambling.

(I) That's fine because that's what's coming to mind.

(P) Yeah. Let's see. I'm trying to think like there was never like as far as bubbles that you want to stay out of with strangers and stuff, I never recall ever feeling like I couldn't, I don't know, get into my mom's personal space. Everything that she had was to offer, whether it be her physical affection or any care that I ever need, or money, material items. Anything that belonged to her belonged to me. I'd say that I've noticed too from my mom's physical affection and my dad's, I, the affection that I give to others physically resembles what I received from my parents. The way that I conduct myself when socializing with others, and even close relationships that I've formed with other people, not just little short-term socializing.

(I) So you said that the physical affection you tend to give to others resembles what your gave to you?

(P) Yeah. Which is not too overwhelming, but enough to show that I cared and if you ever needed anything more, it could be given to you. I never, I wouldn't say that in socializing terms too, I don't really hug people or get very physical with anybody. Not that I recall not being comfortable being physical with other people, I just don't really like to have people in my space. But I never felt like my mom or my dad could not get into my space, its just mostly other people.

(I) So mom and dad can get into your space, but other people can't.

(P) Yes, it takes a lot of time when I feel like people really know me, that's when my space can be...breached if you will. Trying to think of anywhere else to take it.

(I) When you think back to physical affection in your childhood, is there any specific memories?

(P) Hmm. I remember always wanting to be held as a child, always wanting to be picked up even when I was told I was too big to be picked up, I still wanted to be picked up. I remember liking to sit in like my grandparent's laps and stuff, especially my grandpa, because he used to do the little horsey thing where you bounce up and down, and that was just completely a gleeful experience. It was like your riding a horse. But...hmm. I remember a lot of Halloweens for some strange reason. I remember always having to

hold one of my parent's hands and them being very cautious as to wanting to walk up to the door with me, and watching me the whole time. And I remember feeling like "oh my gosh, they're so overprotective." When I was a young child I wanted to run free and get candy I guess. I remember my mom always looking out for my safety when we were riding in cars too. I always had to sit in the back seat even past the legal age being allowed to sit in the front seat with the air bags and stuff. And I remember if ever we had to slam on the brakes for a stop light, she always had the motherly instinct to throw her arm out and put it over my chest. And I always thought it was the strangest thing, I was like "that is not gonna help mom, but thank you for caring. Oh, remember growing up, my dad would drink a lot, and whenever he would drink the affection he would give me, I wouldn't, I think its just cause I hadn't ever been around alcohol, growing up with my mom, but when I would see my dad, it was always, I could never, I never liked it. Its not like it was overwhelming or even different, I just didn't like being around alcohol, probably cause I knew that most people in my family on my dad's side had problems with alcohol so I just kind of assumed if my dad was drinking the affection that he would give me would not be a good thing.

(I) So your saying when you're around your dad when he was drinking, that you didn't want the physical affection?

(P) Yeah. I almost felt like it wasn't, like it was fake. Because he would always reinstate, whenever, whenever he's drinking he always likes to reinstate over and over, "I know I haven't been there for you, I love you, I love you , I love you." And maybe just because it's repetitive, and he's drinking that it just seems really not genuine.

(I) Okay. Not genuine when drinking.

(P) Yeah. Or maybe too genuine. Maybe that is what made it awkward, I can't really, still can't really figure it out. I'm open to tell my mom anything. I know that. I've cried with her before, and she's cried with me before and that's always been completely acceptable. Just recently I cried in front of my dad for the first time, and it was kind of awkward, but it made him cry too. Just over I guess touchy subjects of not being around each other growing up, and him seeing the maturity in me, and me just having an outburst. Definitely a change with age. Not so much hugging so much from him anymore as I remember being younger. I definitely got a lot more, he was always, since he wasn't around, trying to really show that he cared, buying me things, whatever he could find to show me that he cared. As far as hugging me more, and when he'd hold my hand when I was little and picking me up and stuff.

(I) Okay.

(P) I used to, I remember being young going over to other's people's houses, and not thinking that their parents were very warm and inviting. I always felt awkward going over to other people's houses. Like I felt like other people's moms and dads weren't as into their kids lives. And just wanted their kids, maybe, maybe I grew up acting like my parents to the extent that they were so open with me that I learned to be open and it was kind of a duplicate process.

(I) But you saw a difference with your friends' parents.

(P) The difference that they didn't want to hug their parents, didn't want to say "I love you". They didn't want to tell their parents the events that happened in their lives for fear

of basically being punished either emotionally or as far as being grounded or something goes.

(I) Okay.

(P) I remember whenever I would cry, my mom would come and console me and my dad would kind of tell me to get over it. But sometimes I would throw temper tantrums and start saying hateful things, like the typical being young and telling your parents that you hate them and wanting to run away. Or you never want to see them again. You know, blah blah blah. But my mom would always say, 'that's ok, you'll change your mind.' And let me run away room and have my time. So she definitely wanted me to grow up to be independent, not just for that example, but even though I think that my independence resembles her, which is not quite independent, but...kind of repetitive. Umm. I can't really...

(I) Well I can summarize what I've heard you say so far, and if there's anything you want to add or clarify about anything wrong. You started off by saying that your parents had been divorced so that contact you had with your father was more limited. But there really were no limits as to what you could receive in terms of physical affection. Your mom was always hugging, always affectionate, you were always comfortable with that. Um, you talked a lot about the verbal, you could always go to her with your problems and that you were open with both parents. Um, that there really wasn't a lack of affection growing up. Um, you had a specific memory of your dad kissing you on the mouth when you were little and you remember that that was kind of weird but it wasn't sexual or anything but it just stood out to you. You talked about his parents being from Europe, and so they did the double cheek kisses, so you were aware of that. Um, let me see, you talked about you didn't feel like there was like a bubble around, you described in a bubble around your mom. That you always felt like um anything that belonged to her belonged to you. And that there was just no limit in terms of what you could get from her. Um you talked about how the physical affection you have now with other people resembles that of what you had with your parents. Um, and you talked about it not wanting to be too overwhelming, but enough to show that you cared for others. Let me see. And that you don't, I think you said that you don't get too physical. And you also said that there's like your mom and dad can get into your space but other people can't. There's like a space they can get into, that other people, you don't want them to. You talked about being little and always wanting to be held and picked up. You remember sitting in your grandparents' laps, and then also specifically having your grandpa be a horse and riding on him. You talked about Halloween, your parents requiring that you hold their hand, when you went, but also wanting to feel some independence with that as well. Um, and um let me see. Oh you talked about your mom's arm coming across if you had to stop in the car too quickly. You never understood what that was about, but it was kind of instinctual. Talked about being able to tell her anything, and that there's been a change with your dad, as you've grown up there's been less hugging then there used to be. And then um you also talked about being aware when you would go over to friend's houses; that their parents were not as physically affectionate and verbally saying things as much as your parents did, and your mom did. And you always thought that was a little strange. Um, and then you talked about your mom would tend to console you

when you cry and your dad was more like 'get over it' type thing. So those are the things that stood out to me. Is there anything else you would add?

(P) Um kind of when you started talking about how I said that my physical affection towards outsiders, which would be anybody but my mother and father. I've also noticed in a way, that I like to sometimes hide my emotions and hide my physical, or just affections basically my emotions, anything to give away anything. I want to keep them out of my space. I almost feel like as myself, it includes my parents, and we are something that almost, we're so, I don't know, I find this all so similar that its hard for me to want to even give away like our secrets to anybody else or just so basically hiding any affection often. Maybe not always, but towards others. Kind of...

(I) Almost keeping it in the family, is that what your saying?

(P) Um, well keeping it in the family until it's been almost like a trial period to where I know if I can trust you and if I know if you know you're open minded to me, others, if I respect who you are then I feel like physical affection can happen. I don't really go around hugging anyone. I guess I got a cross what I meant to say, I'm not really sure, I kind of rambled and didn't state it that clearly.

(I) Well what I'm hearing you say is there's a safety zone, I mean you safe with your parents and you kind of test the waters so to speak before you get to a certain point with other people.

(P) I guess manipulating my physical affection towards other people...I'd say.

(I) Okay.

(P) I guess that's really it, I pretty much covered everything that would have come to mind eventually.

(I) Okay.

#### Participant #12

(I) Okay, could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Alright, I was, uh with my mother, me and her always got along, a lot more than I did with my Dad. Um, which is probably mostly how a lot of people are. But um, um its you know I always know with my mom, my mom, I'm always real protective of her, like she was of me when I was little. Um, always said there's families, there's kids that don't really say 'I love you' to their parents. Um, I always did, and they always said it back.

(P) With both your parents?

(I) Um, yeah, with both of them. Um, even my dad too and I mean hugs and if I was ever going anywhere I would give them a hug and a kiss on the cheek. Or, either one, I'm really affectionate about that. So, um...

(P) So, you always gave hugs and kisses to both parents?

(I) Yeah. Um, when I was growing up of course. And now when I got a little bit older I was kind of like 'Is this the right thing to do?' Ha, you know, I mean my dad; do I give him a kiss, it's kind of like do I give him a handshake. And but, then you think about it and its your dad and your supposed to, uh, your supposed to love him. You know. So that kind of affection. Um, as for any like, anything except, like over to, you know abuse



or anything like that, nothing like that. Um, my mom would always, I mean if I ever got like growing pains growing up, I would go in and sleep with my parents. And they would rub my growing pains away. Just, stuff that always you know, resembles a parent to their son. Um, let's see here, my mom, I would always, um, at night time, I would always sneak out and uh, check and see if my sister was sleeping so I could go be with my mom, snuggle and cuddle her when I was little.

(I) Uh huh.

(P) When I was little.

(I) So you'd sneak in with your mom?

(P) Sneak into to like, she'd always be awake, she's always taking late-night showers and I always just knocked on the door, and she'd let me in, and we'd just, have just, her company was always, I loved it, I mean not that it was better. Um, let's see here, um, anymore, I'm trying to think, uh...She always used to tickle my back when I was sleeping. I mean, that was one she still does, I mean I'll come home, and uh, usually a man wouldn't say this, but I go home I'll snuggle my mom still. You know, and I will until I get older, and she's old. And um, that's just the way that goes for me. I mean, I'm more of, I love my mom to death. Um, (deep breath), let's see here, my dad, I never really I mean, I think the reason why I was more towards my mom, like in, like if my dad was always going to bed early, 'cause he was always working. And the dad's the one that is in control of saying, punishing the kid, ha you know, so he doesn't, he's gonna go to the mom. Um..

(I) Your dad punished?

(P) Well, I mean my dad was the one that took, you know like give the belt every now and then. Ya know. But the reason for my affection towards, that's why the reason for my affection towards him is different than my mom. Um, um, let's see here. Hmm.

(Long Pause). I'm kind of stuck. Um, (deep breath)...

(I) You talked about, you've used the word snuggling with your mom, could you say more about that?

(P) Yeah, um, um, just like hop in the bed, you know, just snuggle, put my arm around her, my leg around her. Um, um, I mean, now as I've been older, I'll massage her back to try to make her feel good. She's my mom, she's always stressed out, haha. I always love to cheer my mom up when I come home. And, that's now, but back when yeah I snuggled, yeah I would snuggle her, just like my other brothers do. I have a younger brother, but he's, I think he's grown a little too attached. I don't, I mean, I tell my mom, not to, ya know, it's time to kick him out of your bed. There's a time when it comes that you're not supposed to, you just can't do it for that long. Um, um, but besides being, I mean, like affectionate, like touching, nah, none of that...even if it occurred, I probably would have thought nothing of it. But, that's beside the point. Um, there's, I mean I've always been okay if I have something that I'm not really sure with my body, anywhere that freaks me out about something. I'm not afraid to go to my mom and let her check it out. You know. Um, um, let's see. But back to the snuggling, I mean we'd just snuggle, not like a boyfriend and girlfriend snuggle, um totally different. Yeah.

(I) Yeah, a mom and son snuggle.

(P) Yeah, I mean just the company is just, is just I mean I'll snuggle my kids as well, I mean that's the way I was brought up. Um, but I do think that that's made me a lot more,

hanging out with my mom a lot more than my father, made me a lot more emotional as I grow up. As I'm growing up right now. It, I mean I've always been that way, but just watching my mom, um, you know if she's ever depressed, which she's been upset every now and then. I'll always cheer her up, but it makes me kind of sad as well, you know, whatever she's feeling, because I was so affectionate with my mom, like, as a son, mother and son, makes me, whatever she's feeling, I'm feeling almost the same thing. So, if I go home and she's upset, I'm kind of sad, until she's happy.

(I) Okay.

(P) Um, ummm. Um, got stuck again. (Laughing)

(I) Well, let me tell me what I've heard so far. If you need to correct me on anything you can. And if it sparks any memories, you know, go ahead and tell me. Um, you started off by talking about your mom versus your dad. And you said, with your mom you got a lot better with her than you did your dad. And you tended to snuggle with your mom, um, you tended to be protective of her, you've always said 'I love you', a lot. You also tell both your parents that. You give hugs and kisses to both your parents. You noticed as got older, you started to question more of the physical affection, just because of the change you were going through.

(P) Yeah, like going into high school. Like hitting puberty.

(I) Yeah, um, then you talked about the experience of when you would have growing pains, you'd go get in bed with your parents, and then they would rub you, like where your growing pains were. And, some times you'd sneak into bed with mom, to snuggle. She would sometimes tickle you when you were sleeping, and that's something that she still does, and that you still will go home and snuggle with your mom sometimes.

(P) Uh huh. Yeah.

(I) You said your dad always went to bed early. And um..

(P) Tickle my back, yes, tickle my back, I mean that's fine. But yeah tickle my back.

(I) Yeah. Okay. And with your dad, he tended to be the one that punished you. And you talked about the affection with him being different, than with your mom.

(P) Yeah.

(I) When you were talking about the snuggling, you talk about hopping in bed, putting the arm and leg around her. Sometimes you massage her back when she's really stressed out, and that...

(P) That's now that I'm older. When I was younger, I never really did that. I mean I wish I would of, but I didn't. (Laughing)

(I) And um, and that um, you know now, you talk about taking sort of the emotion of your mom, so that, and because you have that close relationship with her, you tend to be emotional then...well you didn't say then what, but you said you felt like you experienced more emotion.

(P) Yeah. Yeah.

(I) And um, you talked about how you'd go to your mom with anything.

(P) Uh huh. I think that is too because my dad was the one, I mean in a regular average family, the dad works eight hours a day and he's not there when you come home from school. Works til six, and then he's all stressed out cause there's toys flying out of the house everywhere on the lawn. And so he'll do that, and then he'll ask me to take out the trash or something, and knowing me and my stubborn self, I'll be like 'why don't you



question me why, blah blah.' And then, I mean my mom was always home, and if my dad said something and I didn't want, I'd go to my mom and be like 'why, why' ya know. And I'd try to get it out of her, cause I knew she would let me do something that my dad wouldn't. Um, and that's one, that's another reason why I've always been closer to my mom. But now, I mean, now its equaling out because its not, I'm so grown up now, that it doesn't, it doesn't, I don't really do that. But, I'll go to my dad if need something, or my mom, cause there not gonna be like 'No.' 'It's your life now.' Um, but that's one big thing about when I was younger that why I was so affectionate toward my mother.

(I) Okay

(P) Because she was always around. And I, I could always, if something was wrong, I'd go to her because she was the one home. My dad wasn't there.

(I) Okay, she was more present.

(P) Yeah.

(I) And you kind of clarified like a mom and son snuggle.

(I) Yeah, and all my brothers went through that. They all, my mom is a real emotional woman. I'm sure a lot of women are emotional. But all my brothers went through that. My brother still, he's eight, I've been trying to tell him "Sleep in your own bed, its time." He just loves my mom to death as well.

(I) Yeah, yeah, okay. Um, and then you talk about how now, if you go home if your mom is feeling really down, you want to do what you can to cheer her up, you can't be real happy if she's not.

(P) Yeah, I mean I'll dance around, and make up songs about how everything is so great, and how it could be worse. And I'll try to help her out, like we just moved into a house, and boxes are everywhere. Which is how it's been like my whole life, we've always moved one way, and never gotten everything taken out, and then it would be time to move again. So, we'd move again. So this time, I think she likes, she doesn't like it that way, but that's the way she is. Um, I'll just ask her if she needs any help, and I'll just continuously ask her, and I'll help her with feeding the horses or whatever she's gotta do that she's busy with. And then, I mean, I'll give her massages, just ten minute massage. Make her feel better, and she always seems a lot happier. I just think its, she's sad because she misses me. She's been around me for, she was around me for eighteen years, and I always did anything I could to help her. And I just think that she was so heartbroken, that she lost her first...she didn't lose me, but yeah, and I don't think she knew how to handle that either as well. As well as me, I mean I took it pretty hard myself. Um, and I do think that if you're more affectionate with your mother or your father. I think it's kind of hard to be affectionate toward your father. Because, most fathers are gone, working, you know, he's a man, he's not affectionate, he's not, he might be affectionate towards another woman that he loves, but not really affectionate towards a son. More like an informational thing, like you know, to teach, he's there to teach you everything that you've learned throughout your whole life. And I think that has a lot to do with it as well. I mean, don't get me wrong, I know my dad was upset when I left too. But the reason why mom was so more upset, is because I was affectionate with her, and I did snuggle with her. I asked her if I could stay home from school just so I could be with her. You know, cause it was my mom. Um that...that's.

(I) Okay, anything else?

(P) Um, it's kind of hard to, I'm sure I could think of so many things, but its, unless I think about it for a long time. So, no.

(I) Okay. Alright

### Participant # 13

(I) Could you tell me your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Um...well my parents were very affectionate with each other, and we all were very affectionate. My parents would actually make me and my sister hug from time to time if we weren't doing it enough. So, we were very affectionate. They you know started out holding our hands and you know at times it was often a safety thing, but then you know they'd just do it all the time. My father loved to play with my hair all the time. He loved our hair. Um, I have a little sister, and he would play with our hair all the time. He couldn't fix it, that was terrible, but he would definitely love to play with our hair. And um, they would, I grew up in a Christian home, and so they would come in at night every single night, and we would all do prayers together by the bed, and they would always hold our hands and give us a hug. Um, we would, we would actually get reprimanded if we didn't hug and kiss our parents and tell them goodbye. Every time we left, from the car, from wherever. Um, my dad used to, when we were really young, used to give us horsey rides before bed, which we'd just sit on his back and he'd pretend to eat us when we fell off. So that was real fun. So every one was really like that was never weird to you know be all touchy with each other. Um, my sister and I, like we would even, well we would go to the lake all the time, and we'd all jump in together, and the only way we could jump in without our life jacket on was if my dad was holding on to us, or my mom was holding onto us. So that was like really fun to like swim around and to know that your were like holding on you know. That was a cool thing. And um, yeah I'm trying to think about other specific...um. Yeah they were really just loving. We always sit really close to each other. You know, oh so my brother was born and so then we became the family of five. But we always hated pulling a chair up to the table, I don't know why, so we'd always smush into a booth. It was always just, oh and my dad, my dad always had a, he had a Ford pickup truck. This probably wasn't very safe, and probably not very legal, but we didn't care. It would be my dad and me, and my sister, and then my mom. So the adults would be on the outside, but it was in a three seater you know Ford pickup truck. And we would drive that way for like an hour and a half going up to the lake, so physical contact was kind of inevitable. But we were like that a lot, we kind of didn't mind being smushed together. And um...

(I) So smushed together a lot?

(P) Smushed a lot, yeah, so if you had any kind of complex about touching, it was over quickly. Um, and my parents really were, they tried as much as possible to avoid punishing with their hands, they would use something else, like a stick or a something. You know, so they never actually you know, their hands were always like touching or hugging, you know they were always really nice. And after we were reprimanded my

parents always came in and hugged us and told us how much they loved us. And this you know hurt them more than us, and you know all that stuff. So that was always good.

Um, uh. Do you want like specific?

(I) Whatever comes to your mind as you think back on it, what are the thoughts or experiences that emerge for you?

(P) Well, um, well I think that's it they were always just very, we were always touching whether it was like doing activities, we would do double horse back riding you know. I guess we just liked being like that, we'd do those bikes where everyone rides on one and you know.

(I) Multiple, what do you call those, those three-seater bikes?

(P) Yeah, I forget, but, we always, that's actually just now hitting me, but we always, it never occurred to us to get four separate horses. We just put two on everybody, and, and uh yeah it was always that way. My sister and I always rode in those seats you know behind my parents' bikes, and we loved that. We would always ride around in the wagon like touching, you know so were always kind of smushed together and that was, I think that was, the fact that everyone was open to it, um, made me really comfortable later on, like now people describe me as, sometimes I get into people's bubbles cause I grew up around that and I don't realize that that's not normal you know.

(I) So that feels very normal to you?

(P) Oh absolutely, I love sitting in people's laps, and you know just lapdogging, and yeah being really close. Actually distance feels really uncomfortable. Um, a lot of times. And uh, that was weird getting married, I'm married, and my husband grew up in family where touch wasn't you know a thing at all. And so that was kind of a hurdle for us to get over, cause my family is real affectionate with him too. So, uh, its I think its become real normal and natural to be real touchy and clingy with people. Um, yeah that, and it just kind of filtered you know my parents were that were that way with us, and I was that way with my siblings, with my two younger siblings, and so we were all kind of that way now.

(I) Okay. So it carries on?

(P) Mhmm, absolutely. I think absolutely. And even now, like even though I'm married, when I still go to my parents' house, I mean there are no restrictions, its just you crawl up on the couch, and oh, oh absolutely I forgot one. Um, my, though my high school years um, my mom would come down like ten minutes before I was going to bed, and she would scratch my back, it was just my favorite thing in the whole world, and she would play with my hair. And that was her way of getting me to talk to her about kind of what was going on. Um, cause she knew, she would say 'I'll scratch your back, if you'll tell me...' you know what I mean, we talked for like...

(I) So she used physical affection as a way to get you to open up?

(P) Oh absolutely, absolutely, she knew that was like my favorite thing and I would buckle to it like every time. So um, I even do it now with my husband. I'll be like in a tiff, or be a little upset with him, and all he has to do is kind of put his hands in my hair and it just I just melt and I think that started with my mom when I was little. She would do that all the time, I mean every single night it was like that. Um, because it got to a point where we wanted to say our own prayers, and that was a little elementary for them being there, and we felt weird. And so then, my mom would come in, and we would

always just start scratching up, and I don't know why that made me open up, but it absolutely did. I think it had something to do with the fact that no matter what I was telling her, she was kind of saying it was okay with the way she was doing that, you know, and she still does that now.

(I) So touching was her way of saying what your saying is okay.

(P) "I still love you no matter what." Yeah, and, and really making me feel comfortable, you know. Um, it'd be kind of like uh, and I mean I do that now with my husband, like if I have to tell him something hard, or want him to talk to me. It's like I will just start, start reaffirming him that he's okay with me, you know by doing that, and she absolutely started that.

(I) So touching and talking?

(P) Abso-yes, and just communicating that no matter what you say, you know, I'm gonna keep doing this. And that was a big thing, that even if I were to break down like crying really ashamed of something, or whatever, she would keep doing it and it just oh, it just made me feel like "okay, you're still doing that so I'm okay." So that was a big part of it. Um, this is just parents?

(I) Well if something comes to your mind?

(P) Well I was just thinking, my, I grew up riding horses competitively, and my trainer was like a surrogate father, he was like another dad, from when I was about six years old, until I was about eighteen. So he was really close. And, and I just remember we always danced all the time. He loved country western dancing.

(I) Your teacher?

(P) My trainer, my riding trainer. And, he was, I would consider him a father figure absolutely. Um, and that just, I think he, he always made me feel a lot older than I was. Like he would two step with me, and he would you know he would take my arm when I would go to shows and you know take me in that way. I think that really kept me out of trouble in middle school. Because I felt like I was absolutely felt like I was above that kind of stuff. He just thought I was the best and he would reaffirm that all the time. Um, and uh...well we...yeah I think playing together is a big one. We always played games. We are a huge competitive family, so like contact sports and football, and riding the waves at the beach. We'd all, this is what I mean, for some reason we don't all think to get six different floats, we all wrestle over one.

(I) The smushing thing.

(P) Yes the smushing thing, and if a wave was coming, we'd all try to fit on one float, and ride it in, and its absolutely ridiculous looking and tons of fun. Um, and sledding, it takes into anything, and we all do it, and we see how many people we can get on an inner tube. Oh it's just all through it, and yeah those are my favorite memories growing up, was sledding, because they would line up, and we'd go down and somebody would jump on it, and finally the sled would just stop going because there were so many people. Um, so yeah I think that, we'd go camping, and we would sleep in tiny, tiny tents all together. And even, even when we got a bigger tent, we would all end up, cause it would be cold, we would all end up in one big ball in the middle. And um, uh yeah, they were very affectionate, I grew up in a very affectionate family. And nobody was scared to be affectionate. It was never, we never, I think I kind of grew up a little bit, in a little bubble a little bit. Because I never, I never knew about like parental sexual stuff, so I

think that actually helped cause it was never weird. It was weird when other people came over. But um, it was so normal for me. It wasn't until I got married that I realized that not every family does that. So, um... yeah but I definitely do the same thing....absolutely. Yeah I'm very hands on.

(I) So you want to be the same way?

(P) Oh absolutely, or times ten. I just think, I think people need it. So.

(I) Well, I'll summarize what I heard and if you want to add anything you can. Well you know a big thing, was this is a very affectionate family. You used the word smushing a lot: smushing, and smushing together. Um, sleds, and cars, and floats at the beach. And there were a number of things you talked about being very close together. You talked about your parents being very affectionate with each other, making you and your sister hug each other and be affectionate with each other. When you were leaving, you know, it was required to hug each other, and say you love each other.

(P) It was also required for siblings, if we ever got in fights, we always had to go in and hug each other, and tell each other we were sorry too.

(I) Part of making up. And then holding hands for safety you also talked about. You talked about your father also loved to play with your hair. Um, prayers by the bed, grew up in a Christian family, so prayers by the bed, holding hands giving hugs at bedtime. Um, let me see, um, talked about going to the lake, and that if you didn't have a life jacket on the only way you could do that is holding on to your parents. Um, let me see, oh when you talked about the smushing, you talked about it like in terms of the restaurant, smushing in the same booth, you didn't pull the chair up, and then there was the truck. And, um, you also talked about your parents avoiding using their hands for punishment. It would be something else, but not their hands. That was seen as what they used for physical affection. You also talked about that after they reprimanded you, after you were punished, they always followed it up loving and touching and telling you they loved you. Um, always touching activities, um also talked about multiple seats on a bike, that smushing together again. Um in riding horses, you wouldn't get different horses, you'd double up on each horse. So a lot of comfort in closeness. You're very comfortable with being close. And um, and yet it feels very normal to you that distance is more uncomfortable, you talked about being married, and that touch was a hurdle between the two of you, that it, the level of touch that you were so used to was so normal to you. So it was a hurdle. You talked about the filtering, that the way your parents are with you, no you're that way in your marriage, with friends, and you'll be that way with your own children maybe even more so. You also talked about in the high school years before going to bed, there was a time period where you wanted your own space when you were saying your prayers. But still even with that they would come in, scratch your back, play with your hair. Um, and there was still contact. And then you also talked about the way in which the touch was used as a way to get you to verbally open up, and as long as you were being touched and rubbed, and caressed, that it was safe to continue talking, it was a way of saying "no matter what I still love you." And um, and you talked about how you use that with your husband as well, um, you kind of, if you're talking, you use touch to say I love you. You talk about melting with your husband. Let's see you also brought in someone else. You talked about a trainer, who was like a father figure to you, that touch was very comfortable. He was, you were close to him, and you would go arm

in arm with him into the shows. You danced together, he affirmed you a lot. Um, you said that as a family you played together. Play was big, games, connection, contact sports, riding, you know all smushing together type things again. Camping, sleeping in the same tent. And you also talked about um, uh, no one in your family is scared of the physical affection and that you think people really need it. Would you add anything to that?

(P) Um, I think, yeah, there was a funny, it's like it never occurred, and it still doesn't occur, I was gonna say we still go on vacation. We opt for the more expensive house so that we can all stay together and not have separate rooms at hotels because people still like we bedhop. Its crazy, even now, I'm married, and I'll go sleep with my sister. And oh at Christmas, I forgot about this, at Christmas time from when I was, well my sister and I shared a bedroom. Um, for a long time until about middle school. But at Christmas every single year, all of us slept together on a big air mattress in the bonus room and waited for Santa. Um, and that's how, yeah that's just how its always been, big traditions. And I think, I don't think my family thinks its weird. I never got that impression, which I think helped from my parents. Very normal, like nothing else.

(I) Okay, that's great.

#### Participant #14

(I) Could you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Um...well...uh...we're not very affectionate, but, we, not extremely. We will hug each other. When I was younger it was more than now. But uh, we would you know, hug each other when we leave the house, and you know, I'd give my mom or dad a peck on the cheek...or vice versa. And um, I don't see my dad as much now, and I guess since I'm a girl and I've gotten older, we're not affectionate as we used to be when I was younger.

(I) Okay, so a change.

(P) Yes. But I'm still affectionate with my mom.

(I) But not as affectionate with dad.

(P) No...cause my parents are divorced. (long pause)

(I) Okay. So when you reflect back on your childhood are there specific memories of physical affection?

(P) Well my mom used to lay in the bed with me every night until I fell asleep, I remember that. And, cause I was scared of the dark when I was little. So...and, sometimes like if I would wake up in the middle of the night, um, and had a nightmare, I would get up and go down and get in the bed with her. And I did the same with my dad, but I don't think my dad was as comfortable with it...when I was younger.

(I) Okay. That was when they were divorced?

(P) Yeah.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Like I remember one time, like if I would wake up in the middle of the night and I lived with my mom and I just saw my dad every other weekend. So, it would happen



more at my mom's house. But if I was young and I would wake up from a nightmare I would just go downstairs and get in bed with my mom, and she wouldn't even say anything. Like she wouldn't even ask 'why are you here?' Or you know if I was crying, she would ask me what was wrong. But like a couple of times I went and got in bed with my dad and he was like 'Why...what are you doing? Why are you here?' And a couple times he told me just to go back to my bed and go to sleep, but my mom never said that.

(I) Okay. Okay. Any other memories of touch?

(P) Um...is this just for parents or other relatives?

(I) If there's something else that comes to mind.

(P) I just remember my grandparents have always been really affectionate with me.

(I) Okay. Can you say more about that?

(P) Yeah. My mom's parents, uh, I only saw them a couple times a year so I didn't know them as well, but I was just as comfortable around them as I was my dad's parents. They lived close by and every time I went to see them they would just give me hugs and kisses whenever I got there. As with my dad's parents. But, I was still as comfortable with my mom's parents even though I didn't see them as much.

(I) Okay.

(P) Me and my brother. I have a brother that's three years older than me. We've never been affectionate with each other.

(I) So you and your brother are not physically affectionate with each other?

(P) No. And I remember uh, how he's three years older than me, he's a senior here in school right now. And uh, my mom and I came up here to help him move in when he was a freshman and I was a uh...sophomore in high school. And, uh, so we dropped him off and we moved all his stuff in and we were getting ready to leave, and my mom was crying. He gave my mom a hug, and then he gave me a hug, and I realized it was like the first time he's given me a hug like in my whole life. Haha.

(I) So that stood out to you as being the first time?

(P) Yes, yeah. So, we've never like kissed each other or anything ever. And we don't tell each other we love each other or anything like that.

(I) So you don't say it either?

(P) No, but I do with my parents. Me and my dad don't say "I love you" to each other very much, but I tell my mom every time I talk to her.

(I) Okay. (long pause). Okay.

(P) I don't know I guess because I'm a lot closer to my mom, we're more affectionate with each other. My dad's kinda more quiet too, so that might be a reason, but...I just always felt like my mom was always more of my friend when I was younger and she like took care of me and my dad just kind of was disciplinary.

(I) Mhmm. So dad disciplined more?

(P) Yeah, but he didn't yell at me. It's hard to explain. Like, he was just quieter, he wasn't as warm towards me as my mom was. And I know hardly ever got spanked when I was little and when I did like it wasn't hard haha, and I would just fake cry so they would quit. It was maybe like two or three times my whole life, they didn't like hit me or anything. And they've been pretty trusting with me. They never, they haven't been really strict with me, they just kinda let me do my own thing, and try to let me be independent. Oh um, I was in the hospital for really long time last year. And my dad

and I get along well I just don't see him very much. But um, when I went into the hospital, you know, I'm a lot closer to my mom, but my dad was like kind of in charge of talking to the doctors and doing the bills and insurance and everything so he was there a lot more. And I was in there for like month, and he would always like rub my feet at night and he would always like give me massages and like brush my hair and stuff so we got a lot closer over that. And that was only last year.

(I) Hmm. So that was a year ago?

(P) Yeah I was seventeen then. And I mean he did other things for me that I thought my mom would do. Like he went shopping and got like, cause I was laying in the bed so much, he got like a bunch of pajamas and stuff to wear. And I thought my mom would do something like that, but he did it for me. It surprised me cause we weren't as close, but I think he was like upset cause I was sick. So I think we got a lot closer because of that.

(I) Okay. Okay.

(P) So my grandparents, well my whole family came to the hospital over the time I was in there and they were all really affectionate towards me but again I think it was just because I was sick you know. But since then I've been a lot closer with my family.

(I) Okay. So an illness, um, with an illness, there's increase in physical affection, and that's been maintained.

(P) Right. I was in ICU for like eleven days, they thought I was gonna die. My brother drove down, it was in XXXX, where I was in the hospital. My brother was in XXXX, and he drove down how ever many hours it took just to stay for like half an hour to see me, and he had a test the next day and he drove all the way back. So, that impressed me. And he also sent me like cards and stuff in the mail and he sent me a print, like movie and stuff in the mail, which also surprised me cause I said like I said we've never like hugged or anything like that. So...

(I) Anything else?

(P) (Long pause). Umm I don't think so.

(I) Okay I'll tell you what stood out to me and then you know correct anything or add something that would be great. You started out talking about how your family wasn't real affectionate. Um, you'd hug each other whenever you were leaving the house. Peck on the cheek from mom and dad. You talked about a change, that there wasn't much affection anymore, um, although you're still affectionate with your mom, dad not as much, but a lot of that had to do with your parent's divorce. And you weren't with your dad as much as you were with your mom. Um, you had a memory of um, laying in bed every night, and your mom was laying in bed every night until you went to sleep. And then sometimes in the middle of the night you would um get out of bed and go get in bed with her when you were having a nightmare or afraid or something. And when you'd get in bed with your mom she wouldn't question it, it was kind of a given a guess. But with your dad he would tend to ask you why and sometimes tell you to go back to bed. Um, you talked about your grandparents, how they've always been real affectionate with you um, and you're real comfortable around them, lots of hugs and kisses. And also, with your dad's parents who were closer in physical proximity. Um, you talked about you and your brother not being very physically affectionate with each other. But you had a memory of when you all brought him to UT, and when you were leaving and your mom



started crying and he hugged both of you. But that you've never kissed each other or told each that you loved each other. And that you and your dad don't say that as much to each other, but it's with your mom, you do. Um, so just being, feeling closer to your mom, and your dad was more quiet. You talked about your mom being more of friend and your dad being more disciplinarian. Although you hardly ever got spanked. They tended to trust you, kind of let you do your own thing and um, let you have your independence. And then you described a memory of being in the hospital a year ago, with a serious illness in ICU, and um, that your dad was there a lot, cause he had to take care of things. But he was also more physically affectionate with you, and you had a memory of him rubbing your feet at night, giving you massages, and brushing your hair. And that also, other relatives came, grandparents came, and um, there was a lot of affection and that stayed the same since then. Um, you described, like in that situation, your brother being more affectionate, and you know driving down to see you, even though it was for only thirty minutes. He came to see you then drove all the way back. Those are some of things that stood out to me. Is there anything you would want to add?

(P) No, that sounds pretty clear to me.

(I) Okay, that's good. Thank you.

#### Participant #15

(I) Can you please tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) It's hard to remember specific occasions. For me it's easier to remember the general nature. And it's hard to know whether this is from more recent or older. But I see my mom as a very warm woman. She does day care, and she had a day care in my house when I was growing up. And so it's weird because when you've grown up like that you see physical affection as far as her holding other kids. And loving kids. And I remember that almost more than my own.

(I) Are you saying that you remember her hugging other children?

(P) Yeah, and I know it was the same way with me, but as far as being specific, some instances... When I think about my mother now, a very caring and loving person and always has a kid in her arms, at all times. I'm sure I was like that, too. I was the first born, and she was very much a doting mother. I know when I was young it was the same way. That both I and my sister were, we were like her whole life. My parents got divorced when I was about three or four, and so at that point, we were pretty much her whole life. I'm trying to think of specific memories. It's really hard. I know she used to put us to bed at night and read to us and touch us and hug and kiss us goodnight. Maybe in contrast to my father, he is pretty much a removed person, not very affectionate at all. It's weird too, because the level of affection sort of reflected the level of interaction in general. My mom, when we were around her, we were with her and doing things together. With my dad, it was more simply we were all in the same house, but we weren't interacting. He's reading the paper and my sister and I playing together, and it's kind of the distance in the relationship reflected the difference in the intimacy of affection.

(I) Physical affection?

(P) Yeah, physical affection. I really don't have many memories of my father hugging me or holding me. As I got older I can remember those. I don't know if this is a part of just not remembering or what. And it's weird, too, because I grew up pretty quick. When my parents got divorced, my mom was really struggling with a lot of stuff, and I was one of those kids who sort of started taking care of the house at three or four years old. So in some ways I almost feel like I'm not, or I wasn't the most needy kind of kid. That's sort of a negative slant, but I wasn't the kind of kid who was seeking affection all the time. I was kind of doing my own thing, like almost overly secure. And it's really an interesting contrast, because once my parents got divorced, we moved to another state and pretty much the rest of my life, except for about two or three years, we lived in a different state from my father. So we would see him only a couple of times a year. When we lived in the same state it was like once a week. And emotionally I'm a lot more like him than my mom. More reserved. I don't know, I'm kind of a mix, but I guess what really stands out to me is my stepfather, who came in when I was five or so. He's very affectionate. A very emotional man. And it's just plain as day to see the difference between he and my father. My father, my biological father, is very much sort of the type that, women do things face to face, and men do things side to side. That's how my dad is. As far as, we would interact a lot, but doing things like playing baseball and things like that. And my stepdad is the same way, but one thing I really remember is that we used to wrestle a lot.

(I) With your stepfather?

(P) With my stepfather. And it was very playful. But it was also, I didn't have a male around a lot, and I just loved that sort of attention. Having this big man pick me up and throw me around and hold me.

(I) So the wrestling felt affectionate?

(P) Yeah. When I think about it now. As a kid, I'm sure it was on that level, too. It was play time. I think then it was probably fun, but I think a part was that I felt important to somebody.

(I) You said earlier that the level of physical affection reflected the level of interaction.

(P) Yeah, it's like my mom was always very much into my sister's and my lives. As we got older, that wasn't always good, too much enmeshed. And when I think of her growing up I think that intimacy and affection were very tight. I think of her as the quintessential mother figure. Children were her whole life. If she could have had a hundred kids in the house for day care she would have done it, but there's laws and limits against human concentration [laughter]. So as we got older that sort of changed, more space. But when I was little it was sort of... I know my sister and I were her whole life. So I can just envision her having us constantly in her arms.

(I) You can envision?

(P) Yeah, I really do have a tough time remembering. I don't know... both her and my father... I can't really remember a specific moment being held.

(I) You use the word envision to describe being constantly in her arms but don't have the specific picture to go along with it.

(P) Yeah, yeah. It's and I don't know how much of that is now, assuming that. It's an interesting picture because I don't have a lot of images of me with either parent, especially when my parents separated and divorced. Mom in addition to doing day care,

was working a night job at bartending. We would be home with her all day and then go stay with an aunt and uncle and then fall asleep. And so after five to six in the afternoon until the next morning when we got up, we didn't see her. And so she was around a lot, but every time she was around there were other kids. And so this is getting away from affection, but we had to share time with those kids. I remember one time being maybe three or so, and being put to bed to take a nap, and there were other kids, older kids who got to stay up. And sneaking out, hiding behind the couch trying to see what they were doing, and they were watching T.V. And I remember feeling angry and wanting to sneak out but afraid of getting caught and being put back to bed. I often think now, when I'm trying to figure out what goes on between my mom and I, I think that even though she was really affectionate, there was so much competition for attention and physical affection with the other kids. There were so many kids she had to take care of. And when I look at her day care kids now, you can tell they all feel really loved, but they also compete. It's like if you really want affection you have to beat out other kids. So it's hard to take myself out of that. There's a difference between my mom and my real dad because with my real dad I just can't come up with memories because there are not memories to come up with.

(I) The memories are not there.

(P) Yeah, Because I don't know that there was physical affection. With my mom it is more frustrating because I know it was there but I don't know why I can't remember specific times. Maybe it was at the point where I just started to retain memories.

(I) So you know it was there but feel frustrated because you can't attach particular memories.

(P) Yeah, like right now I'm trying to come up with specific memories. That's why I keep saying this because I feel like I should be able to. And I don't know, maybe I want her to be more affectionate than she was, and I'm trying to make her that way. It's very frustrating. I know one thing that is interesting, my mom, we still hug and kiss, and my real dad, I think I stopped doing that when I got to be a teenager. My stepdad, it's always been the same. He hugs but doesn't kiss. And he came along early, and became a great influence in our lives. And I call him dad. He is, it's like two dads.

(I) So with your mom and dad you remember the hugging and kissing, but with your stepdad you remember just hugging.

(P) Yeah. It was, my sister and I shared a room. I remember saying prayers and she would sit down and read to us, and my mother would be very affectionate and we would hug and kiss. I know that it happened even though I don't have specific memories. It makes me sit here and wonder 'am I making all this shit up?' It's weird. I remember saying my prayers, and my great grandmother was dying, and I was saying specific prayers about that. It was always nice having my sister there, too. I remember when we moved to XXXX, my sister was in kindergarten and I was in second grade, and my mom would play tapes for us before we went to bed. They would be fairy tales. I remember Rumpelstiltskin, and when I think about it I feel warmth because it was very soothing to have these same stories every night to fall asleep to. But it also reflects to me that she was sort of taking a step back. And that might have been, as far as she wasn't sitting with us anymore. And that might have been because we were getting older.

(I) Anything else?

(P) Not right now.

(I) Well, let me summarize what I have heard so far and then you can add to it or clarify if you need to. The first thing you said is that you have a hard time remembering specifics, but that you have a general sense of what went on. You express the frustration that you have a general knowledge of warmth and physical affection that went on, but have trouble accessing particular memories that support that. Makes you wonder at times.

(P) Yeah, whether there is something to it. When I think about my own security, I feel like for the most part a secure person, all things considered. I think that my frustration is that it was there, but it was also not there. So the frustration of trying to pull it up. But it's sort of like object constancy sort of stuff.

(I) You also described the confusion of knowing the experience was there but that there were a lot of other children there, so not knowing if that was the other children or was it given to me, and the feeling of competition with the others. You described having to take a nap when you were aware there were others that didn't and feeling angry about that. And a lot of what you talked about was within the context of your mother taking care of a lot of other children that were not your siblings.

(P) Yeah, there seemed to be a lot of uncertainty. One of the things I was thinking about as you were saying that about the competition was the question of 'it there going to be enough for me?' 'Is she going to have enough time to do this with me?' is she going to have enough energy at the end of the day?' I know as she got older she was just exhausted. And she had health problems. But I'm sure there was that question of 'is she going to have enough love for me at the end of the day?' She's taking care of all these kids, and she absolutely loves them. You should see her with these kids, she so affectionate with them. That's one of the things that makes me know and have that general sense, because her nature is to be physically affectionate. I just don't know if it was there at the end of the day and on weekends.

(I) So you have an awareness of her being a very physically affectionate person but unsure of how much of it you got?

(P) Yeah. And the difficulty I have in bringing up specific memories makes me really question it.

(I) You described your mom and then your dad and then your stepdad. You described your mom as being very warm, and hugging a lot in the day care. You described her as being loving and crying and basically her whole life being about children. Providing affection. And you see that as part of who she is. You talked about the divorce that occurred when you were three or four, and your dad being very different. He was more removed, he wasn't very affectionate. No memories of him hugging or holding you.

(P) Although I'm sure that it happened. There are pictures. He is a very solitary figure who is more comfortable being alone.

(I) You had talked about the divorce and there being physical distance because he was in a different state.

(P) He doesn't do a lot to come back to see us, or his mother, or his sister. It's been weird, because when I went to college, he started to get an idea of what he missed out on. And really started trying to make that connection again. And I was going to school in

XXXX, and he was in XXXX, and we would meet every summer and go to baseball games. And there was an intimacy that was starting to come back.

(I) You also talked about physical affection reflecting a lever of interaction. You also talked about your stepdad being a very physically affectionate person, and very warm. And also aware that your mom and dad hugged and kissed you, but your stepdad just hugged you. And you also talked about the wrestling that went on between you and your stepdad, and that it was a very positive experience for you, and that even though you didn't experience it as physical affection back then, as you reflect back, you realize that it was.

(P) And even now, if we could physically do it, there is something I miss about that closeness.

(I) You also talked about your stepfather, that you felt very loved.

(P) Yeah, and even though I kissed my father, I felt much closer to my stepdad. There was much more touch in general with my stepdad. That made me feel more loved and part of his life. It's like that touch really sort of like... One of my memories of my dad is my sister and I playing and watching T.V. and my dad is reading the paper, and it's almost like you can't see him because he's in the dining room. And wanting to go play because we are bored and him saying 'I only get you guys on the weekend and you want to go play somewhere else.' And it's like that... there was such a distance. But my stepfather we were being hugged and held. Just like when you are flirting or something and someone pats you on the shoulder... they make some sort of a physical connection. It shows some interest or desire or love. But there was no touch with my father. With my stepdad, he was in there with us. Hugging us, playing with us, more a sense of touch that showed connection.

(I) So that interaction reflected by physical touch.

(P) Yeah. A lot of interaction with my stepdad was playful. Get you down, tickle you, very loving. A direct touch.

(I) You also talked about how your mom was very much into your lives, and that wasn't so good as you got older. A little more enmeshed. You also said you can envision being constantly in her arms, but when you reflect back not so sure that is a real memory. You have a knowledge without the visual memory. You said maybe you are assuming that was there because it was all around you. You talked about sharing time with the kids. And there was competition for your mom's affection. You contrasted your mom and dad, and with your mom you have a knowledge it was there without specific memories, and with your dad, you aren't as sure if there was a lot of affection or intimacy. You expressed more doubts about your dad. You also talked about the memory of prayers together at night, and the proximity to her. As you got older, you have a memory of your mom playing tapes at night. You felt warm, and you really liked those tapes, but as you reflect back you are aware there was more distance because she wasn't there while the tapes were being played. Those were the main themes I heard.

(P) [Laughter]. Good summary!

(P) [Participant requested tape be turned back on]. I don't know, this may be a little off. I know one thing that happened is that I sort of became a caretaker to my mom after she went through the divorce. I ended up taking care of my sister a lot. And I guess I grew up too quick, and wonder if my own need for physical affection became less because I

needed to hold back to make sure she was going to be okay. Maybe I didn't want to ask that of her.

#### Participant #16

(I) So can you tell me about your experience of physical affection you received from your parents during childhood?

(P) When you say that I start having all these memories but I don't really think a lot about physical affection. I would say my mother was fairly physically affectionate. She was a big hugger and if you had a bad day or something like that. My dad was much less so. Great guy, but not very involved, not very physically affectionate, not very verbal. I'm not really sure how much of that had to do with he was raised in a family of three boys, and he had two girls, and didn't know what to do with us. And how much this was his age. He was older when I was born. Um, hadn't planned on getting married, enjoying the bachelor life. She changed his mind, and it took him awhile to convince her. But she wanted to get married, and to him. So he was older, and I don't know how much was his age and generation. I am engaged, and it's almost lead to this philosophical thoughts on his part. In psychological terms, I think he's entered Erickson's integrity vs. despair state [laughter]. I was visiting my parents last week and my dad walked into my bedroom, and my dad walked in and out of the blue, he said, 'you know I always hated that my job kept me from going to more of you school stuff. And being more involved. But I do remember that I came to your first grade field day, and I chaperoned...' and he started naming off the things that he had attended. I think I was taken a little off guard because I was totally not expecting that from him. And I'll never forget when I graduated from high school he said 'I know I don't say it that often, but I'm really proud of you. And that sort of took me back. Because it's more that our relationship just was.

(I) The relationship just was. Can you say more about that?

(P) Um, I never felt particularly close to him and I don't know if that's because my mom had such a strong personality that it interfered, or what it was, but I think I felt closer to him the older I've gotten. I think too, he wasn't particularly excited about having kids, but once he had us, he really liked us. But it was my mom who was more the nurturer, the kid person. And he kind of did his own thing.

(I) Can you say more about you mom being more the nurturer?

(P) Well, I guess just in terms of physical affection, but also mom was sort of the protector and defender in some ways. I'm trying to think of an example. The house we grew up in had a basement with a garage, and part of it was finished and part wasn't. And when we got to be teenagers mom said 'why don't we finish the rest of that? And put in a pool table and what not and the kids will have a space for their friends.' And my dad said 'well, we really don't need the space and why would we want to do that kind of thing.' He's just very practical, very pragmatic, and when I think about it, his dad wasn't particularly physically affectionate. His mom, I remember when we would go visit her, it actually got on my nerves, because she was one of these who would sort of hold your cheeks [demonstrates] and sort of give you several kisses on your cheeks, and that felt invasive to me. I never liked that. It was sort of 'there there, now now', 'aren't you cute.' My mom's parents I would say they were moderately physically affectionate.



And my dad, too, he would come in and hug me good night, but it wasn't as much as my mom. But my mom's parents, my grandfather passed away when I was young. I always really liked him. He was very gently. He was a business, but also had a dark room in his basement and did a lot of photography. And has some wonderful pictures. My maternal grandmother, very sweet, very strong, incredibly intelligent, could be slightly cold sometimes. A very good person, in terms of volunteering and giving money, but could also be very critical, very harsh. Nothing was ever good enough. Um, she came from a well to do family. I feel like I don't even have a good answer to the question, because I don't remember my family being particularly physically affectionate or particularly not. I mean we would get the hugs and kisses goodnight and the hello hugs. And the relationship I'm in now, I first thought he was nothing like my father, but the more I'm with him, the more I see my father in him.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Just a very solid, very stable, very pragmatic, very methodical, business person. He just doesn't ... he's pretty unflappable. I have tried to tell him I need to emote before I can listen to his constructive solutions, and I finally gave him guidelines for tears, in terms of they are non-directional, I might be happy, I might be sad, so don't assume it's your fault, if it's your fault you'll know and also don't try to solve anything. Say 'you feel sad.' That reminds me of my dad, in that very, methodical 'here's how you deal with me', then he could get it, he could understand. I wouldn't say our relationship is particularly physically affectionate. And we are definitely not all over each other in public. That's just gross. So we keep our moderate amounts of physical affection to ourselves. And I guess that's what I mean by seeing my father in him, because there are moments when my dad can be just precious, and so empathic, that I kind of say 'where did that come from?' Like when I had my wisdom teeth taken out, I'm laying on the couch and he said 'do you want me to get you something to eat?' I said 'no' and he said 'do you want me to go get you a movie?' and I said 'no' and he said 'do you want to go somewhere?' and I said 'no' and he looked at me and said 'I wish I could hurt some for you.' And it was so... when he says thing like that, and things like 'I've always regretted that my job kept me from being more involved' it's like whoa, because he is so pragmatic. I would say the best word for most of my family is thoughtful yet pragmatic. It's not that my dad is going to send me a mushy card and we are going to make a hallmark commercial, but it's more if he knows I'm coming home, he'll go out and buy diet coke and skim milk. He knows the things I like.

(I) So he will do things to show what he feels instead of saying things.

(P) Yeah.

(I) You said earlier, and I wanted to clarify because you said he wasn't particularly physically affectionate and I think you said, did you mean he wasn't particularly physically or verbally affectionate?

(P) Yeah, and for the longest time, up until the last couple of years, I don't know what changed, but every time he called or sent me an email, he would start off by saying 'well you mother asked me to call you or write you', but then out of the blue he started just emailing me because he wants to.

(I) So he stopped saying the 'your mother asked me to.'

(P) Yeah, it seems to be his own effort. And um, yeah, when I think back, thoughtful yet pragmatic is the word for most of my family. I tend to be more of the gushy type. I remember when I left for college, even though my mom and I were really close, she said 'well people keep asking me if I'm going to cry and I say no because it's time for her to go.' That sort of very... it was. I think both with my family members and my fiancé, I think all of them have trouble understanding my need to emote before being able to accept the 'it is.' They jump straight to the 'it is.' How am I going to live with this or fix it?

(I) So when you said earlier, they just are...

(P) It just was.

(I) So there is a real difference in the way you and your family express emotion.

(P) Yeah, and I thought... and that goes back to me seeing more and more of me seeing my fiancé like my father. But so often he initiates discussions of 'this is something we ought to talk about.' So I thought that was how he was different from my father.

Because my father, he tried, we'd go out to lunch, he would say 'what is going on, catch me up on your friends', and that was about it. Um, but the longer I'm with XXXX the more I see my dad in him. I don't know how much it might be a gender thing, of XXXX not finding it necessary to rehash the entire day. And I like to rehash with the corresponding emotions. I would say the older I've gotten, the more I've come to appreciate my father. And I don't know if that's me changing, him changing, or both. And I think since he retired, I've liked him a lot better. And maybe that's because there is time to be who he is. And so back to your original question about physical affection, I think I'm struggling to answer that because maybe I'm overanalyzing everything and maybe it's me saying 'is this how it really was?' Or is this me looking back? Um, yeah, I mean I didn't, I never felt neglected. I think in my family I sometimes felt smothered, but I definitely always felt loved. And the times I felt smothered it was more that I felt like I was being given too much in terms of physical gifts. I totally appreciate that, but at times I felt smothered.

(I) Anything else?

(P) I don't think so.

(I) Well, a few things I heard you say. The first thing you brought up was your mother and how she was more physically affectionate of the two, and how she was more the hugger, and you described her coming in and saying goodnight, and you described her as more of the defender and protector. You started off talking about your mom and described her as more affectionate, but you talked more about your dad. Describing him as much less affectionate, physically, or verbally. You talked about how he didn't seem to know what to do, you talked about his age, generation, the experience of his regret, and how surprised you were over that. You described a couple of situations, like graduation in which he expressed being really proud of you. You described the relationship as it just was. You used the phrase 'it just was.' You also talked about their parents and how they related to your parents. And how you could see how some things filtered down. You talked about your dad's dad as not particularly physically affectionate. The grandmother, you described her physical touch as feeling somewhat invasive, the grabbing of the cheeks, and kind of there, there, now, now type of affection, that it didn't seem to feel good to you. You described your mom's parents as being more affectionate, and you



described your grandmother as... she could be somewhat critical, but that there was a warmth about her, and your grandfather. You mentioned that your family was not particularly affectionate, but that you did have the goodnight and hello hugs and kisses. You also talked about feeling loved. You talked about your relationship now, and the similarities you see between your fiancé and your father. And the pragmatic type of personality. You used the words solid, stable, unflappable. You mentioned an awareness of your relationship with him as not being particularly physically affectionate. And you talked about the extreme of being all over each other in public.

(P) Repulsive. [laughter]

(I) And then you described your family as being thoughtful but pragmatic. You mentioned that with your father and your fiancé it could be a gender issue. You mentioned that in your family you stand alone, and that the importance of emotion within your family, and realizing that the rest of your family isn't much like that. You mentioned that you never felt neglected, always felt loved, and that sometimes you felt smothered, which had to do with the physical gifts. Is there anything you'd like to add to that?

(P) No, I think that's really accurate. Um, I've come to realize that I never saw myself as particularly physically affectionate or open, but I think that might be more of a function of my introversion. Once I am close to people then I do tend to be physically affectionate with them. Maybe that's why I had such a hard time answering your question, because the first thing I wanted to do was to quantify. And I guess I think stereotypically of the big Italian family, hugging, kissing, eating pizza and all that. And I mean we are German Presbyterians... neither one known for their warmth and physical affection [laughter]. Well, that's it.

#### Participant #17

(I) Could you tell me about your experience with physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Okay, um, as a child, I was in somewhat I guess you could call it a loving household. Its not like they just kind of let me be, they tried to be involved in a lot of stuff we did. Both my parents are still married. They never got divorced or anything like that. So, growing up the occasional hugs from time to time. There was never any major, I guess you call it, you know, love fest. It wasn't nothing big. It was just small positive reinforcement. I guess. Really I never was really into the whole thing, I could care less about it most of the time. Pretty much regardless, I think they just felt it important to keep a bond between them and their children. Even their experiences, their parents and stuff like that. They feel that their families kind of fell apart at different times. And some way happened between my dad's, my dad and my grandfather and his brother fell apart. Later in life. They try and keep my brothers and I together as much as possible. And try to make us somewhat lovey dovey you know.

(I) Can you say what you mean by lovey-dovey?

(P) Um. Pretty much whenever I would have to go back to college, they would make sure we'd hug. So I have a little brother who's eleven right now. Every time I leave they make sure we hug regardless if we want to or not. And uh, whenever my brother's in,

he's 22, they make sure we see each other before either of us leave. Make sure we at least have some kind of time together, and then there's the whole hug thing.

(I) And you said earlier you could take it or leave it?

(P) Pretty much. I never really cared about the whole, I don't know, I always know there's the whole unspoken bond there anyways. I just felt, not necessarily uncomfortable, but I just found it unnecessary almost to hug constantly, or every now and then. I'm not saying every day was like, we got a hug, or anything like that. But the occasional special occasions, whether it was after some deep conversation of some awards ceremony or something like that. I'm sure some families have that sort of extraordinary together, like after every family meal, or every morning or something like that, the wake me up with a kiss on the forehead kind of stuff. That was no where near our family.

(I) Okay so didn't wake up to kisses?

(P) No, not at all. We had alarm clocks. So it wasn't really a touchy feely morning I guess you could say.

(I) You talked about small, positive reinforcement, could you say more about that?

(P) Let's say, I used to play soccer as a child for like seven years. And uh, before a game or something, like usually it was my dad. Like baseball also. The occasional pat on the back, the good game kind of closeness. Not necessarily a hug after every game, but I mean them being there right next to me saying "good job" or a handshake or something like that. Kind of like a congratulations type.

(I) When you reflect back on your childhood, do you have specific memories of physical touch?

(P) Usually no. I mean of course, certain holidays always brought it about, let's say Christmas, or Thanksgiving. When all the family is together. There is the gift-giving time, and afterwards there is always a hug, because thank you. Like the grandmother would come around, and we would always hug her and like, I don't know whenever it came to grandmothers, or grandfathers, every time we left or whenever we met them, there was always a hug. Cause it just seemed like the right thing to do cause you never know. Other than that, just the day to day random affection. I really have no standout memories or anything like that.

(I) So no random affection or anything like that?

(P) No nothing that's just right off the top of my head.

(I) Okay. Anything else?

(P) I'm saying maybe whether or not I had this affection as a child, I don't think it would have affected me in anyway. I don't know if that's what kind of study you're going from with the affection at all. Honestly, some kids need it, like some people have to have some kind of positive reinforcement with you know close affection rather than just "good job." They need the confirmed I guess embrace, something like that. But I've always been more of not necessarily a loner, but more like I can do it on my own kind of thing. I've always had that bullheadedness you could say. So I mean it never really mattered much to me. What else do you need to know? Nothing really random, is there anything specific that you need to know.

(I) No I'm just asking you to talk about anything that comes to mind when you talk about physical affection.

(P) Okay, mean if you want to go on a tangent of physical affection, you'd go with maybe, not to say negative affection, I guess you could call it punishment. Like lets say I did something bad as a kid, is was the I mean I don't know how you want to look at it. But um, like with my mom, she'd always have the flyswatter, I call that quite physical, I mean right across the leg, I mean that was her way. And then you got dad, whether it was spanking as a child, and then as you grew up it was the belt kind of thing. I kind of learned how to deal with it, or keep it from getting bad. Its not abuse or anything, that's how they grew up. That's how, that's their punishment, I guess it works. Timeout in the corner would have meant nothing to me. But I mean if you wanna go towards that end of it, I found that necessary as a child growing up.

(I) You found it necessary, so when you think about physical affection, you kind of put that in there.

(P) I'd say so, I mean honestly, if some kid just got hugged everyday, but whenever they did something wrong "its okay." That's ridiculous. I think kids need to be shown a boundary, and I think they need to be shown very abruptly. So, I guess you could say, at the time I didn't find the negative touch necessary, but now as I look back I find it a little more appropriate. I understand it a lot more, instead of the kid getting beat back in the day. I guess its kind of weird I don't think its necessary for the positive, but as for the negative its probably better off. I find that weird looking back.

(I) Anything else?

(P) Um, I kind of wondering where you're going with all this, see if I can help you out more.

(I) I don't have a direction, just kind of listening to what people talk about when they talk about physical affection. I can summarize what I heard you say and then if you want to correct me or add anything to it you can. Um, you said that you grew up in loving household, very involved parents. You said they are still married. You got hugs from time to time, nothing real big, but you got a lot of small, positive reinforcement. Um, you said you could really care less about physical affection. Um, and um, then you talked about your grandparents. You said with your dad's side, their parents fell apart. And then your grandfather and his brother fell apart. So as a result of that your dad wants you and your brothers to be more loving to each other. And um, they have you all hug when you leave or come together. And you called it the whole hug thing. Um, you never really cared about hugs. You felt it was unnecessary. Um you said special occasions were okay. You said you weren't real touchy feely in the morning, that you didn't do the whole kiss thing when you woke up. Um, you also talked about when you played sports, you played soccer, you'd get the pat on the back, "good job", it was more about them being there telling you that you had done well. Um, you talked about holidays, when families got together, then the hugs. Um you talked about when your grandmother would come around, um, and your grandparents, you always had a hug for them when they would come or leave. And um, but there was no just random affection. You talked about how some kids seem to really need it, but you always were more of a loner, it never really mattered that much to you. Then you also talked about punishment. Um, your mom would typically use like a flyswatter, your dad spanking, and then later a belt. You fit that in with physical affection, that you feel its necessary, that kids need a boundary.

And at the time you didn't find it good, but as you look back, you felt that it was good. So is there anything that you would add to that.

(P) Really no, that kind of covers it all, I guess on a broad basis. But there is nothing really in depth that I can remember.

(I) Okay.

#### Participant #18

(I) So can you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) I guess they would show affection by uh hugging, and saying "I love you." I guess like, my mom's really affectionate.

(I) So your mom's really affectionate, can you say more about that?

(P) Um, she's, I guess she's like more emotional. She'd always be like "oh give me hug before school, and stuff like that.

(I) So hugs before school, okay.

(P) I know when I was like getting older I was like "Well I don't want to do that in front of school, or give her a kiss in front of school.

(I) So as you got older, there was a change in not wanting to give you hugs in front of school.

(P) I don't really know. Um...

(I) As you reflect back on your childhood, do you have specific memories of touch, um, or any kind of physical affection, warm and tender feelings expressed through touch?

(P) Like if I was upset, she'd like give me a hug, or certain things to calm me down. Like if I had nightmares or something.

(I) Certain things to calm you down.

(P) She just like makes stuff up, like if I'm having nightmares, I don't know why I'd believe it, but she would take an eraser, and tell me she was erasing it, and I wouldn't remember it and wouldn't have trouble sleeping.

(I) Okay.

(P) Hmm. I know...I don't know, it was mainly things like that. And then with my sister, she's like, hug your sister when your going off to different schools and everything

(I) She wanted you to hug your sister?

(P) Yeah, she still does that. Like, if I come home from college, she'll be like "you haven't seen her in months, go give her a hug." Um...(long silence). Umm, I didn't really live with my dad so I don't really know. Like, when I saw him, I'd give him, like, a hug and a kiss.

(I) So they were divorced?

(P) They were separated, I mean pretty much divorced.

(I) From the time you were young?

(P) Mhmm, since I was like six or seven.

(I) So when you saw him you'd give him hugs and kisses.

(P) I'd just give him like a hug and a kiss when I saw him. Just like any family members, when I like see them after a while, I do that. But...like Thanksgiving, all the holidays, I don't know.

(I) Okay...anything else?

(P) I don't know. I can't think of anything.

(I) Anything come to mind?

(P) Not really no.

(I) Well I'll kind of summarize what I heard you say if you want to add anything. You said that in your family you show affection by hugging and saying that you love each other. And that your mom is really affectionate and more emotional, and that she would hug you before school. And then when you got older, you didn't want the hugs and kisses as much. Um, did you say the teenage years.

(P) It was like middle school, just when you're like embarrassed in front of your parents.

(I) Okay, and then you said when you're upset, she would give you a hug, and then say certain things to calm you down. She would tell you something. You gave an example of waking up with nightmares, she would do things like take an eraser and say that she's erasing the memory of that. Then you said that your sister...she wanted you to hug your sister, like, when you went to different schools and such. And when you went home, she wanted you to hug your sister, because you hadn't seen her in so long. And you talked about your dad. Your parents had been separated, so you didn't really grow up with your dad, but when you saw your dad you'd give him a hug and a kiss, and when you got together for holidays.

(P) That's pretty much it. Yeah.

(I) Anything else come to mind?

(P) Na unh. Not off the top of my head.

(I) Okay. Alright then. That's it.

#### Participant #19

I) So can you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during your childhood?

(P) Sure. Um, my family is very close. My parents have like the perfect marriage, they never argue, they've been married about 30 years. They were never very physically affectionate toward one another. I guess we didn't have a lot of physical affection growing up. Mostly I think because my dad wasn't that way. It wasn't because he didn't love us, or was cold or aggressive, or anything like that. I think he was raised to not have physical affection, to not touch, to not show his emotions in any way, shape, or form. So angry, sad, happy, he didn't show emotion at all. My mom was the exact opposite. She was very physical, very affectionate, and she was a lot more physically affectionate with my brother. Just because he was younger and because he wanted it more. Even as a child, my brother would climb up into her lap, and want hugs and kisses, and you know touch affectionately, physical. And I would push away, and my natural tendency was to not want it. Not that I was angry or mad. So in that way I think that physical affection would have been there for me if I would have wanted it, but it wasn't just because I didn't want it. My mom knew that my dad didn't show emotions and stuff. I think sometimes that was hard for her because she was the type who wanted physical affection. To even show it. But she knew in the back of her mind that wasn't how my dad was. It would have been nice, though, I think. In some ways.



(I) You had an awareness that was hard for her.

(P) Yeah. I think she might have said things once in awhile. Because he didn't even ever say 'I love you' or anything like that. I just think it was hard for him, though. And I know now though, that their relationship is better than it was, he has, over time, become more affectionate. As he is getting older, I don't know, I think it is developmental with guys. As they get older, they don't have to be so macho and start becoming more sensitive. But he's a lot more sensitive now, a lot more aware of his feelings, and showing affection to my mom, telling her he loves her, being more affectionate. I think he's changed a lot. So it's kind of interesting.

(I) So you've noticed over time that he's changed a lot.

(P) Yeah, more open and more affectionate.

(I) So when you think back to your childhood and physical affection from your parents, any memories come to you?

(P) Specific memories, I'm trying to think. I guess, like when we would go camping as a family, and for example, we would go almost every night by the ocean and watch the sunset. And so we would watch the sunset, and my mom and dad would sit there, my brother would crawl up in their lap, but I would just go off and look at the tide and pools and completely disconnected from them. So it's like they were all physically affectionate towards each other, and I could have been if I wanted to be, but it just wasn't what I was interested in and I don't think I needed it to... I was more interested in seeing things and trying things out, and stuff like that.

(I) So you noticed that your brother moved toward them, but that you were always busy, had other things to do.

(P) Yeah, and then I don't know if this is related to parental, but I know that when I was in high school when I started getting like boyfriends in high school, I never wanted public displays of physical affection, I was very, very 'don't hold my hand in public, don't kiss me in public', 'nothing in public' and I do think that is a lot from my parents. I never saw it growing up, so I didn't think it was normal. I thought you know there is a time and place for that sort of physical affection, it's not public. I don't even want people to know we are together. I'm not embarrassed by it, just like, so very much like that, in high school and college. Actually, every relationship I've had. And I felt like that was really different from a lot girls of girls. Generally girls are like hug me kiss me, that sort of thing, and guys are usually more serious. I think generally that is how it is. Girls always wanted more attention than I did.

(I) So you noticed they wanted it more than you.

(P) Yeah, like, I would be pushing them away and it should have been the other way around. And I do think it's because my parents didn't show affection so it wasn't normal.

(I) So what you are saying is you have an awareness of the way you are feels normal because of how your parents were.

(P) Yeah.

(I) You used the words 'disconnected from them.' Can you say more about that?

(P) Yeah. Um, I guess, that sounds like a negative term, but I don't think it was. I just feel like I was very independent. I was very independent as a child. I could play for hours and hours alone. My brother on the other hand wanted friends, he wanted attention, he wanted affection, he wanted social. Everything like that. So in that way we were

different. So when my brother would go seek attention and affection from my parents, he would get it and they would give it, but I was kind of off doing my own independent thing. I never felt left out or different, it's just I was happy doing my own thing and he was happy doing his.

(I) So it sounds like what you are saying is that you were happy with your independence. It was comfortable.

(P) Yeah. Very.

(I) Anything else that comes to mind.

(P) I guess I just want to clarify that I think if I had wanted the affection or attention I think it would have been available to me. Maybe not so much with my dad, well I kind of wonder. I wonder if I would have just started crawling up in my dad's lap, what is he going to do. I know he wouldn't have like set me on the floor. So it might have totally changed the whole family dynamics, but I think it's because I didn't choose to go after it, I was happy. But I just don't want to make my family look like the bad guy, or cold, it's just they didn't show their emotions.

(I) Sounds like what you are saying is that you don't feel deprived of physical affection, that it would have been available to you. It was your choice.

(P) Right. Exactly.

(I) Anything else? When you reflect back on your childhood, I hear you say lack of physical affection, but are there times you did choose physical affection?

(P) I mean like I would hug my mom goodbye, and then when I would come back from somewhere I would hug my dad. But I didn't hug him all the time. Maybe big occasions like graduation.

(I) Hugging upon big occasions.

(P) My brother did sit on my mom's lap a lot. Sometimes my mom would like go up and hug my dad from behind. You could tell that he liked it, but he would stand there and pretend not to. She would go like 'honey' and he would be like 'uhhhhh'. So I don't know, I really don't have anything else.

(I) Okay, several things I heard. First of all you started off by saying 'we are a really close family', and you talked about that closeness of the family, that it was obvious to you growing up and obvious to you now. I can tell by your non-verbals that you have, that that is a real strength that you feel. You talked about the change between your parents over time. You described it as a developmental thing, that maybe men over time developmental become more sensitive, and you noticed more physical affection between them as they got older. You noticed them holding hands, when you didn't see when they were younger. And you talked a lot about knowing that even that you were choosing not to seek out physical affection, you talked about being too busy to seek it out, but you knew it would be available. You didn't feel a deprivation of it, but it was just who you were in choosing not to move toward physical affection. Another theme I heard was a lot of comparison between you and your brother. You had an awareness that you and your brother were very different from you in terms of physical affection. He sought it out, he sat in your mom's lap a lot. There was just more going on between them than there was between you and your parents. The physical affection that did occur for your brother was with your mom. Your dad was basically a person who just didn't, or wasn't comfortable, or didn't seek out physical affection. You described a specific memory of being at the

beach. You were out and busy, and your brother was closer by and more physically connected with your mom. You also talked about, that you had an awareness that it was kind of hard on your mom. That your mom would have wanted more physical affection from your dad. Because she was more physically affectionate, and your dad wasn't. But once again, that changed as they got older. When I asked about the word disconnected, you clarified that because you felt like that was a negative word, so changed the way you described it. You also talked about what it was like for you in high school... dating... you were aware that most girls liked physical affection more than you did and that it seemed to be the typical way that girls sought it out and guys pushed away. But for you, you found it to be the opposite. You talked about public displays of affection, that that was not something you were comfortable with, and that it didn't feel normal to you. It's not what you were exposed to. And so it seemed kind of different to be around that. You used the word independence. You described yourself as independent, that that seemed to be a better word to use over that disconnect word as a way to describe why you weren't seeking out physical affection. You did talk about specific times of physical affection, occasions in which there were hugs. You talked about leaving and with your mom there were hugs, and with your dad, once you went to college, you would come home and then leave, he would hug. You did mention that kissing was not something your family did. So that is what I heard. Anything you want to clarify or add?

(P) The only thing I would add to it, is that because I saw the physical affection with my brother, it was comforting to know it was there. That is a huge difference. Even if I was independent, but in a family that wasn't giving of affection, or I didn't feel like it was available, I might have a lot different feelings. So just knowing it's available, knowing I could get it if I wanted it.

(I) So it wasn't being denied.

(P) Right.

(I) Okay, thank you.

#### Participant # 20

(I) Can you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during childhood?

(P) Generally, I come from a very affectionate family. From as long as I can remember my mom gave me a hug and a kiss and told me she loved me every night when I went to bed. My parents divorced when I was 12, so after that they were in separate households, but my dad has always been very affectionate and gave me lots of hugs and not just hugs when you are coming and going, but also in the middle of a conversation if I hadn't seen him all week, he would just say 'come here let me give you a hug.' Then I would sit in his lap and he would hug me and we would talk, and he even still does that at times.

(I) And he still does.

(P) Yeah, he uh, when I still come home to visit he still hugs me a lot. Always gives me a hug when I see him, I always give him a hug when I leave, and tell him I love him. But sort of just random times in the day he may walk over and give me a hug. And tell me that he misses me. My mom and I are still affectionate with each other, too. We still give each other hugs, but it's more when I first see her and then when I leave. We don't



usually do the random hugging. But if I spend the night at her house, I still tell her I love her before we go to sleep. I don't know if you want specific memories about it.

(I) If you would like to talk about it.

(P) I can remember one time when I was about 12 probably, I was having a rough night and was upset about something and my mom came in and held me like a baby, really, and just kind of rocked and we were sitting on my bed and we were talking about things and she put her arms around me and just kind of held me and rocked me until I calmed down, and even at that age I don't know if it seems kind of strange. But she even did that through my teenage years, and when I went through a depression and got upset frequently and she figured out that sometimes what I needed more than any kind of word were just for her to physically hold and hug me until I calmed down.

(I) So you are saying that she knew that what you needed was a physical hold.

(P) Yeah, Um, I remember a funny thing that happened. When I was probably five or six, we had an old wooden rocking chair that my mom had rocked my older brother in, and had rocked me in, and I still liked to be rocked a lot at five and six, and she was rocking me, and the rocking chair fell apart, and we both hit the floor.

(I) And that was a memory you think about and it is funny.

(P) Yeah, at the time it scared me, when it happened and I cried. But now it's very funny, and I can remember my mom laughing about it when it happened. She thought it was funny. I got lots of shoulder rides from my dad. He carried me around the house a lot on his shoulders when I was little. I was always a really small child, easily carried around, so I got tons of those shoulder rides. I know that physical affection meant a lot to me as a child. It was important to me and still is. I still need that with my husband. He didn't come from a physically affectionate family. I mean they are affectionate, but not at the level my family was. And so he had to learn how to be affectionate. But I still give and get a lot of hugs from my husband too, so I have carried on throughout my life.

(I) So you are saying that the physical affection you received as a child, you have found a way to have it continue on.

(P) Yeah, I think it's because of the feeling you get. You feel warm and snug when you are being hugged. Or being held. It gives you not just a knowledge of security but a physical feeling of security.

(I) You said not just a knowledge of security but a physical feeling of security.

(P) Yeah. I think it somehow, for me, it's different. I can know in my head that I'm secure in a relationship and know that that person will always be there, but it sort of reiterates that when you have the physical affection. So the physical affection reiterates what you experience in your head.

(I) And somehow makes it more real. Let me think for a minute. I'm not sure I can think of anything else.

(P) Well, let me tell you what I have heard so far, and if you think of anything else you want to add you can. When you first started you said that you come from a very affectionate family. And then you described your mom and dad and talked about your mom hugging and kissing you, and that it occurred when you went to bed at night and when you were leaving or coming. And then you said that your parents divorced when you were 12 and that they were in different households. You talked about your dad being very affectionate and not just at times of coming and going. You talked about hugs and

sitting in his lap and that he still does that and at random times gives you physical affection. And you also said that you are still physically affectionate with your mom, but that it is at times of coming and going and at specific times. You also described specific memories. You talked about when you were 12 and going through a rough time, and going through some depression and crying a lot. And you remember your mom coming in and holding you and you recognized how important that holding was. And you talked about the funny incident of the rocking, and the chair that was used to rock you and your brother. And that at age five or six you still have an awareness that you enjoyed being rocked at that age. And you described the incident in which your mother was rocking you and the rocking chair fell apart.

(P) Well used!

(I) Well used. And at the time it was disturbing, but you and your mom look back and laugh about it. You also described shoulder rides from your dad. You said you were small and it made it easy to carry you around. You said it meant a lot to you as a child. And you said it still does. And you said that with your husband it has been important. You said that he did not come from a family that was as physically affectionate, but that you have been able to have with him and that it is important in your marriage. You also described a sensation of feeling secure when you are being held. You said there is the knowledge of feeling secure, but then the actual physical feeling of being secure. You talked about physical affection reiterating what the experience is. Physical affection being the physical experience of the warmth that you know. You said 'it makes what you have in your head feel more real.' So is there anything else you would add to what I have said, or clarify or correct what I have said?

(P) No I think you are right on in your summary. The original question, can you ask me that again?

(I) Tell me about your experience of parental physical affection when you were growing up.

(P) Does that mean only toward me or toward each other?

(I) However you would like to talk about it.

(P) I have this idea that physical affection is very important between a husband and wife, too. And at the time that my biological parents were together, and happy together, they were physically affectionate to each other, they hugged and kissed each other. And of course that stopped with the onset of divorce talk. But I could see that once they each remarried, they are physically affectionate with their spouses. And for me that is an important part of a happy marriage. And when I don't see that between a couple, that bothers me. When I don't see that it makes me worry that about the couple. When I don't see them hugging each other or kissing each other, in front of their children even, not teaching their children the importance of physical affection connection and demonstrating how much the other person needs them and that they love them in more than one way. So it's always been very important to me to have that mentality in my own marriage. And when I have children I'm going to make sure that they see that mom and dad love each other. And I think that's about all.

Participant # 21

(I) Can you tell me about your experience of physical affection from your parents during your childhood?

(P) Well, nothing bad or offensive or abusive ever came from my parents. They are both very loving. I think that I tend to turn away from hugging people now just because I'm not a very touchy feely person. My mom used to hold me in her lap for a long time when I was way too big and too old to be held and all that, but she was still doing it. But we would cuddle and I didn't I mean there was no harm or no bad connotations with it or anything.

(I) Can you say more about 'holding you in her lap' and 'way too long.'

(P) Well, I would, probably all the way through elementary school, I don't know, fourth or fifth grade, I was too big and heavy for her to hold me in her lap in the rocking chair, and just, I was an only child, and that made her feel, we are a very close family, and I've always been her baby, and still am, and she still cries every time I leave the house to come back to school. She would just rock me, and sometimes I would be like 'okay mom' because I wanted to grow up faster and wanted to be older and wanted to feel not so much as a child. And there would be somewhat of baby talk with the rocking and the cuddling. And I felt like I'm not a baby anymore, but she still saw me as that. I always had that role, I still do.

(I) Can you say more about 'we are a very close family?'

(P) Mom and Dad both, probably I'm closer to my mom. When I was younger I was probably closer to my dad, but over the years that's changed and I've grown closer to my mom. We never really, I mean we said 'I love you' when we went to bed at night but we weren't a very touchy feely family, never have been. I kind of wish we were a huggy family, because I feel like when I meet people at places everybody's warm and welcoming and they have a warm and more friendly sense about them. And I think it comes from their upbringing and maybe I think I tend to come across as a cold person because I enjoy my personal space and I don't let a lot of people into my personal box. Probably because of the lack of... a hug was always thought of as not just a friendly gesture, but that there was more to it than that. Um, it was a sense of love or a sacred move, and not just something you would do to a friend you hadn't seen in a couple of weeks.

(I) Can you say more about 'when I was younger I was closer to my dad?'

(P) I guess that I was Daddy's girl. He was an avid runner, and I used to run with him a lot. I would run and go outside with him. He would be working on something... he also hunts and bikes, and he would be working on a bow or doing little odds and ends around the house and I would just follow him around and watch. I was always very curious as a child and he sparked my curiosity and explained away... and could talk about any activities for hours and I was intent in listening to him. And once I got interested in boys, I kind of grew away from that and became closer to my mom and shared more things with her. I tell my mom everything. I wish I could be that way with my dad but my mom, but my mom somewhat dominates the conversation. Whenever I call home she always answers the phone and she doesn't want him to get it first. It's kind of like she is fighting for my attention. But I end up talking to her and not to my dad so much. I think

that at some point my dad felt like he wasn't wanted in my life, that I didn't listen to him all the time. Which is not the case at all. I hate that I came across that way. But I value each of their opinions. My dad is equally loving and I probably hug my dad more now than my mom.

(I) Can you say more about that?

(P) Well my dad is more of a warm friendly, touchy feely person. My mom hugs if I'm going to be leaving for a long time. And that's about the extent of it. And every time I leave the house my dad gives me a hug. I think my dad may miss the fact that I was closer to him when I was younger and has realized that, that we've grown apart over the years and maybe he wants to get that back.

(I) So you said your dad is sorry that he wasn't closer to you growing up.

(P) I think he's realized that since my adolescence until now that we've grown apart and that I don't follow him around or hang out with him as much as I used to. And he likes to make that connection because now that I've moved to college there is an empty house. It definitely has taken a toll on my mom. That my dad had more activities, but now I think he realizes that he misses having me around. He made a comment to my grandmother that after I left for school at one point he walked in my room and just opened the door and stared, and he didn't know why he did it. And he told my grandmother 'I don't know why I looked there, and my heart just sank when I saw the empty room.' Anytime I think about moving from home, even when I go home to visit, and for a week or two when I leave, it is so heart wrenching. I mean, I love it here, and I love where I am in my life. Still, I always had that close family and always had fun with my mom and dad, and can always count on that. And I think sometimes I just miss that closeness. There are a couple of best friends that I've met here, but nobody that fills that role that parents fill. There comes a point where I have to move on in my life, and I think it was best that I moved away to college, but it was hard on my mom. I think I mentioned that my mom cried every time I left the house for a long time. And still does. At first it didn't bother me, at first when I came to school. I was excited to be starting school. But then I started going home on breaks and was leaving again, and I would get in my car and almost cry because I would think 'wow, I almost forgot about what that feeling of family is.'

(I) So you came to school and it was the right thing and you were moving on, but also experiencing the heart wrench of moving away from home.

(P) Yes, definitely. And it didn't hit me for awhile. About halfway through my freshman year, I said 'wow, now I see what they mean about letting me go. I mean it's the same for me, but I still have that connection to them. I mean it broke my heart when I heard my grandmother tell me about that. Because that just happened about eight or ten days ago. And she told me what my dad said, and the rest of the day that thought ran through my head. I never confronted my dad about that.

(I) So you and your dad never talked about that?

(P) No.

(I) Anything else about parental physical affection?

(P) Well, between the two of them, I never experienced... I guess they kind of kept it private. I mean they were never affectionate in front of me. I think that may of made me less comfortable in embracing others, say, on a date. A hug at the end of a date means a lot to me. Whereas a lot of guys would expect a kiss, or more than that. It's hard for me

to hug that guy. I have to really trust them. It takes a lot for me to trust a person anyway, but whenever I hug a guy that means something special coming from me. I think it's because a hug was kept as a sacred thing when I was younger and even between my parents.

(I) Physical affection seemed to be a sacred thing and when it happened it was meaningful. And you didn't see your parents hugging each other much so you tend to be more cautious about that with dating.

(P) Yes.

(I) Anything else?

(P) Not that I can think of. Like I said every experience I've had so far is very positive.

(I) Let me summarize what I've heard so far and if you would like to add to it please feel free. When you first started talking about your experience of parental physical affection you said that there was nothing bad or offensive that happened. And that both your parents were very loving. You said that you tend to turn away from hugging, that you are not a touchy feely type of person. And you also talked about your experience with your mom, and that you felt like it went on way too long. That you would cuddle and she would rock you and that there was nothing bad about that, but at some point you recognized that you had become too big for her. You also talked about the fact that you are an only child. You are a very close family. She cries whenever you leave. You also said you had a sense of wanting to grow up. And not be treated so much as a child. You mentioned that sometimes in the rocking there would be baby talk.

(P) And still I get that baby talk every now and then, I guess because I'm her 19-year-old baby, but it never leaves. She still sees me as the girl going into the first day of kindergarten.

(I) And then you mentioned that you were always closer to you mom, although when you were younger you were closer to your dad. And when you talked about not being a real touchy feely family, you said that you wished you were more so, that you were aware that today as an adult that you are not a touchy feely person and when you are with others you notice more touching and you notice a warmth between people. You notice that you step back a little. You used the word 'box', that you 'go into a box.' Something like that. That you held back more on the hugs and kisses. You also talked about how in your family there was a sense of sacredness. A hug was not just friendly but it was a sense of love and sacredness. You also talked about being a daddy's girl. You said he did a number of activities that you did with him. You would run with him, and you also talked about following him around and watching him. He hunted and did some other things and you were right there with him. You were with him a lot in those activities. You also talked about how once you became interested in boys, that's when you began to grow away from your dad. You also talked about how your mom tends to dominate the parent situation more when you call home. She always answers and wants to talk to you and then you end up not talking to your dad. And then you also talked about your dad reaching a point where he felt not wanted by you as you grew away from him. Although you said you hugged your dad more than your mom, because your dad was more of a warm and friendly person than your mom. You said your mom hugs whenever you are going to be leaving for a long time, whereas your dad hugs every time you leave. And you also talked about how your dad realized you had grown apart and wanted more of a

connection with you. You mentioned the experience of your grandmother telling you that your dad had gone into your room and just stood there, and that was very touching to you. You never talked to your dad about that. As you reflected on that experience it brought up tears. You said that between the two parents they weren't real affectionate with each other in front of you, so you tend to take a long time in a dating situation, you don't just automatically hug. And then you ended by saying again that it was all very positive. Those are the themes I heard. Is there anything you would like to add?

(P) Not that I can think of. I think that sums it up.

## VITA

Ellen Senter Denny was born in San Antonio, Texas, On April 18, 1956. She graduated from W.T. Woodson High School in Fairfax, Virginia in June, 1974. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Child and Family Studies in May 1978 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In May of 1980, she received a Master of Science degree in Child and Family Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

After graduation from college, she achieved certification as an ASPO (American Society for Psychoprophylaxis in Obstetrics) Certified Childbirth Educator (ACCE). She taught Lamaze Prepared Childbirth class for seven years and served as the director of the Knoxville Prepared Childbirth Association, Knoxville, Tennessee, for four years. She became adjunct faculty with the University of Tennessee on two occasions, 1982 and 1997.

In May of 1991 she received an Associates Degree in Nursing from Roane State Community College. Upon graduation from nursing school, she was instrumental in developing the first freestanding birth center in Knoxville, Tennessee, The Maternity Center of East Tennessee. During her ten years as the administrator at the Maternity Center, she provided nursing care for the first several years.

In August 2002 she entered the doctoral program in counseling psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in December, 2006. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at Cherokee Health Systems, a community mental health agency in Knoxville, Tennessee.

