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Separation Anxiety in Parents of Adolescents: Theoretical Significance and Scale Development

Ellen Hock, Mary Eberly, Suzanne Bartle-Haring, Pamela Ellwanger, and Keith F. Widaman

Parents of adolescents commonly face separation-related issues associated with children's increasing independence and imminent leave-taking. The aims of this investigation were (1) to develop a reliable and valid measure of parental emotions associated with separation and (2) to validate the measure by relating it to other attributes (attachment relationship quality, parent-child communication, and parent-adolescent differentiation) assessed in mothers, fathers, and their adolescents. The newly constructed, 35-item Parents of Adolescents Separation Anxiety Scale (PASAS) was administered to 686 parents of teenagers in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 or college-bound freshmen and seniors. Factor analyses supported formation of two subscales: Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing (AAD) and Comfort with Secure Base Role (CSBR); both subscales showed distinctive patterns of change with child age. Parents' reports indicated that healthy adult attachment styles were associated with lower AAD and higher CSBR scores; children of parents who had higher AAD scores reported lower quality of attachment to both mothers and fathers.

INTRODUCTION

Research on parents' separation from infants and young children is abundant (Deater-Deckard, Scarr, McCartney, & Eisenberg, 1994; DeMeis, Hock, & McBride, 1986; Fein, Gariboldi, & Boni, 1993; Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992; McBride & Belsky, 1988; Stifter, Coulehan, & Fish, 1993); yet, little research exists on parents' feelings about separation from their adolescent children. This is somewhat surprising because their children's adolescence is a time when parents face challenges that focus on separation-related issues. Society places expectations on both adolescents and their parents for increasing adolescent self-reliance and autonomy from parents; separation of adolescents from their parents is imminent and represents a major life transition. During this developmental transition, adolescents are highly engaged in the process of relationship renegotiation (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Parents, too, are active participants in renegotiation; to understand the course and outcome of this interactive process, parents' feelings and experiences need to be identified. The primary goal of the present investigation is to document comprehensively the presence and developmental course of parents' concerns about separation from their adolescent children.

Psychologists from many theoretical perspectives agree that issues associated with parent-child separation are central to understanding psychosocial development across the life span. Responses to actual separation events or threats of separation relate to relevant characteristics of important relationships such as the level of trust or the quality of attachment. Sep-

aration responses include many diverse feelings, such as anxiety associated with being apart from the significant other, sadness with the imminent or existing loss, and anger or frustration about the inability to remain in close proximity (Hock, McBride, & Gnezda, 1989). The anxiety or concern that mothers and fathers experience associated with separation from a child is referred to as parental separation anxiety and is defined as "an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience" (Hock et al., 1989).

Parents' separation anxiety is distinctly different from that experienced by children. Prior research on attachment tended to focus almost exclusively on separation anxiety and associated separation behaviors of infants and young children. That research noted the adaptive function of separation anxiety and behaviors for the survival of the individual and the species. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), however, can also provide a conceptual base for understanding parental anxiety that is associated with separation experiences. When activated by a separation event or impending danger, feelings associated with separation impel parents to provide protection and to increase physical proximity to their children (Bowlby, 1973, pp. 92, 253). Furthermore, in Volume 3 of *Attachment and Loss*, Bowlby (1980) discussed individual differences in the ways in which adults react to loss or threats of loss of close relationships. Drawing on ideas about representational models, Bowlby argued that an individual's response to a

threat of loss is a function of the representational models of attachment figures and of the self that were built during the individual's own childhood. Thus, parents' mental representations of their own attachment relationships impact the way in which they react, behaviorally and emotionally, to separation events.

If the emotional experience of separation is associated with parents' mental representations of attachment relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Bloom-Feshbach & Bloom-Feshbach, 1987), then parents reporting secure mental representations of attachment should perceive separation events as healthy components of adolescent development and provide security by being accessible to their children. Parents who have secure mental representations of attachment relationships would be comfortable providing a "secure base." In a similar vein, Crowell and Waters (1999) recently reported findings from their study of married adults that clearly demonstrate the linkage between healthy mental representations of attachment and individuals' provision of secure base behavior for their partners. In the current study, such a linkage was also expected to exist between parents' attachment security and provision of a secure base for their teenagers. Considering the increasing autonomy of the adolescent, parents would be expected to experience a level of anxiety commensurate with monitoring adolescent activities (Patterson, 1992), but the experienced anxiety would not compel parents to act in a manner that would be intrusive or inhibiting of the adolescent's exploration of new environments and relationships (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Moreover, such parents would be inclined to successfully balance intimacy and distance in their relationship with adolescent children. In contrast, parents reporting insecure mental representations of attachment might view separation as rejection or a threat to the integrity of their relationship with their child; in these families, one might expect more anger and conflict. On the other hand, other insecure parents might find that being accessible to their child is draining or depleting and look forward to being relieved of such parental responsibilities.

The Structure of Parental Separation Anxiety

Prior research on parental separation anxiety has focused almost exclusively on parents of infants or young children. For example, a factor analytic study by Hock et al. (1989) found that parental separation anxiety in parents of infants could be represented by a three-factor structure. The first factor, Maternal Separation Anxiety, represented a global dimension consisting of a mother's reports of anxiety and discom-

fort when away from her child. The second dimension was named Perception of Separation Effects on the Child, which subsumed concerns about the child's well-being in the mother's absence. The third factor, Employment-Related Separation Concerns, comprised items that targeted separation associated with work/career demands. In later studies, Hock and her colleagues found theoretically consistent differential relations of the separate dimensions of parental separation anxiety with other variables. Variables associated with dimensions of parental separation anxiety represented both child characteristics, such as health problems (Humphry & Hock, 1989), and parental attributes such as depressive symptoms (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992) and role-related beliefs (Hock & Lutz, 1998).

The three-dimensional structure discussed earlier for parental separation anxiety may represent well this domain for parents of infants and young children. When offspring are in the infancy and early childhood periods, parents appropriately may be quite concerned about how separations from the child, particularly separations associated with maternal employment, may affect the child. But, when children reach the adolescent period, many of the concerns from the earlier period in the children's life no longer apply, and new and different concerns arise in and impinge on the parent-adolescent relationship. No longer are parents likely to be overly concerned about how routine absences from their children affect the children emotionally. Instead, parents of adolescents must face a variety of issues stemming from the movement of adolescents toward adulthood, issues such as adolescent autonomy, conflict, decision making, personal responsibility, peer affiliation, dating relationships, and other extrafamilial relationships (cf. Feldman & Elliot, 1990; Montemayor, Adams, & Gullota, 1990). As the nature of the parent-offspring relationship is altered during adolescence, the structure of parental separation anxiety concerning the adolescent is likely to change in response to the evolving relationship between parent and child. Representing the structure of separation anxiety for parents of adolescents is therefore an important research objective.

Relation of Parental Separation Anxiety to Other Constructs

Once the dimensional structure of parental separation anxiety toward adolescent children is determined, exploring the nomological network of these dimensions—or the relations of these dimensions to measures of other constructs—is a relevant concern. Dimensions of parental separation anxiety should be

related to other aspects of the parent–child relationship, particularly to conflict behavior, attachment relationships, and family differentiation.

Separation anxiety and conflict behavior. As parents and adolescents renegotiate their relationships, an increase in the frequency and intensity of conflict between parent and adolescent often occurs (Montemayor, 1982). This increase in conflict and the expression of negative emotion might be related to increasing psychological and physical distance between parents and adolescents that occurs as adolescents mature (Flannery, Montemayor, Eberly, & Torquati, 1993; Larson & Ham, 1993; Steinberg, 1989). On a more positive note, some research suggests that the ability to discuss disagreements, resolve conflicts, and reach compromises is rooted in the security of the attachment relationship (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, & Flemming 1993; Kobak & Sceery, 1988). Research by Kobak and colleagues revealed that adolescents and mothers who were securely attached were able to resolve problem-solving tasks in ways that were characterized by low levels of conflict; that is, securely attached mother–adolescent dyads exhibited low levels of dysfunctional anger and high levels of constructive engagement. Relatedly, a recent investigation of dating partners by Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips (1996) found that couple problem solving was characterized by more anger and less warmth when a partner was insecure-ambivalent or insecure-avoidant, respectively. In the present study, conflictual communication patterns reported by parents and teens were expected to be linked to concerns about separation in parents and, specifically, to be related to lower levels of comfort with issues surrounding autonomy and separation.

Separation anxiety and attachment relations. Theoretically, the psychological and emotional experience of parental separation anxiety should be linked to parents' representations of attachment relationships (Bloom-Feshbach & Bloom-Feshbach, 1987) and witnessed in adolescents' perceptions of attachment to parents. Response to separation is a reflection of the security of the attachment representation. Thus, parents who experience less separation anxiety with their adolescents' increasing self-reliance, while providing a sense of felt security when required by the adolescent, were expected to be most comfortable with others' dependency, need for closeness, and need for independence. Moreover, those parents who were less anxious about separation, in comparison with parents who were more anxious about separation, might be more responsive to adolescent needs for psychological security and exploration. Thus, parental separation anxiety was expected to be in-

versely related to adolescents' reports of quality of attachment to mothers and fathers.

Separation anxiety and family differentiation. In addition to physical separation, parents and adolescents also must negotiate the psychological process of differentiation. Differentiation—a family-systems-level attribute—is a family's characteristic tolerance for intimacy and individuality or distance among family members and between the family and the outside world (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990; Bowen, 1978). Consistent with the major tenets of attachment theory, differentiation was hypothesized to be systematically associated with parental separation anxiety. Low differentiation should be linked to attachment representations in which separation experiences would invoke high anxiety and contribute to disputes in family relationships. In contrast, high family differentiation should be more indicative of secure attachment and low separation anxiety; members of highly differentiated families would be flexible and comfortable with their feelings of intimacy and would be able to cope with age-appropriate separation.

The Present Study

The present study had two general aims. The first aim, consisting of instrument development, focused on operationalizing parents' feelings about separation from their adolescent children. Similar to the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale, which assesses parental feelings about physical separation during infancy (Hock et al., 1989), the new scale—called the Parents of Adolescents Separation Anxiety Scale (PASAS)—asks parents of adolescents to report on their feelings about separation (i.e., worry, sadness, and tension about adolescent distancing for current and impending separation events). The term parental separation anxiety is used in this study of parents of adolescents in much the same way that it was used in previous studies of parents of infants that employed the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (Hock et al. 1989; Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992). Simply put, the term describes a state of apprehension experienced by parents associated with separation events involving children. Although the word, “anxiety” often connotes a pathological, clinical entity, in this case it reflects concerns about separation that can be quite “normal” and may not be unhealthy or dysfunctional.

To examine parental anxiety across all phases of adolescent development, data were collected from parents of early, mid, and late adolescents (including college students); data from parents in all three age groups were combined to select items and assess the psychometric properties of the new scale. Parent gen-

der, child gender, and developmental differences also were examined.

The second general aim of this study was to evaluate the validity of the new structure of separation anxiety by examining the relation of dimensions of parental separation anxiety to other psychological constructs that assess aspects of functioning in close interpersonal relationships. This approach to validity reflects the approach to construct validity described by Cronbach and Meehl (1955); it further defines the meaning of dimensions of separation anxiety by positioning them within the context of a meaningful nomological network. In this regard, confirming expected correlations between parental separation anxiety and the child's reports of relationship quality is necessary. Parental feelings associated with separation were hypothesized to be related to aspects of adolescents' relationships with their parents, and attributes describing quality of the relationship were investigated from the perspectives of both parents and adolescents. By relating data from different respondents, this study sought to circumvent problems associated with potential bias due to shared variance among measures associated with shared respondent effects.

Data were collected in three samples of participants. Variables used examined aspects of parent-adolescent relationships that are conceptually linked with mental representation of the attachment relationship, particularly perceptions of conflictual communication patterns, attachment quality, and levels of differentiation (i.e., balance of distance and connectedness). In participating families, fathers, mothers, and adolescents were assessed.

METHOD

Samples

Sample 1. Adolescents, $N = 129$, in the 6th, $n = 23$ boys, $n = 23$ girls; 8th, $n = 22$ boys, $n = 22$ girls; and 10th, $n = 20$ boys, $n = 19$ girls, grades were recruited from enrollment lists of one middle school and two high schools in large Midwestern suburban school districts. Requests for study participants resulted in 41% agreeing to participate. Average age for boys was 14.2 years, $SD = 1.6$, and average age for girls was 14.1 years, $SD = 1.6$. Mothers, on average, were 42.9 years old, $SD = 3.8$ years, and fathers, on average, were 45.0 years old, $SD = 4.9$. Seventeen percent were from single-parent homes. Most mothers (75.6%) and fathers (85.7%) had obtained college degrees and were employed full-time (55% of mothers, 93.3% of fathers). Using the income categories, median annual family income fell in the \$90,000–\$99,999 category.

Sample 2. Adolescents were recruited from enrollment lists of two suburban high schools in a large Midwestern school district; mailed requests for study participation successfully recruited 30% of those on the enrollment lists. In this lower- to middle-income school district most families report incomes of between \$20,000 and \$60,000. Participants in this study were mothers, $n = 85$, fathers, $n = 74$, and their adolescent children, $n = 35$ boys, $n = 43$ girls. On average, boys were 17.7 years old, $SD = .6$, and girls were 17.4 years old, $SD = .58$. Fourteen percent of the children were from single-parent homes. The average age of mothers was 43.4 years, $SD = 4.5$; fathers, on average, were 45.1 years old, $SD = 6.3$. Approximately 33% of mothers and 50% of fathers had completed undergraduate degrees. Most mothers (76%) and fathers (92%) were employed full time. Using the income categories, median annual family income fell in the \$40,000–\$49,999 category.

Sample 3. Mothers, $n = 168$, and fathers, $n = 130$ of college-bound freshmen, $n = 34$ males, $n = 55$ females, or college seniors, $n = 24$ males, $n = 50$ females, were recruited from the registrar's list of freshmen and seniors at a large Midwestern university; 38% of those contacted by mail agreed to participate. Eighteen percent were from single-parent homes. On average, college men were 19.7 years old, $SD = 2.2$, college women were 19.9 years old, $SD = 2.3$; as expected, this recruitment of college seniors included individuals who were ages 20 to 22. These older participants were still functioning in the "student" role, so their parents' beliefs about separation were considered to reflect feelings of parents of older, but not fully independent, adolescents. The college students' mothers were 47.1 years old, $SD = 4.9$, and their fathers were 48.9 years old, $SD = 5.5$. Thirty-five percent of mothers and 51.9% of fathers had received college degrees, professional degrees, or both. Using the income categories, median annual family income fell in the \$70,000–\$79,999 category.

Total sample. For certain analyses, parents from all three samples were combined. This total sample included mothers, $n = 378$, and fathers, $n = 308$, who completed the PASAS, and adolescents, $n = 159$ boys, $n = 213$ girls, ranging in age from 12 years to 25 years. On average, mothers were 44.9 years old; most were employed full-time (63.4%), some were employed part-time (19.7%), and the remaining were homemakers or unemployed (16.9%). Approximately 35% of mothers had attained college degrees and the remaining mothers had attained at least a high-school education (64%). Fathers were 46.7 years old on average, and 92.7% of fathers were employed full-time. About half of the fathers (53.2%) had college degrees, and the

remaining fathers had received at least a high school education (46.8%). The family incomes ranged from \$10,000–20,000 to greater than \$100,000. Although the sample is generally described as middle class, all income levels were represented and cell sizes were adequate for assessing the relationship between income levels (as indicators of socioeconomic status) and parental separation anxiety. Analyses using family income levels, parental education levels, and parental separation anxiety revealed no significant relationships, so no further analyses of these data are reported or discussed. Families were primarily European American; participants who were not of European American descent composed 3%, 6%, and 9% of samples 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

Instruments and Procedures

All samples. Mothers and fathers in all three samples were asked to complete a pilot version of the PASAS. Two areas of literature guided the development of items for the PASAS, namely attachment theory and research in adolescent socioemotional development, to identify issues of relevance to parents of adolescents. Forty-seven Likert-type statements asked parents to rate (on a 5-point scale, with 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) their feelings associated with important parameters of the parent–adolescent attachment relationship. The actual content or subject matter of the items was derived from areas of study emphasized in the adolescent development literature; areas included adolescent autonomy, conflict, decision making, personal responsibility, peer affiliation, dating relationships, and other extrafamilial relationships (cf. Feldman & Elliot, 1990; Montemayor et al. 1990).

Items were constructed to cover selected parameters associated with separation in the attachment literature. The construction was guided, in part, by Weiss (1982), who proposed three characteristics of an attachment relationship: accessibility, physical proximity seeking under stress, and diminished anxiety in the presence of the child. Physical closeness was represented through items assessing pleasure associated with physical closeness as well as expressions of discomfort at being physically separated for both short and extended time periods. Items also included direct statements about parental provision of protection and safety. In addition to physical closeness and protection, another set of items tapped psychological closeness. These items reflected parental pleasure and comfort associated with being accessible, that is, sharing time, activities, and advice with the teenager as well as contrasting feelings that would include resentment of a teenager's dependency.

It was hypothesized that items referring to the parents' pleasure in providing care, support, and advice to the teenager might well cluster together and load on a distinct dimension. It was also anticipated that the items specifically referring to physical contact might well reflect a dimension distinct from more abstract, psychological referents of closeness.

Sample 1. The focus in Sample 1 was the relation of parental separation anxiety to conflict with the adolescent. To assess conflictual communication patterns, each parent and target adolescent completed 20-item parallel versions of the Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (CBQ; Prinz, Foster, Kent, & O'Leary, 1979). Adolescents completed separate forms for mothers and for fathers. Answered in a True/False format, each statement was designed to assess positive and negative interaction behaviors of parents, adolescents, and their shared relationships. Higher scores represent greater conflict in the parent–child relationship. The CBQ has been used as a clinical diagnostic tool and has been shown to demonstrate adequate psychometric properties (cf. Foster, Prinz, & O'Leary, 1983; Robin & Weiss, 1980). Cronbach's α s were rather high, ranging from .86 through .92.

Adolescents and their parents in Sample 1 individually completed several questionnaires during two 1-hour in-home visits scheduled about 1 week apart. Parents completed the PASAS, and parents and adolescents completed the CBQ. Families received \$20.00 for their participation.

Sample 2. The focus in Sample 2 was the relation of parental separation anxiety to attachment styles. The first measure of parents' attachment style used in this sample was the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS; Collins & Reed, 1990). Consisting of 18 items, the AAS includes three dimensions of attachment: comfort with closeness and intimacy, comfort with dependency (feeling that one can depend and rely on others), and anxiety about rejection or abandonment. Each item is answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = not at all characteristic of me" to "5 = very characteristic of me." Higher scores indicate the degree to which a particular dimension is characteristic of the individual. Cronbach's α s ranged from .78 through .87 in this study.

The second parent attachment style measure used was the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), a 53-item self-report measure designed to examine an adolescent's positive and negative affective/cognitive experiences with parents and peers as sources of psychological security. The IPPA consists of two scales, one for attachment to parents (28 items) and one for attachment to peers (23 items). Modified mother and father sub-

scales were used for the purpose of the present investigation. Adolescents were asked to indicate how true each item was for them on a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores represent greater attachment quality. The IPPA has demonstrated strong psychometric properties (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Papini, Roggman, & Anderson, 1991). In the present study, Cronbach's α s were .93 and .92 for mothers and fathers, respectively.

The third attachment style measure used was the Family System Test (FAST; Gehring & Schultheiss, 1987), a spatial measure assessing cohesion and hierarchical status among family members. The original FAST and its facsimile use 9×9 matrices. Adolescents were asked to place figurines (for the original) or different-colored adhesive dots (for the facsimile) on the checkerboardlike matrix to indicate cohesion between self-mother and self-father. A different colored dot represented each family member. All adolescents completed the FAST facsimile; a subset of these adolescents ($n = 43$) later participated in a 5–10 min, face-to-face interview when the original FAST was administered. A cohesion score was determined by calculating the distance between figurines (or dots). To calculate distance, the number of squares that separate figurines were counted if they were in the same row or column; the Pythagorean Theorem ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$) was calculated if the figurines were at an angle to one another. The cohesion score was obtained by subtracting the distance between figurines from the board's ultimate distance of 12 (cf. Gehring & Feldman, 1988). Scores ranged from .6 to 11; higher scores represent greater cohesion. The original FAST and its facsimile were found to correlate highly, $r = .97$ for mothers and $r = .98$ for fathers. Gehring and Feldman (1988) found the FAST to demonstrate adequate psychometric properties. For analyses in the present investigation, the facsimile cohesion scores were used.

In Sample 2, families were sent a packet that had three envelopes containing questionnaires, one envelope each for the mother, father, and high-school senior. Mothers and fathers completed the PASAS and the AAS; adolescents were given the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (parent subscale) and a facsimile (2-dimensional) of the Family System Test. As an incentive to participate, family members were offered an opportunity to participate in a raffle drawing.

Additionally, adolescents were invited to participate in an extended study of the original (three-dimensional) FAST by returning, with their questionnaires, a card on which they had written their name and phone number. The original, three-dimensional version of the FAST was administered to 43 seniors who were paid \$5 for their participation. The original FAST was

used to assess the parallel forms reliability of the facsimile version.

Sample 3. The focus of Sample 3 was the relation of parental separation anxiety to role differentiation within the family. The Differentiation in the Family System Scale (DIFS; Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992) was used to assess the patterns of differentiation in the family. This particular scale uses a "circular questioning" format that assesses the individual's perception of how various members of the family interact with one another. The scale consists of 11 Likert-type items that provide information about the respondent's views of the patterns of interaction. Items assess the behavioral patterns among family members that reinforce the individual's sense of self as separate yet also maintain a sense of closeness. High scores indicate higher differentiation. Data on four subscales were used in this study: mother-to-adolescent, father-to-adolescent, adolescent-to-mother, and adolescent-to-father. The DIFS has been shown to demonstrate adequate psychometric properties and construct validity (cf. Anderson & Sabatelli, 1992; Bartle & Sabatelli, 1989; Sabatelli & Anderson, 1991). For the present investigation, Cronbach's α s ranged from .83 through .94 for adolescents' perspectives, .85 through .89 for mothers' perspectives, and .83 through .90 for fathers' perspectives.

For Sample 3, a packet was mailed to each participating family; each packet included an introductory letter and three envelopes containing several questionnaires—a set designated for each family member (mother, father, college student). Mothers and fathers were asked to complete the PASAS and the DIFS. Adolescents were asked to complete the DIFS as well.

Analytic Strategies

Factor analyses. For mothers' and fathers' reports, exploratory principal axis factor analyses, in which squared multiple correlations (SMC) were used as communality estimates, were employed to determine the latent structure of the PASAS and to eliminate low-loading items. Factor analyses were conducted for 0 to 4 factor solutions. Because dimensions of parental separation anxiety might be correlated, an oblique rotation method (Promax) was used to determine simple structure; of course, if factors are orthogonal, Promax will find that orthogonal structure. To examine possible parent gender differences, maternal and paternal data sets were initially analyzed separately as independent samples. Factors with eigenvalues greater than one and the scree test (Cattell, 1966) were used to determine the number of factors in each group.

To make decisions about item retention, the criterion of a factor loading of .30 was adopted. For an exploratory factor analysis, according to Floyd and Widaman (1995, p. 294), "factor loadings are generally considered to be meaningful when they exceed .30 or .40"; items that failed to achieve a factor loading of .30 or more were eliminated. Additionally, Cronbach's coefficient α was computed to determine the internal consistency and item-to-total correlation for each factor. Items that failed to correlate above .25 with the total scale also were eliminated.

Validity analyses. Simultaneous multiple regressions were employed in all validity study analyses. To evaluate the relations of the two PASAS scales to other measures, each outcome variable of interest was regressed on the two PASAS subscales, Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing (AAD) and Comfort with Secure Base Role (CSBR). First, total model variance (R^2) was examined to determine the degree to which parental separation anxiety measured by using both scales predicted indices of parent-adolescent conflict, attachment, and differentiation. Second, the amount of variance accounted for uniquely by each subscale (sr^2) and the regression coefficient raw score coefficient B for each scale were examined to assess the unique relationship of AAD and CSBR individually with each dependent variable. For all three studies, adolescent gender was collapsed because significant mean differences between male and female adolescents were not found for the AAD or CSBR.

RESULTS

Factor Analysis and Psychometric Evaluation

Three strategies were employed to determine which items of the original set were to be included in the final version of the PASAS. First, as described earlier, conceptual clarity for each item was evaluated to ensure parsimony and confidence that relevant dimensions were tapped. Second, exploratory principal axis factor analysis was used to determine empirically the latent structure and item inclusion and exclusion. Third, Cronbach's coefficient α was used to examine internal consistency. Given a well-defined factor structure, effects of parent gender, adolescent gender, and adolescent age were evaluated on each factor.

Factor analyses. Factors with eigenvalues greater than one and scree tests (Cattell, 1966) indicated that a two-factor solution was present for both mothers' and fathers' reports. Twelve items were discarded because of low factor loadings and low item-scale correlations. The 35 items that were retained were again subjected to the same method of factor analysis to re-

affirm the factor structure and to determine final factor loadings. (Factor loadings associated with each item are available from the first author.) As before, results yielded a two-factor solution with a simple structure; each item loaded clearly on only one factor. Interfactor correlations showed that the two factors were relatively independent ($r = .17$ for mothers' reports, $r = .20$ for fathers' reports). Identical patterns of items loading on factors were found for mothers' and fathers' data.

Considering the a priori hypotheses about dimensions that might be identified by factor analysis, items that reflected parents' enjoyment of being accessible and providing care, support, and advice to their teenager clustered together, as predicted. The hypothesis about the emergence of a factor that would reflect special interest in physical closeness was not confirmed by the factor analytic analyses: The items referring to hugs and holding were evenly distributed on the two factors. The two factors revealed by factor analysis were interpreted and labeled as AAD and CSBR. The PASAS items and scoring key, showing which items are associated with each factor, are given in the Appendix.

The first factor, AAD, consisted of 21 items reflecting parents' feelings of discomfort or loss associated with their adolescent's increasing affiliation with others and decreasing involvement and time spent with parents. Parents having higher scores on the AAD express "hurt" or "emptiness" in response to the child's increasing self-reliance or affiliation with others, whereas parents having lower scores do not report such anxiety and perhaps experience their child's increasing self-reliance as positive. Examples of items loading on the AAD factor include "I feel resentful when my child goes to his/her room instead of spending time with me" and "I feel sad when I think that my teenager does not seem to enjoy being with me as much anymore." For mothers ($M = 52.0$, $SD = 9.7$), AAD accounted for 39.7% of the variance in the factor analysis and had an internal consistency of .86. For fathers ($M = 55.1$, $SD = 10.4$), AAD accounted for 40.5% of the variance in the factor analysis and had an internal consistency of .88.

The second factor, CSBR, consisted of 14 items, reflecting parents' contentment with being accessible and serving as a source of security to their adolescents who are expanding their social and physical worlds. Higher scores on CSBR reflect parents' satisfaction in providing emotional support, physical support, and guidance for their adolescents. Not only do these parents enjoy "being there" when needed, but they may expect to experience a sense of loss when they are not so obviously needed. On the other hand,

lower scores represent a parents' discomfort and dissatisfaction in being accessible. These parents do not express sadness about loss, nor do they experience enjoyment in providing comfort. They appear to look forward to diminished obligation and responsibility for providing physical, economic, and emotional support. Examples of items in CSBR are "I feel good knowing that my teenager feels that he/she can call on me" and "Life will be so much better when my teenager leaves home for good (reverse scored)." For mothers ($M = 59.7$, $SD = 7.4$), CSBR accounted for 29.5% of variance and had an internal consistency of .82. For fathers ($M = 56.9$, $SD = 7.2$), CSBR accounted for 27.3% of variance had an internal consistency of .81 (see Appendix).

Gender and developmental differences. To evaluate the effects of parent gender, adolescent gender, and adolescent age on the parents' separation anxiety scores, $2 \times 2 \times 6$ analyses of variance (Parent Gender \times Adolescent Gender \times Grade) were used. Analyses are based on only those families for whom both mothers and fathers participated.

For the AAD factor, a significant main effect was obtained for grade, $F(5, 666) = 6.11$, $p < .001$. Using Tukey's studentized range test and an α error rate of .05, results revealed that parents of college seniors ($M = 48.1$, $SD = 9.6$) reported significantly less anxiety than parents of sixth graders ($M = 54.9$, $SD = 9.0$), eighth graders ($M = 52.4$, $SD = 8.5$), tenth graders ($M = 52.1$, $SD = 9.0$), twelfth graders ($M = 53.6$, $SD = 10.3$), and college-bound freshmen ($M = 54.1$, $SD = 10.5$). A main effect for adolescent gender was not obtained, and all interactions were nonsignificant.

For the CSBR, a significant main effect was obtained for parent gender, $F(1, 666) = 22.73$, $p < .001$, where mothers ($M = 56.1$, $SD = 6.8$) perceived greater comfort with providing a secure base than did fathers ($M = 53.4$, $SD = 6.7$). A main effect for grade, $F(5, 666) = 12.57$, $p < .001$, reflecting a general, though not perfectly linear, decline in scores with advancing grade also was obtained. Parents of sixth ($M = 58.2$, $SD = 5.2$) and tenth ($M = 58.1$, $SD = 6.0$) graders were significantly more involved in their role of providing a secure base and more likely to express sadness about their adolescents' future home-leaving than parents of twelfth graders ($M = 53.5$, $SD = 7.4$) and college seniors ($M = 52.5$, $SD = 7.1$). Parents of eighth graders ($M = 56.6$, $SD = 6.5$) were not significantly different from parents of sixth graders or tenth graders and college-bound freshmen ($M = 54.5$, $SD = 6.4$), and parents of college-bound freshmen did not differ significantly from parents of twelfth graders or college seniors. A main effect for adolescent gender was not obtained, and all interactions

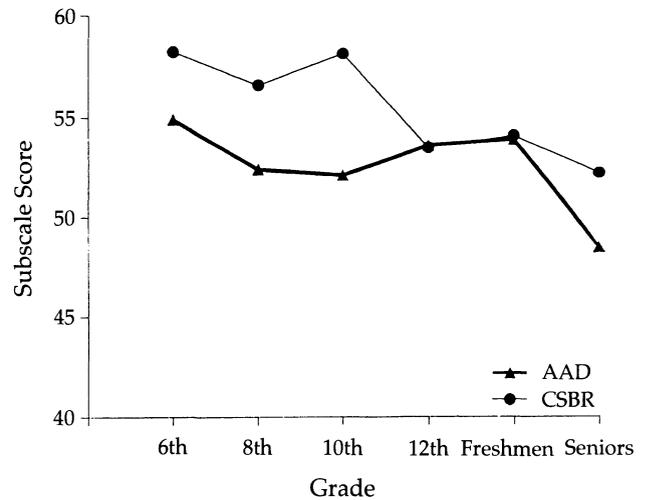


Figure 1 Mean scores by grades for each PASAS subscale—Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing (AAD) and Comfort with Secure Base Role (CSBR).

were nonsignificant. Figure 1 displays means by grade for the AAD and CSBR.

Validity Study 1: Separation Anxiety and Conflict Behavior

Parental reports. Multiple regression analyses showed that parents' separation anxiety from adolescents, as a whole, contributed significantly to parent-reported conflict with the adolescent, for both mothers and fathers (see Table 1). The squared semipartial correlations showed that both AAD and CSBR were significantly related to parent-reported conflict for both mothers and fathers. The regression weights revealed that mothers ($B = .15$) and fathers ($B = .16$) who reported more AAD also reported more conflictual communication with their adolescents. Conversely, the CSBR scale revealed negative relations with conflict; higher levels of comfort with one's role as a secure base were associated with lower reported communication difficulties for both mothers ($B = -.29$) and fathers ($B = -.20$).

Adolescent reports. The regression analyses predicting adolescent-reported conflict with mothers and fathers also showed significant overall relationships for conflict with both mothers and fathers (as shown in the bottom half of Table 1). As with the parent-reported conflict, mothers ($B = -.17$) and fathers ($B = -.22$) who were comfortable providing a secure base had adolescents who reported less negative, conflictual communication. In contrast, no significant relationships were found between the AAD scale and ad-

Table 1 Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analyses in Validity Study 1: Relating PASAS Scale Scores to Measures of Parent–Child Conflict from the CBQ

| Dependent Measure | Model <i>R</i> ² | Model <i>F</i> | AAD ^a | | CSBR ^b | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| | | | <i>sr</i> ² | <i>B</i> | <i>sr</i> ² | <i>B</i> |
| Mother report | | | | | | |
| Conflict with adolescent (127) | .17*** | 12.29 | .07** | .15 | .13*** | –.29 |
| Father report | | | | | | |
| Conflict with adolescent (104) | .14*** | 8.47 | .11*** | .16 | .07** | –.20 |
| Adolescent report | | | | | | |
| Conflict with mother (127) | .07* | 4.63 | .03 | .08 | .06** | –.17 |
| Conflict with father (104) | .10** | 5.62 | .03 | .07 | .09** | –.22 |

Note: Number of participants presented in parentheses.

^a Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing.

^b Comfort with Secure Base Role.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

olescent reports of negative communication patterns with mothers or fathers.

Validity Study 2: Separation Anxiety and Attachment Relationships

Parental reports. Parents' separation anxiety concerning their adolescents was found to contribute significantly to mothers' and fathers' reports of comfort with closeness (or intimacy), comfort with depending on others, and anxiety surrounding abandonment

and rejection (see the first two sections of Table 2). Examination of the regression analyses using attachment scores revealed that mothers who experienced greater AAD also reported less comfort with closeness ($B = -.11$) and less comfort depending on others ($B = -.23$). Fathers responding with higher scores on the AAD also were less comfortable depending on others ($B = -.14$) and were more anxious about relationship abandonment and rejection ($B = .18$). Although no significant relationships were obtained between CSBR and the AAS subscales for mothers'

Table 2 Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analyses in Validity Study 2: Relating PASAS Scale Scores to Measures of Parent–Child Attachment

| Dependent Measure | Model <i>R</i> ² | Model <i>F</i> | AAD ^a | | CSBR ^b | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|
| | | | <i>sr</i> ² | <i>B</i> | <i>sr</i> ² | <i>B</i> |
| Mother report | | | | | | |
| AAS comfort with closeness (85) | .09* | 3.85 | .06* | –.11 | .03 | .11 |
| AAS comfort with dependency (85) | .22*** | 11.53 | .20*** | –.23 | .03 | .12 |
| AAS anxiety about rejection (85) | .07 | 3.07 | .05 | .13 | .02 | –.11 |
| Father report | | | | | | |
| AAS comfort with closeness (74) | .12** | 4.90 | .01 | –.05 | .12** | .28 |
| AAS comfort with dependency (74) | .08* | 3.19 | .08* | –.14 | .00 | .05 |
| AAS anxiety about rejection (74) | .24*** | 10.96 | .13*** | .18 | .15*** | –.30 |
| Adolescent report | | | | | | |
| IPPA | | | | | | |
| Quality of attachment with mother (66) | .23*** | 9.66 | .15*** | –.67 | .10*** | .78 |
| Quality of attachment with father (54) | .24*** | 8.00 | .14*** | –.52 | .20*** | 1.06 |
| FAST (facsimile) | | | | | | |
| Cohesion with mother (66) | .27*** | 11.83 | .12** | –.07 | .17*** | .11 |
| Cohesion with father (54) | .05 | 1.21 | .02 | –.02 | .04 | .05 |

Note: Number of participants presented in parentheses.

^a Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing.

^b Comfort with Secure Base Role.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

reports, fathers who were more comfortable with providing their adolescents with a secure base were more comfortable with intimacy ($B = .28$) and less anxious about abandonment or rejection ($B = -.30$).

Adolescent reports. Regression analyses also revealed that parental separation anxiety significantly contributed to adolescent reports of attachment quality with mothers and fathers and to cohesion with mothers, as shown in the bottom section of Table 2. Inspection of the squared semipartial correlations and regression coefficients revealed that higher levels of parental anxiety about adolescent distancing led to lower levels of adolescent-reported quality of attachment for both mothers ($B = -.67$) and fathers ($B = -.52$); conversely, the lower the level of parental anxiety about distancing, the higher the adolescent-reported quality of attachment to the parent. Not surprisingly, high levels of comfort with providing a secure base were associated with higher quality of adolescent-reported attachment to the parent for both mothers ($B = .78$) and fathers ($B = 1.06$).

Turning to adolescent-reported cohesion with parents, mothers with higher levels of anxiety about distancing had adolescents who reported lower levels of cohesion with the mother ($B = -.07$), whereas maternal comfort with providing a secure base was positively related to adolescent-reported cohesion ($B = .11$). Father reports on the AAD and CSBR scales were unrelated to adolescent-reported cohesion with the father.

Validity Study 3: Separation Anxiety and Family Differentiation

Parental reports. Findings showed that parents' feelings about separating from their adolescents sig-

nificantly contributed to mothers' and fathers' perceptions of differentiation in their relationships with their adolescents, as shown in the top two sections of Table 3. Examination of the unique contribution of each PASAS subscale revealed that higher levels of anxiety about adolescent distancing led to lower levels of parent-reported differentiation from the adolescent for both mothers ($B = -.17$) and fathers ($B = -.15$); this inverse relation also means that lower levels of AAD led to higher levels of differentiation from the adolescent. As expected, parents who were more comfortable with their role providing a secure base reported higher levels of differentiation from the adolescent ($B = .33$ for mothers, and $B = .35$ for fathers).

Adolescent reports. The influences of parental separation anxiety on differentiation between parent and child were largely replicated by using adolescent reports of differentiation, as shown in the bottom section of Table 3. Higher levels of parental anxiety about adolescent distancing were associated with lower adolescent-reported differentiation from both mothers ($B = -.18$) and fathers ($B = -.14$). Similarly, parents who were more comfortable with their role providing a secure base had adolescents who reported higher levels of differentiation from the parent ($B = .20$ for mothers, and $B = .11$ for fathers), although the coefficient for fathers failed to reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

DISCUSSION

First, considering the psychometric strength of the PASAS, findings supported the belief that separation-related concerns of parents of adolescents can be operationalized and empirically addressed. Two aspects

Table 3 Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analyses in Validity Study 3: Relating PASAS Scale Scores to Measures of Parent–Child Differentiation from the DIFS

| Dependent Measure | Model R^2 | Model F | AAD ^a | | CSBR ^b | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|------|-------------------|-----|
| | | | sr^2 | B | sr^2 | B |
| Mother report | | | | | | |
| Differentiation from adolescent (168) | .17*** | 16.99 | .08*** | -.17 | .13*** | .33 |
| Father report | | | | | | |
| Differentiation from adolescent (120) | .19*** | 15.29 | .08*** | -.15 | .15*** | .35 |
| Adolescent report | | | | | | |
| Differentiation from mother (144) | .11*** | 8.81 | .09*** | -.18 | .05** | .20 |
| Differentiation from father (115) | .06** | 3.44 | .05** | -.14 | .01 | .11 |

Note: Number of participants presented in parentheses.

^a Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing.

^b Comfort with Secure Base Role.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

of parents' separation concerns emerged: (1) Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing (AAD) and (2) Comfort with Secure Base Role (CSBR). Each feature was linked to parent-adolescent conflict, attachment representation, and family differentiation in a manner consistent with theoretical predictions.

The AAD dimension reflects parents' anxiety about adolescent distancing, which may be a function of the adolescent's increasing self-reliance and affiliation with peers or other adults. This dimension can be interpreted such that high scores suggest both a reluctance to relinquish control and denial of young persons' autonomy needs and self-functioning. Perhaps parents who score high are unaware of or deny that distancing is normal and appropriate for their children; alternatively, these parents may "personalize" their adolescents' movement to extrafamilial relationships: that is, they may view such movement as rejection. The tension associated with "losing the child to others" could reflect jealousy and possessiveness. These parents may respond to separation in ways that inhibit their adolescents' age-appropriate autonomous behavior and self-definition. The literature on parenthood has not systematically addressed this negative parental characteristic that may be associated with dysfunction in children. Future investigations must more fully document the incidence of this attribute, its relationship to other parental attributes, and its relevance to the child's independence. In contrast, parents having lower scores on AAD express less tension with adolescents' increasing autonomy; they seem to understand the appropriateness of their adolescents' independence and increased affiliation with others, perhaps overcoming unhealthy tendencies toward jealousy by calling on cognitive interpretations.

The trend analysis shifts our attention to normative matters and suggests that parents' average level of anxiety about adolescent distancing may not significantly decrease until after adolescents move out of the home. The parents of college seniors reported significantly lower scores on this attribute than did the parents of younger adolescents; even parents of college freshmen reported relatively high levels of anxiety about adolescent distancing. Future studies might compare other noncollegiate populations of the same age with college populations. Importantly, these findings from a predominantly middle-class population may differ from other groups defined by distinctive cultural and ethnic identities. As well, populations drawn from urban, inner-city areas may experience harsh, dangerous conditions that would systematically affect some parental concerns in a way that would lead to much higher levels of parental anxiety

on this dimension even if the adolescent lives at home. Further research should find it rewarding to use PASAS data to examine parental concerns about separation associated with these differing living environments.

CSBR, the second dimension of the PASAS, reflects parents' commitment to being psychologically and physically accessible to adolescents who are growing more independent and preparing to leave home. Theory would suggest that many parents can and do function in a supportive role, providing unconditional support and guidance to teenagers. High scores on this dimension reflect healthy emotional functioning, even though some anxiety or expressions of sadness are reported. In other words, parents' expression of feelings that reflect missing a child who will grow more independent and leave home is most certainly appropriate. Items included on this scale tap this important dimension.

Recognizing that parents may gear their provision of support to adolescents' need of it is also important. Bowlby (1969) discussed the notion of the goal-corrected partnership, which suggests that mature individuals have the capacity to gear the timing and intensity of their response to their partner's current disposition. Similarly, as the adolescent child moves into young adulthood, parents' provision of secure base behaviors suited to the needs of younger teenagers may decline. Consistent with this expectation, findings reveal a significant decline on this dimension as the children grow older.

This line of thinking about one partner in a dyad gearing responses to the needs of the other also assists our understanding of individual differences in parental separation anxiety. Studies of separation anxiety in mothers of infants show that infant characteristics seem to influence levels of separation anxiety. Temperamentally difficult infants (McBride & Belsky, 1988), infants with colic (Humphry & Hock, 1989) and infants who have experienced health problems (Hock & Lutz, 1998) have mothers who have higher levels of separation anxiety (assessed by the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale, Subscale 1) than mothers of infants without these problems. Further research is needed to determine, in parents of adolescents, the types of child problems or characteristics that influence parental separation anxiety. In these cases, the direction of influence seems to be from child to parent; however, the patterns of influence associated with parental separation anxiety are complex. Future studies may use models showing transactional effects where the level of functioning of the child colors the parents' feelings and, in turn, the parents' responses influence the child (Marvin & Stewart, 1990).

To summarize the validity studies in this investigation, findings supported the important link between expressions of concern about separation and attachment; results confirmed the belief that response to separation is rooted in the mental representations of attachment relationships (Bloom-Feshbach & Bloom-Feshbach, 1987; Bowlby, 1973). Data from the PASAS and the AAS revealed expected relationships between healthy attachment reports and less anxiety about adolescent distancing; for fathers, comfort with closeness in attachment relationships also was related to positive feelings about the secure base role. Parents who express healthy feelings about attachment relationships have the capacity to respond to separation from their adolescents in a constructive manner. In contrast, parents characterized by anxiety or a lack of comfort in close relationships are less capable of responding constructively to separation and may even be threatened or feel rejected by the teenagers' interests in interacting with and depending on others.

Complementing the parental attachment findings, adolescents' reports of attachment to mother and father were related in expected directions to both PASAS scales. Higher parental scores on AAD were associated with lower adolescent attachment scores to both mother and father. Similarly, higher scores on CSBR related to teens' healthier reported attachment to mother and father. Thus, if parents can serve as a secure base, adolescents' feelings of connectedness are maintained, which consequently allows adolescents to explore their widening worlds and gain autonomy. This finding is in agreement with Kobak's thinking on the relationship between parental attachment representations and increased adolescent autonomy (Kobak et al., 1993; Kobak, Sudler, & Gamble, 1991). For example, Kobak et al. (1991, p. 463) stated that "Under secure circumstances, teens can successfully assert their autonomy while maintaining a sense of cooperation and partnership with parents."

Findings also revealed that PASAS scores were meaningfully related to levels of conflict and differentiation as reported by adolescents and their parents. Perceptions of negative communication patterns, using the CBQ, were examined from mothers', fathers', and adolescents' perspectives. Findings showed that higher scores on the AAD dimension were related to higher levels of negative communication between parents and adolescents as reported by the parent. Parents who experience more anxiety about adolescent distancing may be experiencing more conflict or may be more inclined to perceive adolescent autonomy gestures as contentious or challenging, thereby reporting greater conflict in communication. Another interpretation would suggest that in families in which

the parents' anxiety about distancing is associated with overprotection or over-involvement, adolescents may increase the intensity and frequency of conflict to feel and be viewed as independent.

The CSBR scores showed an inverse relationship with the CBQ scores for parents and adolescents. Parents who are comfortable in their secure base role may be less upset by their adolescents' attempts at gaining autonomy; if parents consider disagreement on issues to reflect normal growth toward autonomy, disagreements should less likely result in conflict. As Rice (1990) and Hauser et al. (1984) suggest, these parents are able to encourage exploration and ego autonomy. Such parents could provide what Cooper et al. (1983) called an "affective context of compromise and support." As a result, these parents are able to enter into negotiable interchanges, or problem solving, with adolescents before altercations escalate.

Parent-adolescent differentiation was also related to parental separation anxiety. Although most current research on differentiation stems from family systems theory, the concept is highly compatible with the authors' view of separation and attachment theory. In the introduction to his book, *Separating Parents and Adolescents*, Stierlin (1974) cogently addressed the same process of differentiation from a different perspective, that of a traditional psychoanalytic approach. He stated (p. xii), "On all levels, the separation process is shaped by the interaction of centripetal and centrifugal forces which reveal a relational dialectic." His description of these "forces" makes clear that he is speaking about family members distancing from "suffocating closeness" (centripetal) to interpersonal disconnection (centrifugal). Stierlin (p. xii) goes on to point out that these forces shape child-parent interactions, and when they are "out of phase . . . , mutual individuation and separation between parent and child will suffer." Pistole (1994) also addressed differentiation and attachment by arguing that attachment styles can create different distance-regulating patterns within relationships. Results of this study showed that higher levels of self-other differentiation reported by mothers and fathers is positively related to higher parental CSBR. Perhaps parents who are comfortable with the secure base role are able to regulate distance in relationships that allows for both a sense of separateness and connectedness, and such parents likewise are comfortable with others' approaches for more intimacy and needs for individuality.

Also consistent with this interpretation are results revealing that low self-other differentiation between parents and adolescents was related to high levels of AAD. These findings closely reflect the thinking of Cooper et al. (1983) about "individuated relation-

ships." Cooper et al. (p. 56) wrote that an adolescent's leaving process is "... facilitated by individuated family relationships, characterized by separateness, which gives the adolescent permission to develop his or her own point of view, in the context of connectedness, which provides a secure base from which the adolescent can explore worlds outside the family." Findings of the current study demonstrate that the features of parental separation anxiety assessed by the PASAS are related to teenagers' successful transition to young adulthood. Future work with the PASAS should include longitudinal studies that can further document the relationship of the two subscales to adolescent adjustment and the quality of parents' continuing relationships with their adult children.

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APPENDIX

PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS SEPARATION ANXIETY SCALE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS

The following statements represent matters of interest and concern to parents. Not all people feel the same way about them. Answer the statements as you are feeling now or think you will feel in the near future as your child grows older. Read each statement carefully and circle the number below the item which most closely reflects YOUR degree of agreement or disagreement. Try to answer all statements without skipping items or looking back. Answer all the items without discussing any of them with anyone.

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. I am happy when my teenager relies on me for advice about decisions.
2. It will be a sense of relief for me when my teenager moves out of the house permanently.

3. It hurts my feelings when my teenager takes his/her problems to a good friend instead of to me.
4. I like knowing that my teenager will come to me when he/she feels upset.
5. I can't wait for my teenager to leave home for good.
6. I feel most content when I know my child is sleeping under my roof.
7. I feel sad because my teenager doesn't share as much as he/she used to with me.
8. If (When) my teenager goes away to college, I will feel depressed if he/she begins to like school better than home.
9. My teenager is a source of comfort for me when I'm upset.
10. I am relieved to know that the time will come soon when my teenager won't need me any more.
11. It doesn't bother me if my teenager keeps some secrets about himself/herself from me.
12. I feel sad when I think that my teenager does not seem to enjoy being with me as much anymore.
13. I get upset when my teenager takes the advice of another adult more seriously than my advice.
14. I will miss seeing my teenager's belongings around the house after he/she leaves home.
15. Even though it's in the future, I dread the time when my teenager gets married.
16. I really miss holding my teenager like I did when he/she was younger.
17. I feel resentful when my child goes to his/her room instead of spending time with me.
18. I dread thinking about what my life will be like after my teenager leaves home permanently.
19. I am naturally better at keeping my teenager safe than any other person.
20. I feel relieved that my child is a teenager because I don't have to be as concerned about him/her as I used to.
21. I believe that my teenager misses me when he/she is away from me for awhile.
22. I sometimes feel left out because my son/daughter has such close relationships with friends.
23. It makes me feel especially good if my teenager greets me with a hug.
24. I feel sad when I realize my teenager no longer likes to do the things that we used to enjoy doing together.
25. I feel good knowing that my teenager feels that he/she can call on me.
26. I feel very hurt if my teenager pulls away from me when I try to give him/her a hug.
27. Life will be so much better when my teenager leaves home for good.
28. I don't enjoy myself when I'm away from my teenager.
29. I feel uneasy about my teenager going to college because he/she won't need me as much anymore.
30. I would feel hurt if my teenager didn't come to me for comfort.
31. I feel empty inside when I think about my child leaving home for good.
32. I worry that my teenager won't be completely comfortable in an unfamiliar setting if I am not with him/her.

33. When my teenager returns after being away, I feel like giving him/her a big hug.
34. I would feel left out if my teenager asked for advice from another adult such as a teacher, coach, or a parent of a friend.
35. I resent my teenager's need for my help.

Scoring the Parents of Adolescents Separation Anxiety Scale

1. Reverse the following 7 items so that 1 = 5; 5 = 1; 2 = 4; 4 = 2; (3 = 3): 2, 5, 10, 11, 20, 27, 35.
2. Add the following 21 items to get Anxiety about Adolescent Distancing: 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34.
3. Add the following 14 items to get Comfort with Secure Base Role: 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 33, 35.

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