



“FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN”

By Ella Flemister, MMFT

Often times when couples cannot resolve problems they face in marriage, divorce is the course of action they feel is the best solution. However, when children are involved, careful consideration should be given to the impact such a decision can have on their lives. The effects of divorce are complex, and family dynamics such as the age and sex of the children will play an important role in their psychological functioning. Research has revealed that boys and girls react differently to divorce; boys are more likely than girls to react negatively.

There are circumstances under which divorce is warranted, but steps need to be taken to minimize the negative effects the children will experience. The decision to call it quits should be approached with extreme caution. If parents decide not to divorce, they should commit to providing an environment that is beneficial to the psychological well-being of their children.

For couples who view marriage as a lifelong commitment (whether they have children or not), no stone should be left unturned in an effort to save the marriage. However, staying together only for the sake of the children can be detrimental for all involved. Marriage and family therapy is an excellent resource and can help couples with their struggles as they maneuver through this difficult time.