Boundary Ambiguity Scale #5: For Divorced Adults

The following statements are about the changes in your family since your divorce. Using the scale provided as your guideline, choose the number that best shows how you feel and place it in the blank to the left of each item. There are no right or wrong answers.

Use the following scale as a guide in answering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEVER</th>
<th>RARELY</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>OFTEN</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I still consider myself a wife/husband to my former spouse.
2. Calling myself a divorced person feels comfortable to me now.
3. I feel upset when I imagine my former spouse with another man/woman.
4. I find myself wondering about where my former spouse is and what s/he is doing.
5. I feel that in some sense I will always be attached to my former spouse.
6. I still get my former spouse’s advice about important personal decisions (e.g., health, career).
7. I continue to keep alive my hope that I will be reunited with my former spouse.
8. I continue to hope that my relationship with my former spouse will improve.
9. I feel competent performing the household or outside tasks that my former spouse used to do.
10. I feel guilty about dating (or wanting to date).
11. I feel that I have completely recovered from my divorce.
12. I still consider some members of my former spouse’s family to be part of my family.
13. I feel incapable of establishing meaningful relationships with another man/woman.
14. I find myself asking my former spouse for advice about the areas s/he used to handle.
15. I often wonder what my former spouse’s opinion or comment would be on events that happen or things I see during the day.
16. My former spouse and I discuss our new relationships with each other.

If you do not have children, stop here. If you do have children, answer the following items.

17. My children and I are able to talk about my former spouse without becoming emotionally upset.
18. I worry that my children feel caught in the middle between me and my former spouse.
19. My former spouse and I agree on how to share the responsibilities of parenting.
20. My children are aware of the facts and are reconciled to the divorce.
21. My former spouse and I have difficulty discussing financial matters involving the children.
22. It feels like a complete family when the children and I are together without my former spouse.

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Scoring

To calculate the total score for this scale:

1. Reverse and recode items 2, 9, 11, 17, 19, 20, and 22 accordingly:
   • (1=5)
   • (2=4)
   • (3=3)
   • (4=2)
   • (5=1)

2. After recoding, total boundary ambiguity score is the sum of all individual items.

An individual’s boundary ambiguity score is simply the summation of responses across items, after numerical answers to particular items have been reversed.

To partially avoid problems with people tending to respond in a certain way (response set), some items are worded so that a numerically greater answer indicates higher psychological presence or boundary ambiguity while other statements are worded so that higher numerical answers represent lower amounts of boundary ambiguity. Responses to these latter items must be reversed and recoded before summing across items to obtain a total score. For example, an answer of “5” would change to “1.”

Interpretation

The higher the score, the more that respondent perceives his or her family boundary as ambiguous. At this time, information is being gathered concerning the interpretation of boundary ambiguity scores across varied populations. Norms must be established for each population studied. Currently, the best interpretation of scores is to examine within-sample comparisons, using central tendencies and measures of variation as well as correlations with other variables.

Given that boundary ambiguity is theorized as a perceptual variable, one that varies within cultural, community, and familial contexts, the authors of this publication are eager for more empirical findings from studies with many populations, including those experiencing different types of loss, and those with various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The best guide to understanding and interpreting boundary ambiguity scores and to applying the construct in clinical/intervention settings is an integration of data from studies of varied populations, including those experiencing ambiguous and clear-cut losses. This publication is a beginning toward that end.