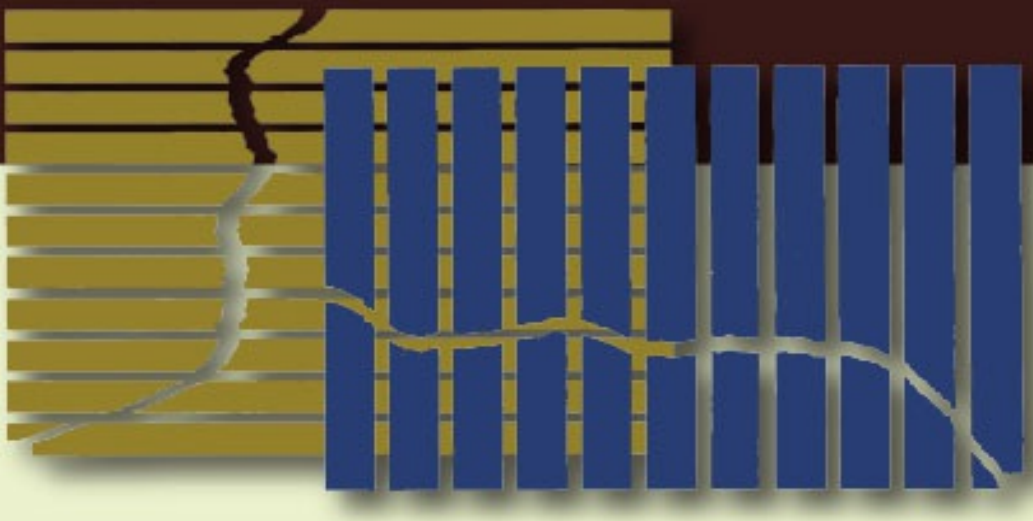
Women and Men Together But Equal

Issues for Men in Dual-Career Marriages



Lucia Albino Gilbert

Women and Men Together But Equal:

Issues for Men in Dual-Career Marriages

Lucia Albino Gilbert

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *Handbook of Counseling and Psychotherapy with Men* by Murray Scher, Mark Stevens, Glenn Good, Gregg A. Eichenfield

Table of Contents

Women and Men Together But Equal: Issues for Men in Dual-Career Marriages

Lucia Albino Gilbert

> While the anger of women may be a necessary stimulus to any sex-role change in our society, our work with the male side of the universe will be more successful if it proceeds out of understanding of the issues, and if it includes a measure of compassion. (Napier, 1986, p. 1)

Men's and women's lives are inextricably linked. As the introductory quote from Napier indicates, recent changes in women's roles and self-perceptions have had and continue to have enormous impact on men. Nonetheless, aspects of both the male and female experience may make the dual-career family pattern difficult even for the well-meaning man and woman. Despite the large percentage of married couples in which both spouses are employed, the dual-career family pattern, as defined here, is far from normative (see Gilbert & Rachlin, in press, for a discussion of how the dual-career family differs from the broader category of dual-earner family, which is normative). A marital life in which a wife and husband are together in a personal, intimate, and economic sense *and* also equal in terms of aspirations, life choices, and personal worth is inconsistent with traditional concepts of marriage and often is difficult to accept cognitively and embrace emotionally. This chapter focuses on traditional and emergent views of masculinity and the male role that directly pertain to the dual-career family pattern. Key issues inherent in the psychosocial development of men are described first. Sources of stress in dual-career marriages and factors that promote effective coping and well-being are then addressed. Finally, recommendations are made for counseling and psychotherapeutic interventions.

The Male Partner in a Changing Society

Men are taught that they must achieve occupationally. In order to attain power, prestige, money, and other indices of achievement, many men readily sacrifice emotional expressiveness, intimacy, and interrelatedness. Because manliness, or one's sense of self as a man, is also tied to the "good provider role" (Bernard, 1981), men often become controlled by their occupational obligations and the economic structure. To be a real man, and a successful man, the male must be an effective breadwinner, whatever the physical and emotional costs involved. Finally, successful men are independent and do what is

necessary to make their way in the world.

Such traditional socialization profoundly affects men's behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses. In this section, the influence of male socialization in three areas—entitlement, dependency, and nurturance—is discussed.

ENTITLEMENT

I've heard complaints from many single women that they can't trust any man's willingness to promote their careers" (Mott, 1985, p. 58). Many men who advocate equality as an ideal in reality view a woman's career as secondary, and the emotional support they provide to their spouse and their level of involvement in family work reflect this view. Male prerogative demands that what men do or want to do should take precedence; and for many men, a successful husband should not have to do housework. Needless to say, being a supportive husband or involved father is difficult when so doing is experienced as infringing on a husband's needs to maintain his own dominance or as interfering with his own ambition. One man in a dual-career marriage described his struggle to live with his ambition and stay in his dual-career marriage as follows: "When I hold my daughter or brush out her hair or tell her stories, I am frightened by the side of me that wants to push ahead at her expense. At the same time, I feel that by taking on more of Roberta's [his wife] load I am losing ground in my career; it's like swimming with rocks in my pockets"(Wright, 1985, p. 166).

Feelings of entitlement may also engender feelings of competition between the spouses (Rice, 1979), which may have positive or negative effects for the marital relationship. On the other hand, an ambitious spouse can enhance a man's own ambition and encourage him to move into new and creative directions. He may be unable to get excited about his spouse's career success, however, when he views his advances and salary as lagging behind. Such a situation may cause embarrassment for the man and perhaps his spouse as well. Because men and women are socialized in the same social context, and therefore acquire many of the same views of gender-related status, both spouses may see husbands who are less successful than wives as unworthy (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).

Another important aspect of male entitlement—one that can cause particular stress for men in dual-

career marriages—is described by Blumenthal (1985):

> As men, we have been like America itself—and still often are. Accustomed to immediate respect, attention, deference, flirtation when we walk into a room full of women (or by analogy, into a foreign country), it still comes, I think, as a shock to many of us that we are, in some measure, no big deal—in fact, are at times perceived as the enemy, (p. 74)

Women in dual-career marriages do not "need" men the way that men were traditionally brought up to believe they did. Women who can support themselves, and want to, can afford to have expectations for their marriage beyond financial security, and because they are more self-sufficient and have the social sanctions for being so, they can leave if these expectations are not met. And if, indeed, these women "need" men, it is as partners, not protectors; as someone to look across at, not up to.

DEPENDENCY

Gilbert (in press) argues that the struggle to achieve a healthy balance between passive dependent longings and active autonomous strivings is a lifelong developmental task for both genders but that traditional patriarchal views have hidden male dependency needs behind a cloak of power and dominance over women. Men's dependency on women is manifested as a need for power over women rather than a need for connectedness between equals.

The hidden nature of male dependency has been recognized by several other writers. Baumrind (1980), for example, believes that boys are bribed by promises of power and dominance to relinquish aspects of their dependency strivings prematurely and thus may depend more than they realize on unconditional acceptance and nurturance from a woman to sustain their pseudo-independent stance. Similarly, Pogrebin (1983) points out, "Contrary to the popular belief that women have the greater dependency needs, men's [noneconomic] dependency needs are far more insatiable Sex specialization in caring atrophies men's capacity to give comfort" (p. 197).

NURTURANCE

Men's difficulty in recognizing their dependency can cause immense problems in dual-career marriages because a sine qua non for the maintenance of such a marriage is spouse support (Rapoport &

Rapoport, 1982). Spouse support not only involves valuing a spouse's abilities and ambitions, it also involves emotional support, empathic listening, and the ability to nurture. It requires putting aside one's own needs to be nurtured and emotionally sustained and doing so for another. It requires drawing out the emotions and feelings of the other person, something men have typically depended on women to do for them (Pleck, 1981).

Indeed, one of the most typical motivations of men who choose the dual-career lifestyle is the desire to nurture—particularly their children (Gilbert, 1985). Close emotional relationships have increasingly become a core part of these individuals' sense of self as a man. A value shift seems to be occurring in our culture toward greater involvement of men in parenting (although many men do not participate in housework to the degree that women do; Pleck, 1985). Gilbert (1985) reports that in her sample of men in dual-career families, 14% were judged by raters to be more involved than the wife in parenting, 32% as involved, and 54% less involved.

In summary, when we look at "women and men together but equal" from the male perspective, we see that for men the attainment of more egalitarian roles by women generally involves more than sharing status and power with women. Because male power over women is central to extant views of masculinity and because wives traditionally sustained husbands' personal and work life, men in dual-career families also need to revise their sense of self. This is not a one-time task, and it is not easily accomplished. All the same, as we shall see later, some men are actively engaged in this process of change and they do find it personally rewarding.

Stress and Coping

It would be inaccurate to depict the dual-career family lifestyle as one replete with stress. Clearly, the choice to pursue a nontraditional lifestyle for which there are few societal supports and little precedence suggests that substantial benefits are possible for the individuals involved. The benefits for the female spouse are readily identified and include the opportunity to develop professionally and to establish a sense of self separate from a man and children, economic independence, greater intellectual companionship and contentment, and higher self-esteem (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Gilbert, 1985; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, 1976).

The benefits of dual-career marriage for men, at this point, are less dramatic and perhaps less evident than those for women; men have experienced fewer constraints from their traditional roles and have not asked for change. As was mentioned earlier, men's involvement in careers was historically associated with what Bernard (1981) calls the "good provider role." The successful man provided well economically for his dependent wife and children but had little involvement in the home. Thus the foremost potential benefits of dual-career marriage for the male spouse are freedom from the mantle of total economic responsibility and family dependency and opportunities to involve himself in parenting and to express his inherent needs to nurture and bond. As was also noted earlier, men are raised to deny their normal dependency needs behind sex-typed needs for power and dominance; their dependency often gets projected onto women and children. A less direct benefit is learning to accept women as peers in work settings and recognizing women's abilities in the public sector.

Children in dual-career families benefit by having greater contact and involvement with both parents, being exposed to less sex-role stereotypic behavior in the home, and developing a greater sense of independence and competence by sharing responsibilities so that family life is successfully maintained (Russell, 1982; St. John-Parsons, 1978; Stephan & Corder, 1985). Adolescent and young adult children raised in dual-career families surveyed by Knaub (1986) viewed this lifestyle positively and rated their families high in family strength, especially in the areas of concern and support. The three most mentioned benefits of growing up in a dual-career family were having positive role models, financial security, and the opportunity to develop independence; time constraints was the most-mentioned problem. The comment of a 24-year-old male in the sample seems particularly apropos to this topic. He felt that the main advantage to him was "seeing my mother, and therefore, other women as my equal" (p. 435).

SOURCES OF STRESS

Whether, When, and How to Parent

> Mary and Mike have been married for five years. Both are in their early thirties and have demanding jobs that require long hours. They are feeling pressure to come to a decision about having a child.

The traditional family structure is a reflection, or outgrowth, of an ideology that places the primary

responsibility for direct care of children on women. Parenting is equated with mothering. Thus when dual-career couples consider whether to have children, they also face the additional question of who will care for them. The recent focus on men's capacity to nurture and care for young children (Lamb, 1982, 1986; Pleck, 1985) is a departure from the earlier focus on the potential negative effects of working mothers on children (Hoffman, 1979). Even with changing societal trends, however, this ideology dies hard. Traditional sex-role ideology places the responsibility for child care with the wife, and in practice this typically is still the case even among dual-career families. Moreover, given current employment benefits and policies, women are better able than men to ask for and receive the accommodations necessary for combining work and family (e.g., maternity leaves, flexible schedules). As Schroeder (1985) notes, "If the father would want to take off [to stay home with the newborn infant], if he even mentions it, it's like he has lace on his jockey shorts. You don't do that in America" (p. 16).

Perhaps most crucial to stress in this area is the importance of a child, and a close emotional relationship with a child, to each spouse's self-concept and life goals. For example, should this importance differ markedly between the spouses the stress associated with a decision to remain childless, or to have a first or second child, could be considerable, depending on which spouse wanted a child more and the type of role accommodations characteristic of the marital relationship. Still, today it is easier for the male spouse to admit a low desire to be involved in child rearing and then actually to remain relatively uninvolved than it is for the female spouse. Thus the decision to have a child would be made all the more stressful when one spouse feels she (or he) will have to do all the accommodating. For men, the psychological cost involved in deciding to have a child may be reduced by limiting the number of children to one or two (contrary to popular beliefs, only children fare well in life emotionally and intellectually; Falbo, 1984), by a strong commitment on his part to be involved in parenting, and by redefining traditional ideas of how a child should be reared.

Finally, for many parents, identifying quality day care is a particularly stressful task; although some corporations and communities provide some assistance in this area, the identification of suitable day care is by and large left to the individual family. In the vast majority of dual-career families some outside help is necessary to supplement the parents' care of children. The type of child care generally used depends on the age of the child. Most parents prefer group care for children older than three years, but they show no clear preference for individual or small-group care for children under three years of age (Kamerman,

1980).

Combining Occupational and Family Roles

> John is willing to help out when he can with his son and the housework, but his career is not nine to five. He feels that he is the one with the more demanding and financially rewarding career and that the effort he puts into his career entitles him to be freed from some household and family responsibilities.

How to combine occupational and family roles is a source of stress for both women and men in dual-career families. Neither gender has role models for doing so, and neither gets much encouragement or assistance from their professional world to do so. Typically, the family is expected to accommodate to the demands of one's profession. As Pleck (1983) notes, some conflicts between work and family are intrinsic and present choices that individuals and society must face.

In principle, couples representative of the egalitarian model have dual-career marriages in which both spouses have major commitments to a full-time professional career. Numerous studies (for example, Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976), however, indicate that many dual-career marriages are far from egalitarian. In an in-depth study of men in dual-career families, Gilbert (1985) found three marital types, which she labeled *traditional, participant,* and *role-sharing.* In a traditional dual-career family, the responsibility for family work is retained by the woman, who adds the career role to her traditionally held family role. In the participant type, the parenting is shared by the spouses, but the woman retains responsibility for household duties. In this situation, male dominance is muted and gender-based role specialization is less extensive. In role-sharing dual-career families, both spouses are actively involved in both household duties and parenting. This type of marriage, which is best understood as an ideal that some dual-career couples are striving for, rather than as a common pattern, is most successful in eliminating gender-based role specialization and power associated with male dominance, as evidenced by such indicators as spouses' salaries, sources of spouse support, and involvement in family work.

Factors influencing the type of marital role pattern adopted in dual-career families can be divided into three major categories—personal factors, relational factors, and environmental factors. Personal factors include personality characteristics, attitudes, values, interests, and abilities. Examples of relational factors are sources of power in the relationship (e.g., expert or coercive power) and tasks that need to be done to maintain the family system. Finally, environmental factors refer to the structure of

occupations, societal norms and attitudes, and social networks and support systems. Satisfaction with the particular pattern adopted depends on these same factors, as well as on the degree of congruence and mutuality between spouses. Particular attention is given to these factors in the section on coping that follows.

Occupational Mobility and Job Placement

> Lisa returned to school to increase her career opportunities and Larry, her spouse, very much supported this decision. Lisa has now completed her degree and recently received an attractive job offer in a desirable area. The employment opportunities for Larry, however, are relatively unknown and would need to be worked out after relocation.

Job placement and occupational mobility may very well be the most difficult issue for members of dual-career families and one for which there is no ready or easy solution. Finding two equally attractive job offers within reasonable geographic proximity in a desired locale is no small feat and indeed may prove to be impossible. Although couples may wish to give equal weight to the interests of both partners in reaching decisions about new jobs or relocations, various factors often make a strictly egalitarian decision impossible (Wallston, Foster, & Berger, 1978). Husband-oriented career choices are still predominant, however (Bird & Bird, 1985; Gilbert, 1985).

Men's own sense of entitlement may come to the fore when decisions about relocation must be made. As one man remarked in a recent article, "Then it struck me where my fears came from. The man in the family—me—was putting his career at the mercy of his wife's. In the starkest psychological terms, I was following her and abdicating my traditional male role" (Mott, 1985, p. 58).

COPING

A satisfying, fulfilling dual-career marriage depends on the spouses' willingness to struggle with the difficulties of integrating work and family roles and of developing a sense of self, despite societal pressure to conform to gender-typed roles and behaviors. What are the resources needed to effectively weather difficulties, dilemmas, and stresses intrinsic to the dual-career lifestyle? Three conceptual categories particularly useful for understanding stress and coping in dual-career families are personal resources, family resources, and societal resources (Gilbert, 1985).

Personal Resources

Most salient among the personal resources for dealing with stressors are material or financial assets, education, physical health, and sociopsychological characteristics. Among dual-career families, however, the latter resource is most likely to influence coping. Sociopsychological resources include one's personality attributes, characteristic ways of coping, and personal beliefs and attitudes.

Men in dual-career families typically report relatively high self-esteem, personal styles that reflect expressive (e.g., warmth) and instrumental (e.g., achievement-oriented) traits, and relatively liberal or pro-feminist views (i.e., belief in the social, political, and economic equality of women and men). Generally speaking, they are supportive of the women's career efforts and have the capacity to value strengths in their wives.

Family Resources

Two characteristics are central to the successful maintenance of a dual-career family lifestyle: (1) mutual spouse support and shared values and (2) coping strategies that reflect redefinition, compromise, and commitment. Because the dual-career family challenges traditional assumptions about family roles and functioning, spouse support is crucial to effective coping—particularly support by the male spouse. (Women are socialized to support men's occupational roles, whereas the reverse is not the case.) Numerous studies report that having a supportive husband is a key factor in successful dual-career marriages (e.g., Rapoport & Rapoport, 1982). Ideally, such support includes positive attitudes toward the woman's career as well as a willingness by the man to involve himself in household and parenting responsibilities.

Spouses in a dual-career marriage typically must struggle with their own sex-role socialization. For example, men committed to role sharing may find it embarrassing to "be caught" vacuuming or doing the laundry or to admit that their wives earn more of the family income than they do; their spouses, in contrast, may well feel reluctant to put their career needs ahead of the husband's or to waken husbands for 2 a.m. feedings. Functioning as a dual-career couple may at times also require behaving in ways that counter societal expectations and risk peer disapproval. A man who "follows his wife," for example, is likely to find that professional colleagues and friends cannot understand why he doesn't divorce her or

put his foot down and say, "Stop this career nonsense, woman, and get into the kitchen!"

Finally, the sense of fairness or equity about the balance of family and professional roles achieved by the spouses is crucial. Equality of power is not the issue but rather the perceptions of equity or proportional returns in the exchange of personal and economic resources. That is, does each partner feel that the other is doing his or her fair share when all aspects of the relationship are considered? Successful dual-career marriages are characterized by communication and commitment; compromise, realistic expectations, and flexibility; and an apportionment of household and parental responsibilities that is viewed as equitable by both partners. As one man married to a businesswoman said in a recent study, "Both of us are accommodating people. If an expectation is not met, that is not cause for walking out" (Gilbert, 1985, p. 72).

Societal Resources

The norms and rules of a society provide individuals with a set of ready responses to problems. Unfortunately, for women and men in dual-career families the extant norms and rules often are incompatible or inapplicable to their situation and can themselves be the cause of the stresses and conflicts experienced. Clearly, this is the category of resource that is consistently deficient or unavailable for dual-career couples and the one over which they have the least direct control. Men in dual-career families need to recognize these limited societal supports and existing equities and do all that they can in their organizations to improve things. Also crucial is their ability to recognize those conflicts that are unique to themselves and those conflicts that stem from insufficient societal supports.

At the present time, dual-career couples must cope with the stressors in their lifestyle largely as individuals, negotiating stress-reducing changes and strategies on their own and in a "create as one goes" context. As has been repeatedly noted here, however, the long-term acceptance and maintenance of the dual-career family as a feasible option will require support from society as a whole. Changes in the structure of work, provision for adequate child care, rethinking of transfer and relocation policies, and increased career opportunities for women are all social policy innovations that would make it significantly easier for dual-career families to thrive. (For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Walker, Rozee-Koker, and Wallston, in press.)

In summary, stress in the various areas described is generally minimized by mutuality in spouse support, willingness by the man to be actively involved in parenting, and relatively comparable career opportunities in their present locale. Typically, the husband is more involved in family work when the wife contributes more financially and when greater meaning and importance are attributed to her work. Thus the smaller the difference between the husband's and the wife's income, the more involved the husband is in household and parenting responsibilities (Gilbert, 1985).

Recommendations for the Practitioner

Areas of conflict for men in dual-career families center on the issues discussed in this chapter under the theme "men and women together but equal." Both psychological and societal factors, it has been argued, can hamper and impede attempts to embrace this ideal in real life. How can those in the mental health field assist individuals with this at times thorny process? This final section first addresses what therapists must bring to treatment and then considers various approaches to treatment.

THERAPISTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES, AND KNOWLEDGE

Crucial to working effectively with men in dual-career families is the knowledge and attitudes therapists bring to the therapeutic situation and the conceptual models they use in working with clients. Providing effective therapeutic assistance to individuals in dual-career families may be impossible if the therapist has inadequate knowledge and/or holds negative attitudes about this lifestyle. Moreover, because therapists, not unlike the clients who seek their guidance and help, are products of a relatively traditional socialization process, they need to constantly question their attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be male (or female) in our society. Therapists who are opposed to or ambivalent about women pursuing careers, men being involved in family work, or changes in the traditional sex-role division of labor are not very likely to be able to understand and effectively work with individuals in a dual-career family relationship. Research indicates that men are generally more negative toward nontraditional careers than women; both men and women are more negative toward males pursuing nontraditional roles than females (e.g., Haring, Beyard-Tyler, & Grey, 1983).

In addition, the failure of therapists to recognize the salient internal (psychological) and external

(structural) barriers to an egalitarian marriage can be counterproductive and work against understanding the limits and obstacles men in dual-career marriages may face. What is needed is a sensitivity to the real difficulties, both psychological and pragmatic, of developing new concepts of self and of coordinating career and family roles and a respect for the values implicit in the choice of a dual-career family lifestyle. Particularly crucial to effective therapeutic work is the recognition that the experiences of men in the dual-career situations are not the same as those of women. Because the gender-role socialization of women and men differs so dramatically, the areas they experience as problematic and the factors contributing to problem areas often differ markedly. Combining a career and family is a different process, involving different choices and changes for men and women.

For men, the traditional structure of professional careers and the assumptions associated with male entitlement and independence have presented obstacles to fuller involvement in family life. For women, the traditional division of labor and assumptions about female dependency and nurturance have presented obstacles to fuller involvement in professional careers. These differences show up in the day-to-day conflicts of men and women in dual-career families and the issues they bring to therapy.

Husbands typically struggle with esteem issues stemming from a perceived loss of power and prestige or decreased freedom in their occupational pursuits, competition with spouses, or involvement in "women's work" within the family. Some men discover a fundamental discrepancy within the marriage; it may be easier to be a supporter or advocate if one's own immediate life is not affected. Wives, in contrast, often struggle with esteem issues regarding conflicts between parenting responsibilities and career interests, legitimate expectations for a man's involvement in family work, and redefinitions of their roles of wife and mother.

EXAMPLES OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

There are many possible approaches to assisting men in dual-career families—at both the proactive and reactive levels of intervention. Most of us work at the reactive or treatment level. We see individuals or couples when they are having difficulties. In this section, issues that often emerge at the treatment level are addressed first. Programs possible at the preventive level are then considered briefly.

Therapists who work at the *treatment level* typically help their clients become aware of underlying feelings and attitudes related to problem areas. Particularly pertinent to this process are the various factors outlined in the earlier sections of this chapter. For example, understanding and acknowledging spouses' values about the prerogatives associated with being male is a sensitive and potentially explosive process, but one that is often essential to conflicts many clients experience. In the process of therapy some men may find that they are willing to make the changes needed and come to see them as benefiting themselves and their relationship. Others, however, may discover that to alter traditional sex-role behaviors and beliefs appreciably would be too great a cost given their career goals and life plans. Still others are cognizant of discrepancies between their attitudes and behavior and will continue to live this "double standard" until circumstances or their spouse push for change. As one client said, "I think it is entirely unfair that my wife does everything."

The handling of household responsibilities and parenting is another area frequently associated with relationship difficulties. Oftentimes men wish that they felt differently than they do or deny deeply ingrained beliefs and values. Helping clients to realize and acknowledge their inner emotional reality, regardless of how inconsistent it seems with cognitively held views, can free them of entrenched positions and allow them to consider alternate views and ways of being. Examining the implicit and explicit expectations of the marital contract and its relationship to traditional views of marriage is often an essential part of this process. Open, honest discussions of what is preferred, what is needed, and what is workable are then possible.

A case in point is a couple in which the male felt unappreciated by his spouse. He was preparing dinner three nights a week and doing what he considered to be his fair share of the family work. What emerged during the therapy was how his sense of male entitlements was getting in his way. He felt that he should be thanked for doing his share—after all, men typically have not done what he was doing. This attitude made his wife furious. Was she to be thanked for being a successful businesswoman because women typically have not done so? Even more upsetting to her was his then implicit assumption that she did not need to be thanked for preparing dinner the other four nights, because that is women's work. Important aspects of the therapeutic process for him were becoming aware of his unconscious attitudes about male and female rights and responsibilities in the marriage and assisting him in understanding how he and his spouse could feel the way they did. Crucial to this process was developing the self-

knowledge and conviction that expanding his own perspective to include his wife's viewpoint did not mean abandoning his own position or life experiences. (For more details on this process, see Gilbert, 1984).

The proactive, or preventive, model—in contrast to the reactive model—educates individuals about the potential problems and challenges that men in a dual-career relationship may face. (The assessment schema developed by O'Neil, Fishman, and Kinsella-Shaw, in press, and the value analysis described by Walker et al., in press, provide material especially pertinent to proactive approaches.) The purpose of this type of intervention is both consciousness-raising and skills-building. Participants are given the opportunity to learn about the day-to-day realities of the dual-career family lifestyle, to examine their personal attitudes, values, and life goals vis-a-vis the egalitarian ideals of such a lifestyle, and, finally, to assess the likelihood of their being able to make the personal and attitudinal changes necessary to accommodate to a dual-career family situation as well as to develop strategies for problem solving and decision making. Daniluck and Herman (1984), for example, report that a workshop format was useful in facilitating parenthood decision-making—but of career women, not men. To date, few programs of this sort have been developed specifically for men. Moorman (1986), however, describes an organization called Father Focus, which provides fathers with an opportunity to talk about their lives and the choices they must make in integrating work and family demands.

Preventive programs can also take the form of marital enrichment and stress management programs. Marital enrichment is based on the premise that couples can provide support for each other and learn from each other if they have the opportunity to interact together as couples. As Mace (1982) points out, interacting as a couple in a couples' group is very different from interacting as an individual in a group. One of the key differences is that couples in a group interaction share their marriages by having a dialogue in front of other couples. This provides an experiential basis for sharing their marital experience. Also crucial is the cross-couple identification, modeling, and support underlying this model of intervention. Many men in dual-career families feel alone in their struggle with an emerging lifestyle, and hearing how other families deal with various conflicts and difficulties can be very helpful.

Like marital enrichment, stress management is particularly relevant to individuals attempting a nontraditional marital relationship. These individuals are coming to grips with new concepts of self and

are pioneering a lifestyle with few societal supports. A key aspect of stress management for men in dual-career families is learning how to define and recognize stress and its physical and emotional effects and how to minimize or prevent its chronic development. Often individuals are unaware of how stressed they are because they are used to it or they assume it comes with the turf. Looking at some of the internal and external factors identified in this chapter, which mediate or cause the stress, can help in determining what behavioral or attitudinal changes could best alleviate or minimize the stress and promote more effective coping. Moreover, good nutrition, regular physical exercise, practice in self-assertion or time management, and an understanding of typical stressors for dual-career families can be effective preventive measures.

Summary

Some men are basing their self-evaluations less on work-related issues and more on family-related issues and are attempting to integrate work and family into their concept of career. This is especially true of men who live in a dual-career family situation. Although there is much evidence that these changes benefit and enrich men's lives, they also encounter resistance—both from within men themselves and from the society at large. Astrachan (1986), in his book *How men feel: Their response to women's demands for equality and power* concluded that although nearly all men approve of working wives, only 5% to 10% support women's demands for independence and equality. Although his findings may not accurately describe men in dual-career families, they do reflect the larger reality in which these men live. Mental health professionals need to be cognizant of these complex issues and how they affect men's lives. And, as was mentioned at the outset of this chapter, their therapeutic work with men in dual-career family's needs to "proceed out of an understanding of the issues . . . and a measure of compassion" (Napier, 1986, p. 1).

References

Astrachan, A. (1986). *How men feel: Their response to women's demands for equality and power*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Baumrind, D. (1980). New directions in socialization research. *American Psychologist*, 35, 639-652.

Bernard, J. (1981). The good provider role: Its rise and fall. *American Psychologist*, 36,1-12.

Bird, G. A., & Bird, G. W. (1985). Determinants of mobility in two-earner families: Does the wife's income count? *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 753-758.

Blumenthal, M. (1985, November 10). No big deal. *The New York Times Magazine,* p. 74.

Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1983). *American couples: Money, work, sex*. New York: William Morrow.

Daniluck, J. D., & Herman, A. (1984). Parenthood decision-making. *Family Relations*, 33, 607-612.

Falbo, T. (Ed.). (1984). *The single-child family.* New York: Guilford.

Gilbert, L. A. (1984). Understanding dual-career families. In *Perspectives on career development and behavior and the family: Family therapy collections.* Rockville, MD: Aspen Systems Corp.

Gilbert, L. A. (1985). *Men in dual-career families: Current realities and future prospects*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gilbert, L. A. (in press). Gender issues in psychotherapy. In J. R. McNamara& M. A. Appel (Eds.), *Critical issues, developments, and trends in professional psychology* (Vol. 3). New York: Praeger.

Gilbert, L. A., & Rachin, V. (in press). Mental health and psychological functioning of dual-career families. *The Counseling Psychologist.*

Haring, M., Beyard-Tyler, K., & Gray, J. (1983). Sex-biased attitudes of counselors: The special case of nontraditional careers. *Counseling and Values*, 27, 242-247.

Hoffman, L. W. (1979). Maternal employment: 1979. *American Psychologist*, 34, 859-865.

Kamerman, S. B. (1980). *Parenting in an unresponsive society: Managing work and family*. New York: Free Press.

Knaub, P. K. (1986). Growing up in a dual-career family. *Family Relations: Journal of Applied Family & Child Studies*, 35, 431-437.

Lamb, M. E. (1982). *The role of the father in child development.* Somerset, NJ: John Wiley.

Lamb, M. E. (1986). *The father's role: Applied perspectives.* Somerset, NJ: John Wiley.

Mace, D. R. (1982). *Close companions: The marriage enrichment handbook*. New York: Continuum.

Moorman, F. B. (1986, May 18). Putting kids first. *The New York Times Magazine,* p. 114.

Mott, G. (1985, April 14). Following a wife's move. *The New York Times Magazine,* p. 58.

Napier, A. (1986). *Family politics theme for speakers.* National Council on Family Relations Report, Vol. 31, No. 3.

O'Neil, J. M., Fishman, D. M., & Kinsella-Shaw, M. (in press). Dual-career couples' career transitions and normative dilemmas: A preliminary assessment model. *The Counseling Psychologist.*

Pleck, J. H. (1981). Men's power with women, other men, and society: A men's movement analysis. In R. A. Lewis (Ed.), *Men in difficult times: Masculinity today and tomorrow* (pp. 234-244). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Pleck, J. H. (1983). Husbands' paid work and family roles: Current research issues. In H. Lopata & J. H. Pleck (Eds.), *Research in the interweave of social roles: Jobs and families* (pp. 251-333). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Pleck, J. H. (1985). *Working wives I working husbands.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Pogrebin, L. C. (1983). *Family politics: Love and power on an intimate frontier*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Rapoport, R., & Rapoport, R. N. (1971). *Dual-career families.* Middlesex, England: Penguin.

Rapoport, R., & Rapoport, R. N. (1976). *Dual-career families re-examined*. London: Martin Robertson.

Rapoport, R., & Rapoport, R. N. (1982). The next generation in dual-earner family research. In J. Aldous (Ed.), *Two paychecks: Life in dual-earner families* (pp. 229-244). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rice, D. G. (1979). *Dual-career marriage: Conflict and treatment*. New York: Free Press.

Russell, G. (1982). Highly participant Australian fathers. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 28, 137-156.

Schroeder, P. (1985, December 29). Should leaves for new parents be mandatory? *The New York Times,* p. 16E.

St. John-Parsons, D. (1978). Continuous dual-career families: A case study. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 3, 30-42.

Stephan, C. W., & Corder, J. (1985). The effects of dual-career families on adolescents' sex-role attitudes, work and family plans, and choices of important others. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 921-930.

Walker, L. S., Rozee-Koker, P., & Wallston, B. S. (in press). Social policy and the dual-career family: Bringing the social context into counseling. *Counseling Psychologist.*

Wallston, B. S., Foster, M. A., & Berger, M. (1978). I will follow him: Myth, reality, or forced choice—job-seeking experiences of dual-career couples. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 3. 9-21.

Wright, L. (1985, December). I want to be alone. *Texas Monthly,* pp. 164, 166, 168.