

Facts



- **50% of all marriages end in divorce within 10 years**
- **60% of all divorces occur between the ages of 25-39**

Facts



- **75% of women and 80% of men remarry within 5 years**
- **Second marriages are at greater risk for ending in divorce than first marriages**

Facts



- **Over 1,000,000 children are affected by divorce each year**
- **70% of all children will spend time in a single parent family**

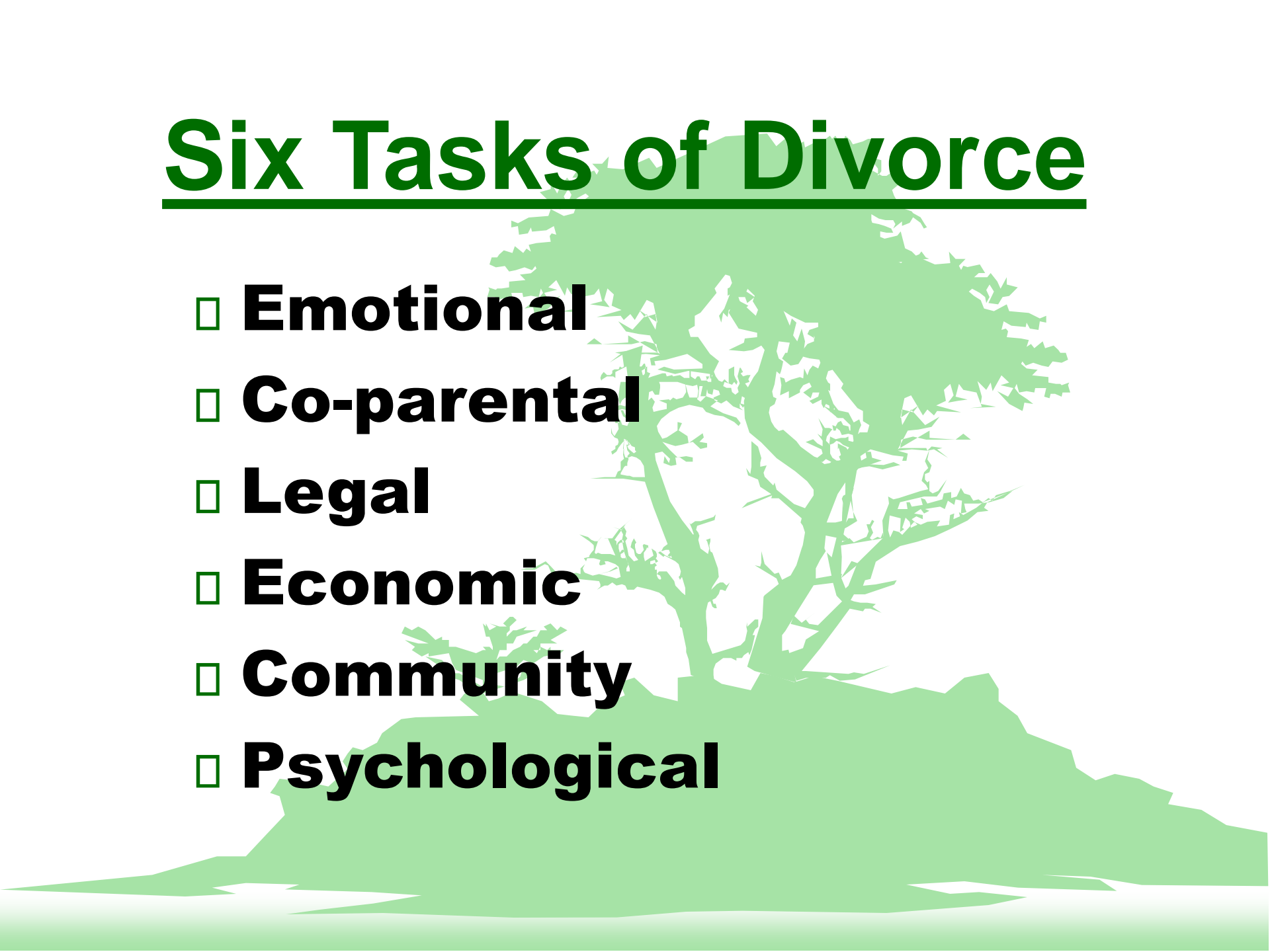
Facts



- **Children who experience divorce are more likely to have marital problems, get divorced themselves, and suffer from anxiety and depression.**

Six Tasks of Divorce

- ❑ **Emotional**
- ❑ **Co-parental**
- ❑ **Legal**
- ❑ **Economic**
- ❑ **Community**
- ❑ **Psychological**



The Legal Divorce

- **The ending of the marriage contract by court order**
 - **Division of Assets and Liabilities**
 - **Provisions for spouses and children**

The Economic Divorce

□ NEWS FLASH:

***Two households are
more expensive to
operate than one.***

The Community Divorce

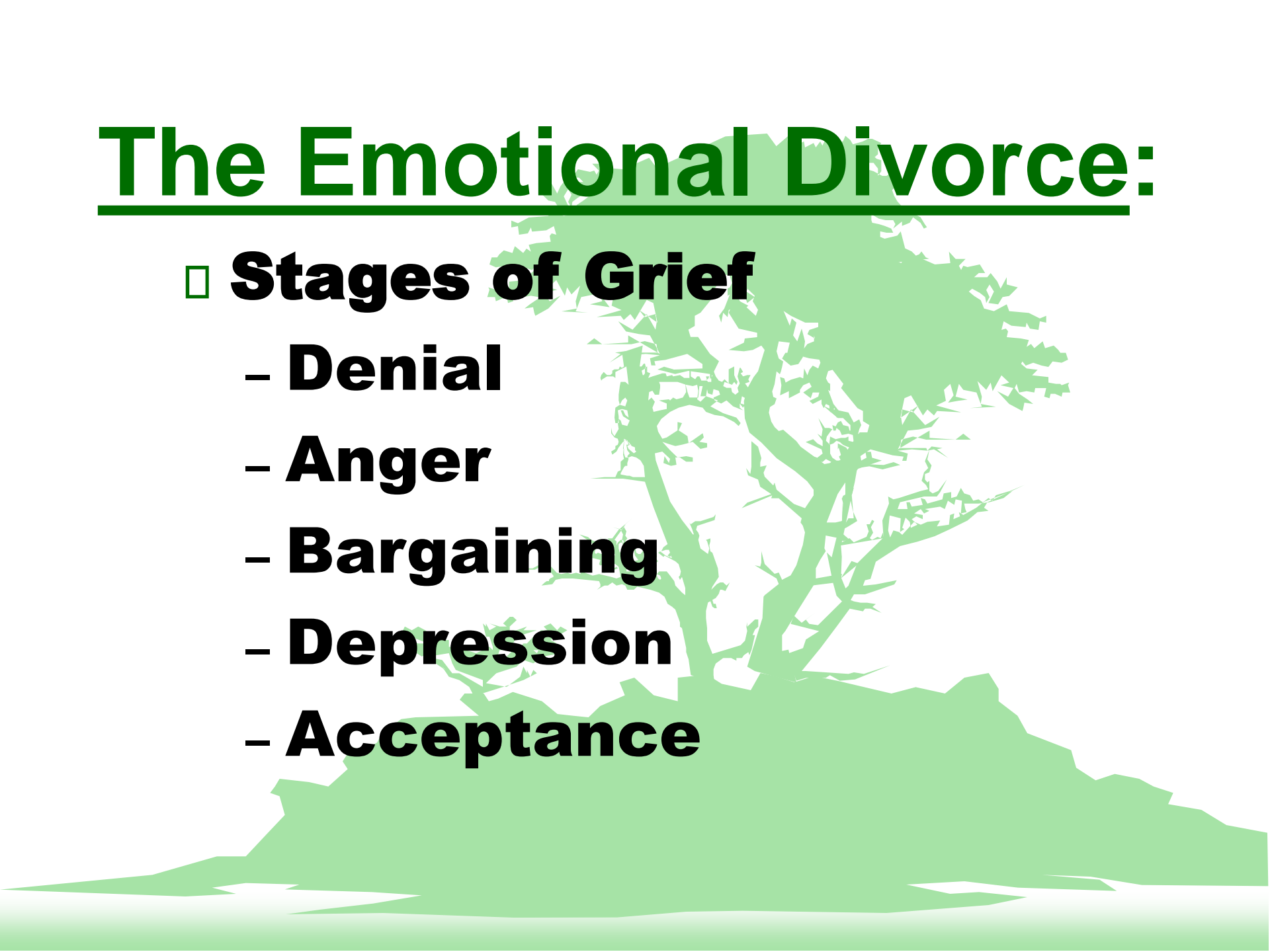
□ Question:

Who gets the friends?

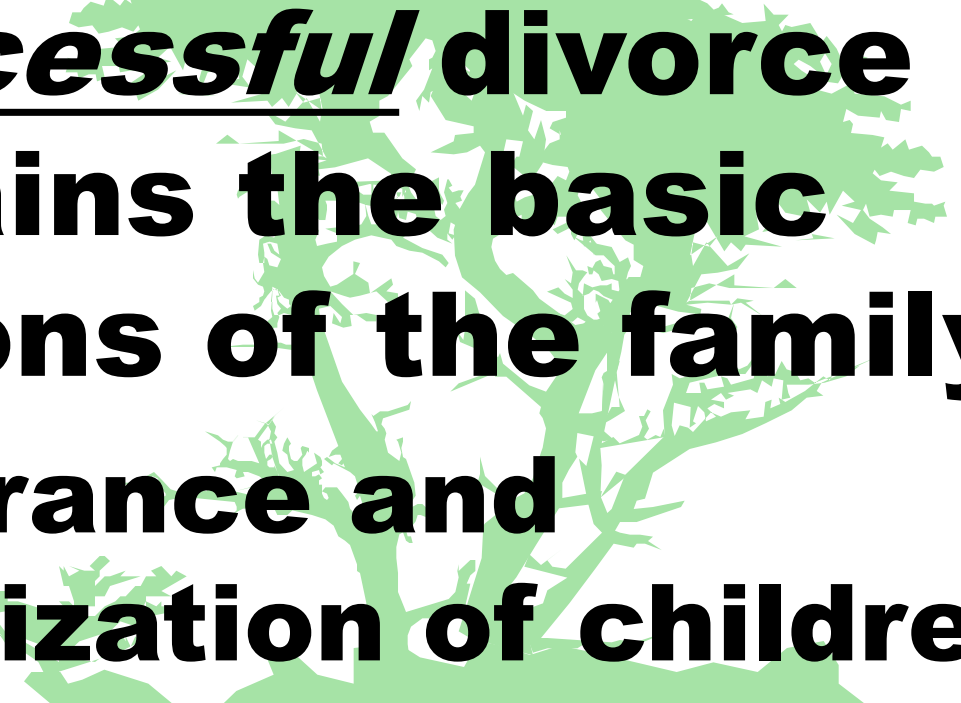
The Emotional Divorce:

□ **Stages of Grief**


- Denial**
- Anger**
- Bargaining**
- Depression**
- Acceptance**



The Co-Parental Divorce

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- ***A Successful* divorce maintains the basic functions of the family:**
 - **Nurturance and socialization of children**
 - **Provides a sense of personal identity**

The Co-Parental Divorce(2)

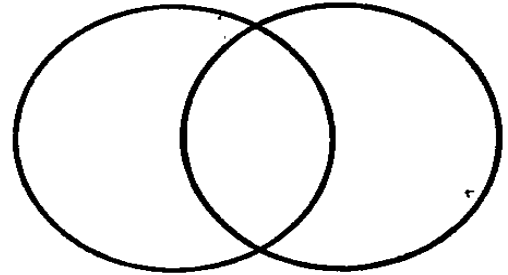
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- **Marriage ends... But family does not**
 - **restructuring relationships**
 - **balancing time and role**
 - **handling resentment & loneliness**
 - **children need two parents**

The Co-Parental Divorce(3)

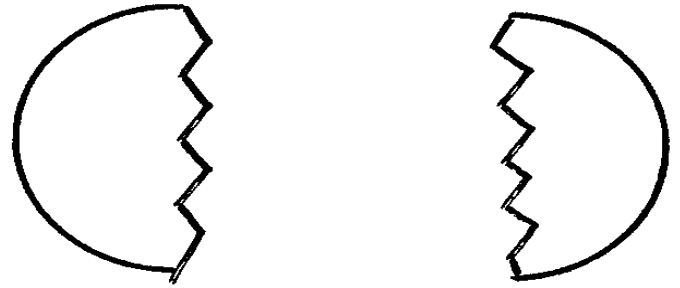
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- **Develop new “business-like” communication skills**
 - **cooperative attitude**
 - **establish agenda and stick to it**
 - **problem solving**
 - **avoiding counter-productive sidetracks & high emotions**

The Psychological Divorce

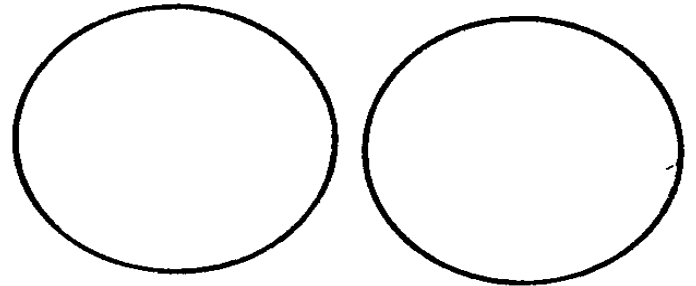
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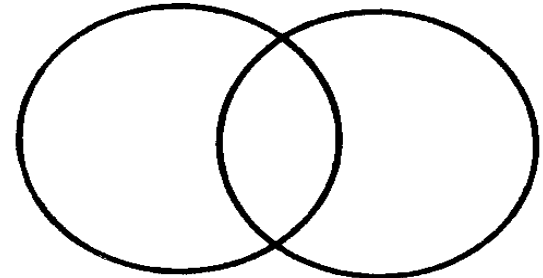
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Divorce: Telling the Kids

- ▣ **If parents tell children *together* :**
 - ▣ **children move through denial quicker**
 - ▣ **parents model their ability to still cooperate as parents**
 - ▣ **less focus on “bad guy”**
 - ▣ **less temptation to turn children into confidants and allies**

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Things Children Need to Hear(1)

- **“We are still a family”**
- **Parent forever**
- **Parent will continue to take care of child**
- **Not child’s fault**
- **Divorce not whim, but carefully thought out**
- **Parent acknowledges this hurts child**

Things Children Need to Hear(2)

- ▣ **Any area of life that can remain the same will be preserved**
- ▣ **Remind about current routines that will continue**
- ▣ **Invite child to share concerns, questions**

Special Situation:

The “Abandoning” Parent

- ❑ **Children can cope if they have one reasonably emotionally healthy parent**
- ❑ **Don’t focus on absent parent**
- ❑ **Don’t “put-down” absent parent**
- ❑ **Focus on what you and child have control of, not what you cannot change**
- ❑ **Not child’s fault; absent parent has problems they have to work out**

Typical reactions: Infant

- ▣ **Most vulnerable**
 - ▣ **total dependency - no skills of own**
- ▣ **Least vulnerable**
 - ▣ **little awareness of conflict or family death**
- ▣ **Adjust object consistency**
 - ▣ **environment /caregiver roles**
 - ▣ **watch for: stranger & separation anxiety**

Toddlers/Preschoolers (2-4yrs)

- ▣ **Fearfulness of what is not understood**
- ▣ **Magical thinking**
- ▣ **Anxiety: Aggressive/Regressive**
- ▣ **Sleep disturbance**
- ▣ **Need for order and routine**
- ▣ **Gender role identification**
- ▣ **Time is something you “feel”**
 - ▣ **monitor behavior re: visitation**

Elementary (5-8 yr.)

- ▣ **Sadness over loss**
- ▣ **More complex magical thinking**
 - ▣ **reuniting/rescuing fantasies**
- ▣ **Fear of abandonment**
- ▣ **Personalization**
 - ▣ **They are being divorced/replaced**
- ▣ **Longing for absent parent**
- ▣ **Better tolerance for visitations**

Pre-teens (9-12 yrs)

- ▣ **See world in absolutes**
- ▣ **Angry**
 - ▣ about inability of parents to “work it out”
 - ▣ didn’t value them enough to “work it out”
- ▣ **Vulnerable to alignment**
- ▣ **Vulnerable to becoming “best friend”**
- ▣ **Need permission to love both parents**
- ▣ **Can spend summer w/non-custodial parent**

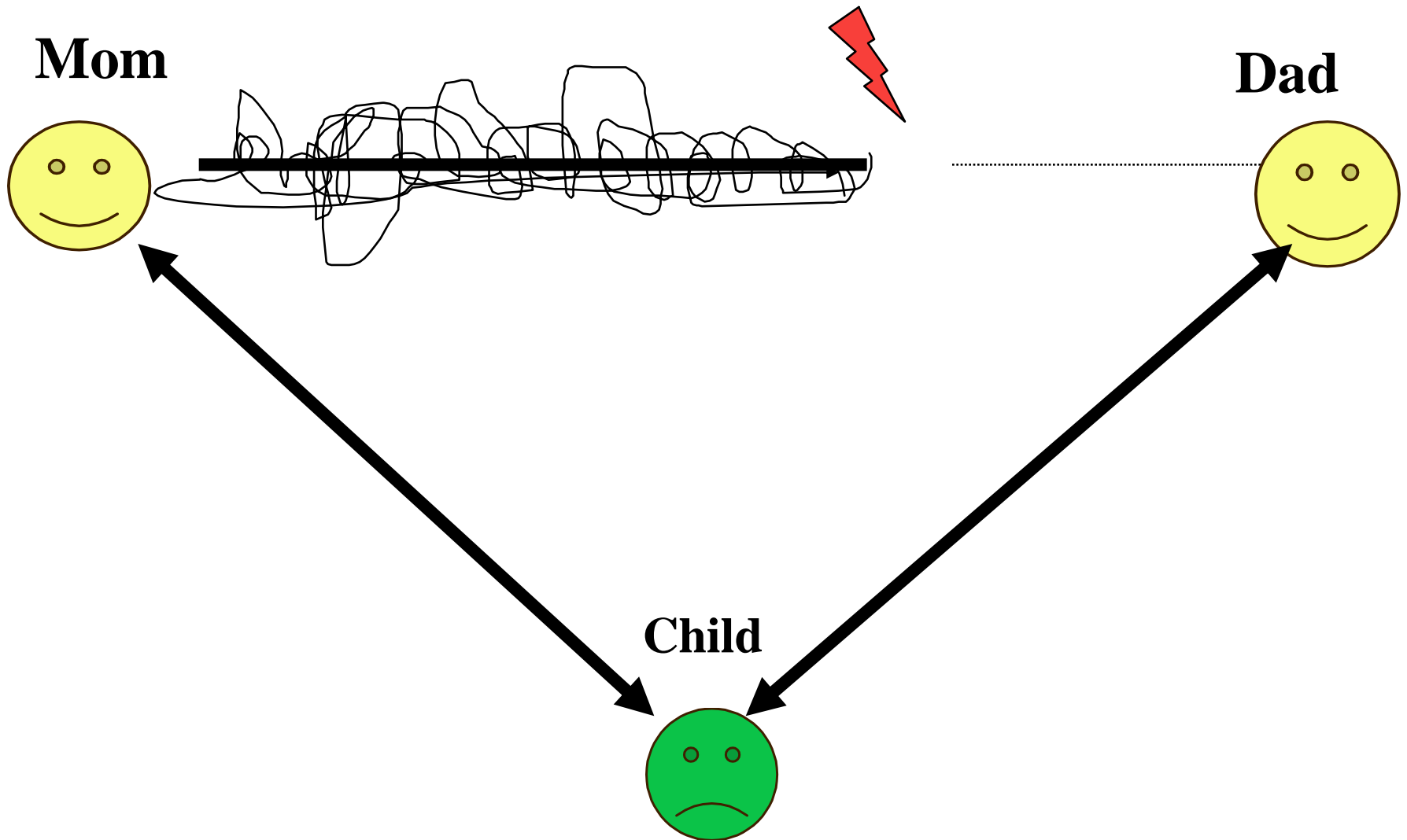
Teenagers (13-18 yrs)

- ▣ **Idealism = rush to judgement**
- ▣ **Range of feelings: relief to failure**
- ▣ **Anxiety**
 - ▣ **about relationships**
 - ▣ **\$ plans for future**
 - ▣ **anti-social**
 - ▣ **flight into intimacy**
- ▣ **Boundary issues**
 - ▣ **teen is not friend/confidant**
 - ▣ **not dating peer**
 - ▣ **natural desire to separate**
 - ▣ **non-custodial contact**
 - ▣ **teen helps plan**
 - ▣ **help to initiate**

General Factors Impacting Child's Reactions

- ❑ **Diminished parenting during 1st year**
- ❑ **Parent needs met outside of family(12-18m)**
- ❑ **Multiple adjustments**
- ❑ **Degree of change in parental image**
- ❑ **Consistency and quality of contact**
- ❑ **Availability of supportive network**
- ❑ **Personality of child**
- ❑ **Ability of parents to cooperate**

The Emotional Triangle



Parents: Listening

- **Hearing**
 - **can't hear with mouth open**
- **Understanding**
 - **not necessarily agreeing**
- **Responding**
 - **feedback lets others know they have been heard & understood**

New Family Structures

**From your child's
perspective:**

- **What is dating?**
- **What is a
boyfriend/girlfriend?**
- **What is a blended family?**
- **What is a step-parent?**

Children at Risk

**Absence
of sadness**

Depression



**Overly
responsible**

**Continuous
acting out**

