

## Extra Credit Week 8

### SINGLEHOOD: BY CIRCUMSTANCE OR BY CHOICE?

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exercise is to consider the experience of women and men who are not married or cohabiting with a partner.

**Instructions:** review the research in your text in the areas of interpersonal relationships, marriage, and commitment. You are likely to find that single adults are rarely mentioned. The establishment and maintenance of a primary relationship in adulthood is a common expectation in this culture, and most people spend much of their adult lives in a committed relationship with a partner. On the other hand, many men and women spend their adult years as single adults. This diverse category includes people in a number of circumstances.

Using the interview schedule that follows, interview a friend, family member, or acquaintance who has been single most of his or her life. Briefly describe your respondent (e.g., race or ethnicity, number and ages of any children, sexual orientation, etc.) at the heading of the schedule, and ask her or him to respond to each of the interview question. Then, compare your findings to the material in the text on interpersonal relationships, intimacy, and attachment in adulthood.

Summarize your findings by responding to the questions below.

1. Some demographic factors are predictive of single status. For example, heterosexual African American women are more likely to remain single due to the fact that they outnumber African American men in adulthood. Also, better-educated women with prestigious or well-paying jobs are more likely to remain single. Were any of these factors cited by your respondent? If so, what were they?





4. What are the *best* things about being single?

5. What are the *worst* things about being single?

6. Very little social science research has been conducted on single adults. If you had your say, what aspect of being single should social scientists study? Why?