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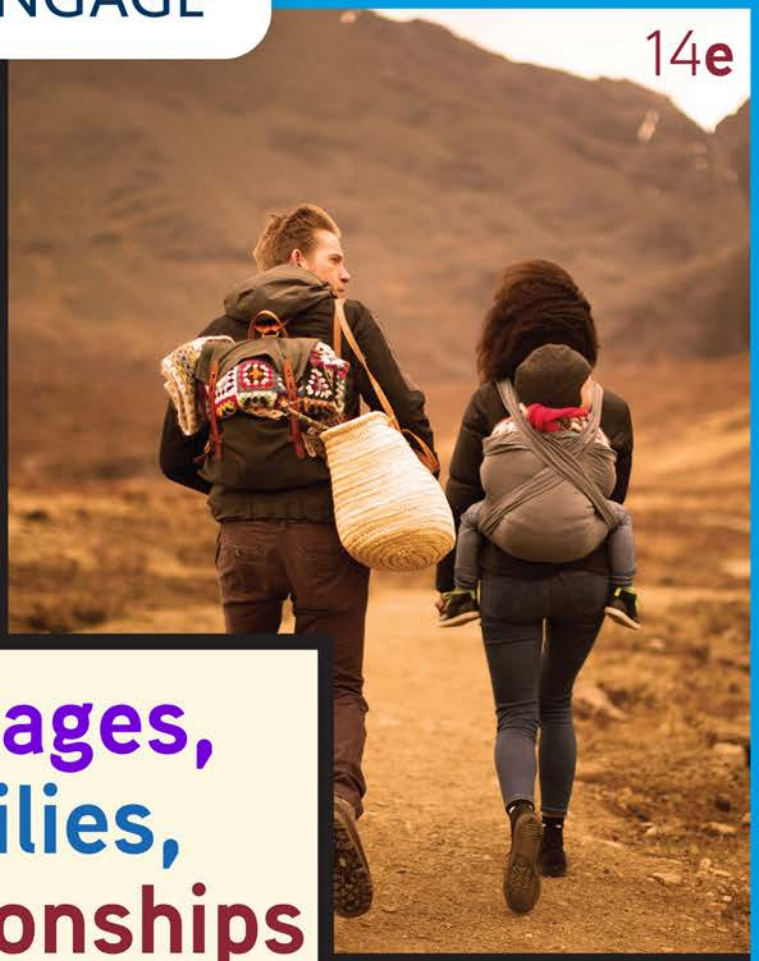

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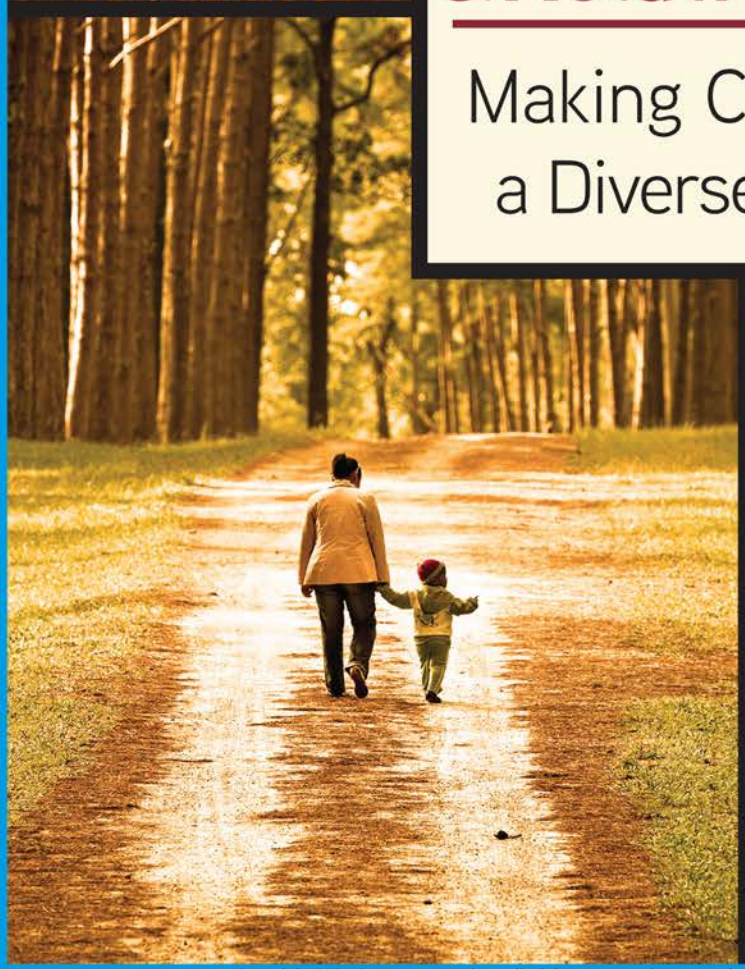
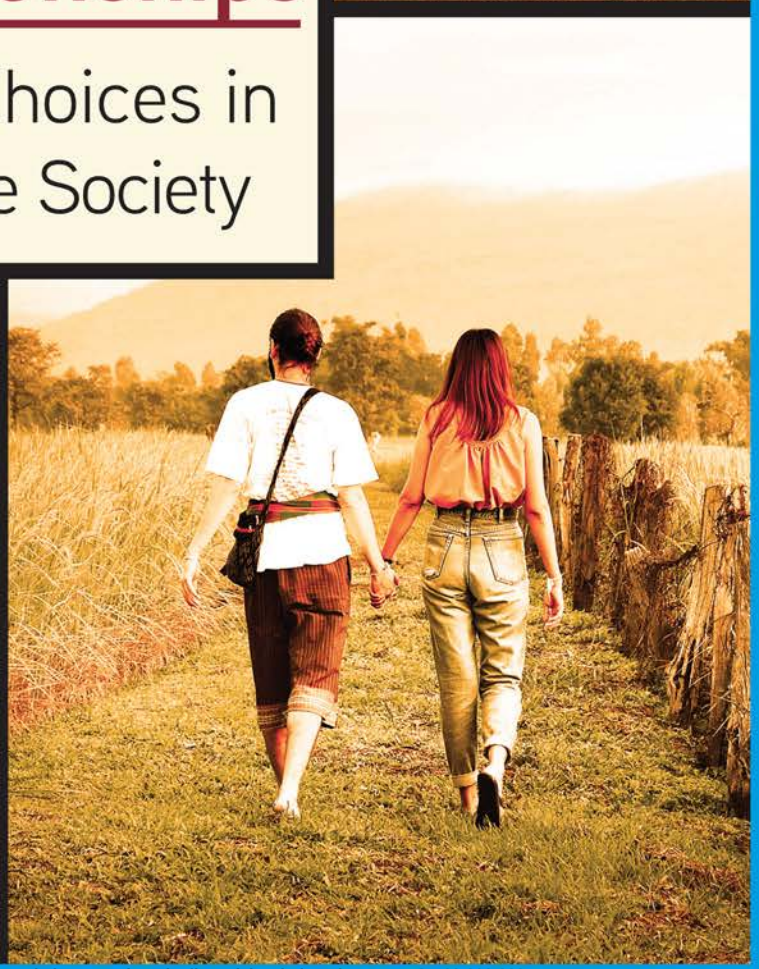
Making Choices in a Diverse Society





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MARRIAGES, FAMILIES, and RELATIONSHIPS

Making Choices in a Diverse Society

Fourteenth Edition

Mary Ann Lamanna
University of Nebraska, Omaha

Agnes Riedmann
California State University, Stanislaus

Susan D. Stewart
Iowa State University

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To our families, especially

Larry, Valerie, Sam, Janice, Simon, and Christie

Bill, Beth, Natalie, Alex, and Livia

Gwendolyn, Gene, Lee, Christine, Mom

and Dad

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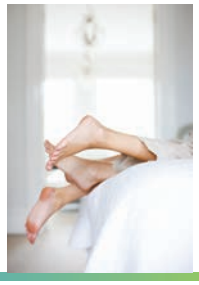

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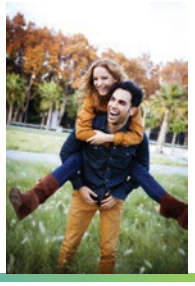

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PREFACE

As we complete our work on the fourteenth edition of this text, we become aware of how suddenly society and family life can change. If ever there was a dramatic example of how the social environment affects personal and family life, the global pandemic Covid-19 has unfortunately provided it. We had finished revising much of this edition before Covid-19 changed life as we knew it. By the time we were finishing our revision of Chapter 16, however, the virus had quieted cities and overwhelmed hospitals. We recognize the pandemic in Chapter 16 with a new box, "As We Make Choices: Want to Call or Visit an Isolated Senior?"

So many questions and hypotheses come to mind regarding how Covid-19 is likely to impact families. We, your authors, are already beginning to think about how this monumental pandemic will impact the content of future editions. We imagine that Covid-19 will focus greater attention on what family means to us as well as on the critical importance of traditional family functions such as raising children and providing practical and social support to family members. How will Covid-19 impact families' motivation and ability to perform these functions? In what ways might we expect family theory and research respond to Covid-19? Will this pandemic affect our choices about our preferred family forms? Will people be more likely to marry than to cohabit, for instance? Or will their decisions go in other directions? How might parenting concerns, issues, and behaviors change? What about the work–family interface? How do families fare when one or more family members suddenly begin working from home? Or later, when home-based workers return to work?

How will mandatory quarantines affect romantic relationships? It was only a matter of time before researchers would look into the impact of Covid-19 on sex. Only weeks after the virus, psychologist Jessica Zucker explored this in "Health, Sex and Coronavirus: How Does Sexual Intimacy Change During a Pandemic?" In an Instagram poll, whereas 50 percent of respondents said their sex life had improved, 50 percent said their sex life had worsened—the "six feet apart rule" would make sex difficult to achieve for those not already living with a partner. It's important to point out, however, that the research on "baby booms" following natural disasters, such black-outs and hurricanes, is mostly mythology. In general, people avoid bringing children into the world when economic times are uncertain.

Then too, how might family power relations change? We're seeing a divide between how older Americans view this pandemic and how a number of young adults perceive the danger and what it requires of them. We've all seen the images of young people partying on the beach during Spring Break in the midst of social distancing.

Will this divide affect family life? And if so, in what ways? Moreover, unfortunately we're hearing about domestic violence during quarantine. An example is Wendy Patrick's (J.D., Ph.D.) article in the March 19, 2020, online *Psychology Today* blog, "Domestic Abuse During Quarantine: When the Threat is Inside, What Victims Trapped at Home with an Abuser Need to Know" (psychologytoday.com).

How might theory and research on family stress and crisis—which assuredly this pandemic causes!—help us to understand what's going on in ourselves, our families, our communities, and our world? What can research findings tell us about what helps families to pull together during a crisis such as this? How might Covid-19 impact the divorce rate? On the one hand, stress puts added strain on couple relationships, and couples with poor relationship quality who are forced together for months may realize they should not stay together. On the other hand, couples under mandatory quarantine may rediscover what they love about each other and may count their blessings in an uncertain world. This remains to be seen. On another front, in what ways does Covid-19 impact aging families, their younger relatives, and caregivers? We were nearly finished revising Chapter 16 when this pandemic broke out and had time to write a box relating to this unprecedented Covid-19 outbreak: "As We Make Choices: Want to Call or Visit an Isolated Senior?"

Covid-19 aside, we authors look back with pride over thirteen earlier editions. Together, these represent more than forty years spent observing and rethinking American families. Not only have families dramatically changed since we began our first edition but also has social science's interpretation of family life. It is gratifying to be a part of the enterprise dedicated to studying families and sharing this knowledge with students.

Our own perspective on families has developed and changed as well. Indeed, as marriages and families have evolved over the last four decades, so has this text. In the beginning, this text was titled *Marriages and Families*—a title that was the first to purposefully use plurals to recognize the diversity of family forms—a diversity that we noted as early as 1980. Now the text is titled *Marriages, Families, and Relationships.* We added the term *relationships* to recognize the increasing incidence of individuals forming commitments outside of legal marriage. At the same time, we continue to recognize and appreciate the fact that a large majority of Americans—now including same-sex couples—are married or will marry.

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Hence, we consciously persist in giving due attention to the values and issues of married couples. Of course, the concept of marriage itself has changed appreciably. No longer necessarily heterosexual, marriage is now an institution to which same-sex couples across the United States and in a growing number of other nations have legal access.

Meanwhile, the book's subtitle, *Making Choices in a Diverse Society*, continues to speak about the significant changes that have taken place since our first edition. To help accomplish our goal of encouraging students to better appreciate the diversity of today's families, we present the latest research and statistical information on varied family forms (including those with lesbian, gay, transgender, and other non-cisgender family members) and families of diverse race and ethnicity, socioeconomic, and immigration status, among other variables.

We continue to take account not only of increasing racial and ethnic diversity but also of the fluidity of the concepts *race* and *ethnicity* themselves. We pay attention to the socially constructed nature of these concepts. We integrate these materials on family diversity throughout the textbook, always with an eye toward avoiding stereotypical and simplistic generalizations and instead explaining data in sociological and sociohistorical contexts. Interested from the beginning in the various ways that gender plays out in families, we have persistently focused on areas in which gender relations have changed and continue to change, as well as on areas in which there has been relatively little change.

In addition to our attention to gender, we have studied demography and history, and we have paid increasing attention to the impact of social structure on family life. We have highlighted the family ecology perspective in keeping with the importance of social context and public policy. We cannot help but be aware of the cultural and political tensions surrounding families today. At the same time, in recent editions and in response to our reviewers, we have given heightened attention to the contributions of biology and psychology and to a social psychological understanding of family interaction and its consequences.

We continue to affirm the power of families as they influence the courses of individual lives. Meanwhile, we give considerable attention to policies needed to provide support for today's families: working parents, families in financial stress, single-parent families, families of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds, stepfamilies, same-sex couples, and other nontraditional families—as well as the classic nuclear family.

We note that, despite changes, marriage and family values continue to be salient in contemporary American life. Our students come to a marriage and family course because family life is important to them. Our aim now, as it has been from the first edition, is to help students question assumptions and reconcile conflicting ideas and values as they make choices throughout their lives. We enjoy and benefit from the contact we've had with faculty and students who have used this book. Their enthusiasm and criticism have stimulated many changes in the book's content. To know that a supportive audience is interested in our approach to the study of families has enabled us to continue our work over a long period.

THE BOOK'S THEMES

We developed the book's themes by looking at the interplay between findings in the social sciences and the experiences of the people around us. Ideas for topics continue to emerge, not only from current research and reliable journalism, but also from the needs and concerns we perceive among our own family members, students, and friends. The attitudes, behaviors, and relationships of real people have a complexity that we have tried to portray. Interwoven with these themes is the concept of the life course—the idea that adults may change by means of reevaluating and restructuring throughout their lives. This emphasis on the life course creates a comprehensive picture of marriages, families, and relationships and encourages us to continue to add topics that are new to family texts. Meanwhile, this book makes these points:

- People's personal problems and their interaction with the social environment change as they and their relationships and families grow older.
- People reexamine their relationships and their expectations for relationships as they and their marriages, relationships, and families mature.
- Because family forms are more flexible today, people may change the type or style of their relationships and families throughout their lives.

These themes appear throughout this text: People are influenced by the society around them as they make choices, social conditions change in ways that may impede or support family life, there is an interplay between individual families and the larger society, and individuals make family-related choices throughout adulthood.

The process of creating and maintaining marriages, families, and relationships requires many personal choices; people continue to make family-related decisions, both big and small, throughout their lives. Making decisions about family life begins in early adulthood and lasts into old age. People choose whether they will adhere to traditional beliefs, values, and attitudes about

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gender roles or negotiate more flexible roles and relationships. They may rethink their values about sex and become more informed and comfortable with their sexual choices.

Women and men may choose to remain single, to form heterosexual or same-sex relationships outside of marriage, or to marry. They have the option today of staying single longer before marrying. Single people make choices about their lives ranging from decisions about living arrangements to those about whether to engage in sex only in marriage or committed relationships, to engage in sex for recreation, or to abstain from sex altogether. Many unmarried individuals live as cohabiting couples, often with children. Once individuals form couple relationships, they have to decide how they are going to structure their lives as committed partners. Will they have children? Will other family members live with them—siblings or parents, for example, or adult children later?

Couples will make these decisions not once, but over and over during their lifetimes. Within a committed relationship, partners also choose how they will deal with conflict. Will they try to ignore conflicts? Will they vent their anger in hostile, alienating, or physically violent ways? Or will they practice supportive ways of communicating, disagreeing, and negotiating—ways that emphasize sharing and can deepen intimacy?

How will the partners distribute power in the marriage? Will they work toward relationships in which each family member is more concerned with helping and supporting others than with gaining a power advantage? How will the partners allocate work responsibilities in the home? What value will they place on their sexual lives together? Throughout their experience, family members continually face decisions about how to balance each one's need for individuality with the need for togetherness.

Parents also have choices. In raising their children, they can choose the authoritative parenting style, for example, in which parents take an active role in responsibly guiding and monitoring their children. However, how much guidance is too much? At what point do involved parents become *over* involved parents—that is, "helicopter parents"?

Many partners face decisions about whether to separate or divorce. They weigh the pros and cons, asking themselves which is the better alternative: living together as they are or separating? Even when a couple decides to separate or divorce, there are further decisions to make: Will they cooperate as much as possible or insist on blame and revenge? What living and economic support arrangements will work best for themselves and their children? How will they handle the legal process? The majority of divorced individuals eventually face decisions about forming relationships with new partners. In the absence of firm cultural models, they choose how they will define remarriage and stepfamily relationships.

When families encounter crises—and every family will face *some crises*—members must make additional decisions. Will they view each crisis as a challenge to be met, or will they blame one another? What resources can they use to handle the crisis? Then, too, as more and more Americans live longer, families will "age." As a result, more and more Americans will have not only living grandparents but also great grandparents. And increasingly, we will face issues concerning giving—and receiving—family elder care.

In the past, people tended to emphasize the dutiful performance of social roles in marriages and families for others. Today, people view committed relationships as those in which they expect to find companionship, intimacy, and emotional support for themselves. From its first edition, this book has examined the implications of this shift and placed these implications within social scientific perspective. Individualism, economic pressure, time pressures, social diversity, and an awareness of committed relationships' potential impermanence are features of the social context in which personal decision making takes place. With each edition, we recognize again that, as fewer social guidelines remain fixed, personal decision making becomes both more open and perhaps more challenging.

An emphasis on knowledgeable decision making does not mean that individuals can completely control their lives. People can influence but never directly determine how those around them behave or feel about them. Partners cannot control one another's changes over time, and they cannot avoid all accidents, illnesses, unemployment, separations, or deaths. Society-wide conditions may create unavoidable crises for individual families. However, families can control how they respond to such crises. Their responses will meet their own needs better when they refuse to react automatically and choose instead to act as a consequence of knowledgeable decision making.

Tension frequently exists between individuals and their social environment. Many personal troubles result from societal influences, values, or assumptions; inadequate societal support for family goals; and conflict between family values and individual values. By understanding some of these possible sources of tension and conflict, individuals can perceive their personal troubles more clearly and work constructively toward solutions. They may choose to form or join groups to achieve family goals. They may become involved in the political process to develop state or federal social policy that is supportive of families. The accumulated decisions of individuals and families also shape the social environment.

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KEY FEATURES

With its ongoing, thorough updating and inclusion of current research and its emphasis on students' being able to make choices in an increasingly diverse society, this book has become a principal resource for gaining insights into today's marriages, relationships, and families. Over the past twelve editions, we have had four goals in mind for student readers: first, to help them better understand themselves and their family situations; second, to make students more conscious of the personal decisions that they will make throughout their lives and of the societal influences that affect those decisions; third, to help students better appreciate the variety and diversity among families today; and fourth, to encourage them to recognize the need for structural, social policy support for families. To these ends, this text has become recognized for its accessible writing style, up-to-date research, well-written features, and useful chapter learning aids.

Up-to-Date Research and Statistics

As users have come to expect, we have thoroughly updated the text's research base and statistics, emphasizing cutting-edge research that addresses the diversity of marriages and families, as well as all other topics. In accordance with this approach, users will notice several new tables and figures. Revised tables and figures have been updated with the latest available statistics—data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other governmental agencies, as well as survey and other research data.

Box Features

The several themes described earlier are reflected in the special features.

Former users will recognize our box features. The following sections describe our four feature box categories:

As We Make Choices We highlight the theme of making choices with a group of boxes throughout the text—for example, "Rethinking Virginity," "Ten Rules for a Successful Relationship," "Disengaging from Power Struggles," "Selecting a Childcare Facility—Ten Considerations," "Rules for Successful Co-Parenting," "Tips for Step-Grandparents, and" "Want to Call or Visit an Isolated Senior?"

These feature boxes emphasize human agency and are designed to help students through crucial decisions.

A Closer Look at Diversity In addition to integrating information on cultural and ethnic diversity throughout the text proper, we have a series of features that give focused attention to instances of family diversity—for example, "African Americans and 'Jumping the Broom,'" "Diversity and Childcare," "Family Ties and Immigration," "Straight Parents and LGBTQ+ Children," and " Do You Speak Stepfamily?" among others.

Issues for Thought These features are designed to spark students' critical thinking and discussion. As an example, the Issues for Thought box in Chapter 16 explores "Filial Responsibility Laws" and encourages students to consider what might be the benefits and drawbacks of legally mandating filial responsibility. The box "When One Woman's Workplace Is Another's Family" invites students to consider how women's work differs across social class, race and ethnicity, and immigration status.

Facts about Families This feature presents demographic and other factual information on focused topics such as "How Family Researchers Study Religion from Various Theoretical Perspectives," "The Changing Language of Gender," on "Researching at the Kinsey Institute," on "Legal Same-Sex Marriage as a Successful Social Movement," and on "Foster Parenting," among others.

Chapter Learning Aids

A series of chapter learning aids help students comprehend and retain the material.

- Each chapter begins with a list of **learning objectives** specifically formulated for that chapter.
- **Chapter Summaries** are presented in bulleted, point-by-point lists of the key material in the chapter.
- **Key Terms** alert students to the key concepts presented in the chapter. A full glossary is provided at the end of the text.
- **Questions for Review and Reflection** help students review the material. Thought questions encourage students to think critically and to integrate material from other chapters with that presented in the current one. In every chapter, one of these questions is a policy question. This practice is in line with our goal of moving students toward structural analyses regarding marriages, families, and relationships.

KEY CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

In addition to incorporating the latest available research and statistics—and in addition to carefully reviewing every word in the book—we note that this edition includes many key changes, some of which are outlined here. We have worked to make chapter length more uniform throughout the text.

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We are streamlining the material presented whenever possible and to ensuring a good flow of ideas. In this edition, we continue to consolidate similar material that had previously been addressed in separate chapters. **Meanwhile, we have substantially revised each and every chapter.** Every chapter is updated with the latest statistics and research throughout. Now that same-sex marriage is legal throughout the United States, we continue to conscientiously revisit all our chapters to make sure we're in line with this major family change. We mention some (but not all!) specific and important changes here.

Chapter 1, Making Family Choices in a Changing Society, continues to present the choices and life course themes of the book, as well as points to the significance for the family of larger social forces. Figure 1.1 is new with data on where Americans find meaning. HINT: their families. Figure 1.3 is new as well. All the boxes have been reworked. We paid special attention to rethinking and reworking the Closer Look at Diversity box in Chapter 1, with updated treatment of immigration due to the immigration crisis at our southern border. As faculty users, students, and casual readers have come to expect, all research and statistics are conscientiously updated. This goes for the entire book.

Chapter 2, Exploring Relationships and Families, continues to portray the integral relationship between family theories and methods for researching families, with new examples designed to better drive home the theoretical perspectives. Examples in the research section of this chapter include more recognition that major surveys are conducted globally, not just in the United States.

Chapter 3, Gender Identities and Families, continues to reflect evolving and expanding understandings of gender and sexual identity as fluid and non-binary, driving by the more progressive attitudes of Millennials and Gen Z. We introduce and define a variety of new terms related to gender and sexuality and discuss, for example, how states are facing political pressure to provide more gender options on birth certificates. We note challenges to toxic masculinity and increased representation of women in politics.

Chapter 4, Our Sexual Selves, continues its exploration into the range of sexual attitudes and behavior that exists in American society with special focus on gender differences, culture, history, politics, and technology. Notable since the last edition is the #MeToo Movement and women increasingly challenging previously taken-for-granted behaviors of men, such as sexual harassment and even sexual assault. In this chapter we broaden our discussion of consent, bystander education, and dispel myths about sexual assault. With increased attention to fluidity in sexual identity and behavior, we discuss the question of what it means to be a virgin. We take a tour of the famous Kinsey Institute and discuss the ethics of conducting sexuality research. Finally, we provide updated statistics on sexual behavior, infidelity, HIV/AIDS, and pornography use.

Chapter 5, Love and Choosing a Life Partner, increases attention to defining love in all its forms and, in particular, the limitations of American's Society's undue focus on romantic love. We continue to examine the changing nature of dating in the United States, not only in terms of new dating patterns, but also dating preferences, such as urban versus rural residence, political ideology, race, and religion. In addition, we draw increased attention to the heteronormative bias in love and dating and include more information on LGBTQ+ couples and gender inequality in relationships. We draw attention to arranged marriages, child marriage, and transnational marriages in the United States. We provide new information on what is known about the link between cohabitation, marital quality, and divorce.

Chapter 6, Nonmarital Lifestyles: Living Alone, Cohabiting, and Other Options, discusses demographic, economic, technological, and cultural reasons for the increasing proportion of unmarrieds, with updated statistics on unmarried men and women in America. New to this edition is a discussion of generational differences in attitudes about the advantages and disadvantages of being single, integrating the attitudes of the youngest generation of Americans, Gen Z, who are just now reaching young adulthood and who have a wide array of lifestyles available to them. We have expanded our discussion of the *transition to adulthood*, which in these tough economic times has continued to lengthen, and is responsible for part of the increase in multigenerational households we are seeing.

Chapter 7, Marriage: From Social Institution to Private Relationship, has been thoroughly updated in accordance with developments after the 2015 legalization of same-sex marriage and also with new statistics and research findings. This chapter explores the changing picture regarding marriage, noting that cohabitation may now be becoming more similar to marriage than it used to be as more couples choose to cohabit. We review the social science debate regarding whether this changing picture represents family change or decline. We thoroughly explore the selection hypothesis versus the experience hypothesis with regard to the benefits of marriage known from research.

Chapter 8, Deciding about Parenthood, continues its focus on the complex process through which couples have children and different infertility patterns by race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual identity and other variables. We provide data on the rising costs of children with a special focus on childcare. We also have expanded our discussion of the social and emotional costs of children, which has led to an increased number of women

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