Development of a Family-Based Program to Promote Resilience among Unemployed Families: Theoretical Basis and Implications for Future Interventions

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Psychology

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Abstract

As the unemployment rate has remained over 9% throughout 2010 and 2011, millions of families in the U.S. and around the world are affected by unemployment. In 2010, 12.4% of families in the U.S. had at least one unemployed member, up from 12.0% in 2008 (BLS, 2011). With the predication that unemployment will remain at high levels in the near future, it is important for family researchers and professionals to establish strategies and programs that will lessen the impact and prevalence of the problems associated with unemployment. A resilience-oriented perspective can serve as a broad framework for intervention and prevention services for unemployed families.

This dissertation applied the construct of resilience to family systems to learn more about ways in which unemployed individuals and their families learn to deal with and grow from this adversity. Specifically, this project involved two phases. The first phase included the development, implementation, and evaluation of a resilience-based program for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. Key quantitative results from Phase 1 showed that participants reported statistically significant reductions in depression and problematic family functioning from pre- to post-intervention. Moreover, B.R.I.T.E. participation was more effective in reducing depression for individuals who had relatively high levels of family protective factors when they entered the B.R.I.T.E. program.

The second phase consisted of follow-up interviews with some of the B.R.I.T.E. program participants six to nine months after their participation. This phase also consisted of a focus group with additional spouses/partners of currently unemployed individuals. This was done in an effort to gather ideas as to how to increase spouse/partner participation in the future as well as to ascertain how these unemployed families coped and what advice they would like to share with
other unemployed families. Qualitative results demonstrated the value of offering a program for unemployed individuals and their family members. Ideas on how to recruit family members as well as advice for other unemployed families are also highlighted. Implications for researchers, community organizations, and policymakers, limitations of the research, as well as directions for future research are outlined.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Unemployment in the U.S. is currently at 8.1%, with some states reporting rates as high as 11.7% (Retrieved May 20, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). These figures are at their highest levels in decades. Moreover, sixteen states are experiencing unemployment rates higher than the national average of 8.1%. Some of these states and their corresponding unemployment rates include: Rhode Island (11.2%), North Carolina (9.4%), California (10.9%), and Nevada (11.7%) (Retrieved May 20, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). However, these rates understate the magnitude of the job crisis and the full impact of the recession on families, because they do not account for the underemployed and those who have given up searching (e.g., older workers who get discouraged, give up and retire after an extended job search).

As the unemployment rate has remained over 9% throughout 2010 and most of 2011, millions of families in the US and around the world are affected by unemployment. In 2010, 12.4% of families in the US had at least one unemployed member, up from 12.0 in 2008 (BLS, 2011). The rate is even higher for African-American (19.2) and Hispanic (17.4) families (BLS, 2011). The proportion of families with at least one unemployed member has almost doubled (from 6.3% in 2007) during the recession (from 2007-2010; BLS, 2011). Moreover, the jobs recovery tends to lag other economic indicators as the broader economy recovers (Summers, 2010). During recessionary times, the unemployment rate among families increases quickly and declines more slowly than the unemployment rate in general (cf., Gray, Edwards, Hayes, & Baxter, 2009).

Yet the effects of job loss and unemployment on families are relatively understudied, primarily because families are complex systems and the effects of unemployment are difficult to tease out from the myriad of influences on families and family member well-being (cf., Strom,
Evidence for negative effects of unemployment on spouses, children, and families is accumulating (cf., Lobo & Watkins, 1995; Strom, 2003). For example, Ishii-Kuntz and colleagues (2010) found that economic hardship caused by unemployment changed the various family roles in Asian American families and lowered the psychological well-being of some family members. Price, Choi, and Vinokur (2002), building on programmatic unemployment research within the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, note that job loss and unemployment can “trigger a cascade” of secondary stressors that affect both the unemployed worker and his or her family. Moreover, Vinokur, Price, and Caplan (1996) found that economic hardship can contribute to growing frustration that may trigger and sustain a variety of destructive interaction patterns among family members including child abuse, decreases in the mental health of the spouse, decreases in marital quality, and increases in marital and family dissolution.

However, those who advocate a strengths-based perspective recognize that there are also opportunities in unemployment. For example, familial relationships may be improved as a result of the increased time the unemployed individual has to spend with his or her family (Thomas, McCabe & Berry, 1980). Unemployment also allows more time for family interaction, potentially drawing the family closer together (Hartley, 1987). Unemployment may also provide opportunities to reprioritize, change careers, or go back to school (Latack & Dozier, 1986). Helping family members recognize and build on strengths is a first step toward recovery from the crisis. With the predication that unemployment will remain at high levels in the near future, it is important for family researchers and professionals to establish strategies and programs that will lessen the impact and prevalence of the problems associated with unemployment. A
resilience-oriented perspective can serve as a broad framework for intervention and prevention services for unemployed families.

**The Construct of Resilience**

One theoretical perspective that explains the value of building on client strengths focuses on the concept of resilience. The term resilience is more frequently found in social science research over the past two decades. However, definitions of the term vary somewhat throughout the literature (DeHaan, Hawley, & Deal, 2002; Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993; Luthar, Cichetti, & Becker, 2000; McMillen, 1999; Patterson, 2002). For example, some authors consider resilience to be the skills or insights that one gains from the experience of facing adversity (McMillen, 1999; Saleebey, 1996). Others have focused on resilience as the presence of protective factors that seem to allow certain individuals to manage their stress better than others (Garmezy, 1995; Rutter, 1990; Smokowski, 1998; Egeland, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1993). A protective factor moderates against the effects of a stressful situation so that the individual is able to adapt more successfully than they would have had the protective factor not been present (Conrad & Hammen, 1993). An example of a protective factor is social support. Having at least one supportive person has been found to reduce the impact of that person’s stress (Wolin & Wolin, 1993).

Walsh (2003) defined resilience as the capacity to rebound from adversity strengthened and more resourceful than before the adversity. This is the definition that will be used in the current study. Implicit within this notion are two critical conditions: (1) exposure to significant threat or severe adversity; and (2) the achievement of positive adaptation despite major assaults on the developmental process (Garmezy, 1990; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). Thus, the main
question with regard to the concept of resilience is why some people are resilient and others are not.

The current research project applies the theoretical construct of resilience when looking at a family as a system. Most of the literature regarding resilience has looked at an individual’s capacity for managing his or her stress (Early & GlenMaye, 2000; Walsh, 1998; McCubbin, McCubbin, & Thompson, 1993) rather than on how families may overcome and grow through adversity. Few projects have studied the functioning of a family from a systems perspective in order to consider the impact of stress and growth on a system as a whole (DeHaan et al., 2002; Walsh, 1998). Family systems theory suggests that a family is more than just the sum of its parts (Allen-Meares, 1995; Fristad, 1989). Instead, a family system is a distinct unit with boundaries, rules, and patterns of interactions (Nichols, 2004). Applying the theoretical construct of resilience to families from a systems perspective can add new understanding about the ways in which family systems deal with their stress (Walsh, 1998; Patterson, 2002). Moreover, applying the construct of resilience to family systems in the current study will enhance our understanding of the ways in which families learn to deal with and grow stronger through the experience of unemployment.

The current study is significant in being one of the few studies on the impact of unemployment that addresses resilience of families, in addition to resilience of the unemployed individual. More specifically, this study examines the effectiveness of a resilience-based pilot program for unemployed individuals and their family members. The state of Nevada currently has the highest unemployment rate in the nation at 11.7%, thereby lending further justification to the importance of this study. Moreover, the state of Nevada currently has the highest foreclosure rate in the U.S., with one foreclosure for every 177 housing units (Retrieved April 9, 2012, from
Drastic state budget cuts have also added additional stress to families. As such, the poor economic and unemployment climate in Nevada may elucidate what would not be noticed in other states experiencing less stress. This atmosphere has the potential to bring out the best as well as the worst of what happens in families.

Knowledge gained from this study can lead to future interventions at state-centered career centers as well as other employment agencies. For example, results can help to inform intervention programs that seek to build up a family’s capacity to better manage the difficulties they face with job loss. Moreover, results from the current study can help to inform unemployment policy which focuses only on individual job seekers and comes from a deficit model which views troubled individuals and families as ‘damaged’ and beyond repair. This perspective fails to see that individuals and families may have the potential for personal and relational transformation and growth as a result of their adversity.

Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation more fully explored the research idea that applying the construct of resilience to family systems leads to understanding more about ways in which unemployed individuals and their families learn to deal with and grow from this adversity. Chapter 2 presents an introduction to the prevalence and meaning of unemployment, the outcomes associated with unemployment, the impact of unemployment on the family system, and resources available to the unemployed. In addition, Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical perspectives of the research, focusing on resilience and family systems theory. Moreover, the two main objectives are discussed. The first goal of the current project, which makes up Phase I of the project, is to develop, implement and evaluate a resilience-based program, B.R.I.T.E. (Building Resilience in
Transitional Employees), for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. Phase 2 involves follow-up interviews with participants of B.R.I.T.E. six to nine months after their participation. A conceptual model, logic model, and research questions which guide Phases 1 and 2 are also presented.

Chapter 3 introduces the research methods for the first phase of the current study, which highlights the needs assessment of transitional workers as well as the development, implementation, and evaluation of a resilience-based program for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. Additionally, the details of the program and the research design are outlined. Pre- and post-intervention results and an evaluation of the resilience-based program are presented in Chapter 4. Limitations and challenges faced with the implementation of the program are also outlined. Chapter 5 discusses the qualitative research methods used for the second phase of the study. Chapter 6 examines the findings of the follow-up semi-structured interviews and focus group. Implications for researchers, community organizations, and policymakers, limitations of the research, as well as directions for future research are highlighted in Chapter 7.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Since the objective of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of a resilience-based program for unemployed families, it is important to review the literature with regard to unemployment and resilience. First, the literature regarding the prevalence of unemployment, the meaning of unemployment, and the outcomes of unemployment for the individual as well as the family system are outlined. Second, the research on resilience is presented from a historical perspective to show how this construct has developed over time. Finally, resilience-based programs or interventions that have been implemented will be reviewed.

The Prevalence of Unemployment

Since 1984, the BLS has biennially collected data from displaced workers. Unfortunately, the frequency of job loss continued to occur during the robust economy of the 1990s and has increased since September 11, 2001. Since the start of the recession in December 2007 to its peak in December 2010, the number of unemployed persons increased by 7.6 million to 15.1 million and the unemployment rate doubled to 9.8 percent (Retrieved May 20, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). Both the number of unemployed persons (13.1 million) and the unemployment rate (8.5 percent) continued to trend down in December 2011. Moreover, during the current recession, rising unemployment has led to record high levels of long-term unemployment. For instance, among the unemployed (13.1 million), 42.5% (5.6 million) have been jobless for 27 weeks or more, by far the highest proportion of long-term unemployment on record, with data back to 1948 (Retrieved May 20, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov).

The average annual unemployment rate in 2010 was 9.6%, the highest rate of unemployment in the United States in decades, and it is unlikely the unemployment rate will significantly decrease any time soon (Retrieved January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov).
The Survey of Professional Economic Forecasters predicted that the average unemployment rate would be 9.1% at the end of 2011 (actual was 8.9%; Retrieved January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov) and 8.1% at the end of 2012 (Retrieved January 23, 2012, from http://www.phil.frb.org). Thus, with the unemployment rate continuing to remain at higher-than-average levels, unemployment in the United States is an important and timely social issue, and one that deserves attention.

When workers are unemployed, they, their families and the country as a whole lose. Workers and their families lose wages, and the country loses the goods or services which could have been produced. In addition, the purchasing power of these workers is lost, which can lead to unemployment for yet other workers. To know about unemployment—the extent and nature of the problem—requires information. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, persons are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, and are currently available for work (Retrieved December 14, 2010, from http://www.bls.gov). The number of employed and unemployed persons fluctuates during the year in a pattern that tends to repeat itself year after year and which reflects holidays, vacations, harvest time, seasonal shifts in industry production schedules, and similar occurrences. Because of such patterns, it is often difficult to tell whether developments between any two months reflect changing economic conditions or merely normal seasonal fluctuations. For example, unemployment is higher in January and February, when it is cold in many parts of the country and work in agriculture, construction, and other seasonal industries is curtailed. Also, both employment and unemployment rise every June, when students enter the labor force in search of summer jobs. The seasonal fluctuations in the number of employed and unemployed persons reflect not only the normal seasonal weather patterns that tend to be repeated year after year, but
also the hiring (and layoff) patterns that accompany regular events such as the winter holiday season and the summer vacation season. To deal with such problems, a statistical technique called seasonal adjustment is used (Retrieved December 14, 2010, from http://www.bls.gov).

When a statistical series has been seasonally adjusted, the normal seasonal fluctuations are smoothed out and data for any month can be more meaningfully compared with data from any other month or with an annual average (Retrieved December 14, 2010, from http://www.bls.gov). One of the most important seasonally adjusted figures that is published monthly is the unemployment rate, which represents total seasonally adjusted unemployment as a percent of the seasonally adjusted civilian labor force. Typically, the unadjusted rate peaks in January or February and reaches a low point in May or October. However, when the rate is seasonally adjusted and the underlying employment situation has not changed, the rate will essentially be the same throughout the year, varying only within a narrow range which results from sampling and other measurement errors. On the other hand, if changes occur in the underlying employment situation in addition to seasonal movements, these changes will show up as a rising or declining trend in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (Retrieved December 14, 2010, from http://www.bls.gov).

The fruits of the potential labor of the unemployed are lost to them and to the economy. Similarly, for people who are unable to work as many hours each week as they would like, their potential output and earnings for the hours in which they were willing but unable to work are also lost. Such workers are sometimes considered "underemployed." One kind of underemployment occurs when persons take jobs that do not make use of, or pay according to, their skills, training, and experience. An extreme example would be an aerospace engineer working in a fast-food restaurant because no engineering position was available. Another kind of
underemployment occurs when an individual does not have the necessary equipment to achieve maximum efficiency and output. A farmer who uses a mule and a hand plow may work longer and harder and yet may harvest a much smaller crop than a neighbor who works less but has a modern tractor.

Because of the difficulty of developing an objective set of criteria which could be readily used in a monthly household survey, no official government statistics are available on the total number of persons who might be viewed as underemployed or those who have stopped searching for work. Even if many or most could be identified, it would still be difficult to quantify the loss to the economy. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics does gather data on involuntary part-time workers, marginally attached workers, and discouraged workers. The number of persons employed part time for economic reasons (sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers) was 8.1 million in December. These individuals were working part time because their hours had been cut back or because they were unable to find a full-time job (Retrieved on January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). About 2.5 million persons were marginally attached to the labor force in December (data are not seasonally adjusted; Retrieved on January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). These individuals were not in the labor force, wanted and were available for work, and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the four weeks preceding the survey. Among the marginally attached, there were 945,000 discouraged workers in December (data are not seasonally adjusted; Retrieved on January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov). Discouraged workers are persons not currently looking for work because they believe no jobs are available for them. The remaining 1.6 million persons marginally attached to the labor force in December had not searched for work in the four weeks preceding
the survey for reasons such as school attendance or family responsibilities (Retrieved on January 23, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov).

**The Meaning of Unemployment**

Two models are frequently referenced to provide a framework for understanding unemployment: Jahoda’s (1982) Functional Model and Warr’s (1987) Vitamin Model. Briefly, Jahoda’s (1982) Functional Model states that unemployment deprives a person of by-products typically gained from being employed, such as time structure, contact with others outside the family, being part of others’ goals and purposes, personal status and identity, and activity. She believes that leisure is not able to afford these outcomes to individuals and unless they manage to locate alternative ways of achieving them, unemployment will be destructive from both latent (psychological) and manifest (economic) perspectives. Warr’s (1987) Vitamin Model extends Jahoda’s (1982) model and accounts for differences in the quality of work experiences and social issues. Essentially, the Vitamin Model posits that mental health is affected when one becomes unemployed due to the loss of certain job characteristics in a way that is analogous to the effects that vitamins are supposed to have on our physical health. Warr (1987) proposes that unemployment leads to negative psychological and physical outcomes because unemployed individuals do not experience nine positive benefits (or vitamins) associated with employment: opportunity for control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, variety, environmental clarity, availability of money, physical security, opportunity for interpersonal contact, and valued social position.

**Outcomes of Unemployment**

**Negative Effects.** Unemployment is mentally distressing and is usually not chosen voluntarily (Clark & Oswald, 1994). Research supports the idea that job loss is a negative event
although the effects are not universal across and possibly within people. Accordingly, job loss ranks in the upper quartile of unpleasant events that generate life stress (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) and is one of the top ten traumatic life experiences (Spera, Buhrfeind, & Pennebaker, 1994). Virtually every study read and reviewed described herein some negative outcomes of unemployment from the perspective of unemployed individuals and their families. The most prominent and frequent outcomes of unemployment are symptoms of psychiatric disorder and distress, particularly depression (Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996).

Psychological Well-Being. The meta-analytic results of McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, and Kinicki (2005) suggest that unemployment has, on the average, a negative effect on mental health. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) argue that it is appropriate to state there is strong evidence to support a causal relationship because there is consistency in results across multiple types of studies and hundreds of data points. Additionally, actively engaging in job-search activities is a stressful experience and is related to lower mental health for unemployed workers (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In cross-sectional studies, unemployed individuals had lower well-being than employed individuals. In longitudinal studies, well-being declines as individuals move from employment into unemployment but improves as individuals move from unemployment into reemployment. Their examination of correlates suggests that there are several aspects of the unemployment experience (e.g., financial concerns, work-role centrality) that are the actual factors responsible for reduced well-being during unemployment, meaning a causal relationship between unemployment and mental health exists at a very broad level. For example, Price, Friedland, and Vinokur (1998) suggested that job loss and unemployment bring about a “cascade” of secondary stressors such as worry, uncertainty, and financial, family, and marital difficulties.
**Physical Well-Being.** Unemployed individuals report greater physical illness and more health complaints (Schwarzer, Jerusalem, & Hahn, 1994; Turner, 1995), and are more likely to engage in risky health behaviors such as using alcohol (e.g., Catalano, Dooley, Novaco, Wilson, & Hough, 1993; Claussen, 1999) than employed persons. Thornton and Deitz-Allyn (2010) found a strong relationship between problems with unemployment and alcohol and drug abuse among their participants who were unemployed compared to participants who were not unemployed. Hence, these findings indicate that there is a strong relationship between unemployment and substance abuse.

**Positive Effects.** Although much less research has focused on the positive outcomes of unemployment, some researchers have suggested that it creates an opportunity for individuals to change careers and life directions (Latack & Dozier, 1986). Hartley (1980) notes that after a period of time the experience of job loss may be viewed positively because it allows one to redirect career goals and priorities, develop new competencies, consider new alternatives, or leave a dissatisfying or unchallenging job. In addition, the stress in the workplace before termination (i.e., fear of layoffs, long hours, pressure to perform) also creates physical problems and stress that may improve after termination (Yawen, Chun-Wan, Chiou-Jong, & Tung-Liang, 2005). Moreover, it is clear that some individuals are able to counteract many of the psychological and physical costs of unemployment by engaging in activities such as pastimes, hobbies, further education and voluntary work (Brenner & Starrin, 1988; Starrin & Larsson, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1987).

**Coping with Job Loss**

As defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1980), coping strategies are methods employed by people to deal with situations that require a tremendous investment of their resources such as
time and effort. Unemployment by its very nature requires individuals to cope regardless of whether they view it as a positive or negative event. It is important to know what individuals do to help themselves before designing individual interventions and corporate- or government-sponsored assistance programs. Two general types of individual coping strategies—symptom-focused/emotion-focused/escape coping and problem-focused/control coping have appeared in the coping and unemployment literatures. The first general class of coping strategies has been defined as follows: symptom-focused coping consists of those activities, such as joining a support group or asking a friend for financial assistance, that an individual engages in to attempt to decrease the hardship associated with the stressful event (Leana & Feldman, 1995a; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978); emotion-focused coping such as seeking counseling is directed at regulating or managing one’s emotional reactions to the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); and escape coping (e.g., pretending the job loss did not occur) consists of actions and cognitive reappraisals that involve diverting, avoidance strategies (Latack, 1986). A second general class of coping strategies has been referred to as problem-focused coping and control coping. Problem-focused and control coping consists of actions and cognitive reappraisals that are proactive, take-charge in nature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Leana & Feldman, 1995a; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Latack, 1986). For example, this type of coping is demonstrated with attempts by the unemployed individual to change the environment in an effort to eliminate the stress such as considering geographical relocation or pursuing retraining to be employable in other jobs.

Gender has been studied as a moderating variable or a potential influence on job loss reactions. The gender model suggests that the differences between men and women in reacting to stressful events are a result of different socializations, role expectations, and orientations with respect to both work and family (Armstrong-Stassen, 1998). Contrary to gender stereotypes that
portray women as less traumatized by job loss than men, Leana and Feldman (1991) found no significant differences between men and women in psychological and behavioral stress symptoms with regard to job loss. There were differences, however, in how each gender coped with the job loss. Men relied more on problem-focused coping such as job search, while women relied more on symptom-focused activities such as seeking social support. This suggests that there do seem to be differences in how each gender copes with the job loss. This makes sense as access to social support tends to be higher among women (Denton, Prus, & Walters, 2004). Women tend to have more close friends than men and to count other women among their closest friends, whereas men are more likely than women to name their spouse as their best friend (Fuhrer & Stansfeld, 2004). This suggests that emotionally supportive relationships are a key resource for women in coping with stressors.

McKee-Ryan and colleagues (2005) confirmed the findings mentioned above which run counter to previous assumptions that unemployment is more psychologically damaging to men than to women. In their meta-analysis, McKee-Ryan and colleagues (2005) found that unemployed women displayed lower mental health and life satisfaction than their male counterparts. This may be the case since the research suggests that women display more depression and lower mental health than men (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Another possible explanation is that changing gender roles have allowed work to take on a more central presence in the lives and identities of female workers (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). This would seem to apply to women who are the primary breadwinners for the family.

Leana, Feldman, and Tan (1998) examined predictors of problem-focused and symptom-focused coping strategies as well as evaluated the impact of severance pay—an organization intervention—on the coping behaviors of individuals who experienced a plant closing. They
examined individual difference variables (i.e., demographic factors, initial emotional reaction) and situational characteristics (i.e., disruptions created by the layoff, corporate assistance programs) and their relations to the two coping strategies. A longitudinal design was used with data collected one month after the plant closing announcement (two months before closing) and nine months after the layoff from a final sample of 62 who responded to both data collections. The results also suggest that the use of problem-focused and symptom-focused coping strategies are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, replicating previous work and suggesting that individuals use multiple strategies to deal with job loss.

The predictors of three problem-focused (i.e., job search, training, relocation) and three symptom-focused (i.e., social support, financial help, community activism) behaviors were evaluated. The most important predictor of the evaluated coping behaviors was positive reappraisal of the job loss; the least important were age and optimism. Each of the six behaviors was associated with different predictors (see Leana et al., 1998, for details) and sometimes the same predictor had similar effects across the two general coping strategies (contrary to the researchers’ expectations). Again, the intercorrelations among the behaviors suggested that people who cope do so in numerous ways. They also evaluated severance pay with the expectation that it would provide a financial buffer so the unemployed could continue searching for a job. In fact, the opposite occurred; severance pay (measured as weeks receiving pay) had a negative effect on job search behavior (possibly because it reduced the sense of urgency to look for jobs). Consistent with other studies, those who used more problem-focused coping (correlated with symptom-focused coping) were significantly more likely to be reemployed at the follow-up evaluation.
A longitudinal study by Archer and Rhodes (1995) investigated changes in the grief process as it pertains to job loss. In a small sample of 38 individuals who were unemployed for both voluntary and involuntary reasons, they evaluated changes over time with regard to depression, anxiety, work involvement, job involvement, and job satisfaction. Participants also completed an interview and afterward were assigned a grief score. Those who met the criterion cutoff on the grief index were labeled as having a grief like reaction to job loss. The grief index was highly correlated with anxiety, depression, and both work and job involvement. Over five assessments, the grief index showed a decline over time similar to adjustments made in one’s life over time for other types of bereavement. Raber (1996) concurs with Archer and Rhodes (1995) and provides a discussion of the importance of the opportunity of mourning a job in the effective treatment for unemployed workers. In sum, the relationship between coping strategies and well-being during unemployment is a complex one.

**Effect of Job Loss on Families**

Job loss would be expected to affect those close to the individuals of this life event. Research supports this expectation and has focused on the family and those in organizations who remain after a layoff occurs and the plant or company does not close.

**Economic Distress or Financial Strain.** Job loss and/or reduced hours generally lead to a reduction in household income, and though unemployment insurance (UI) provides some relief, UI typically does not replace the unemployed worker’s former salary. Such reductions in household income can affect the family’s ability to pay rent or the mortgage, to buy food and other necessities, disposable income for extracurricular activities, hobbies, and entertainment, and result in losing health insurance benefits and access to medical care. Receiving unemployment insurance compensation provides a limited protective effect on the detrimental
outcomes of unemployment (cf., Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell, & Cortes, 2004), and single-parent families are likely to face considerable distress when unemployed (Gray et al., 2009). Two-income families may experience less effects, since the likelihood of both members becoming unemployed at the same time is lower; however, these families are also likely to be dependent on both incomes. While some households have “emergency funds” in the form of savings or investments, many families face an immediate financial crisis from unemployment. For example, Anong & DeVany (2010) found that only one in 12 households have at least six months of living expenses available in liquid assets. They further report that larger households were less likely to have emergency funds available, and that workers employed in industries likely to be adversely affected by a recession were unlikely to have emergency funds saved up.

The inability to pay bills or meet expenses is called economic or financial distress, strain, or hardship and seems to affect outcomes more strongly than absolute levels of financial resources (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Economic hardship leads to increased depression and anxiety both for unemployed workers and their spouses (e.g., Price et al., 2002; Vosler & Page-Adams, 1996). Economic hardship also negatively affects marital adjustment for both husbands and wives, both directly and through psychological distress (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004), and was linked to a higher probability for divorce (Conger, Elder, Lorenz, Conger, Simons, Whitbeck, Huck, & Melby, 1990). Among a sample of Asian couples, economic hardship affected marital roles and psychological well-being, but not social support or family relations (Ishii-Kuntz, Gomel, Tinsley, & Parke, 2010). Moreover, access to material resources affects family functioning (e.g., Giatti, Barreto, & Comini, 2008) and children’s well-being (Lempers, Clark-Lempers, & Simons, 1989). The new jobs obtained after an unemployment spell often lead to underemployment, or jobs that are of lower quality, including either working for less pay or in a
short-term, part-time, or contract position (Feldman, 1996; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). Insecure employment (for contract employees) was also associated with increased financial strain, work-family conflict, and disagreements with partners, along with decreased life satisfaction and physical health (Scherer, 2009). Hence, underemployment also adversely affects couples and families.

In sum, the economic strain or hardship brought about by job loss and unemployment is associated with detrimental effects on unemployed workers and their families. Economic hardship is often conceptualized as a mediator between unemployment and detrimental outcomes, or as the first step in a causal chain for a host of additional stressors and negative effects (e.g., Price et al., 2002). Economic strain is both a help and a hindrance to becoming reemployed for the unemployed job seeker: financial hardship serves to motivate the job seeker, on one hand, but the depressive symptoms brought about by economic strain also inhibit job-search behavior (Vinokur & Schul, 2002). Unemployment insurance and other forms of short-term income replacement (e.g., stop-gap jobs, part-time or contract work) often fail to alleviate the financial hardship brought about by job loss (McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011; Scherer, 2009) and the family continues to be adversely affected.

**Stress and Mental Health.** A majority of the studies that examine how the unemployment of one spouse affects the well-being of the other indicate that there is a negative association between one spouse’s unemployment and the other spouse’s well-being (e.g., Giatti et al., 2008; Strom, 2003; Whelan, 1992). However, the relationship is not clear cut because the partner’s well-being, the role of financial strain, and other mediating factors could play a role. Thus the exact causal mechanism through which this occurs is not known. In particular, job loss
and unemployment could affect couples by way of experiencing common stressors, by transmitting stress to the other partner, or in declining relationship quality among the partners.

More recently, Song and colleagues (2010) looked at the distress experienced by unemployed workers and their working spouses in China to examine the direct crossover of stressors (stress of one spouse demonstrating a correlation with strain for the other spouse), indirect or mediating crossover (through marital support), and the domain stressor (work stress for employed workers and unemployment stress for unemployed workers) model. Results supported the direct crossover model and further revealed that financial strain and job search contributed to the daily distress of unemployed workers, while work-family and family-work conflict, but not work stress, were linked to increased distress for employed spouses.

**Protective Resources for Coping with Job Loss.** Being married or in a committed relationship seems to provide a protective effect on the mental health and well-being of unemployed workers, as unmarried unemployed workers fare worse than their married counterparts on outcomes such as somatic complaints, depression and anxiety, and life satisfaction (e.g., Hamilton, Broman, Hoffman, & Renner, 1990; Leana & Feldman, 1991). Among unemployed workers, lacking social support is linked to facing greater problem severity and the use of avoidance coping (Walsh & Jackson, 1995), as well as increased illness (Schwarzer et al., 1994), psychosomatic symptoms (Viinamäki, Koskela, & Niskanen, 1993), distress (Gowan, Riordan, & Gatewood, 1999), and depression (Vinokur et al., 1996; Vosler & Page-Adams, 1996). Pre-existing family relations or problems also influence spousal well-being during unemployment (e.g., Liem & Liem, 1988; Lobo & Watkins, 1995).

Spouses and families affect the coping behaviors of the unemployed worker by providing or withholding social support as a protective resource for the stress accompanying job loss.
(Kinicki, Prussia, & McKee-Ryan, 2000). Spouses can also undermine the job seeker (e.g., Vinokur et al., 1996; Vinokur & van Ryn, 1993). An interview study of male job losers and their families highlighted that the emotions experienced by the job seeker as he negotiated the search process affected his spouse and children, that the emotions of the job seeker and his spouse influenced each other, and that the family worked to regain a sense of normalcy after job loss (Buzzanell & Turner, 2003). In a sample of middle-aged Chinese men, worsened mental health was reported by unemployed men with lowered household income, who quarreled with their wives, and who expressed anger to their families. Interestingly, unemployed men were less likely to display lowered mental health when their family members grumbled at them regarding their job loss and when they felt less sorry for the family for their unemployment (Chiu & Ho, 2006), highlighting the complex relationships between family variables and the effects of unemployment.

Research focusing on families and their adaptation to short-term challenges and longer-term crises also highlight the role of family resilience (e.g., Walsh, 2003) in the process of coping with job loss and unemployment. Walsh (2003) defines resilience as the ability to withstand and rebound from disruptive life challenges, and notes that family resilience derives from effective family functioning within the family unit rather than from a collection of resilient individuals within the family. Hallmarks of resilient families are found within 1) the family belief system, 2) the organizational patterns within the family, and 3) the communication and problem-solving used within the family. For the family belief system, families tend to fare better when they make meaning out of their adversity and cognitively reframe it as a challenge to be faced by the family, when they maintain a positive and optimistic outlook, and when they view the situation in a transcendent or spiritual way, looking for the opportunity to grow and change
from the experience. For organizational patterns, resilient families tend to be flexible and adaptable, to seek interconnectedness with each other while respecting personal boundaries, and to have social and financial resources they can mobilize to deal with the stressor or crisis. For communication and problem-solving, resilience derives from clear communication, sharing emotions and empathizing with one another, and working together to collaboratively problem-solve. Walsh further notes that the life stage of the family affects resilience and coping patterns; for example, coping with unemployment is different for families with young children in the home versus those with high school or college aged children.

Taken together, research highlights the importance of resources for the unemployed worker and his or her family when coping with job loss and unemployment. Specifically, the worker and his or her spouse can support or undermine one another, family resilience leads to more positive outcomes for the family, and support from friends, relatives, and the broader community can provide another resource for families coping with unemployment.

**Family Roles and Unemployed Workers’ Identity.** Job loss also has the potential to affect the unemployed worker’s sense of self and his or her identity (e.g., Buzzanell & Turner, 2003). Because work is such an integral and important aspect of life, unemployment can significantly alter the roles one fulfills both at work and at home. Identity theory suggests that the more central a role is to the person’s sense of self or identity, the greater the potential impact of the loss of that role (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Thoits, 1995).

In the context of job loss and unemployment, however, multiple roles are lost, damaged, changed, or added simultaneously and generally speaking, very quickly. Losing a job can mean losing one’s career role identity as a worker, professional (e.g., CPA, construction worker, etc.), or industry member, but it can also affect family or household role identities, such as
breadwinner or financial supporter, and shift them to other roles that are deemed to be of lower status or less important (as subjectively determined), such as child-care provider or homemaker. Such identity and role changes also potentially create subtle and overt shifts in the power dynamics of a household.

Hence, job loss can affect family structures, but family members may not be aware of the extent of the changes (Lara & Kindsvatter, 2010). For example, the proportion of domestic duties completed by men and women may shift and be different than among working spouses (Strom, 2003). Because a newly unemployed worker is now home at different times, for example, chores and roles may shift. This type of adaptation may be unplanned and result in family members being “out of sorts” with each other without consciously knowing the root cause of their unhappiness or shifted roles. As mentioned, unemployment can also affect the power balance in a family, particularly when the “breadwinner” becomes unemployed.

Moreover, job loss can be emasculating and require men to reconstruct their masculine identities (Buzzanell & Turner, 2003; Sherman, 2009) and roles (Chiu & Ho, 2006). Sherman’s (2009) ethnographic study of rural couples affected by the loss of jobs due to the main employer leaving town identified two very different adaptations to job loss. First, couples that adhered to strict gender roles and masculine identities were labeled “rigid.” Second, adaptive couples in which the male renegotiated a sense of male success and achievement away from breadwinner and toward good parent were labeled “flexible.” The detrimental effects of unemployment – increased marital discord, seasonal and out of town work, controlling and violent behavior toward one’s spouse, and drug use – tended to be concentrated among the rigid couples. At the opposite end of the spectrum, identifying oneself as a father influenced both getting and keeping
a job and being involved in his child’s life among a sample of unmarried fathers (Cabrera, Fagan, & Farrie, 2008).

Though not causally connected, this identity reconstruction may also be at play in terms of family conflict and violence. Unemployment was linked to increased male-to-female partner violence among couples including a male construction industry worker (Cunradi, Todd, Duke & Ames, 2009). Problem drinking was also a predictor of partner violence, but it did not exacerbate the effects of unemployment. Violent behavior (male-to-female) was increased only when current unemployment was considered, not as a result of several jobless spells, leading the researchers to posit that the acute stress of joblessness prompted the violent actions of males. Qualitative research suggests that anger and frustration from the daily experience of being unemployed plays out in men’s aggressive or violent behavior toward their spouse (e.g., Sherman, 2009).

Interestingly, a different pattern of violence emerged when longer-term unemployment was considered. Female-to-male partner violence increased among couples with long-term unemployment of male construction industry workers (Cunradi et al., 2009). These authors speculate that this partner violence stems from the accumulated stress of unemployment spells. If these men held traditional gender-role attitudes, they may have been less likely to adapt to new family roles, such as performing “women’s work” and helping out with household chores as they habituated to long-term unemployment, leaving their spouses the double burden of being the breadwinner and performing household chores (e.g., Sherman, 2009). Longer term unemployment on the part of the husband was also negatively related to the wife’s marital satisfaction (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2004), suggesting that wives also have role expectations for their husbands which may be affected by unemployment.
**Effects of Unemployment on Children.** Strom’s (2003) review revealed a negative effect of unemployment on children, including both negative health effects and educational attainment. In the following section, recent research on the effects of unemployment on children, including the mental health of children, child development, and human capital/educational attainment of children is summarized.

As noted previously, mental health is diminished for household members of unemployed workers. The negative relationship between unemployment and mental health is expected to operate through the relationships between parents and children and the quality of parenting among unemployed workers (e.g., Strom, 2003). For example, unemployment is a risk factor for child maltreatment and neglect (cf., Euser, van Ilzendoorn, Prinzie, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010). Among Dutch children, emotional and behavioral problems were more likely for children of unemployed workers. These problems were most pronounced among children whose parent was unemployed within the preceding 12 months versus those with more distant unemployment experiences (Harland, Reijneveld, Brugman, Verloove-Vanhorick, & Verhulst, 2002). In a sample of 1992 adolescents in Slovakia, parental support from the employed parent displayed a protective effect on adolescents’ perceived health, but parental support from the unemployed parent did not (Bacikova-Sleskova, Geckova, van Dijk, Groothoff & Reijneveld, 2011). The authors note that the unemployed parent’s stress may inhibit the effectiveness of support for children.

Job loss affects child development (Kalil, 2009). Children from economically disadvantaged families, characterized by low-income jobs and unemployment, displayed lower early learning. The effect was more pronounced for boys and was expected to accumulate over time and become more pronounced as the children grow and develop (Mensah & Kiernan, 2010).
Rates for stillbirths were higher for unemployed workers and homemakers than for professionally employed workers in Germany (Reime, Jacob, & Wenzlaff, 2008). The authors note that this may be due to lack of economic resources, lacking social support from professional networks, a co-variation with educational status, or poor health and risk behaviors. Access to prenatal care was available for the sample, regardless of socio-economic status. Unger, Hamilton, and Sussman (2004) found that adolescents were significantly more likely to try smoking for the first time after a family member lost a job.

Stevens and Schaller’s (2011) analysis of US Census Bureau data showed that children were more likely to have to repeat a grade following a parental job loss. The timing of this increased likelihood suggests a causal relationship, and the authors posit that the shock of job loss contributes to school difficulties. Kalil and Wightman (2011) also showed that parental unemployment is significantly negatively related to children pursuing postsecondary education, and that this effect is three-times stronger for Black than for White families. A study across 17 countries found a negative relationship between father’s unemployment and children’s literacy. However, contrary to expectations, unemployment insurance levels of the country did not lessen the effect of unemployment in this prospective study (Siddiqi, Subramanian, Berkman, Hertzman, & Kawachi, 2007). Children who grow up in jobless families may also lack role modeling for healthy work attitudes of the responsibility and self-discipline required for career success (Brown, 2009). As with spouses, unemployment negatively affects children through complex causal mechanisms.

**Needed Changes and Additions to Unemployment Research**

This section makes specific recommendations for future research in the job loss and unemployment areas. Researchers have learned a great deal about the job loss event and the state
of unemployment, but there are some minor as well as major issues in need of research so the intervention applications presented in the last section may be of a better design.

**Financial Issues.** Several researchers have indicated the need to examine variations in the financial circumstances of unemployed individuals given their moderating effect on both individual and family outcomes. Thus, the effects of economic buffering factors such as unemployment insurance benefits and public assistance on individuals and families need detailed study. Moreover, all research studies in this area should report and evaluate the length of unemployment experience, as the financial situations for most individuals erode over time. An issue pertinent to the financial arena but also to other areas concerns the timing when researchers evaluate the effects of unemployment. Catalano, Dooley, and Rook (1987) state that most studies evaluate individuals, on average, six months after job separation. The six-month time frame may be too short to capture most, if not all, of the undesirable economic events for individuals and their families. Finally, studies of the long-term unemployed—those without jobs for more than two years—are especially vulnerable to greater economic hardship. In Sales’s (1995) study, 80% of the workers unemployed for more than two years received some form of government assistance and 61% of these households lived on less than $8,000 per year. Research on these discouraged workers is needed. In addition, they may need special interventions to maintain their work identities and assistance managing their finances if they are household heads or have dependent children.

**Longitudinal Studies, Heterogeneous and Large Samples.** As mentioned previously, longer periods of time and more frequent time intervals are needed to obtain a better understanding of the coping strategies, consequences, and adjustments to unemployment that are made by individuals and families. In addition, these longitudinal studies of job loss should be
comprehensive and examine all four life facets (i.e., economic, psychological, physiological, and social) described by Latack et al. (1995) in addition to the outcome of reemployment. Many job loss studies also had small sample sizes and there was a noticeable tendency to focus on blue-collar male workers. Studies with large heterogeneous samples in terms of gender, age, and job classification would be desirable. As reported earlier, women are experiencing increasing unemployment, the educational level of workers affected by layoffs is higher, and older individuals have more difficulty finding reemployment. These different groups should initially be evaluated separately because some of the past research suggests that the experience may be different for the different categories. If consistent, replicated differences are found, researchers need to pursue the psychological and situational variables that might explain the differences between the groups (e.g., men and women).

**Positive Outcomes of Job Loss.** Although job loss is usually cited as a negative life event, occasionally, after a period of time, the experience may be viewed positively (Hartley, 1980). Losing a job may become an opportunity to redirect one’s career goals, consider new alternatives, return to school to develop new skills, or leave a dissatisfying job. Additionally, there are potential benefits to the family system when an individual family member is unemployed. As mentioned earlier, the unemployed individual now has more time to spend with the family. Perhaps the loss of one’s job gives one an opportunity to reflect and reprioritize the various aspects of the individual’s and the family’s life. This may result in relocating to a less expensive area and starting a business or finding a more satisfying career. In sum, research on the perceptions, coping, and adaptability of families of unemployed individuals needs attention (Dunlop, 1997). Given the numerous negative outcomes identified for spouses and children of unemployed individuals as well as the psychological and physical reactions they may have to
cope with from the unemployed individual, the antecedents and intervening variables need to be identified and pursued to avoid these outcomes.

**Resources Available to Unemployed Families**

Every state operates a program of unemployment insurance, usually providing up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. However, each state has its own qualifying rules, so that in some states, only 25 percent of unemployed workers collect benefits, while more than 50 percent of unemployed workers collect benefits in several other states. Many of these state qualifying rules make it especially difficult for low-wage, women and part-time workers to collect unemployment. In addition, the weekly amount of unemployment benefits varies significantly from state to state. Each state also operates, through the use of funds associated with the Workforce Investment Act, one-stop career centers for individuals who are looking for employment.

**Unemployment Insurance.** In general, the Federal-State Unemployment Insurance Program provides unemployment benefits to eligible workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own (as determined under State law), and meet other eligibility requirements of State law. Unemployment insurance payments (benefits) are intended to provide temporary financial assistance to unemployed workers who meet the requirements of State law. Each State administers a separate unemployment insurance program within guidelines established by Federal law. Eligibility for unemployment insurance, benefit amounts and the length of time benefits are available are determined by the State law under which unemployment insurance claims are established. Extended Benefits are available to workers who have exhausted regular unemployment insurance benefits during periods of high unemployment. The basic Extended Benefits program provides up to 13 additional weeks of benefits when a State is experiencing
high unemployment. Some States have also enacted a voluntary program to pay up to 7 additional weeks (20 weeks maximum) of Extended Benefits during periods of extremely high unemployment (Retrieved on December 10, 2010, from http://www.doleta.gov).

In 2002, Congress revamped the federal benefits available to workers who lost their jobs (or have less work) due to trade imports or exports, called Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). These 2002 changes, and the recent reforms made under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which was signed into law by President Obama in February 2009, allow qualifying workers to receive career counseling, and in some cases, up to 156 weeks of subsidized training and income support. Additionally, certified workers are eligible for a refundable federal income tax credit covering 80% of the cost of health coverage through the Health Coverage Tax Credit (Retrieved on December 10, 2010, from http://www.doleta.gov).

The ARRA included significant amendments to the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, changing it for the better. TAA now covers more workers, including those who work in the service and public sectors (not just those that are "article-producing" as before) and lost their jobs as their employers obtained similar services overseas. Workers whose firms shift production to non-Free Trade Agreement countries (such as China, India, or Europe) can now be covered under TAA. Additionally, component parts workers, who previously qualified for TAA certification if they could show increased imports of the (essentially) same parts they were producing, now qualify if imports of items that incorporate the parts they produce have contributed to their loss of employment (Retrieved on December 10, 2010, from http://www.doleta.gov).

**Additional State Programs.** Nevada Check Up is the State of Nevada’s Children’s Health Insurance Program. It provides low-cost, comprehensive health care coverage to low
income, uninsured children (0 through 18 years of age) who are not covered by private insurance or Medicaid. A child is eligible if he/she is a U.S. citizen or "qualified alien", has not had health insurance within the last six months, or has recently lost insurance for reasons beyond the parents' control. The family’s gross annual income is between 100% and 200% of the Federal Poverty Level guidelines (Retrieved on January 10, 2012, from https://nevadacheckup.nv.gov/faq.htm#qualify).

The Adult and Dislocated Worker Program, under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, is designed to provide quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals in finding and qualifying for meaningful employment, and to help employers find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in business (Retrieved on December 10, 2010, from http://www.doleta.gov). Services are provided through One-Stop Career Centers. There are three levels of service:

- Core services - includes outreach, job search and placement assistance, and labor market information available to all job seekers;
- Intensive services - Includes more comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans and counseling and career planning; and
- Training services - Customers are linked to job opportunities in their communities, including both occupational training and training in basic skills.

Nevadaworks is the state agency that coordinates workforce development to meet the needs of employers in northern Nevada. Nevadaworks does this by understanding the work place requirements of employers and economic development agencies and then works with educational institutions, public and private providers, and state and local agencies to craft necessary training elements for individuals. Additionally, Nevadaworks provides businesses, economic
development authorities, educational institutions, governmental agencies and individuals unique occupational, labor and workforce statistics and information that meet locally-identified economic and employer needs (Retrieved from http://www.nevadaworks.com on November 3, 2010).

Nevadaworks funds workforce training through various agencies which coordinate with other partners in the JobConnect Centers located in Reno, Sparks and Carson City. These Centers provide access to complete and comprehensive workforce services for employers and individuals, offering on-site resource centers, access to training resources, job order and job referral services, placement assistance, meeting and interview rooms, training centers for workshops, basic computer and resume writing skills and other specialized programs as needed. Thus, services such as workshops on Resume Writing and Networking are available to individuals, but there are no workshops or programs that include the spouse/partner and/or children of the unemployed individual. Thus, state agencies (i.e., one-stop career centers) and employment agencies in the private sector presently focus only on the unemployed individual. Instead, they need to adopt a wider focus, as the research clearly demonstrates that others close to the unemployed individual can be affected by the unemployment experience as well. Numerous negative outcomes (i.e., diminished mental health of the household members, increased marital conflict, and increased child abuse and partner violence) have been identified for spouses and children of unemployed individuals. If the government, society, and families can be proactive and assist unemployed individuals in their unemployment experience, perhaps some of the negative consequences for both individuals and families can be avoided. Future interventions should consider moving beyond the presenting client to the entire family system and utilizing a resilience-based approach to provide tools to unemployed families to more
effectively cope with and prevail from this transitional period. For example, family-based counseling services, peer support groups, and targeted workshops on topics such as stress management, conflict resolution, communication skills, budgeting, problem solving skills and management skills could be offered.

**Resilience**

This section (a) reviews the history of resilience research; (b) highlights the literature and theoretical foundations of family resilience and (c) provides practical applications of a resilience orientation to family-related assessment and treatment.

**Historical Foundation of Resilience**

Although the literature regarding resilience has increased since the early 1990s, some of the first ideas related to this construct came out of a longitudinal study that started in 1954 (Werner & Smith, 1989; 1992). Werner and Smith (1989, 1992) followed at-risk children on the island of Kauai into their adulthood. These children were identified to be at-risk when at least four risk factors were present in their early years. Risk factors included poverty, violence in the home, divorce, mental illness or serious medical problems in the family. Their initial findings showed that two-thirds of their sample experienced negative outcomes in adolescence or early adulthood such as teen pregnancy, trouble in school, or referrals to the court system for various offenses. However, these researchers also found that one third of these at-risk youth became what they defined as healthy, caring adults. Many of these individuals were in committed relationships, working, and reported to be doing well.

The results of the Kauai study left other researchers questioning these situations in which people seem to do better than expected considering their difficult life experiences. Many of these initial studies took a developmental approach in that they looked at how children who grew up
with high levels of stress were able to develop into well-functioning adults. For example, Wolin and Wolin (1993) conducted a qualitative study in which they looked at a sample of successful adults who had experienced high levels of stress and trauma in their childhood. The study found several consistent themes such as a capacity for humor and a sense of independence that these resilient adults discussed as important aspects in their ability to overcome their difficulties. Similarly, Palmer (1997) looked at adult children of alcoholics and presented common characteristics among this sample that were significant in helping these individuals to avoid problems with addiction in their adult lives. Palmer (1997) identified these factors as the presence of support systems, the maintenance of healthy coping strategies, and stability in the family. Both of these studies used qualitative methods to explore the concept of resilience with adults. The small sample size and methods limit the ability to generalize these findings; however, they help to increase our understanding regarding this process of resilience for these particular samples.

Other researchers looked at resilience by comparing children who were coping well to those who were not. Radke-Yarrow and Brown (1993) conducted a longitudinal study that sought to understand the differences between well-functioning children and children who exhibit behavioral or emotional problems. Both groups were identified to be at risk due to being raised in chaotic homes with parents who were diagnosed with mental illness. The findings showed that some children adapt to chaos and stress better than others. Strengths such as having a support person outside of the family, having increased levels of social competence, and being able to identify strategies for coping were identified within the group of well-functioning children. Similarly, Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe (1993) conducted a longitudinal study regarding environmental risks to infants such as poverty, family stress, and maltreatment. Their research
found that a positive relationship with a caregiver or parent mediates the risk of these environmental stressors. These studies helped to expand what is known about resilience by beginning to test theory through quantitative methods including the use of a control group. They also validate some of the ideas gained from qualitative studies regarding the idea that there are consistent factors that seem to help children overcome childhood difficulties and to develop into health adults.

In addition to these developmental approaches to resilience, theorists began defining the theory further by introducing terms such as risk and protective factors. For example, Smokowski (1998) offers a conceptual framework that blends the concepts of risk and resilience. Smokowski’s (1998) model identifies protective factors that lower the effect that risks ultimately have on an individual. Specifically, he identifies many factors including child maltreatment, racial discrimination, and poverty as things that are associated with one’s risk for problems in the future. However, he also identifies protective factors such as self-esteem, positive social supports, and the presence of opportunity as minimizing the impact of the risk factors. His work suggests that the presence of these protective factors lead to better outcomes (Smokowski, 1998). By presenting this theoretical model, it allows for further testing of the construct of resilience. Other researchers who have looked at the role of protective factors in improving outcomes include Rutter (1990), Garmezy (1994), Masten and Coatsworth (1998), and Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky (1994).

Further theoretical perspectives on resilience include the work by Smith and Carlson (1997). Their research expands the idea of protective factors, explaining that there are individual, family, and external factors that can lead to success in one’s life. Individual protective factors they identify include temperament, sociability, humor, intelligence, and self-efficacy. Family-
level protective factors include consistent parenting, positive interaction between parents, and the presence of both parents in a child’s life. External factors include the availability of opportunity, positive school environments, healthy peer interactions and support systems (Smith & Carlson, 1997).

In addition to understanding the protective factors that can help individuals achieve better outcomes, some researchers began expanding the concept of resilience by considering whether or not there are positive gains that actually develop out of the experience of stress. McMillen (1999) and Saleebey (1996) discuss the benefits that can come from facing adversity. They are not only considering the factors that seem to protect people from the effects of risks. Their work suggests that adversity in itself can actually build positive characteristics in one’s life (McMillen, 1999; Saleeby, 1996). McMillen (1999) suggests that people who experience trauma report perceived benefits such as increased sense of efficacy, increased sensitivity toward others, strengthened spirituality, and improved social relationships.

More recently, the focus of resilience has been extended to the family unit (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Walsh, 1998, 2003). The next section provides a discussion of the family resilience literature along with related practical applications.

**Understanding Family Resilience**

Two components familiar to most definitions of resilience are that (a) the individual/family demonstrates a positive response to an adverse situation (Buckley, Thorngen, & Kleist, 1997; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) and (b) the individual/family emerges from the situation feeling strengthened, more resourceful, more confident, and developmentally, advanced (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Patterson, 2002). Many family resilience researchers recognize that resilience is a multidimensional construct (Masten & Coatsworth,
Three dimensions are frequently identified as the key components of family resilience. The first dimension is the length of the adverse situation faced by the family. The situation could be short-term, referred to as a “challenge,” or long-term, referred to as a “crisis” (Buckley et al., 1997; H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Walsh, 1998). Challenges are short-term situations that require adaptation (i.e., relatively minor challenges to the family’s current functioning), whereas crises are chronic situations that require adjustment (i.e., major changes that significantly affect the family’s operations) (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988).

A second dimension of resilience is the life stage during which the family encounters a challenge or crisis (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Walsh, 1998). The life stage influences the type of challenge or crisis a family may encounter at a given time and the strength of the family to successfully cope and emerge from it. There are different types of challenges and crises that families commonly encounter during various life stages (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988). For example, families with preschool- and school-age children may face financial strains, intrafamilial strains, employment strains, and difficulties that are associated with pregnancy. Family life stage also affects how well a family responds to adverse circumstances.

According to Walsh (1998), longitudinal studies reveal that family resilience is an ongoing interactive process between the family’s resilient characteristics and the family’s life stage. Families may use their strengths to effectively overcome challenges during one life stage; however, the same strengths may be insufficient when challenging situations are encountered at subsequent stages of family life. Some of the more robust strengths or coping mechanisms known to help a family withstand a challenge or crisis include high-quality marital
communication, satisfaction with quality of life, financial management skills, family
celebrations, family hardiness, family time and routines, and family traditions (H. I.
McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988). Resilient families use a combination of individual,
family, and community strengths and resources in adapting and adjusting to normative
transitions and stressful events.

A third dimension of resilience is related to the internal or external sources of support
that a family uses during a challenge or crisis (McCubbin, Futrell, Thompson, &
Thompson, 1998; Walsh, 2003). For example, a family may rely solely on the inherent strengths
of its immediate members or may seek out support from extended family and community
agencies. Although empirical investigations of this dimension seem to be limited in number,
research suggests that greater resilience is found in those families who reach out to others in their
social environment, including extended family, friends, and community members (H. I.
McCubbin, M. A. McCubbin, Thompson, & Thompson, 1995). This may be especially true for
individuals from cultural groups that place great value on interdependence or connectedness
among its members (J. A. McCubbin et al., 1998). In addition to social support received from
schools, churches, and neighborhood resources, the effective utilization of health care and mental
health services appears to strengthen family resilience (M. A. McCubbin, Balling, Possin,
Friedrich, & Bryne, 2002; J. A. McCubbin et al., 1998).

Theoretical Models of Family Resilience

Several systems-oriented research, prevention, and intervention models have provided a
framework for identifying key processes that are thought to strengthen a family’s ability
to cope with stressful life situations. From these family systems models, two have emerged that
focus specifically on the concept of family resilience. These two models, the resiliency model of
Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR) Model (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; H. I. McCubbin et al., 1995) and the systems theory of family resiliency (Walsh, 1998), seem to provide a meaningful bridge between the family system orientation and resilience-oriented practices.

H. I. McCubbin and colleagues developed the resiliency model of Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR) Model (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; H. I. McCubbin et al., 1995) from the ABCX (Hill, 1949) and Double ABCX Family Stress Theories. According to family stress theory and specifically FAAR, adjustment and adaptation to stress involve restoring a balance between demands and capabilities. In other words, families use their capabilities (coping behaviors and resources) to meet the challenges faced in a stressful situation. When imbalance occurs, and demands exceed capabilities (maladaptation), families enter the crisis experience (Patterson, 2002). Bonadaptation occurs when capabilities actually exceeds demands (Patterson, 1988). When families can maintain a balance, and their demands do not exceed their coping capabilities, they are said to be adapted (Patterson, 2002), readjusted (Holmes & Rahe, 1967), or resilient (Patterson, 2002). Thus, this model can help to explain the behaviors of families under stress in terms of the central roles played by the family’s strengths, resources, and coping mechanisms as the family progresses throughout the life stage. Using this model, practitioners can help families identify coping mechanisms used in their adaptation to normative stressors and in their adjustment to non-normative stressors. This prevention-oriented model has been applied to samples of post-divorce, military, and ethnically diverse families (Golby & Bretherton, 1999; H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988).

The systems theory of family resilience (Walsh, 2003) sets forth a framework that serves as a conceptual map to identify and target key family processes that can reduce stress and
vulnerability in high-risk situations, foster healing and growth out of crisis, and empower families to overcome prolonged adversity. A basic premise in this systemic view is that serious crises or adversity have an impact on the whole family (Walsh, 2003). These stresses can disrupt the functioning of a family system, with ripple effects to all members and their relationships. A second premise is that all families have the potential for resilience and this principle can be maximized by identifying and building on key strengths and resources within the family (Walsh, 2003). These processes, according to Walsh (2003), enable the family system to rally in times of crisis, to buffer the stress, and to support optimal adaptation. Walsh emphasizes three key processes of family resilience: family belief system, organizational patterns, and communication. A family belief system involves how a family views and approaches a crisis situation, which subsequently influences potential solutions (Walsh, 2003). A positive belief system, centered on overcoming adversity through problem resolution, interconnectedness, and potential for growth, enables a family to unite and view the situation as a “normal” life challenge. By normalizing the situation, a family is able to evaluate potential resources and create a positive and hopeful outlook.

The second key process, organizational patterns, centers on promoting family resilience through flexibility, connectedness, and identification of available resources (Walsh, 2003). For example, families immigrating to a new country may face the difficulty of maintaining connections with family and valued customs left behind while also restructuring and reaching out to new friends and other community resources (Walsh, 2003). In unemployed families, this might include adopting greater flexibility in roles, creating/finding new resources, and finding new ways to connect with and support one another. The third key process focuses on developing open communication within the family (Walsh, 2003), which fosters a level of trust and mutual
respect that leads to the acceptance of individual family member differences and the freedom to express emotions. These two models, though different in orientation and applicability, focus on empowering the family as a unit through improved communication, utilization of the strengths, and use of existing family support networks and resources offered by the community.

**Resilience of “Family Members” versus “Family” Resilience**

Contrary to the traditional view that family resilience is the sum of the resilient characteristics of individual family members, the contemporary perspective considers the characteristics of the family as a unit in addition to those of each individual. The literature suggests that family resilience is the result of interplay between the characteristics of the individuals within the family and the characteristics of the family unit (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988). This is a vital consideration when working with families from various cultural backgrounds who may be more focused on their functioning as a family unit than they are on individual characteristics (J. A. McCubbin et al., 1998). This section includes a discussion of resilience-related characteristics of family members and the family unit.

Each family member contributes uniquely to family resiliency. Adult resilient characteristics are usually viewed in terms of personality traits and coping mechanisms used to adjust and adapt to adverse life situations. For example, resilient adults tend to display a high level of spirituality, acceptance of their own and others’ personality traits, and adaptability to environmental changes (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Walsh, 2003). Individuals with a strong sense of purpose and a positive outlook on life appear to have a greater capacity to transcend life’s challenges compared to less optimistic people. Children also contribute to the resilience of the family unit in very important ways. Resilience in children is
influenced by the child’s age, cognitive and emotional development, self-esteem, social orientation, achievement motivation, and social comprehension (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In addition to the contributions of individual family members, qualities or characteristics of the family unit as a whole can influence resilience. Families are considered to be resilient if they exhibit a strong focus on family accord, communication, finances, and family-focused events (H. I. McCubbin & M. A. McCubbin, 1988; Walsh, 2003). Families may be successful in meeting life’s challenges if they maintain balanced relationships within the immediate and extended family through communicating needs to and spending time with one another. A family’s confidence that it will survive in spite of hindrances can be positively influenced by behaviors that demonstrate the importance of family time and relationships (Walsh, 2003). Such behaviors might include family meals, family game nights, family trips, family meetings, and family traditions. The nurturing of supportive relationships with one another can assist family members in improving their ability to grow, learn, and challenge each other in positive and growth-enhancing ways (Walsh, 2003).

**Resilience Model in the Current Study**

The proposed study utilizes the Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment, and Adaptation as its foundation. The Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR) Model is rooted in the landmark work of Hill (1949) and his ABCX Model of Family Stress. A stressor event (A factor) is defined most often as an event that is capable of causing change and stress but that does not necessarily do so every time. It can be normative, unexpected, volitional, chronic, and inside or outside the family. Stress is synonymous with change (Boss, 1986). It is experienced as a process rather than an event and thus implies change. Crisis differs from stress
in that it is a change so acute, severe, and overwhelming that the family system is blocked or immobilized.

Family coping resources (B factor) are its individual and collective strengths at the time the stressor event occurs. Examples are economic security, health, intelligence, job skills, proximity, spirit of cooperation, relationship skills, and network and social supports. The family’s resources are the sociological, economic, psychological, emotional, and physical assets on which the members can draw in response to a single stressor event or an accumulation of events (Boss, 1986).

The definition the family makes of the seriousness of the experienced stressor is called the C factor in Hill’s (1949) model. Stressor events and related hardships produce tension in the family which needs to be managed. If not overcome, stress emerges. Family stress is defined as a state which arises from an actual or perceived demand-capability imbalance in the family’s functioning and which is characterized by a multidimensional demand for adjustment or adaptive behavior (Boss, 1986). Stress then is not stereotypic, but rather varies depending upon the nature of the situation, the characteristics of the family, and the psychological and physical well-being of its members (Boss, 1986). Family distress is defined as an unpleasant or disorganized state which arises from an actual or perceived imbalance in family functioning and which is also characterized by a multidimensional demand for adjustment or adaptive behavior (Boss, 1986).

All of the above-mentioned factors influence the family’s resistance or its ability to prevent the stressor event or transition from creating a crisis. Crisis (the X factor) has been conceptualized as a continuous variable denoting the amount of disruptiveness, disorganization, or an immobilization in the family social system. As distinct from stress which is demand-capability imbalance, crisis is characterized by the family’s inability to restore stability and by
the continuous pressure to make changes in the family structure and patterns of interaction (Boss, 1986). In other words, stress may never reach crisis proportions if the family is able to use existing resources and define the situation as to resist systemic change and maintain family stability.

McCubbin and Patterson (1983) created the Double ABC-X Model using Hill’s original ABC-X Model as its foundation and added post-crisis variables in an effort to describe: (a) the additional life stressors and strains which shape the course of family adaptation; (b) the critical psychological, intra-familial, and social resources families acquire and employ over time in managing crisis situations; (c) the changes in definition and meaning families develop in an effort to make sense out of their predicament; (d) the coping strategies families employ; and (e) the range of outcomes of these family efforts. An expansion of the Double ABC-X Model which identifies, describes, and integrates the process components of family behavior in response to a stressor and to a family crisis is called the Family Adjustment and Adaptation Response (FAAR).

The aA Factor is the pile-up of family demands. Five broad types of stressors and strains contributing to a pile-up in the family system: (a) initial stressor and its hardships; (b) normative transitions; (c) prior strains; (d) the consequences of family efforts to cope; and (e) ambiguity, both intra-family and social. The bB Factor (family adaptive resources) includes two general types: existing and expanded. One of the most important resources is social support (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The cC Factor (family definition and meaning) is the meaning the family gives to the total crisis situation which includes the stressor believed to have caused the crisis, as well as the added stressors and strains, old and new resources, and estimates of what needs to be done to bring the family back into balance. Family coping is not stressor specific, but involves
efforts to manage various dimensions of family life at the same time, realizing that a perfect solution is never possible. Families learn to compromise.

Family adaptation (the xX Factor) becomes the central concept in the Double ABC-X model used to describe the outcome of family efforts to achieve a new level of balance in family functioning which was upset by a family crisis. The positive end of the continuum of family adaptation is called bonadaptation, while family maladaptation is the negative end of the continuum. The FAAR Model evolved as an extension of the Double ABCX with an emphasis on describing the processes involved in the family’s efforts to balance demands and resources.

In the face of a stressor, family adjustment is determined by several important interacting components. The Stressor (A) and its severity interact with the family’s Vulnerability (V), which is shaped by the pile-up of family stressors, transitions, and strains occurring in the same period as the stressor (McCubbin, Thompson, & McCubbin, 1996). These components interact with the family’s Resources (B). Quality communication between the husband and wife and a family’s willingness to be supportive of each other are examples of resources. This, in turn, interacts with the family’s Appraisal (C), or shared definition, of the Stressor. The family’s appraisal interacts with the family’s Problem Solving and Coping Strategies (PSC), such as adopting an affirming communication style and seeking help from close friends. These components interact with one another to shape the level of adjustment in the family. Some stressors do not create major hardships for the family system, particularly when moderated by the family’s resources, problem solving and coping abilities, and appraisals. In these situations, bonadjustment is the outcome in which the family moves through the stressful situation with relative ease. For example, in the face of a male spouse losing a job, a family may struggle with the mother’s return to the paid work force. Rather than taking on two full-time jobs as homemaker and employee outside of the
home, other patterns of functioning may emerge. The spouse or significant other may now take
on more domestic responsibilities or more child care duties. In other situations, however, the
family’s hardships created by the stressor are often numerous and substantial, and demanding of
more substantive changes in the family system inclusive of family roles, goals, rules, and overall
patterns of functioning. As a result, the family may experience a state of maladjustment, and the
resulting condition may be a family crisis.

Consistent with Hill’s (1949) definition of family crises, within the Resiliency
framework, a family in crisis does not carry the stigma that the family unit has failed. Instead,
such crises are part of the natural evolution of family life and vital to the developmental process
of change and adaptation (Hill, 1949). Family crisis denotes family imbalance in the system and
a demand for basic changes in the family patterns of functioning to restore stability, balance, and
a sense of harmony (McCubbin et al., 1996). The preceding overview of the literature on family
resilience provides a foundation for a discussion of practical implications and applications of a
resilience-informed approach in working with families.

Usefulness of a Family Resilience Framework for Guiding Interventions

The concept of family resilience is a valuable framework with which to guide
intervention and prevention efforts (Von Eye & Schuster, 2000). By using a resilience-based
approach, key interactional processes are identified and fortified that enable families to withstand
and rebound from crises and challenges (Hawley, 2000; Walsh, 1998). Moreover, a family
resilience framework can be applied with a wide range of crisis situations.

A key initial step toward fostering family resilience is identifying the existing and
potential skills, attitudes, and other resources that may enhance the family’s overall growth
and response to adverse circumstances. Such an approach runs counter to the traditional deficit-based models of assessment that dominate training and practice in the helping professions.

Traditional family assessment is based on the medical model assumptions and strategies aimed at identifying and analyzing family pathology and dysfunction (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). Three major features characterize this medical-based model. First, it is assumed that family problems reflect underlying pathology within one or more family members. Second, the initial intake and assessment process usually result in a diagnosis that purportedly identifies the source(s) of family dysfunction. Third, practices are driven by the belief that the more one knows about the problem, the more likely it will be resolved. Accordingly, treatment is focused on correcting family limitations and deficits. A resilience perspective alters and expands the traditional focus of assessment to include the identification of family strengths and resources without minimizing the family’s problems and pain.

**Examples of Resilience-Based Programs.** One family education program which has received increasing attention in recent years is the Journey of Hope (JOH) program. Developed in 1993 by members of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and offered nationwide by the National JOH Institute, the goal of the JOH program is to provide basic education and skills training to families of persons with mental illness, and to give them the practical and emotional support they need to sustain them in their role as primary caregivers (Mayeux, 1995). The JOH program consists of two parts: an 8-week education course and an ongoing support group. Pickett-Schenk, Cook, and Laris (2000) found that the majority of 424 families who participated in the intervention perceived substantial increases in their knowledge of the causes and treatment of mental illness, their knowledge of the mental health service
system, and in their morale. JOH therefore may provide families with the knowledge and support they need to strengthen their ability to cope with their relative’s mental illness.

The Promoting Adult Resilience (PAR) program is a prevention program targeting individual factors to improve adult resilience in the workplace, primarily with customer call center employees. It is designed to be a multifaceted resilience program that encourages participants to apply the skills being taught to both the workplace and to work–life balance issues. In this way, both the efforts that an individual makes to be resilient and the more resilient wellbeing and mental health outcomes can be targeted (Kumpfer, 1999). The initial pilot of the PAR program was conducted in 2006 and has shown promising results. Specifically, Millear and colleagues (2008) reported that participants of the program had significantly higher levels of coping self-efficacy immediately after the program and again at the follow up six months later. Participants also reported lower levels of stress and depression. Stress was lower again at follow up, while the reduced levels of depression were maintained at follow up. Interestingly, participants reported higher levels of work–life fit, independent of changes in their work or family responsibilities. At posttest, PAR participants reported greater self-efficacy, more family satisfaction, greater work–life fit and balance and less negative family–work spillover than the comparison group. At the six-month follow up, these gains were maintained, although to a lesser degree, with work–life balance being considerably strengthened, and negative spillover in both directions reduced. Participants also reported greater optimism, greater work satisfaction, less stress and promisingly for human service workers, exhaustion was reduced and work vigor was increased.
The Current Study

Current services for unemployed individuals provide help to the job seeker only. Since unemployment can affect the entire family system in addition to the job seeker as the research demonstrates, it is important that services adopt a wider focus to include family members. With unemployment rates in the U.S. expected to remain at 8.1% by the end of 2012 (Survey of Professional Economic Forecasters; Retrieved on January 14, 2012, from http://www.phil.frb.org), it is important to provide support to unemployed families.

Based on the above literature review and the lack of services for unemployed individuals and their family members, the aim of the current study is twofold, and as a result, involves two phases. The first goal of the current project, which makes up Phase I of the project, is to develop, implement and evaluate a resilience-based program, B.R.I.T.E. (Building Resilience in Transitional Employees), for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. The overarching research question specific to this goal is to assess whether the program did what it was meant to do, i.e., do participants report improved mental health and general family functioning. In other words, can a resilience-based program for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners help them to adapt and resolve the unemployment experience? More specifically, the following research questions and hypotheses directed Phase 1 of the current project.

Phase 1: Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of B.R.I.T.E. Program

Research Question 1: Does participation in B.R.I.T.E. lead to significantly improved self-reported mental health and general family functioning?

Hypothesis 1: B.R.I.T.E. participants will report statistically significant lower levels of depression over time.
**Hypothesis 2**: B.R.I.T.E. participants will report statistically significant lower levels of problematic family functioning over time.

**Research Question 2**: Do the outcomes (depression, problematic family functioning) significantly vary between the two formats of B.R.I.T.E. (7 weeks, 4 days)?

**Research Question 3**: Do the outcomes (depression, problematic family functioning) significantly vary among the different types of participants (unemployed individuals who participated in B.R.I.T.E., spouses/partners who participated in B.R.I.T.E., and spouses/partners who did not attend B.R.I.T.E.)?

**Research Question 4**: Is participation in B.R.I.T.E. more effective in improving mental health and problematic family functioning for individuals who begin the program with higher levels of family protective factors?

**Hypothesis 3**: Family protective factors are associated with reduced depression over time.

**Hypothesis 4**: Family protective factors are associated with reduced problematic family functioning over time.

**Hypothesis 5**: The association between B.R.I.T.E. participation and reduced depression increases in direct proportion to the level of family protective factors.

**Hypothesis 6**: The association between B.R.I.T.E. participation and reduced problematic family functioning increases in direct proportion to the level of family factors.

**Research Question 5**: Do family protective factors reduce the impact of length of time unemployed on mental health and problematic family functioning?

**Hypothesis 7**: Number of months unemployed is positively related to levels of depression.
Hypothesis 8: Number of months unemployed is positively related to problematic family functioning.

Hypothesis 9: The positive association between number of months unemployed and depression decreases in direct proportion to the level of family protective factors.

Hypothesis 10: The positive association between number of months unemployed and problematic family functioning decreases in direct proportion to level of family protective factors.

The following conceptual model (Figure 1) was created to further illustrate the proposed relationships among the variables in this study. Participation in B.R.I.T.E. is expected to be associated with reduced depression and reduced problematic family functioning over time (Hypotheses 1 and 2 respectively). This relationship is represented by line a. Moreover, family protective factors are expected to buffer or attenuate the effect of the stressor, months unemployed, on depression and problematic family functioning. Specifically, family protective factors are associated with reduced depression and reduced problematic family functioning over time (Hypotheses 3 and 4 respectively). Line b represents this relationship. In addition, there may be an interaction between family protective factors and participation in B.R.I.T.E. (line c) such that B.R.I.T.E. is more effective in reducing depression and problematic family functioning in families that entered the study with more family protective factors (Hypotheses 5 and 6 respectively). Number of months unemployed is expected to be positively correlated to depression and problematic family functioning and is shown by line d (Hypotheses 7 and 8 respectively). Lastly, a positive association between number of months unemployed and the two outcomes are expected to decrease in direct proportion to the level of family protective factors (refer to line e and Hypotheses 9 and 10).
The second goal of the current study is to delve more deeply into the coping strategies of the unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners who participated in B.R.I.T.E. by conducting semi-structured interviews six to nine months after completion of the program. Specifically, I wanted to learn what they remembered from B.R.I.T.E., what resources they used during their unemployment experience, what advice they would like to share with other unemployed families based on what they have learned, and how to increase participation of spouses/partners in future programs such as B.R.I.T.E. Following are the list of research questions that guided this second phase of the project.
Phase 2: Follow-Up Semi-Structured Interviews & Focus Group

**Research Question 1:** What tools or strategies, if any, that were discussed in B.R.I.T.E. are study participants currently using or implementing?

**Research Question 2:** How has the unemployment experience affected your family, either positively and/or negatively?

**Research Question 3:** Besides unemployment insurance, who or where, if at all, do unemployed individuals and their families turn to for help?

**Research Question 4:** What would unemployed individuals and their spouses like others to know about how to help them cope with or recover from job loss?

**Research Question 5:** What can be done in the future to attract more spouses/partners to attend a program such as B.R.I.T.E.?

**Logic Model**

In order to provide an overview of the framework for this study, a logic model was developed (Figure 2) which was used to guide the project and to demonstrate how the two phases were connected. As stated earlier, the research indicates the unemployment affects the transitional (or unemployed) worker as well as their family system. High rates of unemployment mean that many unemployed families are impacted, yet there are currently no services which offer help to the entire family system. An underlying assumption of this project was that this resilience-based training/program would equip transitional workers and their families with skills to combat unemployment as well as other life stressors they encounter. There were possible external factors that could have impacted the project as well. First, spouses/partners of the unemployed individuals may not be able to attend a program because it may conflict with their work schedule. In addition, unemployed individuals may not want to commit to attending
another workshop. They are already participating in other required workshops related to helping them with their job search (i.e., resume writing, interviewing, networking), so they may not want to spend more time participating in another series of workshops. Moreover, they may not be able to afford to pay for the additional gas to travel to the agency to attend more workshops. Lastly, macroeconomics could have impacted the project as well. With high unemployment rates and companies not hiring, unemployed individuals may think they are just one of many in the same situation. This reasoning may serve as an excuse not to seek help as they believe there is nothing that can be done until the economy improves. On the other hand, because so many people are out of work, those who are unemployed may be more eager to seek whatever help they can find in an effort to find employment more quickly.

In terms of the inputs, I developed the curriculum for the program which I entitled B.R.I.T.E. (Building Resilience in Transitional Employees). Two local unemployment agencies, JOIN and ProNet, served as partners and allowed me to facilitate the program with their clients at their facilities. Developing the relationships with JOIN and ProNet and creating the curriculum required my time. I created handouts to distribute to participants so they had something to take home which served as a reminder of what we talked about in each session. I also received funding from Cooperative Extension at the University of Nevada, Reno to cover the costs of survey administration and class materials.

There were a number of activities involved in the first phase of the current project. First, a needs assessment was conducted of ProNet clients in order to determine whether there was an interest in a program including spouses/partners as well as to gather their ideas for potential workshop topics (see Appendix A). A focus group of JOIN clients was conducted next in order to determine their interest in a program and to gather their ideas for potential workshop topics.
Once both sets of clients’ needs were assessed and the final revisions were made to the program curriculum, participants were recruited. Both groups of participants (JOIN, ProNet) took the pre-test, attended the workshop sessions, were administered the post-test and evaluated the resilience-based program upon its completion. I facilitated the program and distributed appropriate handouts at the workshop sessions. Six to nine months after the implementation of Phase I, Phase 2 activities were performed. The activities involved for the second phase of the project included carrying out follow-up interviews with some of the B.R.I.T.E. participants and a second focus group.

Clients of JOIN and ProNet and their spouses/partners were the participants of Phase I, the development, implementation, and evaluation of the resilience-based program entitled B.R.I.T.E. Some of these same participants and their spouses/partners were involved in the follow-up interviews in Phase 2 of the project. In addition, in Phase 2, I conducted a focus group with spouses/partners of unemployed individuals who did not participate in B.R.I.T.E. (as they were not clients of JOIN and ProNet at the time of recruitment).

The short-term outcomes were aimed at the B.R.I.T.E. participants. These outcomes were measured by the pre-post surveys and the participants’ evaluation of the B.R.I.T.E. program. After participation in B.R.I.T.E., the goal was that participants would increase their knowledge about resilience and the family processes which build resilience. By providing participants with the tools and strategies to become more resilient, the goal was that family functioning would improve. Additionally, another desired outcome was that participants would increase their awareness that they were not alone in what they were experiencing. This was expected to help them feel less isolated, therefore positively impacting their mental health. Participants were also expected to increase their social and informational support by sharing experiences and
information with each other. Again, this was expected to help improve the mental health of participants.

Phase 2 of the project involved the follow-up interviews with B.R.I.T.E. participants and a focus group with spouses/partners who did not participate in B.R.I.T.E. The follow-up interviews and focus group at this phase were utilized to measure the medium-term outcomes. I wanted to determine whether B.R.I.T.E. participants were exhibiting more resilient behavior and attitudes. Specifically, I wanted to see if they demonstrated a more positive attitude, increased their use of reframing and proactively managing their lives, and increased their confidence in their job search. Moreover, it was important to learn what ideas and thoughts B.R.I.T.E. participants and spouses/partners who did not attend B.R.I.T.E. had regarding how to increase participation of family members in a program like B.R.I.T.E. in the future.

The long-term outcomes will be measured following this project. I plan to disseminate the findings by presenting them at national conferences, such as the National Council on Family Relations, and publishing them in journals such as *Family Process*. The results can also be disseminated nationally through Cooperative Extension. Attempts will also be made to secure more funding in an effort to roll this project out on a larger scale. For example, I plan to share the results of the project with the Managers at JOIN and ProNet, the two organizations with whom I partnered for this project. JOIN, the parent organization, has already told me they may be able to provide funds to roll the B.R.I.T.E. program out on a larger scale. JOIN receives the majority of their funding from Nevadaworks, the state-funded agency that coordinates workforce development to meet the needs of employers in northern Nevada. My ultimate goal is that a more-family based approach will be used at agencies who serve the unemployed. Thus, the
implications of this study will guide the form that I recommend this family resilience-based approach take.
Figure 2
B.R.I.T.E. Program Logic Model

Situation: Unemployment affects the transitional worker as well as their family system. High rates of unemployment mean that many unemployed families are impacted, yet there are currently no services which offer help to these families.

**INPUTS**
- Time
- ProNet, JOIN Agency partners
- Facilitator
- Resilience-based curriculum
- Class materials
- Funding from eXtension

**OUTPUTS**

**Activities**
- Needs Assessment/ Focus Group
- Recruit Participants
- Workshop Sessions
- Handouts
- Evaluate Program
- Follow-Up Interviews
- Second Focus Group

**Participation**
- Clients of JOIN & ProNet
- Spouses/partners of JOIN & ProNet
- ProNet who attend B.R.I.T.E.
- Spouses/partners of unemployed individuals
- who were not invited to participate in B.R.I.T.E.

**OUTCOMES – IMPACT**

**Short-Term**
- Increase knowledge about family processes which build resilience
- Decrease isolation
- Increase ideas
- Increase knowledge of social and informational support

**Medium-Term**
- Increase positive attitudes
- Increase reframing & proactive mgt.
- To improve partner & family participation
- Increase confidence in job search

**Long-Term**
- Disseminate findings of project
- Use more family-based approach at service organizations
- Measures:
  - Publish findings in journals & with Extension;
  - Present findings (i.e., NCFR);
  - Receive funding to implement B.R.I.T.E. on larger scale

**EXTERNAL FACTORS**
- The format of the program may conflict with spouses/partners who currently are employed.
- Transitional workers may resist additional time commitment.
- Macroeconomics

**ASSUMPTIONS**
- Resilience-based training will equip transitional workers and their families with skills to combat unemployment as well as other life stressors.
Chapter III: Methodology for Phase I

The purpose of this chapter is to present the first phase of the current project which included the development, implementation, and evaluation of a resilience-based program for transitional workers and their spouses/partners. It begins with a brief presentation of the results of a needs assessment conducted in December 2010 at JOIN/ProNet, a nonprofit organization that provides support to professional transitional workers. Next, the design of the resilience-based program entitled B.R.I.T.E. (Building Resilience in Transitional Employees) is explained. Lastly, the implementation of B.R.I.T.E. with two diverse groups of participants is outlined.

Results of Needs Assessment

With the permission of JOIN and ProNet, a needs assessment was conducted of ProNet clients (see Appendix A). JOIN is a private, non-profit job training agency designed to help individuals gain or improve the skills they need for the local labor market. JOIN provides a wide range of services including job search workshops, access to job banks with local job postings, resume preparation assistance, and mock interview practice. ProNet is a subsidiary of JOIN and serves professional-level individuals who are seeking employment.

The purpose of this needs assessment was to determine the level of potential interest in a resilience-based program for unemployed individuals and their family members. A survey was administered to ProNet clients at one of their weekly general meetings. Respondents were asked about their level of interest in attending a program which would address family issues such as communication, managing stress, and budgeting. ProNet clients were also asked to include any other topics that they would like covered during the course of this program. Respondents also indicated whether the likelihood a family member would attend the program with them. Their preferences in terms of meeting days and times were assessed as well.
Out of the 82 ProNet clients who attended the general meeting, 50 (or 61%) completed the survey. Ten (20.4%) reported they were very likely to attend the program. Seventeen (34.7%) said they would be somewhat likely to attend. On the other hand, 8 (or 16.7%) said it was very unlikely they would attend. In terms of the likelihood of a family member attending, three (6.1%) said it was very likely a family member would come. Fifteen (30.6%) said it was somewhat likely a family member would come. Stress ranked as the top topic people were interested in covering (35 respondents or 70%). Budgeting was second (40%) and communication was third (36%). Other topics of interest that came up repeatedly were time management and information on foreclosure and bankruptcy. In terms of preferences of the format, weekday evening ranked first (38%) and the 1.5 hour session for 6 weeks versus the 2-hour session over 4 weeks was evenly distributed so there was not a strong preference either way.

Based on the positive results of the needs assessment and the support of the ProNet and JOIN staff, it was determined that sufficient numbers of clients were interested in participating in a pilot program based on a resilience framework that planning for the current project proceeded. JOIN and ProNet agreed to allow the primary researcher recruit participants from their clientele and to use space, for free, at their facilities to conduct the programs.

**Development of B.R.I.T.E. (Building Resilience in Transitional Employees)**

I drew from the systems theory of family resilience, outlined by Walsh (2003) and highlighted in Chapter 2, to develop the curriculum for the B.R.I.T.E. program. The systems theory of family resilience (Walsh, 2003) emphasizes three key processes of family resilience: family belief system, organizational patterns, and communication. A family belief system involves how a family views and approaches a crisis situation, which subsequently influences
potential solutions (Walsh, 2003). A positive belief system, centered on overcoming adversity through problem resolution, interconnectedness, and potential for growth, enables a family to unite and view the situation as a “normal” life challenge. By normalizing the situation, a family is able to evaluate potential resources and create a positive and hopeful outlook. The second key process, organizational patterns, centers on promoting family resilience through flexibility, connectedness, and identification of available resources (Walsh, 2003). In unemployed families, this might include adopting greater flexibility in roles, creating/finding new resources, and finding new ways to connect with and support one another. The third key process focuses on developing open communication within the family (Walsh, 2003), which fosters a level of trust and mutual respect that leads to the acceptance of individual family member differences and the freedom to express emotions.

In the unemployment literature, one of the most important predictors of coping behaviors is positive reappraisal of the job loss (Leana et al., 1998). This essentially is the same concept as reframing in the systems theory of family resilience. If an unemployed individual and the family can view the job loss in a more positive light, then they are more likely to effectively cope with the transition. Individuals with a strong sense of purpose and a positive outlook on life appear to have a greater capacity to transcend life’s challenges compared to less optimistic people (Walsh, 2003). Additionally, many individuals who become unemployed have a grief-like reaction to the loss (Archer & Rhodes, 1998). It is important for these individuals and their family members to have an opportunity to mourn the job loss and the changes in which it resulted. The group context can provide a social support network and opportunities for family members to learn from one another’s experiences, to gain perspective on their own crisis situation, and to reduce the guilt and blame (Smokowski, 1998). Social support has been identified as a protective factor
that can promote resilience (Smokowski, 1998), so being able to get support in a group setting could be helpful and could promote resilience. This is referred to in the systems theory of family resilience as creating and/or tapping into one’s resources and finding new ways to connect with others. The shared experience can help to reduce family isolation too.

Thus, drawing from the systems theory of family resilience and the unemployment literature, I developed the curriculum. The topics for the program are areas that address the processes of family resilience, including assessing and building upon one’s current resources (session 1), reframing negative thoughts (session 2), and communicating in a positive manner (session 6). Additionally, proactive management of one’s life and life with the family (session 4) is another topic that promotes more resilient behavior. Stress management (session 3) and financial management (session 5), topics which were deemed important by the ProNet and JOIN clients in the needs assessment and focus group and are also proactive management topics which promote resilience, were incorporated into the program as well.

Furthermore, I consulted with Dr. Froma Walsh in a private telephone conversation regarding the current study. The Chicago Center for Family Health, an independent affiliate of the University of Chicago where Dr. Walsh serves as co-founder and co-director, offered a similar program to transitional workers at a nonprofit employment agency in the Chicago area. According to Dr. Walsh (F. Walsh, personal communication, October 15, 2010), this program was successful and ran for over two years, but when the nonprofit agency that sponsored this project lost funding, the sessions ended. Unfortunately, there were no data collected of the various participants during this time. However, Dr. Walsh (F. Walsh, personal communication, October 15, 2010) stressed the importance of giving clients time to informally interact with each other before and after the sessions and to create fun and light-hearted workshop titles. Thus, the
key processes outlined by Walsh (2003) in the systems theory of family resilience and the tips she provided (F. Walsh, personal communication, October 15, 2010) became the foundation for the development of the resilience-based program for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners in the current study. The following section outlines the curriculum that was put together for the resilience-based program entitled B.R.I.T.E. (*Building Resilience in Transitional Employees*). Please refer to Appendix B for a more detailed outline of the curriculum for each session.

**B.R.I.T.E. Program: Content and Procedure**

The topics that will be covered over the seven-week program are as follows:

**Week 1: Making the Most of What You Have**

Objective(s): Participants can identify personal and family resources and learn how to build upon those.

**Week 2: Turning Lemons into Lemonade**

Objective(s): Participants will learn what ‘reframing’ means and will learn how to reframe their constraining beliefs or attitudes.

**Week 3: Stress Management: How Do You Spell Relief?**

Objective(s): Participants will learn more about the nature of stress, its effects (positive and negative), as well as strategies to more effectively manage stress.

**Week 4: Family Management: Do You Know Where You’re Going To?**

Objective(s): Participants will be able to define family management, set goals and priorities for their families, and manage their family’s activities in a more proactive manner.

**Week 5: Financial Management: How to Dig Yourself Out of the Hole**
Objective(s): Participants will learn more about the foreclosure and bankruptcy processes and how to better manage their debt. Have them bring questions for guest speakers.

Week 6: Is Anybody Listening?

Objective(s): Participants will be able to identify the components of the communication process and will learn how to better resolve conflicts with loved ones.

Week 7: Putting It All Together

Objective(s): Participants will be able to define resilience and integrate the major concepts from the previous sessions.

After more consideration, the JOIN staff voiced their concerns about conducting a program over a seven-week period for their clients. JOIN and ProNet serve different populations, and the JOIN staff believed it would be better to shorten the B.R.I.T.E. program in order to better serve their clientele as well as to improve participation in the program. JOIN clients consist of working-class individuals who typically engage in services for a much shorter time than the ProNet clients or more professional-level individuals. Therefore, it was believed to be unlikely that JOIN clients would engage in a seven-week program. As a result of the JOIN staff’s concerns, it was decided that a focus group of JOIN clients would be conducted in order to get their thoughts on the length and format of the workshop series as well as topics they would like to see covered.

Seven JOIN clients attended the focus group. Of the seven attendees, four (57%) were women and three (43%) were men. The average length of time this group had been unemployed was one year and seven months and their average age was 51 years. The group indicated that each workshop should be two to four hours in length. The reason for this was that many JOIN clients take the bus to get to the office, so it is important to make attending a workshop or class
worth the effort to get there. Additionally, participants mentioned that it is important to have enough time in each session so that each attendee has a chance to be “heard”. The group confirmed their interest in similar workshop topics compared to the ProNet group with the exception of budgeting. They laughed and said it was not necessary to talk about that issue as they had been out of work long enough “to figure that out on their own.”

Based on the feedback received from the JOIN focus group, the B.R.I.T.E. program was condensed into four, two-hour sessions, over four consecutive days. Essentially, the same topics that were designed for the ProNet group, with the exception of budgeting, were incorporated into the four sessions. Two of the topics, stress management and communication, were built into two of the session. In the first session, the topics of stress management and strategies to more effectively manage stress were incorporated after the discussion on identifying and building upon one’s resources were discussed. Less time was spent discussing stress management with the JOIN group compared to the ProNet group in order to address two topics in the first session. In the last session on Day 4, communication was discussed first before talking about the concept of resilience and tying all of the concepts together. Again, less time was spent on each topic in this session as opposed to the ProNet group due to the time constraint; however, the main points were still addressed. For more details about the curriculum for the condensed version of the B.R.I.T.E. program, please refer to Appendix B. Following is the outline of the topics presented for the JOIN clients:

Day 1: Making the Most of What You Have

Objective(s): Participants can identify personal and family resources and learn how to build upon those. Participants will also learn more about the nature of stress, its effects (positive and negative), as well as strategies to more effectively manage stress.
Day 2: Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Objective(s): Participants will learn what ‘reframing’ means and will learn how to reframe their constraining beliefs or attitudes.

Day 3: Do You Know Where You’re Going To

Objective(s): Participants will be able to define management in general, family management, set goals and priorities for themselves as well as their families, and manage their activities in a more proactive manner.

Day 4: Putting It All Together

Objective(s): Participants will be able to identify the components of the communication process and will learn how to better resolve conflicts with loved ones or close friends.

Also, review the main topics of each session and discuss the concept of resilience.

Participants

Before proceeding with the first phase of the study, implementation and evaluation of B.R.I.T.E., approval was obtained by the Institutional Review Board. Participants were recruited from ProNet’s and JOIN’s active client list of over 500 unemployed individuals (interchangeably referred to as transitional workers). These two agencies serve a diversity of clients, including those at the bottom end of the socioeconomic scale. Thus, the sample represents a broad range of families (families are defined in this study as the unemployed individual and their spouse/partner as B.R.I.T.E. is not designed at this time for children to participate). Unemployed individuals who were 18 years or over, who involuntarily lost their job, and who were married or living with a partner were eligible to participate in the study. Different recruitment methods were used to more effectively target the diverse populations. ProNet individuals were recruited via email, using the current ProNet email distribution list. Those interested in participating in the
current project signed themselves up, and interested spouses/partners, at the ProNet main desk. Flyers were posted in the JOIN office for clients to see (refer to Appendix C). Moreover, each of the eight case managers was given flyers and detailed information about the B.R.I.T.E. program. The case managers then disseminated the information with all of the clients they met, and those interested in participating signed up with their case manager. The goal was to recruit 15-20 individuals for each program.

Twelve people signed up for the ProNet group, consisting of ten ProNet clients and two spouses. Participants ranged in age from 34 years to 61 years. Five of the participants, including one spouse, were female, and the other seven participants, including one spouse, were male. The mean length of time the ProNet participants had been out of work was 15 months. Only two of the participants had dependent children living at home. Seven (70%) of the ProNet participants were involuntarily laid off and three (30%) were forced to resign or fired. Fifteen JOIN clients, but none of their spouses/partners, participated in the shortened version of B.R.I.T.E. Of the 15 participants, eleven were female and four were male and they ranged in age from 40 to 76 years. One of the participants had a dependent child living in their household. The mean length of time the JOIN participants had been unemployed was 19 months. The majority of the participants (10 or 67%) had been laid off, two (13%) were forced to resign or fired, and three (20%) voluntarily resigned from their jobs. Additional information on the participants is presented in Chapter 4.

**Procedure**

This is a pretest-posttest design. Pretest-posttest designs are the preferred method to compare participant groups and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of treatments or interventions (Pallant, 2007). The Resilience Program, B.R.I.T.E., was delivered in seven 90-minute weekly sessions for the ProNet group and four two-hour sessions over four consecutive
days for the JOIN group. Participants had time to talk informally with other participants at the beginning and ending of each session. Refreshments were served at each session in an effort to make the environment more inviting for participants. Participants were encouraged to get up whenever they wanted to get food or a beverage. The tables were arranged in a U-shape so that participants faced each other and could more easily interact with each other and the primary investigator who stood at the top, middle area of the “U” during each session.

My goal as the facilitator was to create an informal, comfortable atmosphere in which participants felt “safe” to talk. Participants primarily engaged in small group discussion, written exercises, and other activities as part of the program. Lecture was a small portion of each session. Instead, my primary role was to facilitate discussion amongst participants by asking questions, validating what they were saying, and pausing to allow participants to reflect and then speak. Conversation among the participants was quite spirited throughout each session. In fact, many times, when we reached the time the session was scheduled to end, participants were in no rush to leave and stayed to continue talking with each other. Following are some examples which highlight the B.R.I.T.E. sessions.

I started off Session 1, *Making the Most of What You Have*, discussing the difference between change (an event) and transition (process through which we adapt to change). I then asked the participants to share the feelings they have been experiencing during this transition. They immediately started sharing a variety of feelings from hopelessness to grateful. It seemed like the floodgates opened when I asked that question, and they were able to openly share, vent, and acknowledge each other’s feelings. I just let them talk for a while before I asked them to define the term “resources” and to list what resources they have. Interestingly, once they shared their lists with each other and brainstormed ways to build on those resources, the atmosphere in
the room changed and became more positive. At the end of that first session, a sense of bonding and cohesiveness had already formed among the participants for both groups.

In Session 2, *Turning Lemons into Lemonade*, I asked participants to define the word “reframe”. After doing that, I asked participants to write down a few of their negative thoughts. I then asked them to “reframe” those negative thoughts and write positive thoughts opposite their negative ones. At first they laughed at this idea; however, once they started working on it, they found they were able to reframe their negative thoughts. It was a fun process for me to watch. For example, one participant listed lack of college degree as a negative, but turned it around to see it as an opportunity to continue her education. Another said he felt overwhelmed, but reframed that thought to live in the present, one day at a time. Another participant wrote being too old as his negative thought, but he reframed it to say he had more experience.

During the third session, *How Do You Spell Relief*, we talked about stress (this was built into Session 2 for the JOIN participants). I asked participants to define stress and then asked them negative and positive ways to cope with stress. Their answers were written on the flip chart. I then had the participants complete an exercise where they wrote down 10 “stress busters” or ways they can reduce their stress. Each of the ten stress busters was written on an index card (I let participants choose from various colored index cards). Participants really enjoyed doing this and shared their stress busters with each other. Their homework was to refer to those cards whenever they started to feel stressed.

The fourth session (3rd for the JOIN participants), *Do You Know Where You’re Going To* (based on Diana Ross song), focused on proactively managing one’s personal and family life. This is the session where I had participants break up into small groups to build Straw Eiffel Towers using only straws and masking tape. Participants loved doing this activity and had so
much fun. After they finished, we talked about the process. My point in having them do this exercise was to show them how the more “successful” groups who devised a plan before they started to build the tower actually built better and stronger towers. This lesson translates to our own lives. Thus, this was a fun and powerful way to make the connection of how each of them, along with their families, need to proactively manage their lives by setting goals and priorities.

The fifth session was entitled *How to Do More with Less*. The idea for this session was developed by the ProNet participants who wanted to talk about inexpensive entertainment ideas rather than financial management. This topic was built into the third session for the JOIN participants. Essentially, I started off the session by asking the group what the benefits of planning are and then we listed those on the flip chart. I then opened it up to the group to start sharing their ideas on inexpensive entertainment things to do in the area. Many ideas were shared and generated that night. I simply listed those things on the flip chart and later typed it up and disseminated it to the group. At the end of this session, the ProNet participants told me they felt the mood in our group was so much “lighter” than it had been when we first started our sessions. The list of inexpensive entertainment ideas that were generated in this session were distributed to the JOIN participants in their third workshop session.

The sixth session (fourth session for JOIN) focused on communication. The session was entitled, *Is Anybody Listening*?. I had the participants play a game of “telephone”. Participants were split into two groups and we compared the final messages of the groups. Of course, the final messages were not even close to what I had given them to start. This led to a discussion on barriers to communication, and I wrote their list of barriers on the flip chart. I then asked them what characteristics or traits make an effective communicator and listed those things down. Then participants partnered with another and engaged in a listening exercise. One partner had to
talk to another, with their backs turned and while the other partner could not say anything. This was an interesting and somewhat frustrating experience, but it led to some great discussion on what it means to be an active listener.

The seventh and final session for the ProNet participants (fourth and final session for JOIN) was a recap of our previous sessions or topics. I asked them to define resilience and resilient qualities and wrote those down on the flip chart. We then briefly reviewed the main concepts of each session starting from building upon one’s resources, reframing, proactively managing and planning, and finally to communication. They then saw the connection among all of these topics. One participant summed up the experience well when she said, “I have the tools in place now so when another crisis comes I will be better prepared.”

Thus, each session was participatory and lively. At the end of each session, participants were asked what was the most helpful thing they learned during the session. For a complete list of those comments, please refer to Appendix D.

Participants were also encouraged to provide feedback, along the way, on the upcoming sessions to make sure they were of interest. Interestingly, the ProNet group indicated, as did the JOIN participants in the focus group, that they did not need the session on Financial Management. Instead, as mentioned earlier, they decided as a group they would prefer to share ideas on inexpensive entertainment ideas. Participants indicated they already had financial management workshops offered through ProNet so they did not need another workshop in this area. Perhaps this is the reason, but it seems that talking about money and finances is not an easy topic to talk about in a group setting. Participants may feel uncomfortable talking about their personal finances in front of others for fear of feeling ignorant or inferior. Individual,
confidential sessions with a financial management professional may be less intimidating so this is something to keep in mind.

At the first session for each group, the participants completed the pre-test. This pre-test was filled out by all of the participants in each group before the principal investigator began the session. Participants were asked to complete the post-test and evaluation of the program at the end of the last session (refer to Appendix E for pre-test and post-test). Of the 30 total participants of both groups, two (7%; one from the ProNet group and one from the JOIN group) did not complete the post-test. One participant had an interview and the other participant did not show.

**Measures**

The survey included demographic questions asking about participant’s age, level of education, number and ages of dependents, race, marital status, current occupation of one’s spouse or partner or previous occupation, if partner is not employed, previous occupation of the unemployed individual, and length of participant’s current period of unemployment. These questions were only asked on the pre-test survey. At post-test, (end of 7-week program or 4-day program), the survey asked the transitional worker whether they have been reemployed, and if so, when this happened and what type of job was secured. The following measures were also included in each of the surveys.

**CES-D.** The CES-D was chosen for this study over other depression inventories because it was developed for use in the community rather than a psychiatric population, and the wording of the CES-D is more concise than other available instruments. The CES-D is a self-report measure of depressive symptoms composed of 20 items (Radloff, 1977). Items were derived from several previously validated depression scales (Dahlstrom & Welsh 1960, Beck et al. 1961,
Zung 1965) to correspond with major components of symptoms of depression identified through literature review and psychometric studies. The components included depressed mood, feelings of guilt and worthlessness, feelings of helplessness, psychomotor retardation, loss of appetite, and sleep disturbance (Radloff, 1977). The CES-D assesses the frequency/duration of depressive symptoms over the past week. Four items were worded in a positive direction in order to disrupt the tendency toward a response set. The range of total scores is from 0 to 60 with higher scores indicating greater distress. Scores of 16 or greater are suggestive of depressive symptoms and referral for further depression evaluation and treatment may be needed (Radloff, 1977). The Cronbach’s coefficient for reliability for the instrument has been reported at 0.84, 0.85, 0.90 (Radloff, 1977), 0.90 and 0.93 (Verdier-Taillefer et al., 2001) and 0.85 (Hann et al., 1999). Cronbach’s coefficient for reliability in this study was 0.96.

**Family Protective Scale.** This is a scale created for the purpose of this research in order to measure the family’s level of protection or the amount of strengths that a family has to help them cope with the stress they face in their lives. The fourteen items used in this scale were taken directly from research regarding factors, regardless of the level of stress one faces, which predict higher levels of functioning. For example, the first seven factors were adopted from Wolin and Wolin’s (1993) qualitative study regarding individual resilience. These included: a) insight, or the capacity to gain understanding about your situation; b) initiative, or the willingness/ability to take charge of one’s circumstances; c) independence, or the ability to draw a boundary between one’s self and unhealthy activities; d) creativity, or the ability to find multiple solutions to difficult problems; e) social support, or the presence of at least one significant support person; f) humor, or the ability to be light-hearted and laugh even when things are difficult; and g) morality/spirituality, or having a value system that helps to guide a
person in making decisions that are healthy. Additionally, research regarding family resilience was also incorporated into this scale. Recent qualitative studies looking at how families deal with high levels of stress found that: a) flexibility, or the ability to adapt to changing circumstances; b) appraisal, or the meaning that a family attaches to a negative experience; and, c) social support, or the support systems that help a family cope with difficulty were also identified as protective factors that predict higher levels of functioning for families facing stress (Cohen et al., 2002; Daly, 1999; Mederer, 1999). Therefore, seven of the items on the family protective scale relate to these specific resiliency factors. Participants responded to questions such as whether their family “can be light-hearted. We laugh a lot together” or “Our family receives very little support from our friends” using a four-point scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .83, suggesting a good internal consistency reliability for the 14-item scale with this sample.

Family Assessment Device (FAD). The short form of the Family Assessment Device (FAD) was used in order to measure the family’s current level of family functioning. The short form of the FAD is a 12-item, self-report scale designed to assess family functioning. Specifically, it looks at seven dimensions that are based on the McMaster Model of Family Functioning (Tutty, 1995). Research regarding the FAD has established its psychometric properties. For example, Fristad (1989), Miller et al. (1985), and Tutty (1995) all found that reliability and validity for this measure meet adequate standards. Specifically, internal consistency ranges from .72 to .92 on the seven scales and test-retest reliability for each dimension ranges .66 to .75 (Miller et al., 1985). Evidence for validity is based on the scale’s ability to discriminate between psychiatric and non-clinical families (Fristad, 1989; Miller et al., 1985). Participants who score 2.0 or higher on the short form of the FAD are considered to have
unhealthy family interaction; that is, higher scores suggest that the family perceives higher level of problematic functioning in their family.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data was performed using SPSS version 18.0. Prior to analysis, data was screened for errors in entry by running descriptive statistics of all variables. In addition, data was explored in order to ensure that assumptions of proposed statistical tests are met, and violations corrected using standard transformation techniques. After basic screening, data analysis proceeded.

Demographic characteristics were examined first. Independent t-tests were used to determine whether there are any significant differences between the ProNet and JOIN participants. It was also important to assess, in terms of implementing the B.R.I.T.E. program in the future, whether there were any difference in the outcomes (depression and problematic family functioning) between the two different formats (7 weeks versus 4 days) of the B.R.I.T.E. program. In order to do this, a mixed between-within subjects analysis of variance was conducted as it allows us to examine the question of whether which format (7 weeks, 4 days) was more effective in reducing depression and problematic family functioning from pre-intervention to post-intervention. Moreover, the results of this mixed model analysis of variance allowed me to compare the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores of depression and problematic family functioning of both the ProNet and JOIN participants. Furthermore, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether any differences existed among the four types of respondents (JOIN client, ProNet client, spouse/partner who attended B.R.I.T.E., spouse/partner who did not attend B.R.I.T.E.) on depression and problematic family functioning. Lastly, in order to examine the relationship between family protective factors, and the two outcome
measures (depression, family functioning), moderation analyses were done using multiple regression.

Two hierarchical regression analyses with lagged dependent variables were used to test the hypotheses depicted in Figure 1 (refer to page 52). Lagged versions of the dependent variables were included as predictor variables so as to predict change in the dependent variable before and after participation in B.R.I.T.E. That is, they account for participants’ self-reported mental health and family functioning, the two dependent variables, at pre-test before they participated in B.R.I.T.E, allowing me to measure the actual change in their mental health and problematic family functioning from before and after B.R.I.T.E. participation. Each regression included four predictors and included three steps. The predictor and moderator variables were centered to eliminate multicollinearity effects between the predictors, the moderator, and the interaction terms between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended and between family protective factors and number of months unemployed.

To examine the first dependent variable of depression, the regression equation included four predictors of mental health: number of months unemployed, number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended, family protective factors, and the pre-intervention level of self-reported mental health. The model included three steps: (1) a test of the influence of the four factors; (2) a test of an interaction between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended; and (3) a test of an interaction between family protective factors and number of months unemployed.

To examine the second dependent variable of family functioning, the regression equation included four predictors of mental health: number of months unemployed, number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended, family protective factors, and the pre-intervention level of family functioning. As indicated above, the model included three steps: (1) a test of the influence of the four factors;
(2) a test of an interaction between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended; and (3) a test of an interaction between family protective factors and number of months unemployed.
Chapter IV: Results and Discussion of Phase 1

This chapter consists of two sections. First, findings from the quantitative data are presented. This includes demographic information of each group of participants as well as results of independent-samples t-tests that were run to compare each group. Additionally, findings from two mixed between-within subjects analysis of variances are presented to demonstrate any differences between the two different formats (7 weekly sessions, 4 sessions over 4 consecutive days) on participants’ scores on depression and problematic family functioning across two time periods (pre-intervention, post-intervention). Results from hierarchical regressions examining the effect of protective factors on general family functioning as well as depression are also outlined. The second section highlights the results of an evaluation of the B.R.I.T.E. program.

Demographic and Job Loss Characteristics of Participants

There were 10 ProNet clients who participated in the seven-week version of the B.R.I.T.E. program and 15 JOIN clients who attended the condensed, 4-day version of the B.R.I.T.E. program. All 25 participants (100%) were either married or living with someone in a committed relationship. Twenty (20) percent of the ProNet participants had one or two children under the age of 18 living in the household while none of the JOIN participants had children under the age of 18 living with them. Ten (10) percent of the ProNet participants had more than two adults living at home while twenty-one percent of the JOIN group did. There were proportionately more female attendees in the JOIN group (73%) compared to the ProNet group (40%). The majority of attendees in each group were Caucasian, and the majority of attendees’ households consisted of themselves and their spouse or partner. The majority (70%) of the ProNet group had either an Associate’s or a Bachelor’s degree while only 33% of the JOIN
group did. Interestingly, a larger percentage (91%) of the JOIN group scored higher on the family protection scale in comparison to the percentage (60%) of the ProNet group. Please refer to Table 1 for a more detailed breakdown of participants’ characteristics.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of ProNet & JOIN Participants

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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female =</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male =</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian =</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian =</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with Children (under 18) in Household =</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with More than 2 Adults in Household =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Education =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College =</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree =</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree =</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree =</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing =</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Family Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored 2.5 or higher (more protective factors) =</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored lower than 2.5 (less protective factors) =</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was not a significant difference in the average age of the ProNet client (52 years) compared to the JOIN client (56 years). Average length of unemployment was 15 months for ProNet participants and 19 months for JOIN participants. In addition to the demographic characteristics mentioned above, job loss characteristics of the ProNet and JOIN groups are highlighted in Table 2. According to the independent t-tests that were conducted of all of the participants’ characteristics, the results show no statistically significant difference between the
two groups, with the exception of prior median annual household income which was statistically significant with \( t(23) = 4.90, p < .001. \)

**Table 2**

*Job Loss Characteristics of ProNet & JOIN Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ProNet</th>
<th>JOIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (in years)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Length of Unemployment (in months)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Annual Household Income <em>before</em> Job Loss (in dollars)</td>
<td>75,000-100,000</td>
<td>25,000-50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Annual Household Income <em>after</em> Job Loss (in dollars)</td>
<td>25,000-50,000</td>
<td>10,000-25,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .001 \)

Participants were also asked what their previous job title was before becoming unemployed. Most of the ProNet participants held professional and managerial-level positions as opposed to most of the JOIN participants who held more blue-collar jobs. Following, in Table 3, is a compilation of each of the participants’ previous job titles. Participants also indicated in which industry they previously worked. As shown in Figure 3, the two top industries in which the participants previously worked were healthcare and gaming (16% each), followed by construction and casino/entertainment at 12%.
Table 3

List of Previous Job Titles of ProNet & JOIN Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ProNet Previous Job Titles</th>
<th>JOIN Previous Job Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Accounts Payable Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Executive Director</td>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Branch Manager</td>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing Facilities Supervisor</td>
<td>Custodian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Bank Supervisor</td>
<td>Dispatcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President/Director</td>
<td>Medical Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Program Manager</td>
<td>Night Stocker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Trainer</td>
<td>Revenue Qualifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Writer</td>
<td>Customer Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3

Previous Industries of Participants (n=25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino/Entertainment</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service/Govt.</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spouses/Partners

There were five spouses/partners that completed pre- and post-surveys. Two of the five (40%) actually attended the B.R.I.T.E. sessions; the other three (60%) did not attend any sessions and completed the pre- and post-surveys only. Of the five spouses/partners, four were women (80%) and one was male (20%). The average age of the spouses/partners was 50 years. One of the spouses/partners (20%) scored a 3 on the Family Stress Index (higher risk) while the other...
four scored 0-2 or had lower risk. On the Family Protective Factors Scale, four out of the five (80%) scored over 2.5, indicating more protective factors. Two of the spouses/partners (40%) worked full-time, one (20%) was self-employed, one (20%) was a stay-at-home parent or homemaker, and one (20%) worked on a part-time basis. In terms of educational background, one (20%) had some college, two (40%) have Associate degrees, one (20%) has a Bachelor’s degree, and one (20%) has a Master’s degree. Please refer to Table 4 for a breakdown of the spouses/partners’ characteristics.

**Table 4**

_Demographic Characteristics of ProNet Spouses/Partners_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Spouses/Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female =</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian =</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age (in years) =</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree =</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time =</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Homemaker or Stay-at-Home Parent =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Family Protective Factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored 2.5 or higher (more protective factors) =</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored lower than 2.5 (less protective factors) =</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three additional questions were asked of the spouses/partners to explore their perception of the job loss. They specifically were asked how they viewed the job loss of their spouse/partner on a scale from very negatively to very positively. Two of the five
spouses/partners (40%) positively viewed the job loss of their spouse/partner, while one (20%) viewed it somewhat negatively, one (20%) neither negatively nor positively, and the last one (20%) viewed it very negatively. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of responses to this question.

Figure 4

*Spouses/Partners’ View of the Job Loss (n=5)*

The second question asked the extent to which their household duties had increased or decreased since the job loss on a scale from greatly decreased to greatly increased. Three out of the five (60%) said household duties have somewhat increased since job loss and two (40%) responded that it neither increased nor decreased (please refer to Figure 5).

Figure 5

*Spouses/Partners’ Perceptions of Change in Household Responsibilities (n=5)*
The last question asked the spouses/partners to what extent their responsibilities in paid employment had either increased or decreased since the job loss on a scale from greatly increased to greatly decreased. Three out of the five (60%) said responsibilities in paid employment have somewhat increased since job loss while two (40%) said their responsibilities in paid employment had neither increased nor decreased (Refer to Figure 6).

Figure 6

Spouses/Partners’ Perceptions of Change in Employment Responsibilities (n=5)

Next, two mixed between-within subjects analysis of variances were conducted to assess the potential impact of the two different formats (7 weekly sessions, 4 sessions over 4 consecutive days) on participants’ scores on depression and problematic family functioning across two time periods (pre-intervention, post-intervention). The first dependent variable that was analyzed was depression. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilks Lambda = .55, $F(1,25) = 20.49, p < .0005$, partial eta squared $= .450$, with both groups showing a significantly statistical difference in depression from pre-test to post-test (refer to Table 8). The mean decrease in depression for ProNet participants was 13.83, $t(11) = 2.24, p < .05$ (a 29.1% decrease), while the mean decrease for JOIN participants was 29.40, $t(14) = 4.23, p = .001$, a 60.2% decrease. Thus, B.R.I.T.E. participants reported statistically significant reductions in
depression from pre- to post-test, supporting Hypothesis 1 (see Table 5). However, there was no significant interaction between program format and time, Wilks Lambda = .90, $F(1, 25) = 2.66$, $p = .116$, partial eta squared = .096. The outcome, depression, did not vary then between the two formats of B.R.I.T.E. that were offered, therefore answering Research Question 2.

**Table 5**

*Depression Scores for ProNet and JOIN Participants from Pre-Test to Post-Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ProNet</th>
<th>JOIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, I examined the problematic family functioning as the dependent variable. There was a substantial main effect for time, Wilks Lambda = .55, $F(1,25) = 20.3$, $p < .0005$, partial eta squared = .448 with both groups showing a significantly statistical difference in problematic family functioning from pre-test to post-test (see Table 9). The mean decrease in problematic family functioning for ProNet participants was 0.25, $t(11) = 2.29$, $p < .05$ and the mean decrease for JOIN participants was 0.63, $t(14) = 4.18$, $p = .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported as B.R.I.T.E. participants did report statistically significant reductions in problematic family functioning from pre- to post-test (see Table 6). There was no significant interaction between program format and time, Wilks Lambda = .87, $F(1, 25) = 3.83$, $p = .06$, partial eta squared = .133. This result indicated there was no difference in the outcome, problematic family functioning, between the two B.R.I.T.E. formats, which addressed Research Question 2.
Table 6

Problematic Family Functioning Scores for ProNet and JOIN Participants from Pre-Test to Post-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ProNet</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>JOIN</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to examine Research Question 3, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether any differences existed among the four types of respondents (JOIN client, ProNet client, spouse/partner who attended B.R.I.T.E., spouse/partner who did not attend B.R.I.T.E.) on depression as well as problematic family functioning. There was not a statistically significant difference in depression for the four groups: $F(2, 27) = 0.61, p = .55$. Likewise, there was not a statistically significant difference in problematic family functioning for the four groups: $F(2, 27) = 0.58, p = .57$. Hence, the outcomes did not significantly vary among the four types of respondents so the answer to Research Question 3 was no.

Two hierarchical multiple regression analyses with lagged dependent variables were conducted to assess Hypotheses 3 through 10. Number of months unemployed, number of sessions attended, family protective factors and pre-intervention self-reported depression were entered at Step 1, explaining 50.6% of the variance in depression (see Table 7). As expected, pre-B.R.I.T.E. levels of depression positively predicted depression levels after program participation. Family protective factors was not a statistically significant predictor of reduced depression, $p = .09$, not supporting Hypothesis 3. In addition, number of months unemployed was not statistically significant, $p = .70$, so there was no support for Hypothesis 7. After entry of the
interaction term between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended at Step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 73.1%, \( F(5, 14) = 7.59, p < .001 \). The interaction term between family protective factors and number of sessions attended explained an additional 22.4% of depression, R squared change = .23, \( F\text{ change } (1, 14) = 11.65, p = .004 \), therefore supporting Hypothesis 5. In other words, B.R.I.T.E. participation was more effective in reducing depression for individuals who had relatively high levels of family protective factors when they entered B.R.I.T.E. Step 3 involved adding the interaction term between family protective factors and number of months unemployed to the model. No additional variance was explained by the addition of this interaction term, R squared change = .00, \( F\text{ change } (1, 13) = 0, p = .988 \), not supporting Hypothesis 9 (see Table 7). Thus, the total variance of the model was not affected by the addition of this second interaction term between family protective factors and number of months unemployed. Only the interaction term between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended remained significant, \( p = .007 \) (refer to Table 7).

**Table 7**

*Hierarchical regression of post level of depression on number of sessions attended, number of months unemployed, family protective factors, pre-intervention self-reported mental health, and interactions (n=30: includes participants and spouses)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>17.71</td>
<td>17.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Sessions</strong></td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended**</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Months</strong></td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed</strong></td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Protective</strong></td>
<td>-8.67</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors</strong></td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Intervention</strong></td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Reported</strong></td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>-13.93**</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>-13.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Family Protective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors &amp; Number</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>of Sessions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attended</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction</strong></td>
<td>-13.91**</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>-13.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Family Protective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors &amp; Number</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>of Months</strong></td>
<td>-.006</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01*
The second hierarchical multiple regression analysis examined problematic family functioning as the dependent variable. Number of months unemployed, number of sessions attended, family protective factors, and pre-intervention problematic family functioning were entered at Step 1, explaining 57% of the variance in problematic family functioning (refer to Table 8). The family protective factor variable was not statistically significant, \( p = .65 \), therefore there was no support for Hypothesis 4. Moreover, Hypothesis 8 was not supported as number of months unemployed was not positively related to problematic family functioning, \( p = .11 \). On the other hand, a relationship which was not hypothesized emerged. As expected, pre-intervention (B.R.I.T.E.) family problematic functioning was a statistically significant predictor of post-intervention family problematic functioning, \( p = .03 \).

After entry of the interaction term between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended at Step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 61.6%, \( F (5, 14) = 4.50, p = .012 \). The interaction term between family protective factors and number of sessions attended explained an additional 4.6% of problematic family functioning, \( R^2 \) change = .03, \( F \) change (1, 14) = .05, \( p = .22 \), therefore Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Pre-intervention problematic family functioning was still statistically significant, \( p = .02 \). The interaction between family protective factors and months unemployed was entered at Step 3, explaining 67.5% of the variance in problematic family functioning. The interaction term between family protective factors and months unemployed explained an additional 5.9% of problematic family functioning, \( R^2 \) change = .03, \( F \) change (1, 13) = .23, \( p = .15 \), which means that Hypothesis 10 was not supported. Thus, in the final model, only pre-intervention problematic family functioning was statistically significant, \( p = .01 \) (see Table 8).
Table 8

Hierarchical regression of post level of problematic family functioning on number of sessions attended, number of months unemployed, family protective factors, pre-intervention family functioning, and interactions (n=30; includes participants and spouses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Step 3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Sessions Attended</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Months Unemployed</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Protective Factors</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Intervention Family Functioning</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction – Family Protective Factors &amp; Number of Sessions Attended</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction – Family Protective Factors &amp; Number of Months Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01

Let us examine the results of the first model in which depression was the dependent variable. The model showed that the predictors, family protective factors and number of months unemployed, did not affect any change in depression from pre- to post-test. The model also demonstrated that the effect of family protective factors is not contingent on number of months unemployed and the effect of number of months unemployed is not contingent on family protective factors. In other words, their effects are independent and are non-significant. On the other hand, as indicated by the significant interaction between family protective factors and number of sessions attended, it appeared that family protective factors seemed to enhance the effectiveness of B.R.I.T.E. That is, the number of sessions attended decreased depression much more so for those who have family protective factors in place. Thus, it seems that one’s participation in B.R.I.T.E. perhaps helped people build on their existing strengths.

The second model examined problematic family functioning as the dependent variable. This model indicates that there was a statistically significant relationship between pre-intervention problematic family functioning and post-intervention problematic family
functioning. In other words, those who were high in problematic family functioning remained high after the intervention and those who were low before the intervention remained low. This model also showed that the effect of family protective factors is not contingent on the number of sessions attended as well as the number of months unemployed. Additionally, the effect of the number of sessions attended and the number of months unemployed is not contingent on family protective factors. In other words, their effects are independent and are non-significant.

**Program Evaluation of B.R.I.T.E.**

Upon completion of the B.R.I.T.E. program, participants were surveyed regarding the usefulness and their overall satisfaction with the program. The first question asked them to rate the level of usefulness of each session from “not at all useful” to “extremely useful”. Of the nine ProNet participants who responded to this question, the majority found each session either “useful” or “extremely useful”. Session 1 was reported as being “extremely useful to all ProNet participants. Please refer to Figure 7 below for a breakdown of the results to this question.

**Figure 7**

*Reported Usefulness of Each Session - ProNet Client*
This same question was asked of the JOIN participants. All participants (100%) found each session either “useful” or “extremely useful”. The fourth session was ranked as “very useful” by a higher percentage of participants (73%) compared to the other three sessions. Please refer to Figure 8 for additional details.

**Figure 8**

*Reported Usefulness of Each Session - JOIN Client*

The two spouses/partners who attended on a regular basis answered this question on the survey. They found Sessions 1 through 5 to be “very useful”. Neither spouse nor partner attended Session 6, the session on communication. The last session, Putting It All Together, one spouse/partner found the session “very useful” while the other found it to be “useful”.

The next question that participants were asked was their overall satisfaction with the program. Overall, every participant, whether it was a ProNet client, JOIN client, or a spouse/partner reported being either “satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with B.R.I.T.E. Please refer to Figure 9 for the exact percentages.
B.R.I.T.E. participants also responded to open-ended questions as to what was the most helpful part of the program, the least helpful part, and any other comments they wanted to share with regard to the program. Most of the responses were positive in nature and were similar across all three groups of participants (ProNet client, JOIN client, or spouse/partner). Please refer to Table 9 for an example of the key responses to the question as to what was the most helpful part of the program.

Table 9

Sample of Responses to Most Helpful Part of B.R.I.T.E. Program

- “I learned from every session a tool for my toolbox.”
- “Knowing that other people feel the same way and are looking for the same things.”
- “Stay in the moment. The power negative and positive self-talk has on us. The power a group can have on your attitude!”
- “It was good to put things in perspective and share with others.”
- “Having two spouses in the room to share and to contribute to the gap.”
Some of the least helpful parts of the program seemed to revolve around two main issues. Specifically, comments reported by participants involving these issues included: “I only wished more people took the class” and “Availability to layoff sooner might be more helpful”.

Participants were also given the opportunity to share any other comments with regard to the program. Following, in Table 10, is a list of these additional comments.

**Table 10**

*General Comments Provided by B.R.I.T.E. Participants (n=11)*

- I found the content as facilitated by Robyn to be enlightening and beneficial. I enjoyed the interactions that Robyn fostered between class participants.

- Robyn is an excellent, empathetic leader. Group congeniality is important.

- This program is good. Need stronger marketing by ProNet to get word out. Also possible to create a flyer asking them to join the group & why they are important.

- BRITE program was very positive for me.

- Finding lots of outlet about aggravations.

- I feel better about my future and myself. I will really miss getting together & getting insight from my fellow group members.

- If this program was around 1 1/2 years ago, I think it may have popped me out of my depression sooner.

- Should be shared in more places.

- Thanks for a great week! The information you provided was so helpful.

- This was a good program.

- Very informative & enjoyable.

Moreover, at the end of each session, participants were asked the most helpful aspect of that particular workshop session. The coding of this open-ended question required several steps. First, the primary investigator read through all of the responses and started to see some common themes
emerging. Next, categories for the different themes were developed and comments were labeled with one or more categories. Once this coding was complete and the common themes started to appear.

There were four themes that emerged from the qualitative data gathered from these responses over the course of the programs. These themes are highlighted below:

1. **Isolation.** Over and over again, participants indicated they just appreciated being with others who could understand what they are going through. The sessions provided a sense of ‘normalcy’ as well as emotional and informational support to each other.

2. **Openness.** Participants were quite willing to share their feelings and emotions (to the point of crying a couple of times). They seemed to feel comfortable in the setting with each other.

3. **Lack of Participation from Spouses/Partners.** It was difficult getting partners/spouses to attend. The ones who did not attend were the ones who seemed to need more assistance, as there seemed to be tension, lack of support, poor communication, and so on between the couple (at least as expressed by the participant).

4. **Offer Program Earlier in Transition Process.** Participants thought this program would be more beneficial to go through when one first gets laid off or earlier in the unemployment experience, at the beginning of the crisis.

In sum, the majority of the B.R.I.T.E. participants found each workshop session “useful” or “extremely useful”. All of the participants were “satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with the program. The most helpful aspects of the program included reframing negative thoughts into positive ones, knowing there are other people who are experiencing similar feelings and thoughts, and putting things into perspective and being able to share with others. The least helpful aspects were the low attendance rate and that a program like this would have been more helpful earlier in their transition process. Overall, there were four main themes that emerged
from the program. Participants felt safe sharing their thoughts, feelings, and they did not feel alone in what they were experiencing. In addition, this program would have perhaps improved the well-being of some of the participants if it had been offered to them earlier in the job loss experience. Finally, it was helpful for participants to hear the perspectives of the spouses that attended, so increasing the attendance of spouses/partners is important.

**Discussion of Phase I**

Implementing B.R.I.T.E. was a rewarding yet challenging experience. It was rewarding in the sense that I saw the transformation of the individuals from the start of the program, regardless of format, to the completion of the program. Many of the participants arrived the first day feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and down. The mood or atmosphere of each group, however, became “lighter” and more positive as we progressed through each session. Participants seemed to be more upbeat and laughter became more commonplace. There was a tremendous camaraderie that developed among the group members. This confirmed to me how powerful and healing the group process can be. Many participants expressed their gratitude to me and this was personally satisfying. Moreover, statistically significant reductions in depression and problematic family functioning were shown from pre- to post-test among participants. These were surprising, yet promising findings, simply because of the low number of participants. Interestingly, there was a much larger decrease in depression () for the JOIN clients compared to the ProNet clients. There are a couple of possible explanations for this. The shorter, condensed version of B.R.I.T.E. may be more effective than the weekly format over seven weeks. Another possible explanation is that the working-class JOIN clients may have been more resilient than the ProNet clients to begin with based on the increased life challenges they may have already faced.
In addition, the statistically significant interaction between family protective factors and B.R.I.T.E. participation also suggests that involvement in B.R.I.T.E. helped participants build upon their existing strengths.

Another important aspect of offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. in the future is to incorporate fun activities. The session where the participants competed in groups to build straw Eiffel towers was the session where everyone laughed. Participants were broken up into small groups of three to four and were charged with the task of building the tallest tower they could using only straws and scotch tape. They also could not use anything to prop up the tower – it had to be free standing. The point of the activity is to get the groups to realize how important planning is in the process; the groups that developed a plan had more success building towers. We talked about how this activity translates to our own lives and how we need to plan in order to know where we are going. It also brings up issues of communication and teamwork. Therefore, it is important to incorporate activities such as these where participants are actively engaged and learning at the same time. Moreover, laughter is cathartic, and participants thoroughly enjoyed that activity. It got them to think about something else besides their personal situation and they were able to simply have some fun.

The major disappointment with regard to the implementation of B.R.I.T.E. was the low participation rate of spouses or partners. None of the spouses/partners attended the JOIN group, and this is probably due to a couple of reasons. One, the sessions were offered during the day so many of the spouses/partners could not attend as they were working; evening or Saturday workshops are typically not offered at JOIN. Second, the case managers who signed the clients up to attend B.R.I.T.E. did not really encourage the attendance of the spouses/partners. Participation of family members is not a “normal” practice in their office so it was not explicitly
supported. A different culture, however, exists with the ProNet side of the organization. Spouses/partners were clearly encouraged to attend by the Branch Manager and staff, yet few did. We offered the sessions in the evening in an effort to encourage the attendance of spouses/partners, but that did not seem to work either. Furthermore, I believed it would have been beneficial to some of the more strained relationships (based on what participants disclosed) to have the respective spouse/partner present.

As with any study, this phase of the current project has limitations that affect its ability to be generalized to a broader population of individuals. First, the sampling method may not truly represent the target population as self-selection bias may be an issue. Participants who already seek support at ProNet or JOIN are showing they are already motivated to improve their personal situation. Additionally, all ProNet and JOIN clients may not be represented as those who signed up for B.R.I.T.E. may have been more open to talking and sharing their thoughts and feelings about their unemployment experience as opposed to those ProNet and JOIN clients who did not participate. Second, a small sample size was used so this limits the generalizability of the results. In the future, it is important to implement this program on a larger scale. Third, the sample lacked cultural diversity. Thus, the concepts and applications of family resilience might be different for African American or Hispanic families. Despite the lack of cultural diversity, two different social class groups participated in B.R.I.T.E. and it worked for both. This suggests that the content and applications of family resilience are appropriate for diverse socioeconomic groups.

Another limitation is that causality of the true effectiveness of the B.R.I.T.E. program cannot be determined as a non-treatment or comparison group was not utilized. Furthermore, an oversight in the current study was that family protective factors were not measured after
completion of the B.R.I.T.E. program. In the future, it is important to measure whether participants’ level of family protective factors increased after participating in the program. There may have been other variables that confounded participants’ well-being and family functioning regardless of attendance to B.R.I.T.E. In the future, it is important to utilize a comparison group in order to better determine the effectiveness of the program. Moreover, the use of self-report data to measure participant functioning and well-being is a source of error, as participants may be responding either in the socially desirable manner (socially desirability bias), or based on the demand characteristics of the survey. Additionally, I facilitated each of the workshop sessions which may introduce researcher bias. Nevertheless, objective measures utilized for data collection throughout the course of the current project helped to minimize the effects of any potential bias of the researcher. Finally, there was lower-than-expected participation from spouses/partners. In the future, it is important to find ways to improve spouse/partner involvement for a couple of reasons. First, it was helpful for the unemployed individuals to hear the spouses/partners’ perspectives on things and vice versa. Second, according to some of the unemployed individuals whose spouses/partners did not participate, in their opinion, their relationships would have benefitted had their spouses/partners attended.

Thus, in order to address the issue as to how to increase spouse/partner participation in the future as well as other important issues, the primary investigator conducted follow-up interviews with a sample of the B.R.I.T.E. participants. The first question which needs to be examined, based on the results of B.R.I.T.E., is how can we attract future spouses/partners and even family members to attend a program like B.R.I.T.E. A second question to address is whether or not participants are still applying what they learned from B.R.I.T.E. This information is valuable in terms of measuring the program’s efficacy. With unemployment rates at record
high levels, it would also be helpful to ascertain how these unemployed families, many of whom were unemployed for over a year, coped and what advice they would like to share with other families in similar situations to better cope with unemployment. In addition, what resources, other than unemployment insurance, did they find useful during their unemployment. Again, this is information that could be helpful to other unemployed families across the U.S.
Chapter V: Methodology for Phase 2

Qualitative inquiry will be used for gathering and analyzing data regarding the research questions for the second stage of this project. The use of qualitative interviews is appropriate for this stage for three reasons. First, the purpose of this part of the research is to further explore the unemployment experience of families. Specifically, for instance, qualitative methods are preferred in this case where questions are being explored, not tested (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Second, the research questions being considered here are seeking a more in-depth understanding of what unemployed individuals and their families experience, so qualitative inquiry is better suited to do this (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Van Manen, 1990). Finally, one of the goals of this phase of the study is to gather rich data that can only be found when considering a smaller number of families in greater depth. The sample size for this stage of the project may be small, but the depth of the understanding may be beyond what can be uncovered in large, quantitative studies. Some of the researchers who are currently examining the process of resilience in families prefer qualitative methods due to the complexity and exploratory nature of this research (Daly, 1999; Mederer, 1999; McCubbin et al., 1999; Patterson, 2002). For these reasons, qualitative methods are an appropriate method for the second stage of this project.

Sample and Procedure

Once certification from the Institutional Review Board was obtained for the second phase of the project, the 17 B.R.I.T.E. participants (from both the ProNet and JOIN groups) who voluntarily provided their contact information at the completion of the program were contacted via phone or email by the primary investigator to ask if they would participate in a follow-up, face-to-face interview. Spouses/partners of the participants who did not attend the B.R.I.T.E. program were also invited to participate in a face-to-face interview. Of the 17 participants, nine
(53%) agreed to be interviewed. Three couples along with three other B.R.I.T.E. attendees (two from ProNet and one from JOIN) participated in the follow-up interviews. Of the three couples that agreed to be interviewed, two regularly attended B.R.I.T.E. sessions. The third couple consisted of the husband, a former ProNet client, and his wife who did not attend any of the B.R.I.T.E. sessions.

The method for data collection for this stage of the project was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the researcher to pursue themes that are relevant to this project while also being flexible enough that families’ experiences are not limited to the questions being asked and to allow families to talk about issues that are important to them. The interviews began by explaining to the participants how the interview would proceed, gaining permission to proceed and to audiotape the interview. Participants were informed that any identifying information will be deleted from the texts of the interviews and that the audiotapes will be erased after transcription. When the participant agreed to proceed, the interview focused on the questions outlined next, depending on the type of participant.

**Measures**

**Interview Questions for All B.R.I.T.E. Participants.**

1. *What ideas or concepts, if any, still “stick” with you in terms of what you experienced in the B.R.I.T.E. program?*

   This question was asked to see if any of the tools/strategies discussed in B.R.I.T.E. have been helpful. This really speaks to the efficacy of B.R.I.T.E. and whether the program has longer-term benefits for participants. Moreover, this question is important to ask in order to determine whether B.R.I.T.E. would be useful to others in the future, and if so, what topics were of most benefit to them.
2. *How has the unemployment experience affected your family, either positively and/or negatively?*

This question was asked to see how the unemployment has affected the family system as the entire family is affected by the unemployment, not just the individual who lost his/her job.

3. *Besides unemployment insurance, who or where, if at all, have you turned to for help during this time?*

This question was asked to see if the subject perceives they had enough resources to help them during this transition. This may be helpful in addressing additional service gaps for unemployed families.

4. *What advice, if any, would you like to share with other families in terms of how to better cope with unemployment?*

This question was asked as a means to share helpful information with other unemployed families, especially since the national unemployment rate expects to remain at higher-than-average levels and the number of long-term unemployed continues to rise.

5. *What ideas or thoughts do you have in terms of being able to get more unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners to participate in B.R.I.T.E. in the future?*

This question was asked because participation of spouses/partners was low in the B.R.I.T.E. programs. Again, this is helpful information to obtain for possible interventions for spouses/partners and other family members in the future.
JOIN/ProNet clients were also asked what their employment status was at the time of interview. If they were reemployed, the primary investigator asked when did they land the new job and with whom. This was done to ascertain how many of the unemployed individuals were reemployed and how soon after attending B.R.I.T.E. did this happen. For the one spouse who did not attend any of the B.R.I.T.E. sessions and agreed to be interviewed, two additional questions were asked. For instance, question #1 from above was replaced with asking the reason(s) for not attending B.R.I.T.E. and what would make it more inviting to participate in a program like B.R.I.T.E. in the future. Since this was the only spouse who did not attend and agreed to be interviewed, it was important to learn why she did not attend. Gaining this information from her might prove helpful in developing and implementing future family programs. The second question that was added for this one spouse was to talk more about how the unemployment experience of her husband had been for her. This was an opportunity to learn more about her experience as the spouse/partner as the research in this area has been scarce.

In addition to the face-to-face interviews, I conducted a focus group with spouses/partners of currently unemployed individuals. The reasoning for this was to gain additional insight from other spouses/partners since there were not many spouses/partners who attended B.R.I.T.E. In addition, I thought it may be difficult to recruit volunteers from those spouses/partners who did not attend B.R.I.T.E. Participants for this focus group were recruited via flyers posted at two local JobConnect offices and at the ProNet office. Eight spouses/partners participated in the focus group. The questions are similar to those asked of spouses/partners who did not attend B.R.I.T.E. with the exception of the last one.

Questions for spouses/partners in focus group who did not have opportunity to attend B.R.I.T.E.
1) **Tell me how the unemployment experience of your spouse/partner has been for you.**

This question was asked to allow the spouses/partners to “vent” about their experience and to get the group talking. Additionally, and more importantly, this question was asked in an effort to validate their feelings and to learn more about their experience as a spouse/partner of an unemployed individual.

2) **How has the unemployment experience affected your family, either positively and/or negatively?**

This question was asked to see how the unemployment has affected the family system as the entire family is affected by the unemployment, not just the individual who lost his/her job.

3) **Besides unemployment insurance, who or where, if at all, have you turned to for help during this time?**

This question was asked to see if the subject perceives they have enough resources to help them during this transition. This may be helpful in addressing additional service gaps for unemployed families.

4) **What advice, if any, would you like to share with other spouses/partners as well as families in terms of how to better cope with unemployment?**

This question was asked as a means to share helpful information with other unemployed families, especially since the national unemployment rate is expected to remain at higher-than-average levels and the number of long-term unemployed continues to rise.
5) *What ideas or thoughts do you have with regard to offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. to both the unemployed individual and spouse/partner?*

This question was asked to first ascertain whether this group of spouses/partners saw value in offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. to unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. Moreover, I wanted to get their ideas regarding potential workshops and classes in which they would be interested in taking. This is helpful information to obtain for possible interventions for spouses/partners and/or the family in the future.

**Data Analysis**

The qualitative data collected in this phase of the project was analyzed using framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Framework analysis has been used in a variety of settings. The benefits of framework analysis include the following:

- Primarily based on the observation and accounts of the participants.
- It is dynamic in that it allows for changes throughout the process.
- It is systematic in that it allows a methodical treatment of the data.
- It is comprehensive in nature, allowing for full rather than partial review of the material collected.
- It is accessible to others, meaning the analytical process and interpretations can be viewed and judged by people other than the primary analyst (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

With framework analysis, the gathered data is sifted, charted, and sorted in accordance with key issues and themes. This involves a five-step process:

1) Familiarization;
2) Identifying a thematic framework;
3) Indexing;
4) Charting; and
5) Mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Familiarization refers to the process during which the researcher becomes familiarized with the transcripts of the data collected (i.e. interview or focus group transcripts, observation or field notes) and gains an overview of the collected data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). In other words, the researcher becomes immersed in the data by listening to audiotapes, studying the field or reading the transcripts. Throughout this process the researcher becomes aware of key ideas and recurrent themes and makes a note of them.

Identifying a thematic framework, the second stage, occurs after familiarization when the researcher recognizes emerging themes or issues in the data set. These emerging themes or issues may have arisen from a priori themes or issues; however it is at this stage that the researcher must allow the data to dictate the themes and issues. To achieve this end the researcher uses the notes taken during the familiarization stage. The key issues, concepts and themes that have been expressed by the participants now form the basis of a thematic framework that can be used to filter and classify the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994).

Although the researcher may have a set of a priori issues, it is important to maintain an open mind and not force the data to fit the a priori issues. However since the research was designed around a priori issues it is most likely that these issues will guide the thematic framework. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) stress that the thematic framework is only tentative and there are further chances of refining it at subsequent stages of analysis.
Devising and refining a thematic framework is not an automatic or mechanical process, but involves both logical and intuitive thinking. It involves making judgments about meaning, about the relevance and importance of issues, and about implicit connections between ideas. In applied social policy research, it also involves making sure that the original research questions are being fully addressed (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009).

Indexing means that one identifies portions or sections of the data that correspond to a particular theme. This process is applied to all the textual data that has been gathered (i.e. transcripts of interviews). For the sake of convenience, Rabiee (2004) suggests using numerical or textual codes to identify specific pieces of data which correspond to differing themes.

Charting, the fourth stage, the specific pieces of data that were indexed in the previous stage are now arranged in charts of the themes. This means that the data are lifted from their original textual context and placed in charts that consist of the headings and subheadings that were drawn during the thematic framework, or from a priori research inquiries or in the manner that is perceived to be the best way to report the research (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The important point to remember here is that although the pieces of data are lifted from their context, the data are still clearly identified as to what case it came from.

The final stage, mapping and interpretation, involves the analysis of the key characteristics as laid out in the charts. This means searching for patterns, associations, concepts, and explanations in your data, aided by visual displays (via indexing and charting). At this point, Ritchie and Spencer (1994) suggest that the analyst define concepts, map the range and nature of the phenomena, find associations within the data, and provide explanations or develop strategies. Essentially, the central aim at this stage is to use the visually displayed ideas created in earlier stages to aid in developing and testing interpretations of the data.
Chapter VI: Results and Discussion of Phase 2

A number of questions resulted from the implementation of B.R.I.T.E. Two issues included how to improve the participation of spouses/partners in the future and what tools or strategies, if any, are B.R.I.T.E. participants still utilizing six to nine months after completion of the program. These questions needed answers in order to improve future programming/services for unemployed families and to determine the effectiveness of the B.R.I.T.E. program as well. Additionally, most of the unemployed families who participated in this project were unemployed for over six months. In order to help other unemployed families, it would be beneficial to learn how these families have coped and what advice they would share with others going through the same experience. In order to address these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with some of the B.R.I.T.E. participants. Moreover, a focus group of spouses/partners of currently unemployed individuals was facilitated.

Follow-Up Interviews

Nine individuals of the ProNet and JOIN groups were interviewed. Of these nine individuals, five (56%) attended the ProNet group, one (11%) attended the JOIN group, and three (33%) were spouses. Only one spouse, the wife of a former ProNet client, did not attend any of the B.R.I.T.E. sessions while the other two regularly attended sessions. One of the couples, who was married at the time of participation in the B.R.I.T.E. program, was going through a divorce at the time of the interviews. Each partner agreed to be interviewed separately in this case; the other two married couples agreed to be interviewed at the same time. The spouses/partners of the other three participants were not willing to be interviewed. Interviews ranged from 45 to 110 minutes in length and were audiotaped and later transcribed by me, deleting all identifying information.
Of the six ProNet and JOIN clients, four (67%) were reemployed at the time of their interview. One of the interviewees, who was unemployed at the time of the follow-up, had secured a temporary job for a few months in the fall until the company relocated in December. She is still in daily contact with various temporary employment agencies and had a job interview a couple of days after our interview. The other individual has had serious health issues which have hindered her job search. In fact, a few days before the interview, she went in for vocational rehabilitation counseling to see what other jobs she can do.

After I transcribed the interviews, I familiarized myself with the transcripts by reading and rereading the transcripts. At this point in the process, I became familiar with the key ideas and recurrent themes regarding the questions I asked. Using the notes that I took during the familiarization process, I then identified the emerging themes that arose. Once I classified the themes, I then identified portions of the transcripts that corresponded to those themes and color coded those in order to easily identify which parts of the transcripts corresponded to the different themes. The final step was to arrange the indexed, color-coded data into charts of the themes. This is where the actual quotes of the interviewees were charted according to the themes that had emerged during the process. Thus, the emerging themes that developed from each question are highlighted below, along with the specific pieces of data or quotes that were charted in the final stage of the framework analysis process.

Tools/Strategies from B.R.I.T.E. (Research Question 1)

The eight participants who attended B.R.I.T.E. were asked what tools or strategies, if any, they learned in B.R.I.T.E. still remain with them. The main categories included appreciating what one has, maintaining a positive outlook, the straw tower activity (mentioned in Chapter 4), sharing ideas on inexpensive entertainment ideas, and focusing on priorities.
Appreciating What One Has. One of the recurring themes that participants shared was how they learned to appreciate what they have. One participant in particular summed up his experience by saying, “I think one of the most important things that I gained out of the program was that you have to appreciate what you do have. When somebody is down and out and sometimes feeling hopeless you may not always realize what you do have as compared to what you don't have”.

Positive Outlook. In terms of focusing on the positive, one of the participants who attended with his wife indicated how important reframing and staying positive helped him improve his attitude, which may have contributed to his landing a new job one month after completing the program. Additionally, he and his wife are still trying to think positively. He stated:

…really staying positive, really staying focused on the positive. I think that helped not even with the ProNet part of it, but this in conjunction with that led to a difference in how I interviewed and applied. There became a change in how I applied. There was a different confidence level. So instead of focusing on that I was unemployed, the job loss, and how stretched we were financially, but trying to be positive as an individual. It was still hard, and we're still doing that.

One participant changed her perspective in how she thought and added, “…what your series did is give me freedom. It gave me the ability to look at things through a different, more positive viewpoint. The things you suggested in there, I kept them all. I kept my B.R.I.T.E. folder.”

Straw Tower Activity. Another theme to emerge from what really stuck with participants was the straw tower activity that they did during the Do You Know Where You Are Going To session which focused on proactively managing one’s life. One participant summed up
the thoughts around the straw activity and how that still sticks with her by saying:

Do you know how much laughter happened that night? It was a stress releaser, a healing
and that was why I looked forward to going. It was, I'm not a bad person, you're okay,
there's just been some hiccups in life, and then you had this fun activity, and oh yeah, it
gets rid of the toxins when you laugh. And so we're still trying to do that -- we play
games and just laugh.

**How to Do More with Less.** The class session where participants shared inexpensive
entertainment ideas with each other emerged as another theme or issue that remained with them.
Despite the fact that many of the participants were now working and had more income, they
were still enjoying the ideas that were shared in that class. One participant stated, “…what could
you do in the community, we're still doing that. In other words, we have changed how we think.
And I don't think if he got a $100,000 a year job, we would still do things the same way.”

**How Unemployment Affected Relationship (Research Question 2)**

Participants were asked to talk about how the unemployment experience affected, either
positively or negatively, their relationship with their spouse/partner. Both negative and positive
themes emerged from the participants.

**Conflict/Financial Strain.** On the negative side, one of the main themes was that the
unemployment caused stress which led to arguments and lashing out, typically by the
spouse/partner of the unemployed individual. For example, the spouse who did not attend any of
the B.R.I.T.E. sessions indicated:

I think there was a lot of stress between us because I'd get quick to get angry over stupid
little things, and I think too, and no offense (said to husband), when we were working
two jobs, I felt like I had me time, but when you were there all the time, I had no me
The spouses/partners also felt additional financial pressure as one shared, “I felt like I had more
of the responsibility on my shoulders…I just felt like you (unemployed husband who was present
in interview) were more dependent on me and you just became more timid in some things.” One
of the spouses had to return to work to help support the family and mentioned how difficult that
was for her: “I had worked for 11 years as a school teacher. And so when we had her (daughter),
I quit so I had not worked outside of the home for 21 years, so to have to go back I was scared to
death.” Other disagreements revolved around finances and how money should be spent (or not
spent). The couple, who was divorcing at the time of the interviews, indicated this was one of the
major reasons their marriage failed. The spouse mentioned how his wife was spending money
out of her 401K retirement account and would say to him, “It’s my money. I'll spend it any way I
want to”. He indicated that his wife’s behavior, “It almost killed me. No cooperation at all...”

**Feelings of Guilt.** For the unemployed individual, especially the males, another theme
that developed was their feelings of guilt that they were no longer providing for their families.
One male participant expressed this when he said, “I felt guilty because she was going to work
and I wasn't.” Another said he felt this “loss of identity, for some reason you feel like the job is
you or you are the job so I lost identity, lost self-confidence, um, loss of that I'm a good provider
for my family, so my self-esteem just tanked really fast.” As a result of this guilt, some of the
unemployed individuals refrained from talking to their spouses about their fears, concerns, and
so on, as they did not want to “burden” them any more than they already had.

**Coping with Stress.** Another theme which arose was that spouses/partners varied in how
they handled the stress of the situation which led to misunderstanding and disagreements. For
example, two wives of former ProNet clients explained that they did not want to tell extended
family and friends that their husbands had been laid off. One explained it by saying, “I didn’t feel comfortable telling people because I didn't want them to be concerned. If it came to a point where I needed them to be concerned, then I'd let them know.” On the other hand, the husbands, the ones who were out of work, wanted to spread the news with as many people as possible. One stated:

It's reaching out and not being afraid. There's a person I know just recently who lost their job and they don't want anyone to know. He feels shame, and I'm like, no, no, no, no, no… I learned through ProNet you need to tell everyone.

**Brought Them Closer/More Time Together.** On the other hand, there were a lot of positive outcomes reported by participants. For example, the main themes were being able to spend more time as a family or couple and the experience actually brought them closer together because they had to work as a team. One participant shared:

I would have to say the unemployment experience had a positive effect on our relationship. As newlyweds and as expecting parents, it brought us closer together in the fact that we spent a lot of time together trying to figure out and communicating how we were going to get through this challenging time together.

Another participant added, “It made us (he and his wife) revisit things and allowed me time to bond with my son.” One of the couples stressed how they really helped to support each other throughout the transition and this helped bring them as well as their daughter closer together. The husband stated:

She (wife) was always supportive. Never once did she say why did you lose your job, why did this happen, but even aside from that, we grew even closer. We had an opportunity to spend more time together...so we needed each other and helped each
other. And there were times that I was down and she was able to help and there were
times that she was down and I was able to help. And I think through it all, as a couple we
grew together, and our daughter, we grew together, and our family just pulled together.

**Resources Used (Research Question 3)**

In terms of what resources participants used during their unemployment experience, other
than unemployment insurance and ProNet or JOIN, the main themes that emerged were family
and friends as well as their financial savings.

**Support from Family and Friends.** Some of the participants had a family member or
neighbor drop off food items, but they seemed to financially support themselves with their
savings and unemployment insurance. The emotional support of friends and family is what
seemed to be the most important resource. For instance, one participant said:

> It was the emotional support which was the huge part for us. And you need both
depending on your situation, but for us, really, the financial part was okay. Was it tight?
Oh yeah, we had gone through our savings, and I'm not sure how much longer we could
have gone, but the emotional support - we had family, that was huge, and some close
friends.” Someone shared how "the neighbor across this street, to this day, still asks me if
I want their paper after she reads it. So that really helped. I will say you do learn who
your friends are. Another neighbor, my friend, belongs to the Reno Phil(harmonic) so she
took me to the Reno Phil one night so that helped my psyche a lot.

One of the ProNet participants added, “For me, it was ProNet, your class was tremendous for my
wife, and then it was our family, the church, our faith, and the people that were there.”

**Savings.** The participants who were interviewed relied on their savings, either from
retirement accounts or other savings accounts, to financially help them through this period. One
participant shared how financially he and his family were able to manage: “I was fortunate to have some severance along with insurance coverage for some of my unemployment time. I was just about to reach into my savings when I landed a client.”

**Advice for Other Unemployed Families (Research Question 4)**

Participants were asked what advice they would share with other unemployed families. Utilizing services at ProNet or JOIN (or a similar organization), using a day-to-day approach, taking time to reflect, preparing ahead of time, and communicating were the main themes that resulted from this question.

**Day-to-Day Approach.** Focusing one day at a time was also helpful to participants. One participant summed up this theme well by stating, “I was just taking it day by day. As long as our bills were paid and our mortgage was paid, it was just like okay, we can cope with this.” Another participant, a wife who was employed while her husband was looking for work, stressed how critical it was to her to stay focused on the present and shared:

If I'd looked at long range, like I still have 10 years to work and carry all of this on my shoulders, then you would really start feeling yourself down in the dumps. But if you look day by day and week by week then that helps.” Another spouse shared her experience “that finding a job, like he thought he would have a job within a month, and I thought well that might be a little too soon, maybe, but surely by three months he will. And you can't think that way. You can't set a date or you're setting yourself up to fail.

**Reflection.** One of the themes that emerged was to take this time to reflect on what you want to do. A participant shared, “…” find a way to keep out of the house, go to ProNet or JOIN, to keep going, to take every class you can, part of that keeping going is taking time to discover yourself.” Another participant said:
I would like to share that the unemployment experience is often a time to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses so that you can better define what you want to do in the future. I would say the one has to be supportive of all aspects of their life and that a job is not the end of the world.

**Reprioritize/Plan.** Another theme which developed was to focus on what is important and plan ahead. In addition to putting money away for a rainy day, one participant added that one needs “to be able to cook and learning how to cook on things that aren't too expensive”. Another person stated, “I think the thing that is important is that to stop and think about what really is important.” “Being frugal” and focusing on what you really need was mentioned. A wife who attended the B.R.I.T.E. sessions added:

We talked about different budgeting things and priorities, and needs and wants, and we've kind of always done that but going through that helped us focused on those things. And we really, even now, have changed, and I think that's a natural result of what you go through when you're unemployed for a long period of time is you change how you see your priorities and what you spend your money on cuz you realize the future is uncertain.

**Nonjudgmental Communication.** Communication was another theme that repeatedly came up in the interviews. One participant shared how important communication, without blaming, was to their getting through this experience:

It was the communication. For us, that helped. We talked more but being able to talk about our feelings without fear of retribution and I could express my frustration and my anxieties and my fears and get support; she could do the same so we grew closer together. But I think that is where some couples or people that are together have trouble -- where people don't talk. We saw that in the class where some people either didn't talk at all;
they became buried or like an ostrich in the sand like I'll just ignore this and will go away.

Ideas to Improve Spouse/Partner Participation (Research Question 5)

Participants were asked what ideas or thoughts they had about getting more spouses/partners to participate in a program like B.R.I.T.E. in the future. An offshoot of that question was whether they thought it might be more valuable to offer a program just for the spouses/partners. The main themes to develop from these questions were that the program should include both partners, a more informal get-together at the beginning might be helpful to entice people to come back, children should be included, and the program should be offered more frequently.

Both Partners. Participants thought it was extremely beneficial to hear the different perspectives of the unemployed individual and the spouse/partner. As one participant said:

I will have to say having other spouses participate and listening to their thoughts did help create good conversation and realization. I think that having partners and spouses participate increases the impact and also allows for a time to vent without feeling threatened.

A ProNet client who attended the program with his wife added:

From my perspective, having us together was huge. But for me, it helped to have her there because I needed her support. And then when I saw it much it helped her to go through the class, it was even better. It just impassioned me for it and that made it better.

So for me, it (having unemployed individuals and spouses together) made it better.

One of the wives who attended B.R.I.T.E. agreed that both partners should attend together because it is helpful to hear both perspectives, but she also shared an additional thought: “I
wouldn't separate it either. Reason being I've been around enough women who husband bash and I’m tired of it and it becomes a snowball effect.” The one spouse who was interviewed but did not participate in any of the B.R.I.T.E. sessions, in retrospect, realized she would have benefited by attending B.R.I.T.E. She stated:

I think it really benefited him, and as a person who didn't go, I think it would have helped me a lot because I know there were probably people there who could have related to what I was going through and to be able to vent.

One of the former ProNet clients said:

I don't know how you get them there, but it needs to be stressed. And when we did it, it was an invitation. I mean, there needs to be a little more emphasis, or stress, that if they have a significant other or spouse or partner or whatever, somebody they're living with, to bring them for the benefits of them.

He then continued, “I never once heard anything from ProNet about the relationships and what happens in relationships (during unemployment), not until your class.”

**Informal Kickoff Event.** One of the other themes that came up repeatedly was to offer some kind of informal gathering or event to get families invested in attending a program like B.R.I.T.E. One participant shared his idea:

The first one is a potluck, bring your spouse/significant other and come together and visit. Maybe you approach it that way. Maybe even a game night or just something like that and then maybe word would get around and the numbers would grow and be better.

Someone else shared a similar thought: “Maybe have a family time and have it break the ice doing something fun like your thing with the straws and just start throwing out some things and let everyone have fun.” Another thought was to have ProNet clients bring their spouse/partner to
“an informal meet and greet so the spouses know what BRITE is about and what you are trying to accomplish. This would allow the spouses to ask questions, what are the expectations are and what in it for them.” Participants repeatedly said they benefited from and really enjoyed the program. As one person said, “The program that you came up with is just huge. For us, it made a huge difference.” The wife who did not attend said, “If it would have been like on a Saturday, I would have attended because he'd come home and tell me things, and I noticed a difference in him. I think it would have been beneficial for me”. Another comment was “if people would give it a chance and then they would realize there is value for, not so much for the unemployed person, but actually for the other person. That's where I think the value comes in. Then maybe they'd be more apt to attend and get more involved.”

Include Children. The other theme that arose was the fact that children should be included. One participant asked, “Have you thought about including the children because I am sure it affects them as well?” One of the couples that attended B.R.I.T.E. has a 20-year-old daughter living at home with them as she attends college. They regretted not bringing her to the sessions as they did not realize how much the unemployment experience was affecting her. The father, a former ProNet client, said:

I was wishing my daughter had gone. But as a 20-year old she had her own fears and for whatever reason, I never thought of that. And I don’t think we know the extent yet as to how it impacted her.

One idea shared by a participant with a teenage son was “you might have a session with the parents and the teens and the families talk about it so they know what the other teenagers are going through.
**Offer More Regularly.** The last thought in order to improve participation was to offer the program more regularly. A thought was to “offer it again at ProNet but offer it every six months”. One of the spouses said:

Knowing what I do now, every three months (laughs) because you have new people coming in and it's that shot back up in the arm. I mean he had ProNet but I didn't have anything. Really. So, that was my shot in the arm.

Another person added:

You need that boost because it is hard. Because as I was hitting nine months (of being unemployed) and I'm looking at people at 1 1/2, 2, 2 1/2 years, I'm thinking how am I going to do this? I'm thinking, oh my God, Robyn, you need to come back again in six months (laughs) because one shot is not enough. Because it takes constant, constant work.

**Focus Group**

In addition to the interviews, a focus group of eight spouses/partners was conducted in order to gain perspectives from more spouses and partners since not many were involved with the follow-up interviews. This focus group lasted 105 minutes. Four men (50%) and four women (50%) attended. The mean length of time the focus group participants had been married or in a committed relationship with their unemployed spouse/partner was 16 years, ranging from four to forty-two years. The mean age of the focus group participants was 54 years, ranging from 45 to 70 years. The discussion of the focus group members was audiotaped and later transcribed by me, deleting all identifying information. The same questions, with the exception of the one regarding what tools or strategies they are still using from the B.R.I.T.E. program, were asked of
this group. Many of the same themes that came up during the interviews came up during the focus group.

**How Unemployment Affected Relationship (Research Question 2)**

Focus group participants were asked how the unemployment of their spouse/partner had either negatively or positively affected their relationship. Many of the same responses as those who were interviewed were given.

**Conflict.** Examples of conflict were shared. For example, one wife admitted she told her unemployed husband at one point, “I have never been more disappointed in you in my life!” She admitted being frustrated because he was just reading and doing nothing else. Her mindset was “the savings are dwindling away and you're not finding a job and he was probably a bit depressed too but just exhibited differently than me.” Another wife shared that her partner “has become more dependent on me and it's like having another child in the house, almost. Maybe it's partly depression or forgetfulness…I think it's a loss of confidence.” Another participant said, “For me, this has been one of the most stressful times in our lives because it is 24 hours a day, it just doesn't go away. It certainly exasperates the conditions in our household.” Another wife, who is self-employed and works from home, indicated that her unemployed husband was “driving me crazy around the house. You know, I work from home, so having him there and trying to do lots of stuff is kinda hard. And he gets in my way…” A husband whose wife was unemployed shared his frustration about his wife’s lack of participation in household chores: “My hope, and let this remain here, is that she could get some household jobs done in the meantime. It hasn't happened yet. Our home is the backstage and her world is in the job market.”

**Coping with Stress.** There was also a difference in how partners dealt with the stress of the situation, which led to tension between partners. Again, this was another theme that
developed during the interviews. One wife mentioned that her husband “knew he had this (opportunity) coming in or this is a possibility or whatever but he didn't always share those things with me so that I couldn't take comfort from them.” A husband declared:

We deal with stress differently. She goes private and personal, and thankfully she has a therapist she can catch once in a while, but for me, I go public and I have a network of friends so if I'm close to being unemployed or have health issues, I put in on the table. So she wants me to be private about her new status so she doesn't want me to tell people. So she'll say did you tell this person, don't tell that person, and I'm like oh my goodness.

**Brought Them Together/More Time Together.** There were positive outcomes due to the unemployment as well. For instance, as with the participants who were interviewed, the main themes were being able to spend more time as a family or couple and the experience actually brought them closer together because they had to work as a team. One wife shared, “In a lot of ways the unemployment has actually brought us a lot closer. We have to act as a team.” One of the participants, in addition to his wife being unemployed, has an adult son who is unemployed. The son has three children and one of the children is now living with the participant and his wife. As he shared, “but in a way, with him being unemployed, we can spend more time with her (granddaughter) and so can he.” A male partner said, “Overall we're supportive of each other on both ends with her trying to find a job and me realizing this is just the way it is and we just need to stay together and bind together to help each other through this.”

**Resources Used (Research Question 3)**

In terms of what resources the participants of the focus group have turned to family and friends. This main theme was similar to the one provided by B.R.I.T.E. participants in the follow-up interviews.
Family and Friends. Participants shared personal stories of how family and friends had helped them out during this transition. Some participants indicated that family members had occasionally helped financially with groceries or car repairs. A wife shared that her husband has been able to get odd jobs from friends so she said “our friends have come through and helped.”

Advice for Other Unemployed Families (Research Question 4)

Participants were then asked what advice they would share with other unemployed families. Stick to a budget, maintain normalcy, avoid nonjudgmental communication including blame, and take action.

Maintain a Budget. Maintaining a budget was a theme that came up. Repeatedly, focus group participants said that cutting back on spending and creating a budget was important.

Maintain “Normalcy”. Another theme that developed was to maintain a normal routine. One participant shared, “I think trying to be as regular as normal a routine as possible. If you can keep your routine kind of the same as it was when he was employed that helps us both deal with it.” Another one said, “I think try to maintain normalcy, the structure, don't make big adjustments around personal time, shared time, um, just try to keep things normal rather than a panic or crisis mode.”

Nonjudgmental Communication. Practicing nonjudgmental communication was another theme which also came up in the follow-up interviews. For instance, one participant shared, “What has been vital for us is nonjudgmental communication, not just talking about the circumstances but talking about the feelings behind them.” He continued on to add, “You can see when your spouse is having a bad minute and that's probably not the time to say you're upset they didn't do the dishes.” Another participant indicated, “Again, it's being able to work as a team, ya know, it's the family unit, the family problem. And again, as always, don't blame, take
the blame away, it's a family thing.”

**Take Action.** Taking action to do something was another category that developed and participants offered different ways of doing this. One said, “Take one day out of the week to volunteer”. Another participant said, “Just go do something that will take your mind off of things for a while whether that is talking to a friend, going for a walk, or whatever.” One of the male participants, a husband, encouraged families to take some kind of action: “Uh, not doing anything, just being stuck. You need to keep moving forward, doing something. I would say that would be a good one. And just networking with others who are in the same situation.”

**Ideas to Improve Spouse/Partner Participation (Research Question 5)**

The last question asked of the focus group participants was to get their ideas and thoughts regarding B.R.I.T.E. and how to recruit spouses/partners to attend a program like that. The main themes to develop from these questions were similar to those that came up during the interviews, with the exception of the program should be offered more frequently and children should be included. The three main ideas were the program should include both partners, a more informal get-together at the beginning might be helpful to entice people to come back, fun activities should be offered, and organizations like JOIN, ProNet, Job Connect should include spouses/partners and families from the beginning.

**Both Spouses/Partners.** The majority of participants believed both partners should be included in a program, instead of having a separate group for spouses/partners. One participant summed it up by saying:

I would think that ProNet and JOIN that would be a part of their package from up front right at the beginning because I think the unemployed person also feels the burden of what they're causing us, so to isolate them from us is to not really handle the holistic
situation. So I think we should be right there. It doesn't mean we have to go to
everything, but we should be there right at the beginning both for information, for
communication and ultimately for support. I mean we can say emotionally we're in this
together but then it doesn't always connect.

One of the eight participants liked the idea of having both partners attend, but also liked the idea
of having a separate group for spouses/partners. Her feeling was, “I think there is room for the
ones with the spouse and the person but I also like this where the uh it's kind of I feel more open
because I don't want to hurt his feelings, ya know, kind of thing."

**Include Family from the Beginning.** Participants believed that organizations like
ProNet, JOIN, and Job Connect should include spouses/partners and families from the beginning.
This was an issue that arose from the interviews too. For example, one participant said:

Back to the ProNet or JOIN, I wouldn't think I would be going constantly with my wife,
but I would just at the beginning kind of an introduction, an orientation for us. I wouldn’t
want to go a lot because I'm busy, but I could go initially to give support and receive
support.

**Offer Fun Classes.** The idea of offering fun and informative classes or workshops to get
couples or families to attend was another theme which emerged as well. For instance, one
participant shared an idea which was well received by the group:

One I'd like to see would be a cooking class and both partners would be encouraged to
attend, but how you could use lower cost ingredients to make recipes. And it would
foster a sense of learning, accomplishment, and fun at the same time.

Another idea was to offer a coupon clipping class or have a place where people could swap
coupons with each other. Apparently this was something that was done at a local library in Texas
where one of the participants had previously lived.

**Discussion of Phase 2**

Qualitative interviews of former B.R.I.T.E. participants and some of their spouses and a focus group of spouses/partners of currently unemployed spouses/partners were conducted in order to gather more information. Specifically, as a result of the low participation of spouses/partners in B.R.I.T.E., it was important to find out how to increase participation of this population in the future. A second question that was examined was whether or not B.R.I.T.E. participants are still applying what they learned from the program. This information is valuable in terms of measuring the program’s efficacy and for future programming purposes. In addition, the unemployment literature indicates the negative outcomes unemployed families may experience so it is helpful to share information on how to better cope with this experience with other unemployed families. Moreover, it was important to ask what resources, other than unemployment insurance, they found useful during their unemployment. Again, this is information that could be helpful to other unemployed families.

I did learn that the B.R.I.T.E. participants who were interviewed did remember certain tools, strategies, or activities from B.R.I.T.E. In fact, many were still utilizing those tips. For example, maintaining a positive attitude, appreciating what you have, engaging in the straw tower activity, and sharing inexpensive entertainment ideas were the four main things participants remembered. The first two topics were discussed in the first two sessions when participants were feeling more vulnerable so perhaps these topics really struck chords with participants for that reason. They also are topics that many people are familiar with, but perhaps just need reminding of at stressful times. The straw tower activity really stands out for participants because of the laughter that was generated that evening while creating the towers.
That was the first night when everyone was in an upbeat, positive mood, and clearly participants felt it. This is an important note to make for future programs for unemployed families. Having them engage in a fun, but meaningful, activity is therapeutic. In fact, many participants shared the class environment was “non-threatening” and “therapeutic” so they felt comfortable and safe to share, laugh, and so on. The sharing of inexpensive entertainment ideas was an idea generated by the group when they decided not to have the financial planning session. Thus, another takeaway from this is that it is important to allow participants to share their ideas and thoughts about workshops they would like to see offered. This gave the group a sense of empowerment and some really great ideas were shared by everyone.

I saw, as has been demonstrated in the unemployment literature, that there were both negative and positive aspects to going through the unemployment for these families. Stress was clearly felt by both the unemployed individual as well as the spouse/partner, for different reasons, and that led to some destructive behavior (e.g., unwarranted lashing out, blaming). On the other hand, there were positive aspects that resulted from the experience. Many couples felt like they had grown closer as a consequence of them having to team up to figure out how they were going to manage. In addition, the couples had more time to spend with each other as well as with their kids or grandkids.

What was even more helpful to learn were the tips they shared on how to better cope with the unemployment experience. Going day-by-day and keeping as normal a routine as possible were mentioned. Also, using nonjudgmental communication and not blaming the unemployed individual for what was happening were important tools to utilize. Being frugal and sticking to a budget was repeatedly mentioned as things families should do. Despite this, no one brought up how offering a session on financial management would be helpful. The message was more about
cutting back on things and focusing on the basics that one really needs. Creating a support network and joining an organization like JOIN, ProNet, or Job Connect were mentioned as critical to do as well.

In terms of offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. in the future for both the unemployed individual and spouse/partner, nearly everyone agreed it was better to offer a program for both parties. They viewed the unemployment experience as something that affects the whole family so they whole family should be addressed. One of the ideas to come out of this stage of the project was that organizations that serve unemployed individuals should encourage participation from spouses/partners and family members from the beginning. They should be included in an orientation so that they are aware of what these organizations do and how they are helping their unemployed family member. Another key theme was that a more informal meet-and-greet or potluck should be offered at the beginning of a more formal program like B.R.I.T.E. in order to get people bought into the program. Once people attend and get to meet other families, they might be more likely to come back. Additionally, fun activities which encourage laughter while promoting learning are important to incorporate. The ideas of a cooking class or coupon clipping class or swap were examples of great activities which could be incorporated into a future program. The idea of incorporating something for children or teens was also brought up. As the unemployment literature indicates, youth are impacted by a parent’s unemployment too. It may be helpful to have some activities that are designed for the whole family, but depending on the age of the children, it might be helpful for them to have separate sessions at times. Adolescents could participate in certain sessions with the adults; however, a more age-appropriate activity or session would have to be designed for younger children.
In sum, the qualitative interviews and focus group gleaned rich and helpful information. Of course, the sample was small so this may limit the generalizability of these findings. In addition, the sampling method may not truly represent the target population as self-selection bias may be an issue. Participants who already seek support at ProNet, JOIN, or JobConnect are showing they are already motivated to improve their personal situation. These participants may have been more open to talking and sharing their thoughts and feelings about their unemployment experience as opposed to those ProNet, JOIN, and JobConnect clients who did not sign up or unemployed families in general.
Chapter VII: Implications and Conclusions

This dissertation project consisted of two phases. The first phase involved the development, implementation, and evaluation of a resilience-based program, B.R.I.T.E., for unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners. The second phase involved follow-up interviews and a focus group with spouses/partners of currently unemployed individuals. The impetus for B.R.I.T.E. was the current lack of services addressing the needs of unemployed individuals and their family members. Building upon a resilience framework, the goal was to provide the unemployed families with tools and strategies to build their resilience in order to better cope with the unemployment experience.

One of the strengths of this study was that a mixed methods approach was used. This approach allowed for triangulation of the data and all of the data supported the study. The quantitative results showed that B.R.I.T.E. participants did indeed report statistically significant reductions in depression and problematic family functioning from pre- to post-intervention. This was an exciting finding especially since the sample size was small. Both formats of the B.R.I.T.E. program that were offered to the JOIN and ProNet groups fared the same as well. That is, both groups of participants, whether they met over the four consecutive days or weekly over seven weeks, reported significant decreases in depression and problematic family functioning. This suggests that the essence of the program and what it offers are valuable regardless of the length of time the program is offered.

The other positive finding was the significant interaction between family protective factors and number of B.R.I.T.E. sessions attended. It appears that family protective factors enhance the effectiveness of B.R.I.T.E. That is, the number of sessions attended decreases depression much more so for those who have family protective factors in place. This suggests
that involvement in B.R.I.T.E. helped participants build upon their existing strengths. This is promising, and again, suggests that the heart of the program and what the participants are gaining from it is beneficial.

Overall, the evaluation of the B.R.I.T.E. program was positive. The majority of the B.R.I.T.E. participants found each workshop session “useful” or “extremely useful”. Moreover, all of the participants were “satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with the program. The most helpful aspects of the program included reframing negative thoughts into positive ones, knowing there are other people who are experiencing similar feelings and thoughts, and putting things into perspective and being able to share with others. I learned that this program would have perhaps improved the well-being of some of the participants if it had been offered to them earlier in the job loss experience. Finally, it was helpful for participants to hear the perspectives of the spouses that attended.

The second phase of the project involved follow-up interviews with some of the B.R.I.T.E. participants as well as a focus group of spouse/partners of currently unemployed individuals. This phase of the project was important in terms of assessing the impact of the B.R.I.T.E. program six to nine months after participants completed it. Additionally, it was important to learn how these unemployed families had been coping with the transition, what resources were helpful, and what advice they have for other unemployed families. Furthermore, I wanted to get their thoughts and ideas on how to recruit more spouses/partners and other family members to future programs of B.R.I.T.E. These interviews and focus group proved to be rewarding and enlightening.

It was gratifying to hear how much of a positive impact the B.R.I.T.E. had made on participants’ lives. The participants that were interviewed clearly remembered many of the topics
we discussed and still had their notes from the sessions. They shared their stories of how the program helped them better cope with the unemployment experience. In fact, in a couple of instances, the program actually boosted the confidence and improved the positive outlook of the unemployed individuals which they attribute to finding a new job shortly after completing the program. This was an indirect benefit of the program. I repeatedly heard how valuable the B.R.I.T.E. program was, especially for the spouses/partners. Making the spouses/partners happy then made the unemployed spouse/partner feel better as well and perhaps improved the relationships and functioning at home.

Clearly, the message that came through from the interviews and focus group is that it is important and valuable to have both the unemployed individual and spouse/partner attend the program together. This confirmed to the primary investigator that there is value in using a family systems approach when addressing the needs of the unemployed. The ideas that were generated in terms of future programming were great. For instance, having a potluck or a game night to initially bring families together might help families feel more comfortable to attend future workshops. The idea of offering an orientation for both the unemployed individual and spouse/partner and even other family members would be helpful. This would offer a sense of support to the whole family and perhaps alleviate some of their concerns from the beginning.

Of course, there are challenges with regard to offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. There is an ingrained culture in the U.S., and as a result within many of the organizations that serve the unemployed, that only the unemployed individual needs assistance. The thinking is that if workshops on resume writing, networking, interviewing, and job training are offered, then that should help the unemployed individual find a job. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. As the unemployment literature shows, there can be negative outcomes associated with being
unemployed, including depression, increased substance abuse, increased marital conflict, and financial strain. Children of an unemployed parent can also be negatively impacted. As such, the “personal” side of unemployment and the issues that can develop (i.e., increased marital conflict, blaming, depression) need to be talked about and dealt with in order to help improve the functioning of unemployed families. This can then directly help the family to become more resilient in order to better cope with the transition. Additionally, it may indirectly help the unemployed individual find a new job.

Moreover, there seems to be a stigma attached to being unemployed. Some of the B.R.I.T.E. participants in the follow-up interviews indicated that they found out who their true friends were during the transition. They said that some people did not want to be around them, almost like they were afraid that unemployment was “contagious” and they would catch it. Of course, this is an exaggeration, but I do think there is this sense that people do not want to talk about being unemployed. It makes them uncomfortable and perhaps they do not know what to say. As mentioned earlier, a couple of the women who were interviewed did not tell most of their family, let alone their friends, that their husbands were unemployed. They did not want people to feel sorry for them. Again, I think this goes back to the more individualistic culture in this country, and how individuals and families want to “fix” things on their own. Thus, it may be difficult for many to ask for help or to reach out.

I think this is another challenge with regard to offering a program like B.R.I.T.E. The Branch Manager at ProNet, although he thoroughly supported my offering the program and encouraged his clients to attend, personally told me that it was not a program he would ever attend. When I asked him why, he indicated that it was too “touchy feely”. This surprised me to some extent, only because I really tried to make the titles of the workshops amusing and thought
I marketed the program as interactive and fun; however, that apparently was not the perception of everyone. As such, as I mentioned earlier, the participants were those who perhaps were more open to talk about their experience and feelings. Thus, it will be a challenge to recruit more people to a program such as B.R.I.T.E.; however, I believe if organizations like ProNet create a culture where families are encouraged to come in from the beginning, where fun workshops and events are offered to families, and where the “other” personal issues are discussed more openly, then I think participation will increase. It is important to recognize, though, that the format of B.R.I.T.E. works for some people, but not everyone.

This leads me to my vision with regard to this dissertation. Since it was not feasible for this project, I would like to roll B.R.I.T.E. out on a larger scale and utilize a wait-list comparison group. This would then allow me to determine whether there is a causal relationship between B.R.I.T.E. and outcomes such as depression and problematic family functioning. Ideally, my goal is to obtain funding to offer the program on a larger scale throughout the state of Nevada. I strongly believe that this program, or the ideas from this program, could be offered relatively easily and inexpensively. B.R.I.T.E. could be packaged as a program, as was done with this project, but individual or stand-alone workshops based on the curriculum could also be offered. Incorporating children and adolescents into the program is important too. Group activities like the straw tower exercise or playing games would work for the whole family, but it is important for the kids to talk about their experience in a safe place too. I think that could happen with the parents there, or the children could have some time together as a group and then they could rejoin the larger group with the parents.

Therefore, the quantitative and qualitative results suggest that there is value to B.R.I.T.E. which utilizes a resilience-based, family systems approach to helping unemployed families. The
current research indicates critical ingredients for interventions promoting resilience among unemployed families. This has implications for future programming at agencies which serve unemployed individuals. Currently, agencies that assist unemployed individuals only offer services targeted to the individual and are centered around developing job search skills (i.e., interviewing, resume writing, networking). Certainly those services are needed and should continue to be offered as they can help unemployed individuals more effectively conduct a job search to find a new job. However, in addition to those services, agencies could offer programming to the unemployed individual and his/her family. Results from this study show that a resilience-based program aimed at unemployed individuals and their spouses/partners was effective in significantly reducing depression and problematic family functioning of participants. Thus, future programs should build on people’s strengths or protective factors as opposed to targeting their risk factors. The group process also allows those who do start the program with little or no family protective factors in place to learn from others in the group who do. Findings also suggested that some of the unemployed individuals who participated in the program actually felt more positive and confident after participating in the program which could have resulted in their landing a new job shortly thereafter.

Moreover, I discovered that the two formats of B.R.I.T.E. were effective for different socioeconomic groups. I would continue to offer a shorter, more condensed version of B.R.I.T.E. for the “blue collar” or working class population as they typically do not engage in unemployment services for a long period. On the other hand, the weekly version of B.R.I.T.E. works for the more professional-level or “white collar” population as they utilize services for a longer period as it takes them more time to land a new job. However, it is difficult to truly evaluate the effectiveness of the two formats because of the differences in the two populations.
The quantitative results showed that the JOIN clients reported a larger decrease in depression compared to the ProNet clients; perhaps it was the condensed format.

The results of the current study also have implications for unemployment policy. Currently, unemployment policy utilizes a business perspective, not a social science perspective. Services (i.e., workshops on resume writing and interviewing, job postings) only target the unemployed individual, but they need to be targeted at the family system. One of the unique contributions of this study is that family resilience-based approach utilized in this project can address these service gaps. Unemployment services provided by the state should include funding for mental health care (because low self-esteem can make it harder for people to become re-employed) and for family support services. I believe some significant changes in programming could happen with minimal cost. Essentially, it would not cost agencies anything to invite family members to attend orientations regarding their services. Of course, the increased attendance at the orientations may mean that the orientation sessions have to be offered more frequently depending on the organization’s space constraints, however, I think this is a manageable task. Offering programming like B.R.I.T.E. or other workshops aimed at unemployed families requires the time of a facilitator. There is obviously a cost associated with paying someone to come in to offer the workshop(s) or to allocate a current employee to conduct the workshop(s). Additionally, there would be minimal administrative costs to make copies and to use other materials for the workshops. The funds to pay for the facilitator and class materials could come from current state or federal funding. Private organizations could have salaried employees dedicate their time to conduct B.R.I.T.E. or other family-based programs. Assuming the hourly rate to pay a facilitator ranges from $20-$30 per hour and paying for classroom and preparation time, it would cost $200-300 to facilitate the B.R.I.T.E. program. The classroom space to
conduct the program is already being paid for, and there is minimal cost for copies, markers, and flip charts. Hypothetically speaking, then, the total cost to conduct B.R.I.T.E. on a quarterly basis over one year, for example, would range from $1,000 to $1,400. Funding or donations from local companies could also be utilized to help pay for the program. For instance, perhaps a local restaurant could donate the services of one of their chefs to teach a cooking class. A local grocery market might be willing to donate refreshments or items with which to use during a cooking class.

Given how slow economic growth is currently and the fact that the unemployment rate will remain high for a while, many families remain in peril. The ultimate solution to the problem of unemployment will be an ongoing increase in the creation of new jobs so that unemployed individuals can move into stable, long-term jobs that pay a living wage. However, job growth is quite slow, and will likely remain slow for months or even years to come. Thus, many families will continue to face unemployment and all its consequences. Although B.R.I.T.E. is not designed to solve the problem of unemployment, it is set up to reduce the many harmful consequences of unemployment on families, and it may even help families become stronger and more resilient in the face of ongoing challenges. In conclusion, this dissertation has demonstrated that with a few resources, a skilled facilitator, and some motivated unemployed persons and their families, the crisis of unemployment can be turned into an opportunity to bring families closer together as they wait for the economy to improve.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Needs Assessment of ProNet Clients

Robyn Maitoza, Doctoral Candidate at UNR, needs your assistance with a program to help support unemployed individuals and their families. This survey will take only one minute to complete and will provide Robyn with valuable information. Your responses are voluntary and confidential.

1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is Extremely Uninterested and 5 is Extremely Interested, what is your level of interest in the program mentioned earlier by Robyn? (Please circle one)

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely Uninterested</td>
<td>Somewhat Uninterested</td>
<td>Neither interested nor uninterested</td>
<td>Somewhat Interested</td>
<td>Extremely Interested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Please check which, if any, of the following topic(s) may be of interest to you if you attended this program? (Check all that apply)

   _____ How to improve communication with loved ones
   _____ How to manage stress
   _____ How to budget during difficult times
   _____ Other topics (please specify): __________________________________________
   _____ None of the above

3. What is your preference in terms of when the program meets? (Please check only one response)

   _____ Once a week in the evenings for 6-8 weeks
   _____ Once a week in the afternoons for 6-8 weeks
   _____ Once a week in the mornings for 6-8 weeks
   _____ Two hours over 3-4 Saturdays
   _____ One hour over 6-8 Saturdays
   _____ Other (please indicate):

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is Extremely Unlikely and 5 is Extremely Likely, how likely would a family member(s) attend the program with you? (Please circle one response)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely Unlikely</td>
<td>Somewhat Unlikely</td>
<td>Neither Likely nor Unlikely</td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>Extremely Likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please leave your contact information below if you are interested in more information about this program (Optional):

Name: ____________________________________________________________
Address:_____________________________________________________________________________

Phone/Email:________________________________________________________________________

Please feel free to contact Robyn Maitoza at mrobyn@unr.edu with any comments or questions.
Thank you for your time and assistance!
Appendix B

Outline of B.R.I.T.E. Program Curriculum

ProNet Clients:

Session 1: Making the Most of What You Have

Objective(s): Participants can identify personal and family resources and learn how to build upon those

Activities:
Introductions of Principal Investigator/Facilitator of Program (PI) and Participants
Format of each session will be explained by PI
PI will draw circle of various dimensions’ of people’s lives (i.e., health, spirituality, relationships, hobbies, community, travel, education/training)
Have participants make list of positive things in their lives, using different dimensions
Break up into small groups of 3-4 to discuss the positive things they listed
Regroup and discuss the things that each group talked about
PI discuss what ‘resources’ are and how to continue to build on them
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Session 2: Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Objective(s): Participants will learn what ‘reframing’ means and will learn how to reframe their constraining beliefs or attitudes

Activities:
Check in
Have participants list ways their negative beliefs or constraining thoughts
Participants break into small groups to share negative beliefs and strategies to overcome them
Regroup and discuss what ideas, strategies participants came up with
PI lectures on reframing and provides tips on how to focus more on the positive aspect of things; discuss the concept of ‘hope’
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Session 3: Stress Management: How Do You Spell Relief?

Objective(s): Participants will learn more about the nature of stress, its effects (positive and negative), as well as strategies to more effectively manage stress
Activities:
Check in
Ask participants to define stress. Talk about positive and negative aspects
Have participants list a few things they are stressed about in their lives and determine how much control they have over each of those things
Participants break up into small groups and discuss what they wrote down
Regroup and discuss what issues, thoughts, etc. came up for the smaller groups
PI lectures on stress and provides tips on how to minimize stress
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Session 4: Family Management: Do You Know Where You’re Going To?

Objective(s): Participants will be able to define family management, set goals and priorities for their families, and manage their family’s activities in a more proactive manner.

Activities:
Check in
Ask participants how many set family goals, priorities, budgets, etc.
PI talks about importance of defining goals, priorities, etc. Talk about creating mission statements and five-year plans for the family
Have participants write down a few goals for their families
Break up into small groups and have participants share goals with each other
Regroup and talk about how the exercise went and any issues, ideas, or thoughts they have
PI lectures about family management and provides tips on planning, budgeting, and setting goals
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Session 5: How to Do Less with More

Objective(s): Participants will share ideas about inexpensive entertainment ideas in the local area.

Activities:
Check in
Discuss what planning is and how to better plan
List participants’ ideas on inexpensive entertainment ideas in the area
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Week 6: Is Anybody Listening?
Objective(s): Participants will be able to identify the components of the communication process and will learn how to better resolve conflicts with loved ones.

Activities:
Check in
Split room into two groups and do ‘telephone’ exercise
Discuss barriers to communication
Have participants break up into small groups of 2-3 and do a listening skills exercise
Regroup and discuss what they learned from doing the exercise
PI lectures on communication skills and resolving conflict and provides tips
Ask participants to share most important thing they learned from session

Week 7: Putting It All Together

Objective(s): Participants will be able to identify and integrate the major concepts from the previous sessions.

Activities:
Check in
PI reviews concepts (i.e., resources, family management, reframing, stress management, and communication) that were covered in the previous sessions and integrates all the material to reinforce learning of Resiliency Model
Participants ask questions and share thoughts
Evaluation survey is completed by participants
JOIN Clients:

Session 1: Making the Most of What You Have

Objective(s): Participants can identify personal and family resources and learn how to build upon those.

Activities:
- Introductions of Principal Investigator/Facilitator of Program (PI) and Participants
- Talk about Change (event) vs. Transition (process thru which we adapt to change)
- Have participants share feelings they’ve experienced during transition
- Have participants make list of positive things/resources in their lives
- Break up into small groups of 3-4 to discuss the positive things they listed and how they can build on some of those resources
- Regroup and discuss the things that each group talked about
- Ask participants to share the most important thing they learned from session

Session 2: Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Objective(s): Participants will learn what ‘reframing’ means and will learn how to reframe their constraining beliefs or attitudes.

Activities:
- Check in
- Have participants list ways their negative beliefs or constraining thoughts
- Participants break into small groups to share negative beliefs and strategies to overcome them
- Regroup and discuss what ideas, strategies participants came up with
- PI lectures on reframing and provides tips on how to focus more on the positive aspect of things; discuss the concept of ‘hope’
- Ask participants to share the most important thing they learned from session and how they plan to put it to work in their lives

Session 3: Take Charge of Your Future

Objective(s): Participants will be able to define management in general, family management, set goals and priorities for themselves as well as their families, and manage their activities in a more proactive manner.

Activities:
- Check in
Do Raise a Tower exercise
Ask participants how many set individual as well as family goals and priorities
PI talks about importance of defining goals, priorities, etc. Talk about creating mission statements and five-year plans for themselves and their families
Have participants write down a few goals for themselves and their families
Break up into small groups and have participants share goals with each other
Regroup and talk about how the exercise went and any issues, ideas, or thoughts they have
PI lectures about family management and provides tips on planning and setting goals
Ask participants to share the most important thing they learned from session

Week 4: Is Anybody Listening?

Objective(s): Participants will be able to identify the components of the communication process and will learn how to better resolve conflicts with loved ones or close friends.
Activities:
Check in
Split room into two groups and do ‘telephone’ exercise
Discuss barriers to communication
Have participants list their most difficult communication issues with family, friends
Break into small groups to share list and ideas to better handle communications
Regroup and discuss thoughts and ideas as larger group
Have participants break up into small groups of 2-3 and do a listening skills exercise
Regroup and discuss what they learned from doing the exercise
PI lectures on communication skills and resolving conflict and provides tips
Ask participants to share the most important thing they learned from session
Appendix C

Recruitment Messages

To ProNet Clients:

Research Volunteers Needed!

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by Robyn Maitoza, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Nevada, Reno. The goal of this project is to assist transitional workers and their families better cope with the unemployment experience. If you are currently unemployed, at least 18 years of age, and have been married or living with a partner for at least 6 months, you are eligible to participate.

If you and your spouse/partner are interested in participating, you (as a couple) will be selected to participate in one of two groups. One group will participate in seven weekly workshops and will complete four surveys over the next 6 months (when you sign up for the program, upon completion of the program, and three and six months following the completion of the program). The second group will not attend the seven weekly sessions and will only complete surveys at the same intervals as the first group. For your participation in either group, you and your spouse/partner will receive a $10 gift card each time you complete a survey. Each survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

You may sign up to participate in the research project at the front desk in the ProNet office. If you have any questions or want additional information about participating in the research project, please contact Robyn Maitoza at mrobyn@unr.edu or 775.xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your consideration.

Robyn Maitoza
To JOIN Clients:

**Research Volunteers Needed!**

You are being invited to participate in a series of workshops conducted by Robyn Maitoza, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Nevada, Reno. The goal of this four-day program, *Building Resilience in Transitional Employee (B.R.I.T.E.)*, is to help transitional workers and their families better cope with the unemployment experience.

The workshop sessions will be fun and interactive. This is a great way to also connect with other unemployed individuals, share advice, and learn from each other. You are also strongly encouraged to invite your spouse or partner to attend the sessions with you. Lunch will be provided each day.

The B.R.I.T.E. program will be held on Monday-Thursday, August 1st-August 4th, from 11AM-1PM. Your attendance at all four workshops is appreciated. The topics that will be covered are as follows:

**Day 1 - Making the Most of What You Have**

**Day 2 – Turning Lemons into Lemonade**

**Day 3 – Take Control of Your Life**

**Day 4 – Is Anyone Listening?**

In addition to attending the workshop sessions, you are asked to complete two brief surveys: one on Day 1 of the B.R.I.T.E. program and one on Day 4. Each survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Your responses to the surveys will remain confidential, as you are not required to disclose your name or other personal information on these surveys.

Your participation in this research study is purely voluntary and in no way impacts the services you are currently receiving from JOIN. If you are interested in participating, please sign up with your Case Manager.

If you have any questions or want additional information about participating in the B.R.I.T.E. program, please ask your Case Manager or call Robyn Maitoza at (775) xxx-xxxx.
APPENDIX D

List of Open-Ended Responses of B.R.I.T.E. Participants

ProNet Group:

Session #1 – *Making the Most of What You Have*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Know I’m not alone in what I am feeling and experiencing
Being with others & laughing
Express yourself with others
Say what you are feeling
Going through a transition can be an emotional rollercoaster

Session #2 – *Turning Lemons into Lemonade*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Find lemons first, get book (Taming your gremlins), and get 1 + thing done each day
Negative to positive exercise, doing 1 + thing per day
Thank you to Bill for kudos, negative to positive exercise
Chunk goals down into smaller parts, applaud successes
Positives of journaling, 12-cow letter
Visualize STOP sign when gremlins pop up, get book
Relief not to have all of the answers, listening to everyone, daily do-ables
Negative to positive exercise
Reminder of daily reframing

Session #3 - *How do You Spell Relief?*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
All in same boat
Not alone
Mind feed – feed your mind with positive thoughts & no room for negative ones
Reading/Twitter – doing something comical and mindless
Frankl’s book
10 Stress Busters exercise
Appreciate laughs (with others in workshop)

Session #4 – *Do You Know Where You’re Going To*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Vision & mission statements (5 of them said this)
Mission & revision
Set couple of goals for myself
Share with others
Improve personal & parenting skills/relationships if apply business (learnable) skills, tools
Set small goals so not overwhelming
Accountability is challenge

Session #5 - *How to Do More with Less*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Tips, information
Mood feels lighter
Stress busters & making personal vision statement have helped me get over the wall
Collaboration can be powerful

Session #6 – *Is Anybody Listening?*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
List of excellent communicators and listeners
Good review of things to think about
Bottom statement on handout
Talking about something + in dyads (during exercise)
Learn to mediate which will help me listen

Session #7 – *Putting It All Together*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Have tools in place so when another crisis comes will be better prepared
More positive attitude
Resources – identifying and building upon
Grounding effect with support group
Accountability
Shoestring ideas
Fun (shoestring ideas)
Playing games
Continue to reframe
Choose attitude
Negatives to positives

**Overall comments regarding B.R.I.T.E.:**
Workshops were fun, light, not pure lecture.
Nice to know I’m not alone in what I’m feeling, experiencing.
Validating to hear other’s experiences.
I stood back and let them talk.
Really enjoyed the program.
Lots of “thank you’s!”
JOIN Group:

Session #1 – *How to Make the Most of What You Have*

**Response to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
See so many faces & know I’m not alone
Ways to avoid stress
How important making time is
Learned something about myself
Being with others & laughing
Express yourself with others
Say what you are feeling

Session #2 – *Turning Lemons into Lemonade*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
We are what we think – have to fight it
Reframing – good refresher
Drop bad habits, accentuate positive ones
Words I use to reframe
Get control of thinking – catch yourself
Turning words around, motivate yourself
Stay in present
Liked exercise turning negatives into positives
Not alone in what is going on
Being around others
Be strong, stay positive
Live today
Choose to be positive
Read positive statements every day
Appreciate what I have
Your attitude is everything

Session #3 - *Do You Know Where You’re Going To*

**Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:**
Stops you from moping
Mission statement & SMART goals help focus you
Reminder to focus to write mission statement and goals
Verbalizing with others was helpful
Teamwork aspect of many minds
Recommendations on books
Accountability to self
Empowering
Stop and think
More positive
Start with smaller goals
Session #4 – Putting It All Together

Responses to What Was Most Helpful in Session:
Used Tiger Woods & Michael Jordan examples of how they are resilient, determined, kept working at their skills, didn’t feel sorry for themselves
Soldiers
Never give up!
Stay in moment
Find positive people
Perspective

Other Comments Shared regarding BRITE Program Overall:
Felt safe sharing and talking, not like in other classes
Content didn’t matter, although it was good, it was just nice to talk with others going through the same things
Going to really miss this class
Now giving myself permission to focus on other aspects of my life, not just my career
Enjoyed being able to be in a group and talk with others
Fun to be with others and laugh and have fun – miss that
Miss having the monthly JOIN meetings where they saw others
Would like to be able to meet in a group like this
Appendix E

Pre- and Post-Surveys

Pre-Test for ProNet Clients

Demographic Questions

Please indicate:

1) Age ______ years

2) Gender
   □ Male
   □ Female

3) What is your ethnic background (Please check all that apply)
   □ Asian or Pacific Islander
   □ Black or African-American
   □ Hispanic or Latino
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native
   □ White or Caucasian
   □ Other:_______________________

4) For the purpose of this research, “immediate” family refers to the family with whom you live.
   a. Including yourself, how many adults (age 18 and over) are in your immediate family? ______
   b. How many children (under the age of 18) are in your immediate family? ______

5) What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Please check one)
   □ Some high school
   □ High school diploma
   □ GED
   □ Some college
   □ Associate’s degree
   □ 4-year College Degree
   □ Master’s degree
   □ Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., etc.)

7) What was the approximate date of your job loss? ___/____/____

8) Reason for unemployment (please check one)
   □ Laid off (not voluntary)
□ Forced to resign or Fired
□ Voluntarily resigned
□ Other: ______________________________

9) a. What was your previous job title? ________________
    b. In what industry did you work? ________________

10) Before you became unemployed, were you the primary wage earner in your household?
    □ Yes
    □ No

11) Before you became unemployed, were you the only wage earner in your household?
    □ Yes
    □ No

12) What is your current annual household income before taxes?
    □ 0 - $10,000
    □ $10,001 - $25,000
    □ $25,001 - $50,000
    □ $50,001 - $75,000
    □ $75,001 - $100,000
    □ $100,001 - $125,000
    □ $125,001 - $150,000
    □ $150,001 – above

13) What was your annual household income before taxes prior to your job loss?
    □ 0 - $10,000
    □ $10,001 - $25,000
    □ $25,001 - $50,000
    □ $50,001 - $75,000
    □ $75,001 - $100,000
    □ $100,001 - $125,000
    □ $125,001 - $150,000
    □ $150,001 – above
Family Protection Scale

Please read each statement and check one response that best represents your “immediate” family or the family with whom you live:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our family is flexible. We can change and adjust when our life circumstances change.</td>
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<td>Our family prays together.</td>
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<td>Our family receives very little support from our extended family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family believes that we can learn and grow through the difficulties that we face.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our community has resources that have been a great support to us.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No matter what circumstances we have faced, there has been some good that has come from it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>We feel good about the future of our family.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family has many creative ways to deal with the problems/difficulties we face in our lives.</td>
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Please circle the number that indicates how many days in the past week that you had these feelings or behaviors...

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Felt lonely

Felt sad

Felt like I could not get going

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Post-Test for ProNet Clients

What is your current employment status? (please select one)

- Full-time in job equivalent in pay to my old job
- Full-time in job earning 20% or less than my old job
- Full-time in job earning 50% or less than my old job
- Part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

12-item Depression (C-ESD)

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Your feedback regarding the following questions is most helpful in determining what changes, if any, need to be made to the B.R.I.T.E. Program in the future.

Please rate the level of usefulness of each of the 7 sessions. Please check one box for each session.

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<th>Session</th>
<th>Not at All Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
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Week 4: Family Management: How to Do More with Less

Week 5: Financial Management, Guest Speaker

Week 6: Keeping the Lines of Communication Open

Week 7: Putting It All Together

What was the most helpful part of this program to you?

________________________________________________________________________

What was the least helpful part of this program to you?

________________________________________________________________________

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program (Please circle one)

Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

Any other comments you would like to share:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Would you and your family be interested in answering more questions three to six months after the completion of the B.R.I.T.E. program?

If so, please provide the following information:

Name:______________________________________________________________________

Home Phone Number:______________ Cell Phone Number:______________

Email:______________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address:______________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time and assistance!
Pre-Test for Spouses/Partners of ProNet Clients
(administered before B.R.I.T.E. program for ProNet clients and their spouses/partners begin)

Demographic Questions
Please indicate:

1) Age ______ years

2) Gender
   □ Male
   □ Female

3) What is your ethnic background (Please check all that apply)
   □ Asian or Pacific Islander
   □ Black or African-American
   □ Hispanic or Latino
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native
   □ White or Caucasian
   □ Other:_______________________

4) What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Please check one)
   □ Some high school
   □ High school diploma
   □ GED
   □ Some college
   □ Associate’s degree
   □ 4-year College Degree
   □ Master’s degree
   □ Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., etc.)

5) What is your current employment status? (Please check one)
   □ Full-time
   □ Part-time
   □ Unemployed
   □ Disabled
   □ Retired
   □ Self-employed
   □ Student
   □ Stay-at-home Parent or Homemaker

7) How positively or negatively do you view the job loss of your family member? (Please check one)
   □ Very negatively
   □ Somewhat negatively
   □ Neither negatively or positively
8) To what extent have your responsibilities in your household increased or decreased after the job loss of your spouse/partner?
   - Greatly increased
   - Somewhat increased
   - Neither increased nor decreased
   - Somewhat decreased
   - Greatly decreased
   - Not applicable

9) To what extent have your responsibilities in your paid employment increased or decreased after the job loss of your family member?
   - Greatly increased
   - Somewhat increased
   - Neither increased nor decreased
   - Somewhat decreased
   - Greatly decreased
   - Not applicable

Family Protection Scale

Please read each statement and check one response that best represents your “immediate” family or the family with whom you live:

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<td>Our family is flexible. We can change and adjust when our life circumstances change.</td>
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<td>Our family prays together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family receives very little support from our extended family.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family believes that we can learn and grow through the difficulties that we face.</td>
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<td>Our community has resources that have been a great support to us.</td>
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<td>No matter what circumstances we have faced, there has been some good that has come from it.</td>
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Please rate the level of usefulness of each of the 7 sessions. Please check one box for each session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Not at All Useful</th>
<th>Somewhat Useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Very Useful</th>
<th>Did Not Attend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2: Turning Lemons into Lemonade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3: Stress Management: How Do You Spell Relief?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4: Family Management: How to Do More with Less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5: Financial Management, Guest Speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6: Keeping the Lines of Communication Open</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7: Putting It All Together</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What was the most helpful part of this program to you?

______________________________________________________________________________

What was the least helpful part of this program to you?

______________________________________________________________________________

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program (Please circle one)

Extremely Dissatisfied Somewhat Satisfied Satisfied Extremely Satisfied

Any other comments you would like to share:

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
Would you and your family be interested in answering more questions three to six months after the completion of the B.R.I.T.E. program?

*If so, please provide the following information:*

Name:__________________________________________
Home Phone Number:_________________________ Cell Phone Number:_____________________

Email:________________________________________
Mailing Address:__________________________________________________________________

*Thank you for your time and assistance!*
Pre-Test for JOIN Clients

Demographic Questions

Please indicate:

1) Age ______ years

2) Gender
   □ Male
   □ Female

3) What is your ethnic background (Please check all that apply)
   □ Asian or Pacific Islander
   □ Black or African-American
   □ Hispanic or Latino
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native
   □ White or Caucasian
   □ Other:__________________________

4) For the purpose of this research, “immediate” family refers to the family you live with.
   Including yourself, how many adults (age 18 and over) are in your immediate family?
   ______
   How many children (under the age of 18) are in your immediate family? ______

6) What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Please check one)
   □ Some high school
   □ High school diploma
   □ GED
   □ Some college
   □ Associate’s degree
   □ 4-year College Degree
   □ Master’s degree
   □ Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S., etc.)

6) What was the approximate date of your job loss? ___/____/____

7) Reason for unemployment (please check one)
   □ Laid off (not voluntary)
   □ Forced to resign or Fired
   □ Voluntarily resigned
   □ Other:_________________________________________
8) a. What was your previous job title? _______________________
b. In what industry did you work? ______________________

9) Before you became unemployed, were you the primary wage earner in your household?
   □ Yes
   □ No

10) Before you became unemployed, were you the only wage earner in your household?
    □ Yes
    □ No

11) What is your current annual household income before taxes?
    □ 0 - $10,000
    □ $10,001 - $25,000
    □ $25,001 - $50,000
    □ $50,001 - $75,000
    □ $75,001 - $100,000
    □ $100,001 - $125,000
    □ $125,001 - $150,000
    □ $150,001 – above

12) What was your annual household income before taxes prior to your job loss?
    □ 0 - $10,000
    □ $10,001 - $25,000
    □ $25,001 - $50,000
    □ $50,001 - $75,000
    □ $75,001 - $100,000
    □ $100,001 - $125,000
    □ $125,001 - $150,000
    □ $150,001 – above
Family Protection Scale

Please read each statement and check one response that best represents your “immediate” family or the family with whom you live:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our family is flexible. We can change and adjust when our life circumstances change.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family prays together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family receives very little support from our extended family.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our family believes that we can learn and grow through the difficulties that we face.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our community has resources that have been a great support to us.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter what circumstances we have faced, there has been some good that has come from it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our family has many creative ways to deal with the problems/difficulties we face in our lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family can be light-hearted. We laugh a lot together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our family receives very little support from our friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The members of our family take charge when we need to take care of a problem.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our family has come to understand more about ourselves through the circumstances in our lives.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter what happens our family can still stay strong.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our family attends religious or spiritual activities together.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

12-item Depression (C-ESD)

*Please circle the number that indicates how many days in the past week that you had these feelings or behaviors...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling/Behavior</th>
<th>Number of days I felt this way</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt bothered by things that usually don’t bother me</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t feel like eating; appetite was poor</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt like I could not shake off the blues even with help from family or friends</td>
<td>0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>felt depressed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>felt that everything that I did was an effort</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>felt fearful</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slept restlessly</td>
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Family Functioning Scale (FAD)

The following statements may or may not describe your family with whom you live. Please read each statement below and check one response that best represents your level of agreement.

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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Post-Test for JOIN Clients (administered after completion of B.R.I.T.E. program for JOIN clients and their spouses/partners)

What is your current employment status? (Please check one)
- Full-time in job equivalent in pay to my old job
- Full-time in job earning 20% or less than my old job
- Full-time in job earning 50% or less than my old job
- Part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Retired

12-item Depression (C-ESD)

*Please circle the number that indicates how many days in the past week that you had these feelings or behaviors...*

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Your feedback regarding the following questions is most helpful in determining what changes, if any, need to be made to the B.R.I.T.E. Program in the future.

Please rate the level of usefulness of each of the 4 sessions. Please check one box for each session.

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<td><strong>Week 4: Is Anybody Listening?</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What was the **most** helpful part of this program to you?

_________________________________________________________________________________________

What was the **least** helpful part of this program to you?

_________________________________________________________________________________________

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the program (Please circle one)

Extremely Dissatisfied           Somewhat Satisfied       Satisfied       Extremely Satisfied

Any other comments you would like to share:

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Would you and your family be interested in answering more questions three to six months after the completion of the B.R.I.T.E. program?

If so, please provide the following information:

Name:______________________________________________________________________________

Home Phone Number:_________________      Cell Phone Number:_________________

Email:______________________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address:________________________________________________________________________

*Thank you for your time and assistance!*