

# idea corner

## Talking About a "Taboo" Subject

*There used to be an unquestioned permanence about marriage that doesn't exist today. Fewer Americans remain untouched by divorce. If someone hasn't personally been through a divorce, the chances are extremely good that he/she is married to someone who has been divorced or has a relative, business acquaintance, or friend who's divorced.*

Extension home economists are in an ideal position to address this social issue and help fill a gap with much needed information. To help meet this need, I developed a 10-issue newsletter series, "Starting Again . . . Divorce and After." It focused on the problems and concerns a person undergoing a divorce can expect to face. The emphasis of the series was to help people in this position cope emotionally with the traumas of a divorce—either their own or someone else's.

The response to the series was overwhelming, with 385 Atlantic County residents registering to receive the series. The series was distributed to many other people via program participants and other professionals, including attorneys. The series is now being used by other Extension home economists as part of their county programming efforts.

The series opened the door to talk to county residents "face-to-face" about the problems associated with divorce. As a result of this series, I've presented a cable TV program on coping

with divorce, have been a guest speaker at a women's conference sponsored by the local county college, have written several newspaper columns on the subject, and will be working with several community agencies to establish support groups for newly single people. A three-class series, "Coping with the Problems of a Divorce," began in January, 1979, and is still going strong!

The many positive comments about this series by program participants made all the time and effort involved *more* than worthwhile. On more than one occasion, I was told the series gave emotional support and a feeling that life *would* go on after the divorce was final. What a satisfying feeling to know that this Extension program helped people cope better with a change in lifestyle. Isn't that what Extension is all about?

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