A Qualitative Investigation of Undergraduate Students’ Experiences of Helicopter Parenting

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Abstract

The study involves a qualitative investigation of undergraduate students’ experiences of helicopter parenting. Quantitative research has provided a variety of important insights into this phenomenon as far as the characteristics of helicopter parents, the nature of the helicopter parent-child relationship, and multiple outcomes of helicopter parenting for children. Little qualitative research, however, has been conducted on the general phenomenon helicopter parenting of college-aged children. Much of the phenomenon therefore remains to be investigated qualitatively for other demographic groups of undergraduate students. Purposeful sampling was used to select undergraduate students from a mid-sized, public, four-year M1 university in the mid-Atlantic region of the country. Participants were recruited via email, using a listserv that includes all undergraduate students who attend the institution. Data collection involved the use of in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews to explore the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon. A standardized, open-ended interview format was used, which involved developing all interview questions in advance and asking them in the same way and in the same order for all of the participants. A form of whole text analysis was then used to code the data and develop categories and subcategories from the resulting codes. To establish the credibility of the findings from the current study, the traditional trustworthiness criteria was used but without their commitment to a foundationalist epistemology. Several prominent alternative criteria in contemporary qualitative inquiry were used. The current study has a number of limitations, as well as a variety of potential implications for further research on the helicopter parenting of college-aged children, higher education, and qualitative methodology. The analysis yielded
seven major findings: (a) helicopter parenting prior to college can take a variety of forms, (b) helicopter parenting during college can take a variety of forms, (c) other parental characteristics associated with helicopter parenting, (d) personal consequences of helicopter parenting, (e) consequences of helicopter parenting for others and relationships with others, (f) efforts to deal with helicopter parenting, and (g) goals associated with education, career, and helicopter parenting. The implications of the findings for higher education and further research and implications of the study for qualitative methodology are discussed.
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**General Audience Abstract**

The study involves a qualitative, interview-based investigation of undergraduate students’ experiences of helicopter parenting. Little qualitative research, however, has been conducted on the helicopter parenting of college-aged children, and these studies have dealt with only one facet of the phenomenon or have focused on a specific ethnic group. Purposeful sampling was used to select undergraduate students from a mid-sized, public, four-year M1 university in the mid-Atlantic region of the country. Participants were recruited via email, using a listserv that includes all undergraduate students who attend the institution. Data collection involved the use of in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews to explore the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon. A form of whole text analysis was then used to code the data and develop categories and subcategories from the resulting codes. The limitations and implications for further research on the helicopter parenting of college-aged children, higher education, and qualitative methodology are discussed. The analysis yielded seven major findings in the areas of (a) helicopter parenting prior to college can take a variety of forms, (b) helicopter parenting during college can take a variety of forms, (c) other parental characteristics associated with helicopter parenting, (d) personal consequences of helicopter parenting, (e) consequences of helicopter parenting for others and relationships with others, (f) efforts to deal with helicopter parenting, and (g) goals associated with education, career, and helicopter parenting.
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Chapter One: Introduction

The majority of high school graduates in the United States choose to immediately begin some form of post-secondary education. For example, during the fall of 2017, 69.7% of the previous year’s graduating class enrolled in a college or university (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Thus, a significant proportion of undergraduates are young adults (i.e., traditional students) who either continue to live at home or have left home relatively recently. Moreover, the parents of these students likely show varying levels of involvement in their children’s lives. Those parents who show the highest level of involvement in their children’s lives, though, could be described as helicopter parents.

Helicopter parenting, as it relates to undergraduate students, is a relatively new phenomenon, with Cline and Fray (1990) having coined the term in a study of then elementary-aged children’s parents. In general, helicopter parenting (or over-parenting) is a pejorative term that is used to describe over-involved parents who make developmentally inappropriate decisions for their children. Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) define helicopter parenting as “parenting involving hovering parents who are potentially over-involved in the life of their child” (p. 1777). Darlow et al. (2017), however, emphasize the issue of parenting style and define helicopter parenting as the “hovering of parents over their children, ready to take responsibility for their decisions and their problems” and whose parenting involves “a unique combination of common parenting styles: parenting that is high on warmth and support, but also high on control and low on granting autonomy to the child” (p. 2292). Last, Segrin et al. (2015) emphasize the developmental appropriateness of parenting behaviors and define overparenting as the “application of developmentally inappropriate parenting tactics that far exceed the actual needs of adolescents and emerging adults” (p. 470). For the current study, and only for purposes of
recruiting participants and helping them to prepare for the interview process, a general definition of helicopter parenting was used. Consistent with each of the above definitions, helicopter parenting will be defined as the hovering of one or both parents over their child, such that they are over-involved in the child's life and use parenting techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child (see also the Participant Selection section).

It should be added that professionals at colleges and universities have noted an increase in helicopter parenting since the early 2000s, as well as the emergence of an institutional culture in which it is acceptable for parents to contact administrators directly on behalf of their children (e.g., Carney-Hall, 2008). A number of reasons for helicopter parenting have been discussed in the literature, including parents’ need to protect their children (e.g., Darlow et al., 2017) and parents feeling entitled to information because they are financing their child’s education (e.g., Bers & Galowich, 2002). In this regard, Bers and Galowich found that parents believed that without their intervention, their children registered for incorrect classes, allowed advisor mistakes to negatively affect their time to graduation, were not given enough one-on-one advising, or were not performing appropriately academically. These parents also indicated that the purpose of their involvement with their child’s academic advisor and faculty was to ensure the child’s smooth transition through community college.

For a number of reasons, qualitative methodology was chosen to investigate the phenomenon of helicopter parenting in the current study. First, qualitative methodology focuses on participants’ concrete, lived experiences of a phenomenon. Second, it emphasizes the meaning that participants assign to their experiences. Third, qualitative methodology is sensitive to the context within which the phenomenon occurs (Patton, 2015), and this can include the socio-cultural, historical, and temporal contexts for the phenomenon. Taking into account the
context for the phenomenon is essential for arriving at a credible understanding of the phenomenon itself. Last, qualitative methodology adopts a holistic approach to investigating its subject matter, aiming to explore and understand the phenomenon as a whole (Patton, 2015). More specifically, the various parts of the phenomenon are seen as interconnected, and it is therefore crucial that the phenomenon be investigated in its entirety (i.e., for qualitative inquiry, the whole is considered to be greater than the sum of its parts). Studying only a part of the phenomenon would likely produce a distorted understanding of that portion of the phenomenon, as well as result in an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon itself. For the above reasons, qualitative methodology was considered the most appropriate approach to investigating the phenomenon in the current study. More specifically, the purpose of the current study was to examine undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parenting.
Chapter Two: Review of Literature

There is a considerable body of empirical research on the helicopter parenting of college-aged children. Moreover, the majority of this research is quantitative in nature, with only several qualitative studies present. In the following review of literature, quantitative studies of helicopter parenting are reviewed first, followed by qualitative studies of helicopter parenting.

Quantitative Research on Helicopter Parenting and Undergraduate Students

The following review of quantitative studies of helicopter parenting is organized according to more specific topics that include the characteristics of helicopter parents, the nature of the helicopter parent-child relationship, and the outcomes of helicopter parenting for children. In addition, the outcomes of helicopter parenting for children are further organized according to physical and psychological outcomes, social outcomes, and educational and vocational outcomes.

Characteristics of helicopter parents.

Research has examined a number of general characteristics of helicopter parents, including the type of control that these parents exert over their children (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) and their over-involvement in their children’s college-related choices (Bers & Galowich, 2002). More specifically, Padilla-Walker and Nelson examined the relationship between helicopter behavior, behavioral control, and psychological control in parents of college-aged children. Behavioral control was defined as the healthy parental regulation of anything related to the child’s behavior, such as manners (e.g., politeness), homework, and daily activities. Psychological control was defined as unhealthy control behaviors (e.g., withdrawing love, inducing guilt, gaslighting) that are manipulative and intrusive in all aspects of the child’s life, such as the child’s feelings, attachment to parents, and thoughts. As used above, gaslighting
refers to efforts to “manipulate (someone) by psychological means into doubting their own sanity” (gaslighting, 2018). A total of 438 students who lived away at college were surveyed as well as at least one of their parents. Participants were students at one of four universities in the American west, Midwest, south, and east. Parent-child pairs completed a survey separately that included items that measure factors such as helicopter parenting, behavioral control, psychological control, parenting dimensions, and the parent-child relationship. A factor analysis revealed that helicopter parenting was related to both psychological control (e.g., inducing guilt) and behavioral control (e.g., controlling daily life) and that the two types of control were related to each other. Also, helicopter parenting was negatively related to parental granting of autonomy and child school engagement.

Bers and Galowich (2002) examined helicopter parents’ over-involvement in their children’s choices of whether to attend community college and which college to attend, as well as their expectations while their children attended the institution. Surveys were completed by 225 parents or legal guardians of community college students, and the following year a parent focus group was conducted to further understand the parents’ roles in their child’s college search process, the parents’ perceptions of their children’s experiences in college, and the parents’ responses to the course catalog. The focus group included 15 participants, 14 of whom were mothers of the students. The survey results revealed that parents expected their children to earn a bachelor’s degree after completing community college, valued student outcomes related to academic achievement (e.g., a high GPA), and linked academic skill level and maturity. However, even though parents reported that they were involved in their children’s academic experiences, many of them overestimated their children’s academic skill level, as measured by
placement test results. Specifically, over 20% of the parents indicated that their children had high-level academic skills, but their children had been placed into at least one remedial class.

**Nature of the helicopter parent-child relationship.**

A number of studies have focused on the nature of the parent-child relationship when helicopter parenting is present and found that this parenting behavior is associated with problems for the child. For example, Segrin et al. (2013) tested the hypothesis that overparenting is associated with interpersonal problems between the parent and the child. Four hundred and seventy-seven adult-child (emerging adult) dyads were asked to complete a self-report survey of interpersonal problems and how they coped with these problems. Students were recruited from three American universities and completed an online survey. Parents’ surveys contained the Overparenting scale, the Critical Family Environment, the Attitude toward Parent/Child scale, the Parental Conditional Regard scale, the Problems with Parents and Self scale, the Anxious Parenting scale, and the Helicopter Parenting scale. Their children completed all of the scales except for the Overparenting scale. Structural equation modeling revealed that the child’s self-reported overparenting was strongly related to reports of more child problems, but that parental reports of overparenting were not related to child problems. The authors inferred that the adult children’s criticisms of their parents were associated with overparenting (i.e., college-aged children can identify helicopter parenting as the catalyst for many of their own problems).

One hallmark of helicopter parents is the increased frequency and type of their contact with their children (Kelly et al., 2017; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Wolf et al., 2009). For example, Kelly et al. (2017) studied cellular phone contact between undergraduate students and their helicopter parents. The participants were 529 upper-level college undergraduates from a large Midwestern university who completed an online survey. The three-part survey included
separate questions about mothers and fathers and included five scales for each parent: the 
Helicopter-Parenting instrument, the Cell-phone Rules scale, the Cell-Phone Avoidance 
Strategies scale, the Cell-Phone Satisfaction scale, the Relational Satisfaction with Mother and 
Father scale, and the Closeness with Mother/Father scale. Different findings were revealed for 
mothers and fathers. Specifically, children who had high-level helicopter fathers were contacted 
most frequently and those with low-level helicopter fathers were contacted least frequently. 
Children who had moderate- or high-level helicopter fathers had more relational satisfaction than 
students who had low-level helicopter fathers. In terms of mothers, there were no differences in 
the frequency of contact between low-, moderate-, or high-level helicopter mothers, but children 
who had high-level helicopter mothers had more cell-phone conflict than those with moderate-
level helicopter mothers, who, in turn, had more cell-phone conflict than children who had low-
level helicopter mothers. Finally, the most cell-phone avoidance behavior occurred in students 
who had moderate- or high-level helicopter mothers. Thus, helicopter parenting behavior 
exhibited by mothers appears to have a direct effect on conflict and students’ desire to avoid such 
conflict.

Also, helicopter parents contact their children for a variety of reasons, including to 
emphasize good academic performance. For example, Wolf et al., (2009) used pre-existing data 
from the 2006 University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey to better understand 
the relationship between parents and their college-aged children. Specific survey items were used 
that measured students’ background and relationships with parents. The sample included 10,760 
students who had completed both scales from which the specific items were drawn. In terms of 
parental involvement, most respondents (66%) reported that their parents were interested in their 
avademic progress. Over half of the respondents indicated that their parents stressed good grades,
and they also agreed or strongly agreed that their parents were interested in their out-of-class experiences. As far as the frequency and method of college student-parent interaction, of all methods of communication (i.e., face to face, phone, text, email), parent/child interactions occurred most frequently by phone, with 80% participating in phone calls at least once per week. Of the students who reported using the phone for parent communication, 25% spoke to their parents every day. Only 23.5% of respondents reported texting with their parents, whereas 62.3% reported using email. When examining all respondents across the four means of communication, 40.85% reported that they spoke to their parents daily.

In addition to contacting their children frequently, helicopter parents also influence their children’s decisions about life choices. Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011), for example, examined the frequency and nature of helicopter parent-child interactions that are initiated by the college-aged child. The authors surveyed 747 undergraduate students from a large, public, Midwestern university about their decision making processes. Respondents were asked to describe an important decision they made and how they came to that decision. Approximately 44% of students indicated that they would involve their parents in decision making, but most of these students indicated that they would involve them for a first-time, unique problem but not for similar, subsequent problems. The researchers assumed that for their first encounter with the problem, these students would learn how their parents handled the situation and that they would then duplicate their parents’ actions in subsequent encounters with the same problem. Only 15.1% of respondents indicated they would reach out to their parents for advice on more than one occasion. Interestingly, even though these students were communicating with their parents on a regular basis, they relied on their parents’ problem-solving skills during their first exposure to a situation.
In the above study, Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) also classified parental involvement according to four kinds of interaction: confrontational, thought, consultation, and dictation. A confrontational interaction occurs when the student makes a decision before telling their parents about the situation and then refuses to listen to their advice. A thought interaction occurs when the student believes that they know the advice that parents will give and bases a decision on that hypothetical advice. A consultation interaction arises when the student approaches their parents for advice in a situation and considers their advice equally with advice from other sources. A dictation interaction occurs when the student follows the advice of their parents without question, assuming the advice to always be correct. Different levels of parental involvement were found for different types of interactions. Specifically, the majority of participants (53.07%) who relied on their parents did so through consultation. The remainder of the participants utilized thought (36.27%), dictation (7.73%), or confrontation (2.93%). Thus, the majority (89%) of students with helicopter parents considered their parents’ opinions, either with or without communicating with them, but ultimately made the decision on their own.

**Outcomes of helicopter parenting for children.**

A relatively large number of studies have examined outcomes associated with helicopter parenting for children, and these include physical and psychological outcomes, social outcomes, and educational and vocational outcomes.

**Physical and psychological outcomes.**

A number of studies have examined the relationship between helicopter parenting and student health issues, including both physical and psychological health. Toda et al. (2008) focused on physical health and surveyed 200 pre-medicine or pre-dentistry first-year undergraduate students from a university in Japan to better understand the relationship between
parenting style and health-related lifestyle. Students completed two scales: One scale dealt with perceived parenting style and the other dealt with healthy lifestyle choices. For female students, those with an unhealthy lifestyle perceived their parents as having been overprotective. However, this was not the case for male students; male student depression was related to both low maternal care and overprotection. It was concluded that a student’s health is related to the perceived parenting style to which the student was exposed. Although these findings are correlational, encouraging mothers to not engage in helicopter parenting may result in female students with less unhealthy lifestyles and male students with less depression.

Reed et al. (2016) hypothesized that there is a connection between helicopter parenting and poor health. Four hundred and sixty one undergraduate students from a public university in the American southeast completed a survey that included an Autonomy Support scale, Helicopter Parenting subscale, Self-Efficacy scale, Beck Anxiety Inventory, Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale, Satisfaction with Life scale, and a single item to measure the quality of general physical health. It was found that helicopter parenting was positively related to general physical health but not to any other variables.

A number of studies have focused specifically on the link between helicopter parenting and student depression. Specifically, Schiffrin et al. (2014) surveyed 297 college undergraduates at a public, liberal arts institution in the mid-Atlantic United States. Most of the participants were students in a psychology course who received course credit for participating in the study. The survey measured 20 behaviors that are associated with helicopter parenting and seven behaviors that are associated with autonomy-supportive parenting. An exploratory factor analysis revealed that helicopter parenting was related to lower levels of child autonomy, competence, and
relatedness, which in turn were related to depression. Thus, the authors concluded that helicopter parenting and depression are indirectly related.

Yoshizumi et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between perceived parenting style during childhood and depression in adulthood, using dissociation as a mediator. Dissociation was defined as “a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception of the environment” (p. 354). They surveyed 449 college undergraduates in central Japan using the Parental Bonding Instrument, the Parenting Scale of Inconsistency, the Dissociative Experiences scale, the Depression Scale of the GHQ-60, and the Tri-Axel Coping Scale. A path analysis revealed different findings for men and women. For women, dissociation mediated the relationship between inconsistent parenting and depressive symptoms, but for men, dissociation mediated the relationship between overprotective parenting and depressive symptoms. These findings were seen as supporting the conclusion that parents should not only desist from helicopter parenting behaviors when their children go to college, but that they should avoid beginning these behaviors altogether. Given how harmful depressive symptoms can be, the authors also suggested that the helicopter parenting of male students be avoided.

Darlow et al. (2017) studied 294 undergraduate students in the northeastern United States to determine the effects of helicopter parenting on children's' anxiety, depression, self-efficacy, and adjustment to college. Students completed an online survey, and the authors used analysis of variance and structural equation modeling to determine that students who were over-parented had higher levels of anxiety and depression, lower self-efficacy, and poorer college adjustment. These three outcomes were all predictors of students leaving university before degree completion. Thus, because parental over-involvement can negatively influence development,
helicopter parents are causing the exact experience they sought to avoid: lack of success in college.

Finally, Lindell et al. (2017) hypothesized that there are three kinds of parental control (helicopter parenting, behavioral control, and psychological control), all of which have effects on children into adulthood. Psychological control was defined as emotional manipulation and controlling the child by threatening to withdraw love. Behavioral control was defined as protecting the child from risk-taking behavior, but the authors noted that this behavior is only healthy and appropriate if it ends before the child becomes an adult. The authors examined whether the parent-child relationship during the first year of college was related to feelings of transitional competence and adult status. One hundred and fifty undergraduate students from a large, public, Midwestern university participated in a two-phase study. Students were surveyed during their first year of college (first phase) and again three years later (second phase). It was found that mothers were more likely than fathers to be helicopter parents. In terms of parent-child relationship quality, it was found that adult children who had low levels of negativity toward their parents at the first data collection point were much more likely to feel like adults at the second data collection point. However, reporting positivity toward their parents at the first data collection point was unrelated to feeling like an adult at the second data collection point. It was concluded that a lack of conflict and antagonism in the parent-child relationship is most important for first-year undergraduate students feeling like adults three years later.

Not all studies, however, have found a relationship between helicopter parenting and depression. As discussed earlier, Reed et al. (2016) found that autonomy support was positively related to general physical health, life satisfaction, and self-efficacy and was negatively related to
depression. Thus, when parents increase their children’s ability to make their own choices, there are many benefits for the latter.

**Social outcomes.**

Helicopter parenting has also been found to be negatively related to students’ social abilities, relationships, and communication style. For example, a study by Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014) examined the relationship between the antecedents and consequences of parental involvement and overparenting and undergraduate student experiences and future career expectations. Five hundred and eleven undergraduates in a large management class at an American university completed a survey that included scales for self-efficacy, parental involvement, over-parenting, workplace scenarios, and classroom outcomes. A regression analysis revealed that over-parenting was negatively related to social self-efficacy, whereas parental involvement was positively related to social self-efficacy. The authors concluded that parental behavior, whether it involves parental involvement or overparenting, is directly related to students’ social success. More specifically, students who have helicopter parents are less likely to function properly in social settings, which has implications for their future career choices and relationship building.

Van Ingen et al. (2015) also examined the relationship between helicopter parenting and aspects of student social success such as self-efficacy and peer relationships. They surveyed 190 undergraduates at a university in the American Midwest and found that students’ perceptions of helicopter parenting were significantly associated with poor peer attachment and low self-efficacy. More specifically, students with helicopter parents had less confidence in their own abilities and found it more difficult to relate to, and have relationships with, fellow students. Similarly, students who perceived their mothers to be overbearing had difficulty trusting peers
and also reported feeling alienated from peers. Students who perceived their fathers as overbearing had poorer peer communication, lower peer trust, and a greater sense of peer alienation. Thus, even though helicopter parenting by mothers and fathers was associated with different outcomes for their children, all of the social outcomes were negative.

In addition to affecting relationships with peers, helicopter parenting can negatively affect how students interact with faculty, which, in turn, can affect these students’ grades. Miller-Ott (2016) surveyed 272 college undergraduate and graduate students to examine how family life is related to students’ social interactions with faculty members. More specifically, the study examined the influence of helicopter parenting, family conversation orientation, and family conformity orientation on students’ out-of-class communication (OCC) with faculty members. Family conversation-oriented children were defined as those who had a high level of interpersonal confidence and comfort in open communication and when making decisions. Alternatively, family conformity-oriented children were defined as those who indicated social incompetence and high stress. Miller-Ott found a negative relationship between helicopter parenting and OCC with faculty members and between family conformity orientation and OCC with faculty members. Family conversation orientation and OCC, however, were positively related. It was concluded that parental communication and communication in the home directly influence how students communicate with faculty outside of the classroom. Thus, although it is important that undergraduate students contact faculty members when issues arise, students who have helicopter parents are less likely to do so.

**Educational and vocational outcomes.**

A number of educational and vocational outcomes that include college-choice decisions, academic choices, and vocational choices have been found to be associated with helicopter
parenting. For example, Bers and Galowich (2002) examined the point at which parents became involved in their children’s college selection process, as well as how they influenced their children’s college-choice decision. Students who planned early for college were found to be less likely to attend community college. Sixteen percent of parents reported that their child only decided to attend community college after graduating from high school, and nearly 66% reported that their child only applied to one community college and no other institutions. In terms of being involved in the college choice process, the majority of parents (46%) were involved during their child’s junior or senior year of high school. Nineteen percent reported never having been involved with the college-choice process, 31% were involved starting in the first- or second-year of high school, and 4% became involved after high school graduation. Similarly, 46% of parents reported that the actual choice of college was made by the child alone, 51% reported that they assisted their child in making the decision, and 3% reported that they made the decision entirely for their child. The majority of parents became involved in the college-choice decision-making process during high school, and more than half assisted their children in choosing to attend community college. The finding that the majority of parents became involved in college-choice decision-making at an early stage and assisted their children in the decision-making process is consistent with the concept of helicopter parenting.

Bers and Galowich (2002) also examined parental level of involvement in their children’s education after their children began college. A focus group interview that was conducted with helicopter parents yielded three major themes. First, in terms of parental involvement in advising and registration, participants expressed their desire to be more involved in the advising and registration process. The majority felt that, without their input, their children were placed in or registered for incorrect classes. Almost all of the participants wanted information to be sent
directly to them about academic performance and attendance, indicating that it was their right as parents to receive such information. Second, in terms of communicating with parents, all of the participants agreed that communication with them needed to come directly from the college. Last, in addition to wanting to receive information continuously throughout the semester, many participants restated their desire to be included in all meetings with counselors and advisors and to be able to contact these advisors about or on behalf of their child, even without the child present.

Parents can also play a significant role in their child’s retention at an institution. More specifically, Wintre and Yaffe (2000) examined the issue of retention using a sample of 408 unmarried, Canadian students at a commuter college who were taking a psychology course. Participants completed two rounds of data collection (during the first week of the fall semester and during February/March) and were administered the Parental Authority Questionnaire, the Perception of Parental Reciprocity scale, the Social Provisions Scale- Present Version, the Discussion with Parents scale, the Autonomy Scale of the Psychosocial Maturity Inventory, the Beck Depressive Inventory, the Self-Esteem scale, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). All items were assigned to one of four categories: parenting styles, current relationships with parents, psychological well-being, and adjustment variables. The Beck Depressive Inventory and Perceived Stress Scale were found to correlate negatively with the SACQ, indicating that students who had more depressive symptoms and self-reported stress had lower levels of adaptation to college. Also, self-esteem was positively correlated with SACQ scores, indicating that students who had higher self-esteem had higher levels of adaptation to college. Similarly, self-reliance, identity, and work orientation were positively correlated with SACQ, indicating that students who had higher levels of self-reliance,
identity, and work orientation had higher levels of adaptation to college. Also, GPA was negatively correlated with scores on the *Beck Depressive Inventory* and *Perceived Stress* scale, positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with maternal authoritarianism. These findings suggest that factors that are important for higher adaptation to college and for a high GPA include a low level of depressive symptoms; a low level of stress; a high level of self-esteem; a high level of self-reliance, identity, and work orientation; and a low level of maternal authoritarianism. Because parents can influence their children’s development in each of these areas, they can also influence their children’s retention at university.

Some studies have also examined how helicopter parenting relates to students’ academic achievement and academic choices (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000). For example, Schiffrin and Liss (2017) sought to better understand if and how maternal helicopter parenting is related to academic motivation. The sample consisted of 192 undergraduates who were enrolled in a psychology course at a liberal arts institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and their mothers. It was found that having a helicopter mother was negatively related to academic achievement. Students who reported having helicopter mothers were more likely to have avoidance goals for learning, an extrinsic motivation to learn, and maladaptive perfectionism, all of which are associated with lower academic achievement. Maladaptive perfectionism, as used here, occurs when the children of helicopter parents do not believe that they can meet their own expectations. Also, mothers who reported being helicopter parents had children who reported a greater sense of entitlement. It was concluded that helicopter parenting is related to maladaptive academic motivations which, in turn, can influence academic achievement negatively.
In the Lindell et al. (2017) study discussed earlier, it was also found that when fathers showed greater psychological control or when mothers showed low positivity, their children showed weaker vocational identity. Also, a higher level of helicopter parenting was associated with weaker vocational identity in male children. It was suggested that if graduated undergraduate students do not have confidence in their career choices, they will continue to rely on their parents even as employees. Lindell et al. also found that helicopter parenting was related to a weak vocational identity for male children when negativity between parents and the child was low. Thus, parents who engage in inappropriate behavior (i.e., helicopter parenting) are more likely to have male children who are unsure of their career choice.

The study by Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan (2014) discussed earlier also focused on hypothetical workplace scenarios and found that overparenting significantly predicted maladaptive responses to hypothetical workplace scenarios, whereas general parental involvement did not predict such responses. For example, students who reported experiencing overparenting indicated that in workplace scenarios they would choose the conflict resolution strategy that relied most heavily on others to solve their problems. It was also found that the relationship between over-parenting and maladaptive responses to workplace scenarios was mediated by self-efficacy. That is, students who were overparented but had a strong belief in their own abilities were not inclined to use maladaptive responses to workplace scenarios. Thus, overparenting alone may not be harmful to students, but rather, overparenting that results in low student self-efficacy. It was suggested that perhaps increasing the self-efficacy of students who have helicopter parents will lessen their maladaptive reactions to workplace scenarios.

Similarly, Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, and Montgomery (2013) examined parent and child traits that are associated with overparenting and surveyed 653 parent-child dyads, where the
children were undergraduates. The participants represented 32 of the 50 states in the United States. It was found that overparenting involved the application of developmentally inappropriate levels of parental directiveness, tangible assistance, problem-solving, monitoring, and involvement in the life of the child. Children whose parents reported overparenting indicated greater use of dysfunctional coping skills, leading to lower academic performance and poor performance in the workplace. Thus, helicopter parenting does not end once the child graduates from college; parents can also inhibit the child’s life after college.

It is important to note that not all research has found that helicopter parenting is associated with negative educational outcomes. More specifically, the Wolf et al., (2009) study discussed earlier used pre-existing data to better understand the experiences of undergraduates and did not find a relationship between helicopter parenting and student decisions that were influenced by parents. These parents emphasized good grades, but only a small percentage of their children agreed or strongly agreed that their parents had influenced their choice of major (3.4%) or their selection of courses (11.8%). Thus, although these parents were active in their children’s lives, as far as achieving good grades, few of them had an influence over the chosen major or the courses in which these grades were achieved.

**Qualitative Research on Helicopter Parenting and Undergraduate Students**

Several qualitative studies have focused on helicopter parenting and undergraduate students. For example, Cullaty (2011) examined undergraduate students’ experiences with autonomy development and, in particular, how overparenting influenced their ability to make good decisions. An online survey, which was completed by 169 undergraduate students in the American southeast, focused on their parents’ level of involvement and the students’ decision-making processes. Six participants were then recruited from each of the following groups:
students who identified their parents as uninvolved, students who identified their parents as normally involved, and students who identified their parents as overinvolved. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, who also completed two journal entries on the topic. Three major findings emerged from the study. First, participants who described their parents as normally involved felt supported by their parents, which allowed them to act autonomously and make decisions. Second, participants viewed parental control as inhibiting their autonomy. Last, participants viewed three types of parental behavior as promoting autonomy development: (a) actively redefining the parent-child relationship, (b) relinquishing unnecessary control, and (c) encouraging child responsibility. The author suggested that parents of college-aged children engage in these three behaviors to allow their children to develop autonomy.

Kwon et al. (2017) focused specifically on Korean-American undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parents, including the students’ perceptions of helicopter parents, the prevalence of helicopter parents, and the impact of these parents on the students’ development. An online qualitative survey was sent to Korean-American undergraduate students at three institutions in the American southeast, with forty students responding. The main finding was that participants identified three negative aspects of helicopter parenting and negative associated outcomes while also acknowledging their parents’ positive intentions. More specifically, negative aspects of helicopter parenting included over-involvement and/or overprotection, strict overcontrol without granting autonomy, and benevolent intention. Negative outcomes of helicopter parenting included increased anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts; inability to make friends; low self-esteem; and inability to make decisions independently of parents. Nevertheless, the participants also identified positive effects of helicopter parenting: With
someone monitoring their every move, they were less likely to fail academically, which would lead to obtaining a good job.

In summary, the above review of both qualitative and quantitative research literature on helicopter parenting indicates that the most frequent form of interaction between helicopter parents and their children occurs by phone and often deals with issues of academic performance. Moreover, helicopter parenting is associated with a variety of problems in the parent-child relationship and for the child, including cell-phone conflict and cell-phone avoidance by the child. In terms of physical and psychological outcomes, helicopter parenting is associated with greater child depression, anxiety, and general physical health. As for social outcomes, helicopter parenting is associated with lower self-efficacy, lower peer attachment, lower peer trust, greater alienation from peers, poorer peer communication, and lower out-of-class communication with faculty. When educational and vocational outcomes are considered, helicopter parenting is associated with a greater tendency to attend college than community college, a desire to be more involved in various aspects of the child’s academic achievement, weaker vocational identity, and maladaptive responses to hypothetical workplace scenarios when student self-efficacy is low.

It is also evident from the above review of the research literature that quantitative research has provided a variety of important insights into helicopter parenting and college-aged children, including characteristics of parents who engage in helicopter parenting, the nature of the helicopter parent-child relationship, and the physical, psychological, social, educational, and vocational outcomes of helicopter parenting for children. Only a very small number of qualitative studies, however, have focused on college-aged children’s experiences of helicopter parenting. Moreover, these studies have dealt with only one facet of the phenomenon, autonomy development (Cullaty, 2011), or have focused on a specific ethnic group, Korean-American
undergraduates, whose experiences were explored using only an online qualitative survey (Kwon et al., 2017). Thus, much of the phenomenon of helicopter parenting remains to be investigated qualitatively for other demographic groups of undergraduate students. It should also be added that because qualitative research emphasizes lived experience, meaning, context, and holism, the findings of the current study serve as an important complement to similar quantitative findings.

The research question that was investigated in the present study, then, is: What are undergraduate students’ experiences of helicopter parenting?

Method

The following method section includes information about my stance as a researcher, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. The study, like much qualitative research, was generic in nature in that it did not involve the use of a specific qualitative methodology (e.g., case study, ethnography, phenomenology, or grounded theory). In this regard, the use of a specific qualitative methodology was not considered necessary to investigate the above research question.

Researcher Stance

It was important for me to become reflexively aware of how I was positioned (Haraway, 1988) in relation to the phenomenon I investigated because it is from this standpoint that the study was conducted and the phenomenon understood. In this section, I began the process of reflexively positioning myself in relation to the phenomenon to be investigated in the current study by discussing relevant aspects of my personal history and the beliefs that I currently hold about the phenomenon. It should be added that the process of reflexivity is ongoing during research and continued during all stages of the current study.

I am a White, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, 30-year-old woman who grew up in Connecticut and has lived in the American southeast for ten years. I grew up in a solidly middle
class household, but all my extended family were of lower- or lower middle- socioeconomic status. I am a Ph.D. candidate, and I am married to another student affairs professional whose work focuses on orientation and first-year seminar courses. I have worked in the field of higher education for ten years in the areas of student success, retention, assessment, and evaluation. Through my role as an instructor and working directly with students, I have interacted frequently with helicopter parents.

I have never had helicopter parents, but I have had constant, frequent contact with my mother since I left home for college. During my undergraduate program, a master’s program, working full time, and a Ph.D. program, I have consistently spoken to my mother daily. I see this as a social connection rather than an intrusive need to control me. It does not constitute helicopter parenting, but my mother is a constant part of my daily life. In terms of my father, I believe the frequency of my contact with him is above average as well. The entire family, including my 25-year-old sister, is involved in a family group text in which everyone posts at least once each day. Again, I see this as a social interaction and a way to share good news, rather than a parental attempt to control children.

During my undergraduate career, I attended a large, public, Research I institution that was an hour from my childhood home. My parents were involved in a healthy, appropriate way. During each of my four major changes, my parents asked questions to better understand the benefits and limitations of future careers connected to those majors, but they never discouraged any of my choices. During both my master’s and current degree, my parents sought to understand my research and graduate assistantships, while supporting and celebrating my choices.
Since I have not had helicopter parents, I sympathize with students who do. I have seen, firsthand, the negative effects that helicopter parents have on their college-aged children. As for the helicopter parents themselves, I vacillate between contempt and pity for them. I have seen some helicopter parents attempt to control their children’s lives because of, what I consider to be, misguided principles or morals, while others truly believe they are making the best possible choices for their children.

For example, in the almost fifteen sections of the first-year seminar and academic recovery courses I have taught, there have been three students with helicopter parents who really stood out to me. Their helicopter parents became known to me in three different ways, but each had an effect on how I interacted with their children.

During the summer of 2017, I ran a parents’ orientation for the college at which I teach. Through my presentations, I met “Amanda’s” parents, who asked if she could request to be in my first-year seminar course. Throughout the course of the semester, I helped Amanda navigate her desire to stay true to her very strict, religious upbringing while being upset that her father was now requesting to FaceTime with her constantly so that he could see where she was and if she was lying about her whereabouts. Amanda and I began meeting twice weekly before class and it soon became clear that I was a stand-in for her parents. She felt comfortable discussing academics and religion with her parents, but any other topic fell to me. I would advise her on how to navigate relationships with boys and non-Christians and how to cope with her menstrual cycle. By the end of the semester, she had Dean’s List grades, which made her parents happy, and a (hidden) social life that she appreciated. Her parents would check in with me periodically through email, but I had Amanda’s FERPA waiver allowing me to relay her progress to her parents.
“Esther” was a student in my first-year seminar whose first one-on-one interaction with me came when she approached me after class and told me that she had never managed her own time or made the decision to do work on her own time. She had a serious learning disability that prohibited her from focusing on her own timekeeping. In high school, she had an art teacher who let her work in the studio when classes were not in session because it was quiet, and she acted as an advocate for Esther. Esther and I began meeting weekly where we would create an hour-by-hour schedule for the upcoming week of where she should be, what she should be studying, and how long it should take to complete assignments. Her mother called her multiple times each day and demanded that she come home at least once each week to give academic and social updates in person. Esther followed my advice and schedules to succeed academically, and then reported to her mother weekly. She ended the semester with all As and Bs, which I attributed to her schedule and despite her mother’s controlling behavior. I have seen Esther irregularly since that semester she was in my course. She provides me with the kind of updates one might give their parents, and she refers to my husband and me as her “mom and dad.”

“John” was a very different story. His name had been on my first-year seminar roster the entire semester, but weeks went by without him ever attending class. John’s mother was checking his emails and saw my requests for him to reply or attend class. She began coming to campus to meet with John’s academic advisor and worked out a plan with each of his instructors about how he could make up work from the weeks he had not attended classes. Regardless of the contract I created with John on behalf of his mother, he never turned in any work for my class. John’s mother kept coming to campus, meeting with his advisor and instructors, but John’s refusal to turn in work led to five failing course grades. John’s mother tried to circumvent the
academic suspension policy on John’s behalf, but there are no exceptions to academic suspension.

During the study, as I interviewed participants, I found three instances where I needed to write memos about my own reflectivity. Something that I found across all eight interviews was that the participants were incredibly introspective. Before interviewing began, I reflected on what I was like as a college sophomore, junior, and senior. I have always considered myself to be contemplative, so I was incredibly taken aback at the kinds of self-reflection these students were able to articulate. It has taken me years to effectively put into words how I feel about certain childhood experiences or how those experiences affect me as an adult. All of the participants were able to articulate both obvious and nuanced aspects of experiencing helicopter parenting; so much so that I began months of deep examination of my own experiences and personality.

Second, the interviewing of participants and analyzing the data affected me emotionally much more than I ever thought it would. Two participants described behaviors of their helicopter parents that they considered helicopter parenting. I, however, considered the behaviors to be abusive. It was incredibly hard for me to continue with the interview protocol while my Student Affairs training indicates that I should attempt to counsel the students. Because these two students considered the behavior to be helicopter parenting, which admittedly is less serious than abuse, I suspect they will allow the behavior to continue. It goes against everything I believe as a feminist scholar to do nothing when I observe this kind of behavior. In one instance, I felt physically ill leaving an interview because I so strongly wanted to inject myself into the participant’s life. The time between interview and analysis did little to less my emotions when it came time to read the transcripts. I was similarly upset as when the interview had first taken place.
Finally, I was incredibly surprised by how multiple participants interpreted the definition of helicopter parenting (i.e., the hovering of one or both parents over their child, such that they are over-involved in the child's life and use parenting techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child.) Before interviewing, it never occurred to me that participants would have different ideas of what constituted techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child. I thought students would see most of their helicopter parent’s behavior as helicoptering; instead, participants defined some behaviors as helicopter parenting and some as not. For example, Jacob did not believe that his mother engaged in helicopter parenting when she made his doctor appointments; he considered the appointment-making as something developmentally necessary. On the other hand, during high school, a different participant’s father would not allow boys in her room or let her boyfriend sleep over. The participant described this as helicopter parenting, while I thought his rules were developmentally appropriate.

Categorizations such as these surprised me because I incorrectly assumed that the participants’ definition of techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child would match my own.

In terms of the beliefs that I hold about undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parenting, first, I believe that academic achievement suffers when college-aged students experience helicopter parenting. Students who are not used to taking initiative will not know how to fix an academic problem when it arises. If grades cannot be fixed by a retroactive parental phone call (and most cannot), then the student is at a loss about how to proceed.

Second, I believe that helicopter parenting seriously harms a child’s psychological well-being, leading to depression and anxiety in undergraduate students. A student who has always had helicopter parents to fix their problems to avoid any discomfort does not know how to deal
with uncertainty or rejection. Once the child gets to college and is not performing academically as expected, does not get into a certain club or Greek organization, or is not beloved by instructors, they may shut down in a depressive episode because they do not have skills to persevere in a disappointing situation.

Third, I believe students who experience helicopter parenting feel entitled not just to the assistance they receive from their parents, but also to the assistance they receive from administrators, instructors, and others. These students lack problem solving skills and so they rely on the skills of others. For example, I believe these students will be more likely to ask for unearned extra credit in a class than students without helicopter parents.

Fourth, I believe helicopter parents have their children's best interests at heart when they over-parent. I think these parents believe they are assisting their children by helping them bypass challenges or hardships, no matter how small. By doing so, the parents intend to make life easier for their children, but they do not foresee the unintended consequences of their helicopter parenting.

Last, I believe that helicopter parents will not suddenly stop helicopter parenting, and this is due to the co-dependent nature of the parent-child relationship that has been established. That is, if a child has been relying on their parent(s) for 22 years, the relationship will not simply go away because the child suddenly has a diploma in hand. I believe helicopter parenting will continue into the workplace, the adult child rearing children of their own, and other major decisions.

I also hold beliefs about specific groups that are related to the phenomenon that I will be exploring. In terms of the parents of college-aged students, I believe most parents value a college education and believe that a degree is necessary for higher earning potential and a higher quality
lifestyle. I also believe most undergraduate students are in college because they want to learn and increase their earning potential. For the most part, they are respectful and open to receiving assistance from instructors and administrators. Last, I believe that helicopter parents are parents who have good intentions and are reasonable people. Most do not understand student development theory or university policy but are open to learning from administrators and instructors.

**Participant Selection**

As in most qualitative research, purposeful sampling (e.g., Patton, 2015) was used to select participants for the study. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants who are informative about the phenomenon being investigated (i.e., participants who have experienced the phenomenon in depth). The sampling procedure that was used can be further described as involving convenience sampling (e.g., Miles et al., 2014) because the participants who are selected were available to me (i.e., the researcher has access to them).

Three general selection criteria were used. Specifically, to participate in the study, a person needed to (a) have a sufficient amount of experience with the phenomenon, (b) be able to communicate those experiences effectively, and (c) be willing to share those experiences as fully as possible. A number of specific selection criteria were also used. To participate in the current study, a person need to (a) be an undergraduate student at a public, M1 university; (b) have completed at least two consecutive semesters of coursework at that college (i.e., be a second-year student, at a minimum); (c) be registered full-time; (d) be completing a traditional degree rather than an online degree; and (e) have at least one parent who is viewed as having engaged in helicopter parenting during the above-mentioned semesters.
After obtaining IRB approval for the current study from Virginia Tech and submitting the IRB-approved documents to the target institution for review and approval, participants were recruited from the target institution. The institution is a mid-sized, public, four-year M1 university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and has approximately 10,000 full-time undergraduate students, nearly half of whom are first-generation undergraduate students. Participants were recruited via email. An administrator at the target institution sent out the email using a listserv, which includes all undergraduates at the institution. As mentioned earlier, the recruitment email contained a generic definition of helicopter parenting. That definition is as follows: the hovering of one or both parents over their child, such that they are over-involved in their child’s life and use parenting techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child.

The recruitment email (see Appendix A) included information about the researcher, the nature of the study, the time commitment for participants, benefits, and a general definition of helicopter parenting. As discussed earlier, helicopter parenting was defined in a general way only, as the hovering of one or both parents over their child such that they are over-involved in their child’s life and using parenting techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child. It should be added that students were provided with a general definition of helicopter parenting to ensure that their understanding of the general nature of the phenomenon was consistent with how it was conceived of for the current study. Also, to maintain the integrity of the data collection process and the credibility of the resulting data, it was essential that the participants and I share the same understanding of the general nature of the phenomenon (i.e., the phenomenon must be clearly nameable and participants needed to be aware of how the phenomenon had been conceived within the study). The recruitment email also included a link to
a Qualtrics survey. The survey was used solely as a means of collecting contact information and was added due to my concern that undergraduates might feel intimidated by contacting me directly. The Qualtrics survey required respondents to provide an email address and/or phone number that was then used to schedule a first meeting, the structuring interview (see Data Collection section).

In terms of the issue of sample size in qualitative research, the sample size for a qualitative study is not established in advance (e.g., Patton, 2015). More specifically, there are no universal guidelines or requirements for the size of a sample in research. Often, as many participants are included as are needed to achieve informational redundancy during the data collection (i.e., no new insights are gained when interviewing an additional participant) and saturation during the data analysis (i.e., no new modifications occur to the categories as new data are analyzed), and this approach to sample size was used in the study.

The sample for the study included eight participants, two men and six women. They ranged in age from 19 to 22 years, with an average age of 20.75 years. In terms of ethnic/racial identity, three participants were of mixed race, three were White, and two were African American. In terms of family socioeconomic status (SES), two of the participants came from a lower class background, four had a middle class background, and two had an upper class background. In terms of the structure of their family of origin, three of the participants indicated that they were raised by single mothers, and six of the participants described their fathers as not playing an active role in their lives. Three of the participants spent equal time between their divorced parents, two of the participants had parents who were still married, and two of the participants lived with one parent and two grandparents. All of the participants have between one and six siblings and grew up with at least one sibling in the house. All of the participants had
parents who were at a distance of at least two hours away. Additionally, most of the participants went to college in-state. Six of the parents who engaged in helicopter parenting were mothers and two were fathers. Three of the participants were second-year undergraduates, two were third-year undergraduates, and three were fourth-year undergraduates. The participants majors included communications, sociology, economics, health science, political science, nursing, and interdisciplinary studies. Six of participants described themselves as being first-generation undergraduate students. All of the participants had part-time employment during the school year, whether paid or unpaid.

**Data Collection**

Data collection for the study involved the use of in-depth, open-ended qualitative interviews to explore the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon. Moreover, the interview process consisted of three phases (Laferriere, personal communication, cited in Becker, 1986). The first phase of interviewing, the structuring interview, is, in its most general sense, used to prepare for the actual process of data collection. This interview was not recorded, and it served a number of major purposes. First, it was used to confirm that the participant in fact met all of the specific selection criteria (see Participant Selection section). It also allowed the researcher to assess whether the participant met all of the general selection criteria. Second, this meeting provided the participant with important information about the phenomenon to be investigated, the procedure, and their level of involvement in the procedure. Third, this meeting was used to complete the consent process and obtain an informed consent (see Appendix B). Fourth, this meeting was crucial for beginning the process of establishing rapport with the participant; an adequate level of rapport is essential for participant openness during the second phase of interviewing and for the collection of credible data. In this regard, I worked to establish the
highest level of rapport possible with each participant. Last, any questions or concerns that the participant may have had were addressed during this meeting. During the structuring interview, the participant was also asked to select a pseudonym (i.e., a false name) and was given specific guidelines to help them to prepare for the second phase of interviewing (see Appendix C). It should be added that this meeting, as well as those that follow, was held on a college campus in a private, neutral location that had been reserved for this purpose. Attention was paid to choosing rooms that had a physical environment that fostered an effective interview and that was free of noise, interruptions, and other distractions.

The second phase of interviewing, the data gathering interview, had as its main purpose the exploration of the phenomenon with the participant (Laferriere, personal communication, cited in Becker, 1986). All data gathering interviews were audio recorded. Also, a standardized, open-ended interview format (Patton, 2015) was be used, which involved developing all interview questions beforehand and asking them in precisely the same way and in the same order for all of the participants (see Appendix D). Doing so minimized variation in how interview questions were asked across participants.

The interview guide that was used in the current study had five major sections that include parent, family, and degree characteristics; the nature of helicopter parenting; consequences of helicopter parenting; efforts to deal with helicopter parenting; and future goals. The interview guide contained 19 interview questions in total. Probes were developed spontaneously, as needed, during the interview, but for some interview questions, the topics for important potential probes were added to the interview guide as italicized bullets.

Also, it is important to add that rapport building with participants continued during the data gathering interviews. No more than two hours were needed to explore the phenomenon fully
with each participant, and the average length of the interviews was 54 minutes. The shortest interview was 40 minutes and the longest interview was 68 minutes. As much time was taken for the data gathering interview as was required to explore the phenomenon fully with each participant.

The final phase of interviewing, the corroborative interview (Laferriere, personal communication, cited in Becker, 1986), is also commonly known as a member check (e.g., Miles et al., 2014). After a complete draft of the discussion of the findings was developed, it was emailed to each of the participants, asking them to review it and provide me with feedback about its adequacy. More specifically, each participant was asked to provide feedback about how accurately, appropriately, and comprehensively the discussion of findings captured their experiences of the phenomenon.

**Data Analysis**

A form of whole text analysis was used that is based on aspects of the procedures and guidelines provided by Corbin and Strauss (2015), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Miles et al. (2014). First, each of the audio recordings of the interviews was transcribed verbatim, with attention paid to factors such as emphasized words or phrases, changes in tone of voice, and rate of speech. A transcriber was chosen to complete the transcription process (see Appendix E). Each interview transcript was then read carefully several times to develop a thorough understanding of the participant’s experiences of helicopter parenting.

Beginning with the first line of text in the transcript, a line-by-line approach was then used to identify segments of text (i.e., excerpts) that were revealing of an aspect of the phenomenon. A sentence was used as the unit of analysis and, hence, an excerpt could consist of one or more sentences. Each excerpt was then assigned one or more codes (i.e., a series of words
or a phrase) that captured its explicit and implicit meaning. A process of comparing and contrasting codes was used, as needed, to develop and/or refine codes. One of the coded transcripts is included in Appendix F for illustrative purposes (excerpts are highlighted and codes are numbered and listed in the right-hand margin).

When all of the interview transcripts were coded, the codes for all of the interview transcripts were organized according to shared meaning. In other words, codes were grouped when they shared the same meaning. Each group or cluster of codes were then assigned a label (i.e., a series of words or a phrase) that captured its meaning. This label, and its associated codes, constitute a category, and categories capture meaning at a more abstract level than codes. It should be added that a code can inform more than one category. The categories were then refined so that they were internally homogenous (i.e., all of the codes that were associated with a category were consistent with the meaning expressed in the category label) and externally heterogeneous (i.e., the categories were mutually exclusive in that they were conceptually distinct and did not share meaning).

When patterns were discerned among the codes that comprised a category, subcategories were developed to capture those patterns. Subcategories are therefore less abstract than categories and allow for a more fine-grained analysis and, during the write-up of the findings, a more nuanced discussion of the category (see Appendix G). In addition, analytic memos were developed during all phases of the analysis to document important analysis and conceptual issues that then informed, as needed, subsequent analysis work and the write-up of the findings.

Establishing the Credibility of the Findings
A number of evaluative criteria, and their associated techniques, were used to establish the credibility of the findings. First, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) trustworthiness criteria were used but, importantly, without their commitment to a foundationalist epistemology (i.e., an epistemology that assumes that knowledge must have an absolute, objective foundation).² That is, the trustworthiness criteria can continue to have value even when they are no longer tied to their original foundationalist assumptions.

In terms of the trustworthiness criterion of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), member checks were used with the participants. As discussed earlier, member checks involve giving participants a complete draft of the discussion of findings and asking them to provide the researcher with feedback about how accurately, appropriately, and comprehensively their experiences of the phenomenon have been captured in that discussion. These member checks, however, were not viewed as a means of “validating” the findings (i.e., her interpretation). Instead, and consistent with the interpretive or constructivist assumptions of qualitative inquiry, member checks provided a means to extend and enrich the researcher’s interpretation. As Sparkes (1989) has noted, member checks are valuable in that “agreements and disagreements are illuminating in themselves and provide a rich source of data that is itself pertinent to the researcher’s analysis and interpretation” (p. 144). In terms of the member checks that were conducted for this study, the response rate was low with only two of the eight providing feedback. The use of a follow-up reminder email did not result in any of the six remaining participants providing feedback. The participants who did provide feedback about the write-up of the findings did not recommend changes of any kind. Also, in terms of the criterion of credibility, quoted material from the interview transcripts was included, where appropriate, in the
discussion of the findings to support my interpretation and to illustrate, concretely, the participants’ experiences of the phenomenon.

The trustworthiness criterion of dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was also used in the study but, again, without a foundationalist assumption. More specifically, an audit trail is used in the dissertation to provide the reader with important information about how the study was conducted, including the justifications for the research process decisions that were made. The audit trail included a detailed discussion of the steps involved in data collection and data analysis; discussion of the rationales for research design decisions; documentation (i.e., the results) of each stage of the data analysis; and a detailed discussion of the outcome of the researcher’s reflexive work over the course of the study (i.e., discussion of relevant personal and professional background and beliefs and assumptions about the phenomenon and the more general phenomena that underlie it).

The final trustworthiness criterion that was used, transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), involves the generalizability of the findings. More specifically, providing detailed demographic information above the participants, along with developing a detailed and comprehensive discussion of their experiences of the phenomenon, allows the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to other people who have experienced the phenomenon and to other contexts (e.g., other geographical regions of the country, other types of post-secondary institutions, other ethnic/racial groups).

It should be added that several prominent alternative evaluative criteria in contemporary qualitative inquiry are also relevant to the study. More specifically, substantive contribution (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018) focuses on the reader’s assessment of whether the study adds to our current understanding of the phenomenon. Or, as Richardson and St. Pierre state, “Does this
piece contribute to our understanding of social life?” (p. 823). A second criterion, reflexivity, emphasizes the extent to which the researcher has situated herself in the study. In other words, “is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgements about the point of view [in the text]?” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2018, p. 823).
Chapter Three: Results

The analysis of the interview transcripts yielded seven categories, which are used to structure the discussion that follows. It should be emphasized that although these categories are interconnected when experienced originally, they are discussed here separately.

Helicopter Parenting Prior to College Can Take a Variety of Forms

All of the participants experienced helicopter parenting during college, but helicopter parenting was also present for some of the participants during middle school and, for all of the participants, during high school. During middle school, the focus of helicopter parenting was either academic issues, such as efforts to improve grades that were viewed as too low, or efforts to alter the child’s friendship group because current friends were seen as undesirable. For example, in terms of academics, Lauren was punished by her father for earning a B on a mathematics test: “My dad just wouldn’t let me do anything. I couldn’t go hang out with my friend who lived across the street from me for those two weeks. I was just [alone in the house] studying and it was the worst two weeks ever.” In terms of friendship groups, Rebecca’s mother withheld electronic devices such as her cell phone and computer so that Rebecca would be denied contact with her friends. By the end of the summer, Rebecca had not spoken to her friends in months. Rebecca’s mother also forbade certain social activities, in an effort to force Rebecca to change her friends:

When I was younger, uhm, going into my eighth grade year of, like, middle school, uhm, my mom didn’t like my group of friends, so she, like, took all my friends away. I didn’t have my cell phone all summer. I got my, uhm, door taken off. I didn’t have a computer. I didn’t have TV. I wasn’t allowed to leave my house. Like, I had to stay home. And I
could only, like, read books all day. I was really bored. And then I went into my, like, eighth grade year with, like, no friends. So I had to, like, start from scratch.

Also, after the school year started, Rebecca had to explain to her former friends that she was not allowed to see them because of her mother, which impeded her social growth for the rest of the school year.

Helicopter parenting, however, was much more prominent and pervasive during high school and focused on the participants’ social lives, academic issues, and the more routine aspects of their daily lives. Moreover, helicopter parenting was much more prevalent in the participants’ social lives than in the other above two areas.

Influences on Social Activities

Almost all of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in their social lives, and the form of helicopter parenting that occurred in the social lives of most of these participants was forbidding or strictly controlling sleepovers in their homes, visits to friends’ homes, and friends visiting them at home. For example, Jay’s mother was very strict about sleepovers:

In high school, she never let me stay at someone’s house. Like, all my friends have sleepovers. I was never, I never stayed at anyone’s house in high school ‘cause she just was like, “You don’t need to be staying at other people’s houses. You don’t know what they’re doing.”

For some participants, helicopter parenting also occurred with specific social events or activities and involved forbidding specific trips, forbidding swimming as an inherently dangerous activity, or the parent waiting up until the child returned home from a social activity. Specifically, two participants were not allowed to go swimming because of the danger of
drowning or the combination of possible drowning and shark attacks. Another participant, Jacob, was not allowed to attend parties in high school:

And so my mom was always strict, like, I couldn’t go, like, certain places, like, to a high school party or anything like that. And I think this is a little bit extreme, but I’m just going to put it out there. My mother, every time I asked my mother, “Can I go to, like, a high school party, like, my first-time party?” Its like, “Uh, no. I think you’re going to get shot.”

Closely related to the above form of helicopter parenting, some of the participants experienced helicopter parenting with social activities that involved their friends and, at times, the family members of those friends. For example, Claire was not allowed to go on a beach vacation with her friend’s family:

Yeah, I was definitely not being able to go anywhere. Uhm, most of my friends, like, they’re, like, “Yeah. Me and so-and-so, like, our parents are going to the beach with them.” Like, not even to do anything bad. Like, if you’re just going with your friends to the beach. [My dad] is, like, “No. I’m scared. Like, I know you can see all these shark attacks or you might drown in the water, and I’m not there.” I just wasn’t allowed to go anywhere.

For several of the participants, helicopter parenting also took the form of curfews for social activities. Jay’s mother, for example, imposed a midnight curfew for all parties that he attended. Also, for another participant, helicopter parenting involved controlling which specific friendships were allowed to develop. For another participant, helicopter parenting extended to dating behavior. Finally, for another participant, Rebecca, helicopter parenting extended to her best friend and involved her mother questioning what was happening in the best friend’s life:
And my mom is very much, like, she pr[ies] into my best friend. And she’ll be like, she’ll be like, “How’s your mom? How’s your dad? How are you? What are you doing? How – what are you – you have a job? Do you have this? Do you have this? Do you have this?” I’m just, like, “She came over to hang out with me. Not get a hundred and eighty questions.”

Last, for some of the participants, helicopter parenting involved all aspects of their social lives. Hannah, for example, was required to provide her mother with a written document that described the nature of a social activity before she could be given permission to attend it:

So any time I tried to make a plan it was, “How are you getting there? What time are you arriving? When are you leaving? How did you get this? What is the address of the place you will be at? When do you plan on coming home? How are you going to pay for that?”

And it kind of just embedded in my mind if I want anything to happen I need to do, do, do, do, do all the way to basically write out a document for her to say, “This is what I’m doing, how I’m doing it. Is that okay?” And most of the time it was a “yes” if I did it correctly, but there were many times that I did everything that was asked of me and there was still a “no.”

As mentioned earlier, helicopter parenting also occurred with academic issues, and this form of helicopter parenting was experienced by half of the participants. More specifically, for several of the participants, their parents chose all or some of their high school courses for them, in an effort to prepare them for specific types of careers. For example, Lauren’s father wanted her to have a mathematics-related career and therefore forced her to take extra math courses:

When I was a junior in high school, uhm, he was, just wanted to control all the classes I took. He, I’m terrible at math, and he wanted me to do something with math, uh, like as a
career and that didn’t work out. And, uhm, yeah, it was just terrible. It was the worst ever. It was the worst thing ever and our relationship definitely sucks because of that.

For several of the participants, their parents were also in constant communication with teachers. Claire’s father, for example, wanted her teachers to share with him everything about her academically:

He would, he would be, like, [I’m going to] email your teachers and, like, make sure you’re doing okay in class.” Uhm, just, like, make, I don’t know, he would just always make sure me, my brothers were doing our homework. Like, and if anything came back and we got a bad grade or anything like that, you had to study.

For some participants, the helicopter parenting that was associated with academic issues took the form of requesting that the child take extra, unnecessary courses in order to be more prepared for the college major that the parent had chosen, monitoring studying and homework completion, controlling educational options after high school, and being critical of low grades. For example, Lauren’s father wanted her to take extra summer mathematics courses because he wanted her to major in mathematics during college. Claire’s father checked each night to ensure that her homework and studying were complete. In terms of parental criticism of low grades, Rebecca’s parents attributed her low grades to a lack of effort, even when Rebecca’s teacher saw otherwise:

And then, history. Definitely, my mom pushed me to go into, like, AP [i.e., advanced placement] classes and, like, all these really high-level classes. It took me until, like, the middle of my, like, my semester, and I needed to beg my parents, and I was, like, failing. Like, "‘Cause you guys, like, made me go take this stupid class that I'm, like, not gonna do well in." . . . And then my teacher ended up contacting my parents and was, like,
"Rebecca's trying but she's not, she's just not good at this class. Like, it’s okay." And they're, like, "What can she do? Like, what can she, she needs tutoring. She needs this and that." And [my teacher’s], like, "She stays after every day. She's just not getting the material. And that's okay."

**Influences on Aspects of Daily Life**

As discussed earlier, helicopter parenting also influenced aspects of the participants’ daily lives, and this was experienced by most of the participants. These parenting behaviors took a wide variety of forms. For example, Rebecca’s parents searched her car regularly for prohibited items after a friend left condoms in the car. Claire’s father gave her strict guidelines for doing household chores and for the type of clothing that she could wear (e.g., no clothing that made her look promiscuous). Jane’s mother required that she be included as an account holder on all of Jane’s bank accounts. Last, Jacob’s mother never believed that he was where he said he would be, and she would sometimes appear unexpectedly in public places, such as during his on-duty hours at work at a fast food restaurant or at birthday parties, to verify his stated plans:

I can remember one time, it was, like, my friend's birthday bash or birthday party and, like, I guess my mother does, for some reason, did not trust me. Or for some reason thought that I was in a totally different place, and she appears at my friend's birthday bash. And I'm just, like, it's, like, “Hi. Is my son here?” And she’s [i.e., the friend], like, “Yeah.” And she comes in, and I'm just, like, [makes a face]. She's like, “I just wanted to make sure you were safe.” And I’m, like, “Oh my God!” . . . Uhm, I remember one time I was at work and apparently she didn't think I was at work. I used to work at Popeye's and apparently she didn't think I was at work and she came up to the drive-through. She’s,
like, “Hey, son” and up and she puts on like the brightest smile, and I'm just, like, “I can’t. I can't. I just, I just can’t.”

Reactions to Helicopter Parenting

Last, most of the participants had a variety of reactions to the helicopter parenting that they experienced during high school. Some of the participants cried or experienced embarrassment, frustration, or depression due to helicopter parenting. For example, Hannah was very frustrated by her mother’s level of involvement in her life:

Younger days, like, when I talked about the beach week, and the movie theatres, and going out certain places, it was very frustrating. It was kind of, like, you know, “Why’s my parent like this? Uhm, why can’t I just have, you know, a parent who doesn’t care?”

Some of the participants also took steps to avoid the parent as much as possible. For example, Jacob tried to avoid being at home when his mother was present, and Molly attended many sleepovers at friends’ homes to avoid spending time with her mother. Similarly, Lauren’s father very strictly controlled her friendship group and the classes that she took, and he would not let her ride in anyone else’s car. Lauren was so angry with her father’s behavior that when her mother deployed for military duty, she chose to live alone instead of with him, even though it meant working part-time jobs to pay various expenses on her own.

Several of the participants reacted to helicopter parenting by taking steps to restrict their own social lives. More specifically, Claire refused all social invitations because she assumed that her father would not allow her to attend anyway, and another participant, Molly, refused to host sleepovers because she did not want her friends to have to experience her mother’s helicopter parenting:
But I think that when I was younger she definitely wanted to have an eye on me at all times. And, uhm, you know, my friends would kind of be, like, “Well, [the sleepover is] over at my house.” And I'm, like, “Okay.” And Mom’d be, like, “You never have friends up here.” And she would kind of get sad, and I was, like, “Well, we're just allowed to do different stuff at their house.” And she's, like, “Like what?” And, I don't know, I kind of just feel like it hurt her a little bit that I never wanted to have friends up to my house. But at the same time it’s, like, it's your fault.

Last, several of the participants reacted to helicopter parenting by either having frequent arguments with the parent or seeing a therapist to deal with issues that could not be broached with the parent. For example, Claire would ask her father to buy her feminine products, and he did not understand how frequently she needed them, which sometimes lead to arguments:

But, see, he didn’t know that because, you know, my mom was always buying it when he was gone, or, like, overseas or stuff like that. So when my mom left, it was kind of a harder transition, especially with, like, you know, women things ‘cause, like, he just didn’t want to talk about it. He just wouldn’t talk about it.

**Helicopter Parenting during College Can Take a Variety of Forms**

All of the participants experience helicopter parenting during college, and it is present in a variety of aspects of their lives. More specifically, helicopter parenting influences academics and extracurricular activities, social activities, financial issues, employment during college and career choice, and specific aspects of daily life.

**Influences on Academics and Extracurricular Activities**

All of the participants experience helicopter parenting in their academic lives, and for most of the participants, this influence was present as early as the decision to attend college.
More specifically, for most of these participants, their parents required them to attend college, whereas for some of these participants, college was only attended to avoid disappointing or displeasing their parents or because their parents had emphasized obtaining a college education.

For example, Hannah only went to college to make her mother happy:

I did not get excited for college. I did not think that’s what I wanted to do. . . . Well, there was no room for that. That is no thought for that. That was a, “No! You know, your mom has done all of this for you, so you need to do this for her. You need to show her that the money that she put in and the effort that she did.” . . . So when I would struggle and I would say, you know, “I want to give up or I want to change this” there was a voice in the back of my head that said, “Well, that’s not acceptable. . . . You need to carry on.”

In addition, for several of these participants, helicopter parenting involved a forced choice between attending college and enrolling in the military. For example, Jacob’s mother gave him the following ultimatum about his future:

And so that's why my mother’s, like, with, when it comes to being straight like education-wise like, “Okay, like you’re – you’re going to graduate high school. We need to, like, figure out what you want to do with it. . . . Whether that’s going into the military, or whether it’s going to the workforce. Whether that's going to, like, college or anything like that.”

Closely related to the issue of attending college, for some of these participants, helicopter parenting also influenced the decision to remain in college. Some participants remained in college either to avoid angering the parent and experiencing guilt or because the parent strictly forbid leaving college. Jane, for example, never wanted to attend college but remained in college
to keep her mother happy. As far as a parent forbidding leaving college, Jay wanted to leave college and join the army, but his mother refused to provide him with his birth certificate:

I didn’t really like school. Like I said, I didn’t want to come back. But I was talking to recruiters and stuff and I needed to get my birth certificate from her to, like, you know keep going through the process and stuff and she didn’t want to give me my birth certificate. She was, like, she was, like, “I don’t think you should stop going to school to go in the military.” And I’m, like, I’m, like, “Well, I’m going to do this.” She was, like, “No. You don’t need to do all this.” And she kept, like, putting it off, putting it off. And eventually I was, like, “I guess you don’t want me to not come back to school ‘cause you’re not going to give me my birth certificate and I kind of need that to keep going.”

So, yeah, she’s definitely the reason I’m still here because she didn’t want to give me the information I needed to leave.

For most of the participants, helicopter parenting also influenced the specific college that was chosen, and parents’ reasons for doing so varied greatly. For several of the participants, the choice of college was influenced by parents’ familiarity with the institution. More specifically, parental approval of a particular college was based on the parent having visited the institution multiple times, or parental disapproval of a particular college was based on the belief that the child had not done an adequate amount of research on the institution. For example, Claire’s father approved of her choice of institution because he had visited the campus several times with her:

He was pretty okay with my choice of college. I think it's because he, he came here several times. Like, we toured the place and then we came back for the orientations and everything. And he was with me each and every time. He would always make sure, like,
“Oh, this [i.e., these activities and events are] is going on the dorm room?” Like, one of the food services, like, he was pretty much, like, he's up to date. Like, when the one student was murdered off campus, he was texting me, like, “Is everything okay?” Like, “Are you okay?” Like, he always is up to date on everything that's going on at my college. So I feel like he's proud that I'm here. But first, he still calls me and texts me a lot, so, I know he's still a little worried.

For other participants, the choice of college was based on parental approval of the institution because it offered a particular undergraduate major, offered a particular undergraduate major that was highly ranked, was geographically close to parents, or was a community college, which was seen as helping to ease the child’s transition from high school to college. For example, Hannah’s mother convinced her to attend a two-year community college first, to save money:

I decided to complete a full two and a half years at community college by talking with my mom and saying, “While I’m spending my time here I might as well put it towards something. That way we are not wasting money. We are not wasting our time.” ‘Cause I’ve always been conscious of my mom paying for things, and my mom being the one who provides for me. Uhm, so basically community college I guess was my mom’s idea but it was mine too.

Alternatively, for several of the participants, parental disapproval of a particular college was based on its party reputation or a boyfriend attending the institution.

For half of the participants, helicopter parenting also influenced the choice of major or minor, and parents’ reasons for this varied. For most of these participants, parental approval of a particular major or minor was based on the parent’s view that the major was lucrative and/or
offered good employment prospects. For example, Jacob chose an economics major because it would result in a lucrative career and because he wanted to learn how to deal with money. For several of the participants, parental approval of a particular major was based on its level of rigor or the fact that other extended family members had completed that major when they attended college. For example, Molly’s parents only allowed her to attend the institution because she was admitted into a prestigious major:

But, uhm, I know I'm in one of the best programs they have to offer here. So it makes me feel, like, good. But I think if I were, like, – and not bashing on any other majors – but I think if I were, like – I have, like, sisters in my sorority who were like communications, or like history, or archaeology – and I think if I were something like that then they might think a little differently. But because it, it's rigorous and nursing's hard no matter where you go. You know, pre-med even our, like, business, school of business and stuff like that. They're like nationally recognized so I think they're proud of me no matter what.

Last, it is important to add that for one of the participants, her own change of major lead to an increase in helicopter parenting. Specifically, Rebecca changed her major from one that is found in the fields of her mother, father, and sister to one in the health sciences:

I'm also in a major that my entire family doesn't know about. My – both my parents are IT, uhm, telecommunications, like, chronic technicians. Like, wires, computers, all that stuff that I don't care about. And I'm just, like, "I don't know what any of this is." And I'm very – I'm in a health field. So I think for her, it's, like, "Why can't you get a job? Why can't you do this? Why can't you do this?" And it's, like, it's just, like, “I need a license.” And she just doesn't understand that. And it's hard to get her mind to wrap around it. So
she's very much of a, like, "I need to do everything I can to guide you in the right direction."

For most of the participants, grades and a number of course-related issues are also influenced by helicopter parenting. More specifically, some of the participants experience grade-related helicopter parenting, which takes the form of a strict parental standard for grades, parental pressure to obtain good grades because the parent is paying for the child’s education, or a parental belief that obtaining poor grades is due to a lack of effort or not attending classes. Claire, for example, feels pressure to obtain good grades because her father is paying for her tuition:

Uhm, he does pay for my college. So I knew that if, if I was failing or making, like, all D’s and C’s I knew he would probably say, “Okay, well you need to take some time off or I'm not paying for it anymore.” So, he kind of gives me the motivation to actually make the good grades to stay in college. Because it's a blessing that my dad can actually pay for my school.

In terms of helicopter parenting that involves parental beliefs about poor grades, after suffering for years with extreme physical symptoms, Lauren has been diagnosed with a genetic condition. After a high-profile celebrity publicly disclosed her struggles with the illness, Lauren recognized that she had the same symptoms. When she broached with her parents the topic of getting tested for the illness, however, her father did not want her to be tested. More specifically, one of the consequences of the illness is depression, which her father does not believe in. As a result, he did not want her to be tested for the illness because of his concerns that she would use depression as a justification for poor academic performance:
[After obtaining approval from the doctor, I thought,] “Okay, sure, we get tested,” whereas my dad was, like, “No.” Because I told him one of the side effects or side effects [of the genetic condition] was depression. Uhm, and he was, like, “No. That's not like” – He didn't think it was, uhm, it’s that he doesn't think depressions are real or valid thing. But it's one, he was thinking me using it as an excuse as to why I didn't do well that semester or anything like that.

Ultimately, Lauren did proceed with testing for the illness:

And I ended up getting tested for it and ended up having it. So there was that. And he didn’t even so much as acknowledge that, that he was wrong. Uhm, because he doesn’t like to be wrong. So he didn’t acknowledge that part.

For several of the participants, helicopter parenting also influences their course load during the semester because their parents require them to register for 18 credits per semester, even if the child sees no legitimate reason for the additional coursework. For example, Rebecca’s mother wants her to take 18 credits of coursework each semester, to avoid the possibility of needing to stay in college for an extra semester:

Because even though my older sister had to say an extra semester they weren't even, like, upset with her. Rather with me they're just very, like, overbearing with my coursework and very much, like, “Well, why aren’t you taking 18 credits?” Like, “You should be taking 18 credits since you switched so you can stay on track. Well, if you have to stay like an extra semester, what are you gonna do for those six months? Or what are you going to do? Are you gonna get a job or going to do this? Are you gonna do this or you gonna do this?” It's just a lot of, like, anxiety outside because I have to, like, always be on
top of it. And, like, I always have to keep track of, like, okay, like, “Am I gonna do this? Am I gonna be able to graduate?” So it's very, a lot of anxiety.

Last, for one of the participants, helicopter parenting involves disapproval of dropping courses and, for another participant, it involves conflict over her mother’s insistence that disability accommodations be used when taking exams. More specifically, Claire’s father does not want her to drop courses because he believes that any poor grades are the result of poor academic habits:

Uhm, I've dropped, I think, two classes since I've been in college and he'll just be, like, “Why, Claire?” Like, “Why didn’t you get a tutor first?” Or, “Was it really that hard?” Or “Was it the time? Were you even going to class?” Like, he just has all these things in his head that I'm doing, and I'm really not doing it. I feel like he's just paranoid, you know, like he sees all these things online or like on TV. He just goes with it.

For most of the participants, helicopter parenting influences academics in general. Almost all of these participants experience helicopter parenting with FERPA-related issues. More specifically, most of these parents have become angry when FERPA has prevented them from contacting administrators at the child’s institution or when FERPA has prevented them from having access to the child’s academic records or other information. For example, Lauren’s father is upset by his lack of access to various aspects of Lauren’s academic life due to FERPA:

I think it’s called FERPA? Uh, that he was not for. He did not like the fact that he had, uhm, didn’t have any insight. So, like, that was going on because he couldn’t see my grades and couldn’t, uhm, like – you couldn’t even check, like, the tuition balance or anything like that. He, everything he would have to get from me. Which is something he was not used to or happy with. Uhm, and he’s still not happy with it.
Also, one of the participants, Jay, was required by his mother to sign a FERPA waiver before she would pay his college expenses.

Also, for most of the participants who experience helicopter parenting with academics in general, helicopter parenting involves parental input into various aspects of their academic lives in general, unrealistic parental expectations about academics in general, or strict academic rules. For example, Lauren’s father required that she give up all of her friends, extracurricular activities, and part-time work to allow for as much studying as possible:

It, uh, that was my lowest semester, GPA-wise. Uhm, I ended up being, like, on academic probation. So that, it just was not, it, like, trying to meet his expectations. I didn’t, I dropped all the clubs I was a part of. Uhm, dropped all the clubs. I wasn’t working. Uhm, and literally all I did was just go to class and come back to the dorm. Uhm, I didn’t go to, like, lunch with my friends. [We] used to hang out and that all the time. And probably, like, the first half of the semester that’s how it went. And it was terrible. And then after, maybe a little after Thanksgiving is when, uhm, I just kind of stopped doing that because it was, like, I felt like I was depressed.

Also, for most of the participants who experience helicopter parenting with academics in general, helicopter parenting involves specific forms of interference into their academic lives overall. This interference includes breaking into the child’s e-mail account each time after the child has changed the password, phoning administrators and supervisors at the child’s institution regularly, or secretly checking the e-mails in all of the child’s e-mail accounts even though the child has been forthcoming with information. For example, Molly had a disagreement with her roommate, which she was able to resolve on her own, but her mother contacted administrators at her institution to ask that they get involved in the situation. Following this incident, Molly’s
mother now contacts the university whenever she chooses. For Rebecca, her mother continuously breaks into her email accounts, but Rebecca avoids confronting her:

In college, my mom tried to get, like, my email, my passwords to everything, wanted to know everything. My mom tried, like, everything to get in my passwords and I was, like, “No.” I literally would like switch passwords, because, like, she would get in. And she would, like, “Why can’t I unlock it?” I’m, like, “I don’t know. I’m locked out too!” And then she was, like, “You just don't want me to look!” And I feel, “Yeah, I don’t want you to look. Like, I'm in college. Like, I fail, I fail. If I pass, I pass, like.” . . . And she's, like, “I just need to help you.” And I'm, like, “No you do not! Because you don't understand anything that I'm doing.”

A final form of helicopter parenting that is associated with academics in general, which is experienced by one of the participants, involves pressure from the parent to graduate early.

Last, helicopter parenting also influences most of the participants’ involvement in college-related extracurricular activities, whether in the form of discouraging or encouraging such involvement. For almost all of these participants, however, parental influence involves discouraging involvement in extracurricular activities. More specifically, these parents discourage involvement in clubs and other organizations on campus, forbid all extracurricular activities and emphasize academics, or try to control academically-related trips. For example, Jane’s mother does not want her to be involved in any social clubs or organizations on campus because she believes that her grades will suffer:

And it [i.e., helicopter parenting] may also be why I didn't get involved in, or one of the reasons why I didn't get involved in, uh, a, in very many, uhm, out-of-classroom activities. I mean I was president of the student council for a while, but I didn't do any,
like, social clubs or anything like that when I probably was just not interested. . . . She was saying, “This is going to affect you. This is going to keep you from your work and stuff.” I just didn't want to deal with that, so.

For one of these participants, Rebecca, the level of helicopter parenting that she experienced increased after she joined a sorority and had new friends who were unfamiliar to her parents. More specifically, she was no longer socializing with only her cousin but had friends whom her mother did not know:

I’d call my mom or my mom would call me and I’d tell her, like, “Well, I’m going to my cousin’s. I'm gonna go hang out with him. I'm going to the same place tomorrow.” She’s, like, “Okay, you're in a safe environment. No problem.” And then the moment I joined my sorority she was, like, “What are you doing? What are your plans? Are you really going there? Are you telling me the truth? Are you doing something?” And then she would, like, request to track me on my phone.

For one of the participants, however, helicopter parenting involves the opposite pattern, with his mother pressuring him constantly to become involved in extracurricular activities on campus. More specifically, Jay’s mother has pushed him to become involved in extracurricular activities on campus, including joining a fraternity:

Where, like, as far as myself, like, I do something, like, uhm, getting involved on campus, I feel like I did that probably for her and not for myself. I hate to say that but, like, ‘cause she’s, she wanted me to, like, kinda make this college thing work. And I remember she used to try and get me to go like, Greek and I was never interested in, like, fraternity/sorority life. But she’s always trying to push me, “Yeah. Go do this, go do that.” And I didn’t want to do that, but I did get involved on campus like she wanted me
to. So I guess she had like a positive effect on that and I kinda cop into, like, her vision of what college should be like for me because I’m trying to do stuff that she would want me to do and, you know, live a lifestyle for her.

Influences on Social Activities

All of the participants experience helicopter parenting within their social lives. It should be noted that the term *social activities* is used here to refer to the participants’ involvement in social activities that are outside of college-related extracurricular activities. For some of the participants, helicopter parenting occurs with all social activities. More specifically, these parents either forbid socializing of any kind, including meeting friends for lunch, or they provide input into all aspects of the child’s social life. For example, during her sophomore year, Lauren’s father did not allow her to socialize with her friends, although she hid from him some forms of interaction with those friends:

So, fall semester, dealing with that [i.e., helicopter parenting] on top of, uh, just, uh, not really having any of my friends as, like, an outlet. Like, my friends are still there, of course. I still texted them. We still, uhm, talked on, like, Twitter and stuff, but it was definitely a stark difference. Like, uhm, I didn’t go out so, uhm, like, my freshman year I definitely went out too much. But, uh, sophomore year, uhm, I didn’t go out at all.

For some of the participants, helicopter parenting occurs specifically with socially-oriented travel and can include efforts to control travel to a specific social event or to social events in general. Also, parental control of the child’s travel can involve either preventing the child from traveling or insisting that the parent accompany the child during travel. Most of these participants are also required to provide their parents with detailed information about their travel plans.
For some of the participants, helicopter parenting involves the issue of dating. Parents either forbid or discourage dating, and in the latter case, the parental expectation is seen by the child as unrealistic and dating occurs anyway. For example, Lauren chooses not to date, to avoid a confrontation with her father:

I don’t date, like, ever. Uhm, just because I, if my dad doesn’t want me to work, I can’t even imagine what he would say if I, uhm, told him I had a boyfriend or that I was even like talking to a guy. So I don’t date and I didn’t date in high school just to avoid that.

For some of the participants, helicopter parenting occurs with the issue of using alcohol. More specifically, these parents forbid any drinking of alcohol, and, in one case, the parent also forbids drinking alcohol after the child has reached the legal drinking age. More specifically, Rebecca’s mother does not want her to drink alcohol, even though she is 21 years of age:

And then when I turned 21, my mom’s like, “Are you going to drink?” I said, “Yes.” She was, like, “Where? What time are you coming home? You need to call me when you come home. Why are you going to drink? Why? You know it's bad for you.” And I’m like, “Because you only turn 21 once. I have the test the next day.” So I’m, like, “I’m not getting hammered. Like, I’m going out to have four drinks. Then I’m going home.” She's, like, “That's a lot.” Okay. I studied. I’m literally gonna do fine. Got an A on the test. Called my mom. It’s, like, “I got an A.” She’s, like, “Okay, but I still think you shouldn’t drink.” Okay. Okay.

For some of the participants, their parents impose a curfew during breaks in the semester or when the child visits home. Also, other forms of helicopter parenting that involve specific aspects of the participants’ social lives, and that are each experienced by one participant, include an expectation that the child continue to function as a parent to a younger sister who also attends
the institution or a requirement that the child return home from college most weekends. In terms of the latter form of helicopter parenting, Jane’s mother and grandparents stay awake until she arrives home. They expect her to come home almost every weekend and to avoid doing any homework or studying while she is there:

And some days it’s very hard to be a full-time student on a five-day workweek. Uhm, there’s a lot of, I could get things done a lot better if I had the weekends to work on school work, but when I’m home it’s family time and I don’t really get to work that much on, on school work. And then plus you have four hours driving back and forth. It's basically just commuting.

Influences on Financial Issues

For most of the participants, helicopter parenting influences the financial aspect of their lives. For half of these participants, their parents provide various forms of financial support. More specifically, all of these parents pay for tuition, and some of them also pay for food expenses or all of the child’s expenses while attending college. For all of these participants, however, financial support means that the parent’s rules or stipulations, such as maintaining good grades, must be followed. For example, Claire puts pressure on herself to get good grades (As and Bs) because her father is paying her tuition. Also, for half of the participants who experience helicopter parenting with finances, their parents influence how money can be spent. That is, for most of these participants, their parents control how all money is spent, and for one of these participants, her father does not want her to spend money on extras (i.e., “frivolous things”). More specifically, Lauren wanted to obtain a job to pay for her personal shopping and other priorities, such as getting her nails and eyebrows done, but her father does not believe that these personal preferences should be priorities for her:
And, uhm, I told him, I was, like, “I don't want to have to ask you for money when I, when I go shopping or if I want to treat myself. Like, get my nails done, my eyebrows done.” And, uhm, I'm, like, “So I'd rather, uhm, feel like as a parent you should want me to be that way. Like, to work for what I want and, uhm, pay for it that way instead of just asking you for money.” But he doesn't see it that way. He doesn't think I should be working. Uhm, and he doesn't think any of those things are priorities, which they aren’t of course, but, I mean, I'm still a girl. I've stuff I want to do.

Last, for one of the participants, Hannah, her mother requires that she be included on both of Hannah’s bank accounts, so that they are joint bank accounts:

My current bank account is a co – like, joint account of my mother’s. It’s my own account. I have a checking and a savings, but it is not in my name and only my name. Because there was some talk of, God forbid something happens to me. At least my mom’s credit and her financial history, you know, could make way for, if I were to overdraft my account, or if I were to get in any financial issue my mom’s history could kind of help me aid in the way of learning this and that.

*Influences on Aspects of Daily Life*

For most of the participants, helicopter parenting also influences a variety of aspects of their daily lives. For several of these participants, their parents influence their child’s living arrangement or specific housing issues, and for several other participants, their parents engage in daily or frequent phone calls and/or texting to monitor the child’s activities. For example, when Jacob first began college, his mother asked that he call her four times each week:
Uhm, [pause] so when I first came here my mother was, like, “Okay. You’re going to call me, like, four times a week. We’re going to talk.” I’m just, like, “I’m not doing that. I’m not, I’m not calling you four times a week.” I was, like, “No, that’s crazy.”

Other forms of helicopter parenting that occur in the participants’ daily lives include controlling personal hygiene and clothing choice, controlling car use, influencing the making of various kinds of appointments, controlling decision-making in general, and requesting to track the child’s location using a smart phone. Jay, for example, has never made any kind of appointment for himself, even though his mother has encouraged him to do so. His mother, however, always relents and makes the appointments for him:

I used to have braces and, like, dentist appointments. Everybody gotta make dentist appointments but, like, she’s always trying to get me to go to the dentist. And, like, she sent me a whole list but, like, me, I’m not trying to call them and be the one that’s make that appointment when I feel like she should be the one that do it. And, like, yeah, but I’m grown and stuff, but I’m, like, you know what to say, “I’ve never done this before.” So that’s, and that’s why I never made a dentist appointment. That she isn’t trying to take the initiative to set up my appointment. Now I guess it is my fault. But I still feel like she should be the one that sets up the appointment because it’s, like, I’m under her insurance until I’m, like, 25 or something because I’m in school. So, yeah, that was something we’ve had to argue about before.

_Influences on Employment during College and Career Choice_
Half of the participants also experience helicopter parenting with the issue of being employed during college. A form of helicopter parenting that is experienced by most of these participants involves either being required to work while attending college or being forbidden to work while attending college so as to ensure higher grades. For example, Lauren’s father wants her to avoid any on- or off-campus employment while she is in college:

I would just say, like, it's been tense. Uhm, because like even, uh, because I try not to start arguments. So I avoid topics I know that would start arguments. So school, and it's kind of hard not to talk about school, [points to herself] right here, college student. That's pretty much your life, is school. Uhm, work, because he doesn't think I should be working, uhm, which is another argument we have all the time.

One participant, however, has experienced helicopter parenting while she worked at a summer job. More specifically, Rebecca’s parents phoned her workplace to verify her presence there and also asked to visit, to meet her supervisor:

I think the only time it's ever been, like, with a boss was, like, this past summer when my parents were, like, “I want to meet your boss. I want to come to your work. Let me come to your work. Why can’t I come to your work? Why don't you want me to come to work?” Because I worked in a chiropractor’s office. And they were, like, “You always talk about how much you like your boss. Well, I wanna meet them. Like, we can go to a restaurant for lunch. We can, can, we can meet your boss. We can go, like, hot lunch with them. We can go do this. Like, we can, we will invite them to your graduation.” And I'm, like, “No. One, that's weird, and, two, like, no. Like, you, I don't think your bosses. . . That’d be weird.”
For another participant, Hannah, her mother expects her to be present for dinner at home, regardless of her work schedule in a retail position:

Then there was the, uhm, “If you are working super late and you are doing doubles, are you coming home for family dinner?” There were certain expectations of, you know, you need to come home and be present in this family. Stuff like that. Uhm, and currently being in college, uh, being four and a half hours away from home, there’s a issue.

For some of the participants, helicopter parenting has also influenced their choice of career. More specifically, for all of these participants, their parents have influenced them to choose a lucrative career. For example, Claire’s father wants her to choose a career that will allow her to financially take care of him when he is older:

He's always told me I needed to be somewhere that made like a decent amount of money so when he is old I can take care of him. And I feel like he's being serious about that. So, uhm, I chose, like, a job that I wouldn't mind doing but also made a decent amount of money, you know, once you had a few years of experience in that field.

In addition to choosing a career that pays well, one of these participants is also encouraged to choose a career that is physically safe over other careers that are less physically safe. Also, Jay’s mother’s influence over his choice of career extends to her stipulation that he cannot move back home after he has graduated from college:

No, she said I can’t come back. She said, like, “Once you’re out, you’re out.” I’m not going back, like, I mean, like, my plan is to just, like, graduate and then, like, hopefully be like, enlisting right after so I can just go to basic and then, start my life.

For some of the participants, however, helicopter parenting influences every aspect of their lives. More specifically, this occurs in the form of parental demands in all aspects of the
child’s life, including the need to ask for permission to eat snacks at home, or parental disapproval of any choices that are made that are considered unacceptable. Disapproval of the child’s choices can involve making the disapproval clear to or confronting the child, giving the child the “silent treatment,” or denying all contact with the parent for an extended period of time (i.e., one month). For example, Claire’s father stops speaking to her for a period of time when he disapproves of a decision that she has made:

So, I would pretty much just tell him when I was doing it [i.e., something he disapproved of] and then expect him to be okay with it. Now that, like, I don’t live under his roof anymore I’m kind of just, you know, doing things that I’ve wanted to do and just letting him know. And if he has a problem with it then, I guess, he just stops talking to me for a little bit.

Other Parental Characteristics Associated with Helicopter Parenting

Almost all of the participants view other parental characteristics as being associated with helicopter parenting, and some of these characteristics are viewed positively, whereas other characteristics are viewed negatively. More specifically, most of these participants view helicopter parenting as being associated with other, positive parental characteristics such as being caring and/or supportive, creating a positive home environment, or being a best friend. In terms of the first of these characteristics, all of these participants viewed their parents as being caring and/or supportive. Jane, for example, would like to have the same relationship with her future children that she has had with her mother: “Uhm, I think having a mom as wonderful as she is and how supportive she is, and things like that, I want, uhm, having the kind of relationship [with my own children] that I had with her.” In terms of creating a positive home environment, participants see their parents as providing a high level of financial support,
working multiple jobs to support the family, or striving to function as both parents. For example, Jacob’s mother has worked as many jobs as has been necessary to provide for her family:

Like, my father was in my life, and when he left I think that's, that's when my mom was, like, “Okay, like, now I have to, like, step up to the plate.” And my mom always, like, worked, like, two or three jobs at a time to, like, provide for us and things like that. And [pause] we're always, I don’t want to say we were always struggling, but we're always on ends.

Half of the participants view helicopter parenting as being associated with other, negative parental characteristics such as being closed-minded, being overly protective, being a parent and not a best friend, always needing to be right, or creating tension during interactions. For example, Molly views her mother as not behaving like a friend to her:

I feel like my mom is definitely my parent before she’s my best friend. Uhm, so, and that’s kind of what she’s always said to me. She’s, like, “I’m here for you and I, we’re fr – I want to be your friend, but definitely no. Like, I’m your parent before your friend.”

So, she’s, like, “If I don’t make you say, ‘Oh, I hate you’ at least once in your life, that’s not good.”

**Personal Consequences of Helicopter Parenting**

All of the participants have been affected personally by the helicopter parenting that they have experienced during college, and these effects have been psychological, academic, or more general.

**Psychological Consequences**

All of the participants have been affected psychologically by helicopter parenting, and all of these effects have been negative in nature. More specifically, most of the participants
experience anxiety as a result of helicopter parenting, and this anxiety can take a variety of forms. For example, anxiety can be associated with not following the parent’s requirements or expectations, sharing information of any kind with the parent, or making decisions in general. In terms of the anxiety associated with decision-making, this can include second-guessing the ability to make one’s own decisions, second-guessing the actions that result from decisions, or making decisions that are consistent with what the parent would want. For example, Jacob sometimes fears that his decisions will have negative repercussions:

    Helicopter parenting definitely did affect my decision making on things and that shows. Now I think the worst of things. And I’d, I'd never, granted I don't try to and I'm, like, “Okay, Jacob, if you do this you’re going to be perfectly fine.” But sometimes just like, “If I do this, what is going to happen to me within an hour, or within two minutes, or within a year from now?” Like, it affects my decision making especially like with college. You have so much freedom, and you get to do so many things, and you're open to reach out and just touch the things that you want to do within a blink of an eye, and it's just like, some, it was, it definitely affects my decision making from that aspect of life.

    Anxiety can also be associated with grade-related issues and can take the form of constant anxiety about grades in general, anxiety about not obtaining all A’s, or anxiety about a parent’s response to a lower grade. Jane, for example, gets upset with herself if she does not obtain a perfect grade:

    Uhm, that [i.e., experiencing helicopter parenting] may have, uh, kind of attributed to me becoming obsessively. So, you know, I’ve kind of developed a perfectionist tendency where even if I get like a, a 95 or something, it is not good enough because it's not perfect.
Rebecca, however, experiences a high level of anxiety about grades because of her parents’ negative reactions to other grades:

Uhm, it's definitely made me very anxious when it comes to my grades because I know if I get a C my parents are going to, like, be very mad at me. Even if it's, like, the hardest class in the world that, like, most people get like Ds and Fs. And then I got, like, a C, I feel like, “Whoa, I got a C! It's all good.” Uhm, and I, I feel, like, because now my parents know that I need, like, A’s and B’s to get into grad school. And I need to keep my A’s and B’s up, that they’re ten times more, like, on top of me about it. Because they're, like, “Oh, you got a 75 on a test. You should have gotten an A. Why didn't you get an A? What happened? What were you doing? Were you not studying enough? Why weren’t you studying enough?” And it’s, like, the material is just really hard!

Similarly, anxiety can be associated with test-taking or completing the degree on time. For example, in terms of test-taking, Rebecca experiences a high level of test anxiety when taking major tests, which affects her ability to focus on the test material. “It [i.e., helicopter parenting] makes me very anxious for, like, big tests. I get very, very nervous and then, like, I can't focus on my work because I'm just so nervous.” Last, anxiety can take the form of social anxiety and the frequent breaking of plans for social activities, which results in no longer being invited to social activities by some friends.

For several of the participants, their anxiety is more general, pervading various aspects of their lives. This anxiety is the result of parental influence over the academic and social parts of the child’s life; concerns that the parent will contact the university about problems, without the child’s knowledge; being afraid of confrontations with the parent over choices made; or an
extreme emphasis by the parent on obtaining scholarships. For example, Molly is always anxious that her mother will contact the university behind her back about problems involving Molly:

    My dad is going to be okay with it [i.e., Molly making her own choices], but my mom, I think, I think that I don't have, especially with like the housing, the incident with the housing department. Uhm, now, like, whenever I go there I always think if they think about me, like, being, I wonder if they get calls like that all the time or if it's, like, if I have something I genuinely need to, like, ask somebody about, if they're like, “Oh, that's the girl whose mom called here and, like, had a fit.”

For Jane, however, helicopter parenting has had an even more profound effect on her life, as far as her level of anxiety: “Basically, it [i.e., helicopter parenting] made me afraid to live.” Also, she has been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, which she attributes to her mother inducing fear and guilt, and helicopter parenting makes her anxiety much worse:

    It [i.e., helicopter parenting] really did not play well with my anxiety. Because when she would, when she would remind me constantly to do these things, is, I told you I'm, uhm, I always have to do things last minute. I've tried to start things early and I just can't. I can never get my thoughts in order until it’s crunch time. And I always get good grades. It's just that, and, but, she would just, that added stress of I couldn't start things early and she would always be on me. “Did you start this yet? You start this yet? Did you turn this in?” And it just really upped my stress to unhealthy levels. Which, my stress is always high anyway, because I am that perfectionist and I am always, you know, trying to do my, my own, as much as I can as fast, as hard as I can. Uhm, but I think that it definitely did, uhm, add to that. It did add to that stress.
Closely related to anxiety, for half of the participants, helicopter parenting has resulted in perfectionism, obsessive thinking, or over-preparing or over-planning for various activities. Jane, for example, views herself as perfectionistic and obsessive, and she becomes upset with herself if she falls short of being perfect. Also, her mother’s view of her as perfect has created pressure to be perfect, and any mistakes that Jane has made have been met with harsh parental criticism: “She made me feel that I was a horrible human being if I ever made mistakes.” Similarly, Rebecca feels pressure from her mother to be perfect, and she believes that her parents will be angry, hate her, or be disappointed with any failure, regardless of how small:

I get very anxious when I have to tell my parents stuff. Even if it's not, like, bad bad. Like, even, like, me having to tell my parents I got rejected from, like, a college. And I was like, “They're going to hate me.” Like, “They're going to, like, be so mad at me and, like, so disappointed.”

Last, Molly finds herself unable to deal with failure and views failure as anything less than being perfect:

It’s [i.e., helicopter parenting] made me into a very hard to, stressing-on-myself person, uhm, to the point, like, where I’m in my first nursing course, and I get an 81 and I’m passing. I should be happy. And my professors, like, I come in there sobbing.

For several of the participants, helicopter parenting results in constantly seeking parental approval or constantly seeking parental reassurance that they are loved. For example, Rebecca feels so much parental pressure to excel in college that she seeks reassurance from her parents that they love her:
Sometimes, like, I will just call them and be like, “Do you love me?” And they’re like, “Yes. We love you.” And I'm like, “Okay. Are you sure?” And they’re like, “Yes!” I’m like, “Okay. I don't believe you.”

Also, for several of the participants, helicopter parenting results in feelings of anger or resentment. For example, Lauren views herself as being an angry person because of the helicopter parenting that she has experienced:

I would say the biggest thing was definitely, uhm, my friends tell me that I beca—, that I'm like an angry person. Uhm, because, especially since I had met them in college. I didn't know any of them from before. So I'm like, “Okay, wow. So everyone who's met me so far since I've been in college, uhm, thinks me as like this angry person when I didn't think of myself like that at all. Uhm, and that's when I did like some self-reflecting and I realized they were right. I did have a shorter temper. I was snapping at people more.

Also, Rebecca feels resentment toward her mother because of the pressure that has been placed on her to be perfect:

Um, it sounds really bad but, like, I feel, like, I kind of resent my mom in a way, because, like, I don't feel like I've, I see, like, my other friends who have, like, even, like, my boyfriend has very, like, understanding, very, like, relaxed, like, that they want him to succeed but they don't, like, expect him to be perfect. And while they're, like, my parents, like, they're very, like, strict and very like, “You must do this, you have to do this, you have to do it this way. And if you're surfing this way like, you're wrong.” And, like, you're basically like disowned. And, like, you're not perfect. Like, you aren't doing this correctly.
Other psychological consequences of helicopter parenting that are experienced by some of the participants include guilt, depression, low self-confidence, or self-criticism. Jane, for example, is afraid to make decisions so as to avoid feelings of guilt about the decisions made. She also experiences guilt if she conceals any important information from her mother, and she maintains good academic habits to avoid the feelings of anxiety and guilt that result from her mother’s criticisms:

And so my mom actively tries to instill a sense of fear into making me and my sister not do those things [i.e., going out, not making schoolwork a priority] because it was, cost her a lot. Uhm, but in doing so has made me really just afraid to make decisions. Afraid, you know, really just feel guilty all the time over everything. Uhm, just different things like that. Uhm, I think that it's part of a, I have, uhm, kind of a little bit of an anxiety disorder.

For Molly, however, self-criticism is associated with obtaining any grade that is lower than an A:

And so I, I think it's mainly been a, more of a, it's made me into a very hard to stressing on myself person. Uhm, to the point like where I'm in my first nursing course and I get an 81 and I'm passing. I should be happy. And my professors, like, I come in there sobbing. And she's like, “Whoa! Whoa. Chill out.”

Also, as discussed earlier, when Lauren’s father forced her to give up her friends, extracurriculars, and part-time work because social things were seen as interfering with academics, it triggered depression.

Last, several of the participants also view the psychological consequences of helicopter parenting in more general terms. Jacob, for example, views helicopter parenting as psychologically abusive because of the degree to which he has been controlled by his mother:
So, being, I understand, like, being raised by a helicopter parent, it can be very, very emotionally draining. There’d be sometimes, like, I will break down and cry because it was so bad. And sometimes, it can be mentally abusive because it's, like, okay like, where’s it’s, like, it’s, it puts you in a different mental state, in a different mind setting because it's, like, it's more of, like, “I don't understand as to why I can’t do this.” Or it’s, you’re always asking the question “Why?” Like, “You can't do this because such and such.” And, like, you're, like, “Why, like, why can't you do- like, why can't I do this? Or why won't you let me do this?” And it so, it can be, it can be very, very, very draining. And it’s, like, I guess I’d be, sometimes, like, I'll go to school and, like, at the end of the day everyone’s, like, excited and its (unintelligible). With me it's just, like, “I don't want to go home.

Also, Jay views helicopter parenting as harmful to a child’s overall development and considers himself to be lacking many of the necessary skills of an adult:

But as far as, like, the individual or, the child, like, too much help can be a bad thing ‘cause it’ll affect you, like I said (unintelligible). Like, it’s a lot of stuff that I know I should be able to do but, I don’t know how to do that because I’ve always had her, like, doing everything for me, taking care of me, setting up appointments. Like, I’m 20 and not setting up appointments because I want my mom to do it. Like, that’s not good.

*Academic Consequences*

Most of the participants have been affected academically by helicopter parenting, and for all but one of these participants, these effects have been positive in nature. More specifically, helicopter parenting has resulted in higher academic achievement, academics being made the highest priority, the development of good study and other academic habits, and the development
of greater respect for instructors and supervisors. Jane, for example, developed good academic habits, as well as a high level of orderliness, as a result of her mother’s criticisms of low grades:

Uhm, I think overall it has helped me to be a good student because I knew that if I did poorly that mom would know about it. Uhm, because I think of the guilt complex, whatever. I would have to tell her. Uhm, so it did help me in that regard. And I always make sure to turn things in on time because I knew that if I didn't, she would know and, uhm, I didn't want to hear about it forever. And I mean, I probably, it's hard to know what I would or would not have done otherwise, but I probably would have done the same thing or close to it. Even if she hadn't always been on me, but because she was, I always, uhm, did try to get, make sure I had everything in order. Uhm, that may have, uh, kind of attributed to me becoming obsessively.

For one of the participants, however, helicopter parenting has had negative academic effects. More specifically, helicopter parenting has caused Rebecca to develop a negative attitude toward academics, feel intense pressure to earn perfect grades, and sometimes refuse to do homework, even when she is aware of its necessity. In terms of the latter effect on academics, along with experiencing a high level of test anxiety, Rebecca responds to her mother’s demands by refusing to do homework:

Uhm, I think, [pause] I think being helicopter parented makes me very anxious for, like, big tests. I get very, very nervous and then, like, I can't focus on my work because I'm just so nervous. And then, like, sometimes, like, if my mom yells at me, I'm, like, “I don't want to do my work.” And then I'm just, like, won't do it. And even though, like, I'll have time, like I’ll make sure, like, I’ll have time. Like, if it's, like, a Saturday and I'm, like, about to go do, like, reading, or, like, start a paper, she's very much of, like, she, like,
will, like, argue with me. I'm, like: I don't want to do it. And then, like: I should have. Oh
... I'm not doing the homework! And then I'll just, like, walk away, from them. Because
I'll just be, like, upset. I'm, like, I'm not going to retain anything.

Apart from personal effects of helicopter parenting that are explicitly psychological or
academic, it is important to add that for one of the participants, Molly, helicopter parenting has
also had a positive effect on her life in general. More specifically, her mother’s emphasis on not
procrastinating has resulted in Molly never procrastinating: “I’m a very, like, plan weeks in
ahead and get it done type person.”

**Consequences of Helicopter Parenting for Others and Relationships with Others**

For almost all of the participants, the helicopter parenting that they have experienced
during college has directly affected their relationships with other people in their (i.e., the
participants’) personal lives and/or these other people themselves. Also, almost all of these
effects have been negative in nature.

**Consequences for Relationships with Others**

For most of the participants, the helicopter parenting that they have experienced during
college has negatively affected their relationships with other people. More specifically, for all of
these participants, helicopter parenting has affected their relationships with friends or
roommates. This has occurred in a variety of forms, including parental disapproval of the child’s
current roommate and forbidding living with the roommate during the next academic year, strain
being placed on friendships as a result of complying with a parent’s demand that all friends be
given up because social activities could potentially interfere with academics, or strict adherence
to parental rules for personal cleanliness and clothing choices negatively affecting the child’s
relationship with a roommate or, more generally, helicopter parenting undermining the
relationship with a roommate. For example, parental rules for Claire’s personal cleanliness have affected her relationship with her roommate: “So my roommate is not that clean and she finds it rather annoying.” For Jay, his mother’s level of involvement in his life resulted in his roommates being critical of him with other people:

I was living with these two females and my – they pretty much knew, like, how involved my mom was, involved in my life and, like, how she was doing this for me and, like, how she’s doing this. And they would, like, passionate about it, like, talking crap about me. Yeah, they would just talk crap about me all the time to, like, and they, they wouldn’t say it to my face. I’d find out from other people that they’re bashing me and stuff, so.

Moreover, for one of the participants, Hannah, the helicopter parenting that she has experienced has resulted in engaging in helicopter parenting-like behavior herself with friends. More specifically, after asking a friend if she asked her own friends to provide all of the details of their travel plans, Hannah realized that she was repeating a pattern that she has experienced with her mother:

I said, “Do you ever do that [i.e., ask friends to provide the details of their travel plans]?” And they [i.e., friends] said to me, which kind of shocked me, “I only do that because you ask me that when I tell you I’m going somewhere.” And then it hit me: Oh my God. You know, like, now I’m doing what my parent has done to me my whole life, and I’m doing it to my friends, people I enjoy.

More generally, for several of the participants, helicopter parenting, including adhering to all parental rules about socializing, has constrained partying or other forms of socializing because of a fear of getting into trouble or a fear of parental punishment. For example, prior to
beginning college, Jacob thought that he would be a partier in college, but he in fact shows a high level of caution due to concerns about the consequences of his actions:

And sometimes like, gee, like, I thought I was going to get here [i.e., to college], and I thought I was gonna do everything. Uh, go to parties, do everything, like, do everything that a college student would normally do, uhm, but it didn't, but it did, I didn’t. Uhm, I always base my behaviors and my actions off of the “what if.” Like, if I did this, what if this happened? Or what if I did this, what will happen if, like, you know, so it was always that fallacy of a slippery slope. Like, okay, this is going to happen. This happened. This is going to happen. This happened. This is going to happen.

For one of the participants, Claire, strict adherence to parental rules for personal cleanliness and clothing choices also negatively affects her relationship with her boyfriend:

And so when I get out of class, I'm literally mopping the floors every day. Doing all the dishes. Like, making sure my room’s clean. The house smells great. Like, and all that comes into effect when not everyone you live with is like that. So my roommate is not that clean, and she finds it rather annoying. Or my boyfriend, he thinks it's annoying. And I tried to tell my – I was, it’s kind of instilled in me when I was little, like, you know, you get home from class or school you start cleaning. Like, you change out of your outside clothes and put on inside clothes. Like, do stuff like that. Like, you always have socks on in the house. Like, I cannot walk around barefoot in my dad's house.

For Lauren, who, as mentioned earlier, has a genetic condition, her father’s helicopter parenting has resulted in a poor relationship with him; she does not like to be in contact with him. More specifically, his helicopter parenting is a major source of stress in her life, which, as
mentioned earlier, can exacerbate the effects of the genetic condition that she has, and she is contemplating whether to exclude him from her life:

I mean, he didn't cause my illness, of course, but, uhm, the stress from that [i.e., helicopter parenting] and then, because stress is something that affects, can affect it and, you know, trigger depression, trigger anxiety, and all those things. And he is a huge stress in my life. He's probably my only stressor in my life, if I'm being honest. Uh, I mean, occasionally, you know, like a paper will come up, or homework, final, a test or something like that, but as far as, like, in a general sense, he's definitely the only stressor in my life. . . . And it’s definitely got to the point where I’m, like, debating if I just want to be the one to cut him out [of my life.] And just feel like I – “You need to calm down and then we can get back together maybe.”

More generally, her mother’s helicopter parenting has caused Molly to judge others based on what her mother has taught her.

*Consequences for Others*

Apart from their personal relationships with other people, for half of the participants, the helicopter parenting that they have experienced during college has negatively affected these other people directly. For several of these participants, these effects involve friends.

For example, the helicopter parenting that Rebecca experiences has extended to her best friends:

And then my parents are very much, like, they pry my best friends. And they'll be, like, they'll be, like, “How's your mom? How's your dad? How are you? What are you doing? How, what are you, you have a job? Do you have this? Do you have this? Do you have this?”
this?” I’m just, like, “She came over to hang out with me. Not get a hundred and eighty questions.”

For Molly, helicopter parenting affected her boyfriend in that he was annoyed with the curfew that was imposed on her in college:

Uhm, but I would say anything I – when I was a sophomore, I was dating a senior and I would say he kind of just, like – he's also a guy which they [i.e., his parents] didn’t really set curfews on him or anything. And he was just kind of annoyed that my parents were always like that. And he didn't really have much regard for it. So it was really hard for me to, like, tell him I need to be back. And he’d be, like, “Why? You're eighteen!”

Helicopter parenting also affects Molly’s brother in that her mother now expects him to behave in the same way that Molly has, as far as complying with all parental rules and expectations. Although their mother puts the same demands onto her brother as she did with Molly, however, he refuses to adhere:

But it's driving my mom insane because the way he does things is last minute, you know. It's, like, if he has to print out scholarships, he’ll do it, like, the night before at like 9:00 o'clock if it's not due until midnight. . . Uhm, but he is in a band, his hair is long. It's literally, like, he's 18 years old, and he is stubborn and no one can tell him anything.

Last, for several of the participants, the helicopter parenting that they have experienced during college has had positive effects on others or their relationships with those people. For Hannah, for example, helicopter parenting has taught her to work more effectively with people who hold different perspectives than she does:

I learned, you know, how to work with people that are different from me and who think differently of me. And it kind of prepared me for, like, my future endeavors, whether that
be with a job or at school, say. You know, my bosses are going to think differently, my coworkers are going to think differently.

**Efforts to Deal with Helicopter Parenting**

All of the participants have made efforts to deal with the helicopter parenting that they have experienced during college. Moreover, some of these efforts are personal ones, whereas other efforts involve various forms of assistance from siblings and/or friends.

*Personal Efforts to Deal with Helicopter Parenting*

All of the participants attempt to deal personally with helicopter parenting, and this includes engaging in various forms of avoidance, engaging in various forms of compliance or cooperation, engaging in various forms of refusal, acknowledging or realizing the reason(s) for helicopter parenting, and attempting to provide the parent with feedback about his or her helicopter parenting.

In terms of avoidance, almost all of the participants use this method to deal with helicopter parenting, and it can occur in a variety of ways. For all of these participants, avoidance occurs in the form of withholding information from the parent. Also, the withholding of information can occur to varying degrees, involve a variety of topics, and occur for a variety of reasons. More specifically, these participants avoid sharing certain types of information with their parents, including information about personal plans, when tests and assignments will occur, the identity of instructors, grades other than final course grades, a change of major, new friends, or instances of legal drinking. In addition, this information is withheld for a variety of reasons, including to avoid stress for the child, questioning by the parent, being lectured to by the parent, having arguments with the parent, creating worry for the parent, or allowing the parent to contact instructors. For example, Molly no longer tells her mother about upcoming tests or assignments:
At first, it was really important, like, for my mom to know what I was doing and, like, I would want to tell her if I did good. But now I kind of, like, just don’t put out that thread that, like, tests are coming up or anything. And they don’t – even if she asks, I’m just, like, “Yeah. I’ve got it under control.” And I really don’t tell her.

For some of the participants, avoidance also occurs in the form of avoiding specific topics entirely when interacting with their parents. This can involve avoiding the topic of studying abroad, to prevent confrontations with the parent; avoiding all school-related topics, to prevent questioning by the parent; or, more generally, avoiding any topics that will lead to an argument or a confrontation with the parent. For example, Lauren does not bring up school during any conversations with her father, and she has not told him that she is studying abroad next semester, to avoid a confrontation.

For some of the participants, avoidance occurs in the form of avoiding going home, where their parents reside, or choosing when to go home. For one of these participants, Claire, avoiding going home has been made possible by the decision to rent an apartment:

And now I have my own apartment and it's, like, I kind of pay the bills there. So, it's kind of, like, up to me at the end of the day. I don't have to go home on breaks anymore. I can stay, like, in my apartment rather than the dorm room, [where] I had to go home [on school breaks]. So I feel like I was always trying to be on good terms with him [i.e., her father]. So I didn't, like, start any problems when I went home.

Moreover, home is avoided to prevent confrontations with the parent, prevent constant questioning by the parent, avoid restrictions that are imposed by the parent, or decrease the pressure that is felt to keep the parent happy. For example, during summer months and college
breaks, Jacob’s mother places restrictions on him when he is at home, and so he now avoids going home:

Like, sometimes, like, I’m just so glad, like, I’m doing something for spring break because during the summer time I'm, like, I don’t want to go home. Like, I, I really don’t want to go home. Like, and I just feel like I’m going home to listen to her being, like, “You can’t do this. You can’t do this. You can’t do this because you’re in my household.” And so, like, even, like, this winter break, I was with some of my friends, I was, like, I wanted to, I was ready to come back. Like, when I went home, like, last summer, within the first five days I was ready to come back. I was like, “I'm ready to deal with the stress of home where professors putting everything on me at one time to deal with this.” And so, and even, like, even, like, when I go home for the summer, hopefully I like it. Hopefully I find something. But even, like, when I go home this summer I'm just, like, I don't want to because I don't want to put up with that anymore. . . . It's, like, the helicopter is still right there. So that's where that emotional comes from. That draining, like, it can be, it can be very draining sometimes.

For several of the participants, avoidance was associated with their choice of institution. For example, Jacob, chose a university because its distance from his home prevented his mother from visiting unexpectedly:

I wanted to get away. I, I definitely wanted to get away with – now, granted, I love my mother to death. I was, like, “I need to go to a school that’s far away.” I was, like, “I can’t not be nowhere near my mother.” And there’s many colleges in [my hometown]. . . . I was, like, my mother’s, like, “You don’t want to apply to those colleges?” “No.” “You’re
30 minutes away.” “I’m not, no.” And so, it real, a university a few hours away offered me the most money in financial aid. But it was also, I wanted to get away.

Jane, however, wished that she had chosen a university that was even farther away from her mother: “But, uhm, I do think, some days I do think it would have been better for me to go somewhere farther away.”

A final form of avoidance, used by one of the participants, Rebecca, involves avoiding answering phone calls from her parents as often as possible, as well as avoiding going home and avoiding her parents when she is at home:

I don't really want to go home that often. If I am home, I want to be as far away from them as much as I can. And I don't really answer their phone calls as often as I can, unless, like, I really have to. I haven't talked to them in a couple days then I'll answer, but it's definitely, like, they've gotten more and more, like, strict with me.

In terms of compliance or cooperation, half of the participants use this method to deal with helicopter parenting. More specifically, most of these participants make decisions for themselves that conform to their parents’ requests, wishes, or advice. For example, Hannah did not want to go to college, but her mother persuaded her to attend a community college:

So originally, I was not a school person. I was not the one who would tour a school and fall in love with it and want to go. And promote the school, join the team, wear, like, the gear, get the stuff to hang up in your room. . . . Uhm, but, I was never really attached to the idea of school because I was that student that had to work three times as hard to be able to get a B or a C. . . . So we both made an agreement that said, “Okay, if you go to community college and you at least get some prerequisites away from things you’re interested in, you know, you could stay back and, you know, find your time.” . . . Uhm, I
decided to complete a full two and a half years at community college by talking with my mom and saying, “While I’m spending my time here, I might as well put it towards something. That way we are not wasting money. We are not wasting our time.” . . .

Uhm, so basically community college I guess was, my mom’s idea but it was mine too.

For several of the participants, compliance or cooperation takes the form of always sharing personal plans with the parent, even if doing so will carry consequences, or never lying to the parent. For example, Claire sends her father the addresses that are associated with her personal plans because she knows that he will want them:

I guess whenever I go anywhere I send him the address. Like, automatically, like, when I went to Florida for spring break, I had to send my dad the address to my hotel. Even though I knew he wouldn’t just show up, but I, in the back of my mind I’m, like, “I know he’s going to ask for [the address] and if I don’t he’s probably going to get a little irritated.” So I go ahead and send him that.

Last, for several of the participants, compliance or cooperation involves allowing the parent to make some decisions for the child, so as to avoid the parent’s anger, or not confronting the parent about helicopter parenting. For example, Jay allowed his mother to make a decision about his remaining in his own apartment rather than living with his girlfriend:

I remember I was going to move out of my apartment to try to move in with my girlfriend and she [i.e., his mother] was just, like, “No.” She’s, like, “No. You’re not doing that.” I’m, like, “What do you mean? It’s going to save money.” She was, like, “No. You’re not moving out of that apartment.” And, like, I could have if I wanted to because she can’t do anything, but I didn’t. And that was an argument we had for a little bit.
In contrast to compliance or cooperation, half of the participants use various forms of refusal to deal with helicopter parenting. This can include refusing specific parental requests, refusing specific parental prohibitions, or taking steps to become more independent, so as to circumvent parental ultimatums. For example, Jacob’s mother asked that he phone her four times each week when he first began college, but for some time, he refused to do so.

For half of the participants, an awareness or realization of the reason(s) for helicopter parenting also helps them to deal with helicopter parenting. More specifically, almost all of these participants acknowledge, or have come to realize, that helicopter parenting is done out of love for them. Moreover, several of the participants acknowledge that helicopter parenting has its basis in a desire to protect them. For example, Jane recognizes that, ultimately, her mother’s helicopter parenting comes from a place of wanting to protect her child:

And this is where it [i.e., helicopter parenting] comes from, you know, and I know that she wants to protect me and things but it's just taken to an extreme level. She's terrified that we won't succeed and she's terrified that, uhm, we, you know, that we're going to mess up like she did and have, you know, to face the consequences like she did.

Last, some of the participants deal with helicopter parenting by attempting to provide their parents with feedback about their helicopter parenting. This feedback can take the form of attempting to speak to the parent about the helicopter parenting itself or verbalizing frustrations about the helicopter parenting. Claire, for example, tries to talk to her father about his negative reactions to her decisions, now that she has greater independence:

I try to, uhm, ask him why he goes that way towards certain things. Like, “You don't like my living situation. Why?” I ask him, like, “Dad, I'm paying the rent here. I have a dog that I paid for, so I don't understand why that's affecting you or how that's, like, irritating
you.” You know what I'm saying? Just certain things like that. So, I would pretty much just tell him when I was doing it and then expect him to be okay with it.

Moreover, in terms of attempting to speak to the parent about his or her helicopter parenting, parents have responded by either preventing the conversation or preventing subsequent contact by the child. For example, Jacob’s mother refuses to discuss her helicopter parenting:

But trying to deal with it in front of my mom it was, like, I couldn't because it was, like, if I try to talk to her it’s always, like, a brick wall. And I'm just talking to her. And I never – it was more me, I'm just going to put up with it because I only have this amount of money and this many years left in the house. . . . I'm in the house with her, like, it’s nothing that, there’s nothing that I could do to change her mind and things like that. And it was just, like, “Okay, whatever’s [stipulated] in my household goes, and if you don't like it you can leave.” And so it was more of, like, I had to learn how to cope with it, and I was never bold enough to try to do something about it because I'm just, like, if I go try to talk to her about it, I don't know what she's gonna say to me. And my mother’s that person that was just, like, “Well, you're being disrespectful ‘cause you don't look at it in my point of view,” things like that.

Assistance from Siblings and/or Friends in Dealing with Helicopter Parenting

For almost all of the participants, various forms of assistance that involve siblings and/or friends also serve as ways to deal with helicopter parenting. Almost all of these participants receive assistance that involves siblings, and this can take the form of assistance that is received directly from a sibling or assistance that results from being united with one or more siblings against the parent. More specifically, some of the participants receive assistance directly from
their siblings, and this assistance can focus on the participants themselves or the parent. Sibling assistance that focuses on the participants themselves involves various forms of advice for dealing with helicopter parenting such as encouraging more independence from the parent, not speaking with the parent as often, or providing the parent with fewer details. For example, Jay’s older brother encourages him to be more independent of their mother and to make fewer requests of her:

He, he’s the one that’s always, like, “Yeah. You’re taking this stuff for granted.” So, he’s the one, like, tries to, like, give me the edge to try to be more, like, independent. Like, maybe stop asking for stuff as much ‘cause I know I do kinda ask for stuff, like, I ain’t going to say a lot, but I do ask. I feel comfortable asking her ‘cause I know she’ll do it.

Alternatively, some of the participants receive sibling assistance that focuses on the parent, and this assistance can involve intervening with the parent on the sibling’s behalf, discouraging the parent from engaging in helicopter parenting, or encouraging the parent to provide the sibling with less support.

For some of the participants, however, assistance results from being united with one or more siblings against the parent, and this occurs in the form of having a close relationship with one or more siblings, so as to protect one another from the parent, or having an unspoken agreement with siblings to not disclose who is responsible for behavior that is not allowed by the parent. For example, there is an agreement between Jacob and his siblings to protect one another by never disclosing information to their mother when they are in trouble with her:

My mom calls [us] the trio because, like, whenever we get in trouble, we’ll, we will sit there and, like – now, granted, it’s wrong – we’ll sit there and lie to her face to cover everyone. And, and, like, we have this bond of, like, “Okay, we got each other's back. If
mom asks, say *this* or if mom asks, say *that.*” And so it was more of, like, if one person went out to do something that we know that mom would not like, it was, like, “Okay, like, we got your back. We’re not going to say anything if she asks. We’re going to tell her this and, like, we’re going to, we're going to cover for you.” And I think that it formed us into, like, this bond of, like – we love our mother, granted, and – but we were, like, like to be a little rebel especially, like, when you get, like, [into] middle school, high school. . . . And, like, we’ll tell, like, little lies and try to, like, cover our butts.

For some of the participants, assistance from friends is used to deal with helicopter parenting, and all of these forms of assistance focus on the participants themselves. More specifically, this assistance involves providing emotional support or offering suggestions for decreasing the amount of helicopter parenting experienced. Jacob, for example, has few ways to deal with helicopter parenting, and his best friend has been a source of emotional support:

> Uhm, besides like crying I, it, I, I, I had no way of dealing with it [i.e., helicopter parenting]. I talked to my best friend about it. My best friend would give me like encouraging words and things like that.

Apart from efforts to deal with helicopter parenting personally or through assistance from siblings and/or friends, it should be added that for one of the participants, Jane, her mother now recognizes that her helicopter parenting has been harmful, and she is working to engage in less helicopter parenting:

> And, uhm, she, I think she's kind of realized that [helicopter parenting is harmful to the child] a little bit recently and does tell me that she's actively trying to reform but it's still there in the background and she tries not to do it as much now. And is successful more often than she was, but it's still a strain, I think, on our relationship.
Goals Associated with Education, Career, and Helicopter Parenting

All of the participants have goals for themselves in the areas of education, career, and/or helicopter parenting. More specifically, all of the participants have the educational goal of completing an undergraduate degree, and other educational goals include completing an undergraduate degree on time, giving a parent credit for the completion of an undergraduate degree, joining the military after completing an undergraduate degree and obtaining the GI Bill to pay for a master’s degree, completing an undergraduate degree and passing a professional licensure exam, or obtaining a Ph.D.

Most of the participants also have career goals. More specifically, two of the participants have career goals that involve the military: Jay plans to become an air force officer, whereas Lauren plans to join the military and subsequently obtain a salaried position. For some of the participants, their career goals have been influenced directly by helicopter parenting and include wanting to have the same career as a parent, becoming a lawyer in the area of family law, or becoming a traveling nurse as a way to become less rigid.

Last, almost all of the participants have goals that are related to helicopter parenting itself. More specifically, half of the participants have goals for themselves that involve helicopter parenting, and these include learning to cope more effectively with helicopter parenting, speaking up when distressed by the parent’s behavior, being less anxious around the parent, or developing better communication with the parent and trying to understand the parent’s perspective. Molly, for example, wants to feel less anxious around her mother and discuss more with her mother how she has been affected by helicopter parenting:

And, uhm, I think I kind of, I, I just want to be able to feel comfortable because I feel like being around my mom sometimes causes me more anxiety. Like, when I go home and I
should be, be able to relax, she kind of causes me more anxiety because she makes me think that I should be doing something for school, like, when I'm on break or doing something. And so, uhm, I think I kind of just want to, going forward, I would want to talk to her more about, uhm, how it makes me feel and why I think I've been, like, the way I am because of things that she has done or done for me or to me. It sounds bad, "done to me."

Some of the participants also have helicopter parenting-related goals for themselves as future parents, and these include not wanting to be like the parent, not wanting their own children to have anxiety, or not giving their children “a childhood they have to recover from.”

More generally, some of the participants want greater distance in the future from the influences of helicopter parenting, and this includes wanting to be more independent of the parent, wanting financial independence in order to eliminate the parent’s influence, having greater emotional distance from the parent, or stopping helicopter parenting before graduate school is attended.
Chapter Four: Discussion

In this section, the findings of the present study are discussed in relation to the existing research literature on helicopter parenting. The significance of specific findings is also addressed, where relevant.

In terms of the helicopter parenting that the participants experienced prior to attending college, as discussed earlier, some of the participants experienced helicopter parenting during middle school, and all of the participants experienced helicopter parenting during high school. During middle school, helicopter parenting focused on academic issues and the child’s friendship group. In terms of academic issues, the finding that, for some of the participants, grades and course-related issues were influenced by helicopter parenting is related to the finding by Steinberg et al. (1992) that parenting style affects the academic success of students in middle school and high school. More specifically, authoritative parenting, which involves high acceptance, supervision, and psychological autonomy granting, was more likely to promote adolescent academic success than non-authoritative parenting, which shares similarities with helicopter parenting.

During middle school, helicopter parenting also involved efforts to alter the child’s friendship group because current friends were viewed as undesirable. This finding has not been discussed in the literature on helicopter parenting. Cohen (1983), however, has shown that friendship groups for children are the most significant factor in decision-making, even more so than parental beliefs. Moreover, preventing a child from socializing with other children whom they have chosen could negatively affect the child’s social development or emotional wellbeing.

As discussed earlier, helicopter parenting was much more prevalent during high school and focused on the participants’ social lives, academic issues, and the more routine aspects of
daily life. Moreover, helicopter parenting was much more prominent in the participants’ social lives than in the other above two areas and influenced a wide range of social activities. None of the existing research on helicopter parenting discusses its influence on high school students’ social lives, but this is perhaps attributable to the quantitative nature of this research, which has focused instead on characteristics of helicopter parents (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012), the nature of the helicopter parent-child relationship (Kelly et al., 2017; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Segrin et al., 2013; Wolf et al., 2009), and outcomes of helicopter parenting for children (Bers & Galowich, 2002; Bradley-Geist & Olsen-Buchanan, 2012; Darlow et al., 2017; Lindell et al., 2017; Miller-Ott, 2016; Reed et al., 2016; Segrin et al., 2015; Schiffrin et al., 2014; Toda et al., 2008; van Ingen et al., 2015; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000; Wolf et al., 2009; Yoshizumi et al., 2007).

Helicopter parenting during high school also influenced a variety of academic issues. Although there is no existing research on helicopter parenting that has focused on student academic achievement, research has examined the relationship between parenting style and academic achievement for high school students. For example, Boon (2007) found that low academic achievement was associated with student perceptions of neglectful parenting styles, whereas higher academic achievement was associated with an authoritative parenting style.

Helicopter parenting during high school also influenced a variety of aspects of the participants’ daily lives, a finding that has not been addressed explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting. Nevertheless, there is a considerable body of more general research that has focused on parental influences on children’s physical activity (e.g., Alderman et al., 2010; Welk et al., 2003), eating behavior (e.g., Savage et al., 2007), and sexual behavior (e.g., Romer et al., 1999). More specifically, parents influence how much time children spend engaged in physical
activity (Adlerman et al., 2010) and the parents influence the physical activity habits of their children (Welk et al., 2003). That is, parental influence accounted for 20% of variance in physical activity, 26% variance in attraction to physical activity, and 28% variance for the perceptions of competence. Also, parents can have a direct influence on children’s eating behaviors (Savage et al., 2007), and parents in high poverty areas who increased communication about high-risk sexual behavior resulted in lower rates of sexual activity, lower rates of anal sex, and higher rates of condom use by their children (Romer et al., 1999).

Also, most of the participants had a variety of reactions to the helicopter parenting that they experienced during high school. The finding that some of the participants cried or experienced embarrassment, frustration, or depression due to helicopter parenting is related somewhat to a finding by Rapee (2009) that adolescents’ perceptions of maternal anxious parenting significantly predicted adolescent anxiety twelve months later. That is, adolescent girls who were over-parented developed anxiety within a 12-month period.

The finding that some of the participants reacted to helicopter parenting by trying to avoid the parent as much as possible has not been addressed in prior research on helicopter parenting. This finding, however, is related somewhat to a finding by Ebata and Moss (1991), who studied the coping skills of adolescents, aged 12 to 18 years, in response to a variety of stressors. Consistent associations were found between chronic stressors and the use of three avoidance-coping behaviors: cognitive avoidance, resigned acceptance, and emotional discharge. Avoidance-coping was defined as the attempt to avoid thinking about the specific stressor, think about its consequences, or trying to manage its consequences. Participants who experienced more negative life events were more likely to use avoidance-coping behavior. It should be added here that some children reacting to helicopter parenting by trying to avoid the parent rather than
communicating or otherwise interacting with the parent is not surprising given that communicating displeasure about helicopter parenting to the parent could carry a variety of negative consequences for the child. Striving to avoid the parent, then, may be an effective way in which to minimize both negative interactions with the parent and negative personal consequences such as grounding or losing privileges, for example.

The finding that several of the participants reacted to helicopter parenting by restricting their own social lives has also not been addressed explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting. Much like the avoidance behavior discussed earlier, restricting one’s own social life may be an effective way in which to avoid both negative interactions with the parent and negative personal consequences.

Last, several of the participants reacted to helicopter parenting by either having frequent arguments with the parent or seeing a therapist to deal with issues that could not be discussed with the parent. The latter finding is related to findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019) that for children aged 12 to 17 years, over 10% are diagnosed with anxiety and over 6% are diagnosed with depression. Moreover, approximately 78% of children who are diagnosed with depression and approximately 60% of children who are diagnosed with anxiety seek treatment.

In terms of the helicopter parenting that the participants experienced during college, many of the findings that are related to the influences of helicopter parenting on academics and extracurricular activities are consistent with prior research on helicopter parenting. Most generally, all of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in their academic lives, a finding that is consistent with the findings of a number of previous studies (e.g., Bers & Galowich, 2002; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000).
terms of the decision to attend college, most of the participants attended college because their parents required them to do so or because they wanted to avoid displeasing their parents. This finding is consistent with Bers and Galowich’s (2002) finding that only 19% of parents were never involved in their child’s decision to attend college. The majority of parents in the study played a major role in influencing their child’s decision to attend college. Also, the finding that some of the participants’ decisions to remain in college were due to helicopter parenting is related to a finding by Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) that parents influence their children’s decisions about life choices. They found that 44% of undergraduate students involved their parents in decision-making, although not specifically academic decision-making.

The finding that, for most of the participants, their choice of college was heavily influenced by their parents is consistent with the finding by Bers and Galowich (2002) that 51% of the parents studied assisted their children in making decisions about going to college and the specific college to attend. Also, 46% of parents became involved in the college decision process during either their child’s junior or senior year of high school. Also, for half of the participants in the present study, their choice of major or minor was influenced by their parents. Although prior research has examined the influence of helicopter parenting on the institution chosen (Bers & Galowich, 2002), grades (Wolf et al., 2009), or course load (Bers & Galowich, 2002), the major or minor chosen is an important aspect of college that has not been addressed.

The finding that helicopter parenting influences the participants’ grades (e.g., strict parenting standards, parental pressure to obtain good grades, a parental belief that obtaining poor grades is due to lack of effort) is consistent with the findings of several previous studies of helicopter parenting. More specifically, Wolf et al. (2009) found that the majority of students who experienced helicopter parenting agreed that their parents emphasized good grades. Bers
and Galowich (2002), however, found that parents who engaged in helicopter parenting overestimated their children’s academic skills, which is consistent with the finding of the present study that some parents believe that poor grades are due to a lack of effort.

For several of the participants, helicopter parenting also influences their course load during the semester, which is related to a finding by Bers and Galowich (2002) that parents who engaged in helicopter parenting expressed a desire to be more involved in the advising and registration process for their children during college. The majority of these parents felt that, without their input, their children would be placed in, or registered for, incorrect courses. Also, that helicopter parenting can influence the dropping of courses or the use of disability accommodations during exams is perhaps not surprising, but it has not been addressed explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting.

Also, most of the participants experience helicopter parenting with academics in general, and almost all of these participants experience helicopter parenting with FERPA-related issues. The latter finding has not been addressed explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting and is somewhat surprising given that FERPA is a long-standing federal law for which there is a strong legal basis. More specifically, as mentioned earlier, FERPA (U.S. Department of Education, 2018) affords parents certain rights as far as their children’s education records, but these rights are transferred to the child when she or he reaches legal age or begins postsecondary education. For most of the participants, their parents became angry when FERPA and the institution denied them certain forms of access or information, and this negative parental reaction may be reflective of the intense form that helicopter parenting can take and/or parental unwillingness to now view the child as an adult who has certain legal rights.
For most of the participants who experience helicopter parenting with academics in general, helicopter parenting involves specific forms of parental interference in their academic lives overall. This finding is related to a finding by Bers and Galowich (2002) that all of the parents in their study believed that communication with them needed to come directly from the institution. In addition to wanting to receive information continuously throughout the semester, many of these parents wanted to be included in all meetings with counselors and advisors and to be able to contact these advisors about, or on behalf of, their children, even without their children being present. Also, the finding that helicopter parenting can involve parental pressure to graduate early from college has not been addressed in prior research on helicopter parenting. In other words, prior research has focused on how helicopter parenting influences children while they attend college, but its influence on the completion of the degree is also an important issue.

Helicopter parenting also influences most of the participants’ involvement in college-related extracurricular activities, whether in the form of discouraging or encouraging such involvement. There is no literature on this topic, but there is also no literature on why general undergraduate students participate or do not participate in extracurricular activities. Burton (1981) found that participation was not influenced by age, sex, GPA, high school leadership participation, college leadership participation, or personality characteristics. Berk and Goebel’s (1987) findings were contrary to Burton’s; they found that students who participated in extracurricular activities in high school were more likely to also participate in college. It appears there is not a consensus of who joins college extracurricular activities or why.

Many of the findings that deal with the influence of helicopter parenting on the participants’ social lives have not been examined in prior research on helicopter parenting. More specifically, the finding that helicopter parenting involves forbidding all or specific kinds of
socializing, or providing input into all aspects of the child’s social life, has not been addressed in previous research. Two studies that dealt with social outcomes (Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan, 2014; van Ingen et al., 2015), however, found that children who experience helicopter parenting have lower social self-efficacy and are less likely to search out social opportunities. Also, for some of the participants, helicopter parenting involves efforts to control their travel to specific social events or to social events in general. Although no prior research has dealt specifically with this issue, Segrin et al. (2013) found that parents that over-parent apply developmentally inappropriate levels of involvement in their children’s lives; for college-aged children, this could certainly include parental control of socially-oriented travel.

Also, some of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in the area of dating, with dating either being forbidden or discouraged. This finding is related somewhat to Padilla-Walker and Nelson’s (2012) finding that helicopter parents exert behavioral control over their children (e.g., controlling daily life). They also found that helicopter parenting was negatively related to the parental granting of child autonomy, under which dating falls. The above finding of the present study is also related to the finding by Lindell et al. (2017) that helicopter parents engage in behavioral control (i.e., protecting the child from risk-taking behavior) but that behavioral control is only healthy and appropriate if it ends before the child becomes an adult.

Similarly, some of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in the form of their parents forbidding alcohol use. Also, some parents imposed a curfew on the child during breaks or home visits. Neither of these issues is discussed explicitly in the research literature on helicopter parenting, but both alcohol use and curfews are specific aspects of the more general issue of child safety, which has been addressed in the literature (e.g., Pisinger et al., 2020; Williams et al., 1995).
Existing research on helicopter parenting, however, has not focused on the influence of helicopter parenting on financial issues for the child. For most of the participants, helicopter parenting influences the financial aspect of their lives, and for half of these participants, their parents provide financial support but expect that certain rules be followed in return. Moreover, for half of the participants who experience parental influence on finances, their parents also influence how money can be spent. These findings are related to the more general finding by Padilla-Walker and Nelson (2012) that parents exerted control over anything related to their child’s behavior (i.e., behavioral control).

In terms of influences of helicopter parenting on the participants’ daily lives, the finding that, for many of the participants, their parents influence their living arrangement has not been addressed explicitly in the research literature on helicopter parenting. This finding, however, is related to a finding by Pizzolato and Hicklen (2011) that 44% of students involved their parents in decision making. Another finding, that helicopter parenting occurred in the participants’ daily lives, is related to Kelly et al.’s (2017) finding that mothers who engage in helicopter parenting are usually in contact with their college-aged child at least once per day. This level of contact increases the likelihood that helicopter parenting is occurring in the child’s daily life.

For most of the participants, helicopter parenting influences employment during college and/or career choice, but the existing literature has focused only on issues of employment post-degree (e.g., Bradley-Geist & Olsen-Buchanan, 2014; Lindell et al., 2017; Segrin et al., 2015). Nevertheless, the finding that some participants were either required to work, or were forbidden from working, during college is related somewhat to a finding by Lindell et al. (2017) that the male children of helicopter parents have weak vocational identities. The authors suggest that these male children will rely heavily on their parents even as employees. Perhaps the parental
requirement that a child work, or not work, during college contributes to the development of a weak vocational identity.

In terms of other parental characteristics that are associated with helicopter parenting, most of the participants view helicopter parenting as being associated with other, positive parental characteristics (e.g., being caring and/or supportive, creating a positive home environment, or being a best friend). None of these parental characteristics have been referred to explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting, but this finding is not surprising because parents who engage in helicopter parenting, which can often be viewed as negative, are likely to have other qualities that are positive.

Half of the participants view helicopter parenting as being associated with other, negative parental characteristics (e.g., being closed-minded, being overly protective, always needing to be right, or creating tension during interactions). The finding of parental closed-mindedness is related to Hastings and Grusec’s (1998) finding that parents whose main goal was obtaining compliance from their children were less accepting of their children’s wishes. Also, the finding of parental overprotectiveness is consistent with Brussoni et al. (2012) assertion that *helicopter parenting* is a colloquial term for overprotective parenting (i.e., every parent who engages in helicopter parenting also engages in overly protective parenting). Last, the finding that parents who engage in helicopter parenting create tension during interactions is supported by Scheinfeld and Worley’s (2018) finding that the presence of parental interference in a child's life is indirectly related to relational turbulence. That is, the more often parents attempted to interfere in their college-aged children’s lives, the more likely their children were to classify the relationship as tumultuous. It should be added that if helicopter parenting itself can involve a variety of
negative parental characteristics or behaviors, then it is not surprising that other, negative parental characteristics can also be exhibited by these parents.

It is clear that helicopter parenting is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon and that the other, positive and negative parental characteristics that can accompany helicopter parenting mean that the overall parenting that the participants experience can contain contradictory elements. Moreover, these other positive and negative parental characteristics provide important context for understanding helicopter parenting and for understanding it more fully.

In terms of the personal consequences of helicopter parenting, all of the participants have been negatively affected psychologically by helicopter parenting, which is consistent with the findings of a number of studies of helicopter parenting (Darlow et al., 2017; Lindell et al., 2017; Schiffrin et al., 2014; Yoshizumi et al., 2007). Additionally, most of the participants have experienced anxiety as a result of helicopter parenting, and this is supported by the findings of Darlow et al. (2017) and Kwon et al. (2017), who found that children who experienced helicopter parenting are more likely to suffer from anxiety. The finding that perfectionism, obsessive thinking, or over-preparing or over-planning, which can be associated with anxiety, were experienced by half of the participants is consistent with clinical research on perfectionism and planning (e.g., Newman et al., 2019). More generally, Segrin et al. (2013) found that college-aged children who were over-parented identified helicopter parenting as the catalyst for many of their own personal problems.

The finding that several of the participants constantly seek parental approval or reassurance has not been addressed explicitly in prior research on helicopter parenting. It is possible that parents exerting control over various aspects of a child’s behavior, which has been referred to as behavioral control (Padilla-Walker, & Nelson, 2012), fosters the constant seeking
of parental approval or reassurance because the child has not been given the opportunity to develop a sufficient level of autonomy.

The finding that some of the participants experienced guilt, depression, low self-confidence, or self-criticism as a result of helicopter parenting is consistent with a number of studies that have found that helicopter parenting is associated with a higher level of depression and low self-esteem in children (e.g., Darlow et al., 2017; Kwon et al., 2017; Schiffrin et al., 2014; Yoshizumi et al., 2007).

In terms of academics, most of the participants have been affected positively by helicopter parenting, in the form of higher academic achievement, academics being made the highest priority, development of good study habits and other academic habits, and the development of greater respect for instructors and supervisors. This finding is inconsistent with the findings of several other studies, which have found that helicopter parenting is associated with lower academic achievement (Schiffrin & Liss, 2017; Segrin et al., 2015). In the Schiffrin and Liss study, the majority the mother’s had post-secondary education, while 75% of the mothers for the current study did not. Perhaps the makeup of participants contributed to the academic success of the current study’s participants. Of the Segrin et al. (2015) study’s parental participants, 89.5% had similarly attended college or beyond. The lack of education for the current study’s participants’ parents could account for the emphasis they place on academics and, subsequently, academic success.

In terms of the consequences of helicopter parenting for others and the participants’ relationships with those people, for almost all of the participants, helicopter parenting has affected their personal relationships with others and/or these other people themselves. Also, almost all of these effects have been negative. The finding that, for most of the participants,
Helicopter parenting has negatively affected their personal relationships with others is related to Bradley-Geist & Olson-Buchanan’s (2014) finding that participants who experienced helicopter parenting had lower levels of social success and van Ingen et al.’s (2015) finding that students who experienced helicopter parenting had poor peer attachment. The above finding of the present study is also related to a finding by Miller-Ott (2016) that participants who experienced helicopter parenting were less likely to interact with faculty outside of the classroom. Also, the finding that, for several of the participants, helicopter parenting has constrained various forms of socializing is perhaps not surprising and is consistent with the more general finding that parents who engage in helicopter parenting influence their children’s life choices (Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011).

Last, the finding that, for half of the participants, helicopter parenting has negatively affected other people in the participants’ personal lives directly has not been addressed in the literature on helicopter parenting. This finding is perhaps not surprising, though, if helicopter parenting can negatively affect the participants’ personal relationships with others.

In terms of efforts to deal with helicopter parenting, all of the participants have used a variety of approaches to try to deal with helicopter parenting during college. Moreover, some of these efforts are personal ones, whereas other efforts involve various forms of assistance from siblings and/or friends. Personal efforts to deal with helicopter parenting includes engaging in various forms of avoidance, engaging in various forms of compliance or cooperation, engaging in various forms of refusal, acknowledging or realizing the reason(s) for helicopter parenting, and attempting to provide the parent with feedback about his or her helicopter parenting. More specifically, almost all of the participants used avoidance as a way to deal with helicopter parenting, a finding that has not been addressed in prior research on helicopter parenting.
The finding that half of the participants used compliance or cooperation (e.g., always sharing personal plans, never lying to the parent, allowing the parent to make decisions for them) to deal with helicopter parenting is related to the finding of a study about undergraduate students’ use of resistance strategies with instructors who attempt to control student behavior in the classroom (Burroughs et al., 1989). It was found that compliance was one method used by students to deal with an instructor who was attempting to control student behavior in the classroom.

The finding that half of the participants use various forms of refusal (e.g., refusing parent requests, refusing parental prohibitions) to deal with helicopter parenting has not been examined in prior studies of helicopter parenting. Nevertheless, it is related somewhat to a finding in the study by Burroughs et al. (1989) that undergraduate students used ignoring the teacher as a method to deal with an instructor who was attempting to control student behavior in the classroom. Ignoring the teacher included sentiments such as “Ignore the teacher’s request, but still come to class” and “I would just ignore the remark and keep up the same habit,” for example.

Last, for half of the participants, an awareness or realization of the reason(s) for helicopter parenting also helped them to deal with helicopter parenting. This finding is not discussed in any literature about helicopter parenting. This is not surprising given the frequency of contact between participants and their parents (Kelly et al., 2017; Pizzolato & Hicklen, 2011; Wolf et al. 2009).

The finding that almost all of the participants received assistance from siblings and/or friends to deal with being helicopter parenting has not been addressed in the research literature on helicopter parenting. This finding is, however, related to the findings of a number of studies that child (e.g., Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Stocker et al., 1989) and young adult (e.g., Stocker
et al., 1997) sibling relationships are characterized by warmth and support. Moreover, some of the participants in the present study received help directly from a sibling, which is consistent with Furman and Buhrmester’s (1985) finding that the majority of sibling pairs in their study were characterized by either nurturance by a sibling or nurturance of a sibling.

Last, some of the participants receive assistance from friends to deal with helicopter parenting, and all of these forms of assistance focus on the participants themselves. This finding has not been addressed in prior research on helicopter parenting, but it is related to the more general finding that one of the major functions of friendship in adolescence and young adulthood is to provide the other person with help (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999).

In terms of the participants’ goals about education career, and helicopter parenting, this topic has not been addressed explicitly in the research literature on helicopter parenting. More specifically, all of the participants have the educational goal of completing an undergraduate degree, a finding that is related somewhat to Bers and Galowich’s (2002) finding that parents who engage in helicopter parenting want their children to complete college and believe that their involvement in the registration process will assist their children in finding the correct path to graduation. Also, most of the participants have specific career goals, and almost all of them have goals that are related to helicopter parenting itself. That is, half of the participants have goals for themselves that involve helicopter parenting, and some of the participants have helicopter parenting-related goals for themselves as future parents. More generally, some of the participants want greater distance in the future from the influences of helicopter parenting. As discussed earlier, much of the research that has been conducted on helicopter parenting has been quantitative in nature. Qualitative research, with its use of flexible and emergent research designs and its emphasis on investigating phenomena holistically, however, may be capable of revealing
more subtle aspects of helicopter parenting such as its relationship to children’s goals. It is also worth noting that the vast majority of the participants’ helicopter parenting-related goals have their basis in negative effects of helicopter parenting.

**Limitations of the Study**

A number of limitations are associated with the present study. First, all of the participants were recruited from one mid-sized university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Also, this institution is a M1 university (i.e., a master’s college or university) as defined by the Carnegie Classification system (Indiana University School of Education Center for Postsecondary Research Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2017). These institutional characteristics may limit the generalizability (i.e., transferability) of the findings to students at other types of higher education institutions (e.g., R1 universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, vocational institutions) or to students at higher education institutions in other parts of the country.

Second, the institution from which participants were recruited has a somewhat higher percentage of first-generation students than the national average for higher education institutions and a diversity rate of approximately 40% (for the most recent semester for which data are available). As a result, the demographic characteristics of undergraduates at this institution may limit the transferability of the findings to students at other M1 universities or at other types of higher education institutions.

Third, as mentioned earlier, the sample for the study consisted of white, African-American, and mixed race participants, and this may limit the transferability of the findings to other ethnic/racial groups. It would therefore be valuable for further research on helicopter
parenting to explore the experiences of college-aged participants who are Latinx, Asian-American, or from other ethnic/racial groups.

Fourth, all of the participants were unmarried and without children and the findings may therefore have limited transferability to undergraduate students who are married and/or have children. It would be valuable for further research on helicopter parenting to examine the experiences of the latter two groups.

Fifth, participation in the study required the completion of at least two consecutive semesters of study, and, hence, the participants were second-, third-, or fourth-year undergraduates. The findings may therefore have limited transferability to other types of students such as first-year undergraduates, graduate students, community college students, international students, or secondary school students, for example.

Sixth, conventional, individual qualitative interview contain a significant power imbalance, with the interviewer holding most of the power, but my status as a Ph.D. student and my age may have functioned to increase this power imbalance. More specifically, one or both of these factors may have made the participants reluctant to (a) share certain aspects of their experiences with me or (b) share specific aspects of their experiences fully with me. These potential influences could have been eliminated if the interviewer (in a different type of study than a dissertation) had been an undergraduate students and/or closer in age to the participants.

Seventh, the study focused exclusively on helicopter parenting as experienced by undergraduate students. The experiences of parents who engage in helicopter parenting, college instructors’ or administrators’ experiences with helicopter parenting, and undergraduate students’ experiences with peers who experience helicopter parenting, could also be made the focus of
further qualitative research, thereby potentially providing other important insights into helicopter parenting.

Last, as mentioned earlier, data for the study were collected using in-depth, open-ended, individual, qualitative interviews. Other qualitative data collection methods, such as participant observation, focus group interviews, solicited participant documents (e.g., journals, diaries), qualitative surveys, or archival document analysis, for example, may be useful in producing data that provide other valuable insights into the phenomenon of helicopter parenting during college.

It should be added that because qualitative research is widely considered to be fundamentally interpretive in nature, how I am positioned as a researcher does not constitute a limitation, per say, of the study. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that my age, racial identity, gender identity, socioeconomic status, personal background, and professional background, for example, have all fundamentally shaped the research process and the text that I have produced. Thus, another researcher, who would essentially be positioned differently than I am, may have collected data that differ from my own, as well as produced a text that differs in important ways from my own.

**Implications of the Findings for Higher Education**

The findings of the present study have a number of implications for higher education. First, the finding that helicopter parenting can result in the child taking more than the normal number of courses per semester during college has implications for the advising process and the training of academic advising staff. More specifically, when academic advising staff become aware that students have a higher-than-normal course load, they can begin by inquiring about the reason(s) for the high course load. If it becomes clear that the reason(s) for a high course load originate with the parent and not the student, then academic advising staff can help students to
(a) understand the benefits of carrying a normal course load, (b) understand the risks of carrying a high course load (e.g., higher stress, lower motivation, lower academic achievement), and, perhaps most importantly, (c) address the issue of course load constructively and effectively with their parents. It should be added that these advisor actions are consistent with two Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education (CAS) (2018) standards for Academic Advising Programs (2018a), namely, that academic advising programs need to (a) contribute to students’ progression toward education goals and (b) assist students in identifying a realistic timeframe for completing those educational goals.

Second, the finding that helicopter parenting can influence the child’s choice of major or minor during college also has implications for the advising process and the training of academic advising staff. More specifically, much like the previous implication, academic advisors should begin by inquiring about the reason(s) for choosing the major and minor. If it becomes clear that the reason(s) for choosing the major and minor originate with the parent and not the student, then academic advising staff can help students to (a) understand the benefits of choosing an appropriate major and minor, (b) understand the risks of choosing an inappropriate major and minor, and (c) address the issue of choice of major and minor constructively and effectively with their parents. The advising process can also include the possibility of student referral to the university career center, to complete career-related testing such as one or more career interest inventories. Also, academic advisors should give adequate attention to the issue of students’ abilities as they relate to the chosen major and minor, particularly as evidenced in their level of academic achievement in courses that are associated with each one. These advisor actions are consistent with a CAS standard for Academic Advising Programs (2018a) that includes a general
suggestion that students who are being advised should be given sufficient attention based on their specific needs.

Third, the finding that helicopter parenting can influence FERPA-related issues and that most of these parents have failed to respect the rights accorded to their children during college, under FERPA, has implications for the training of faculty and staff. More specifically, both groups should be thoroughly familiar with FERPA and should be trained to deal effectively with parents who are attempting to try to bypass the requirements of FERPA. In this regard, one of the CAS standards (2018a) refers specifically to how Academic Advising Programs should approach FERPA; that is, Section 7.3 *Personal Training and Development* provides a list of topics on which academic advisors should be trained that includes FERPA. In addition, it may be valuable for institutions to provide students with greater exposure to FERPA so that they are fully aware of their rights under FERPA.

Fourth, for many of the participants, helicopter parenting involved discouraging involvement in college-related extracurricular activities such as clubs or other organizations on campus and academically-oriented trips. These activities have the potential to enrich the educational experience of undergraduate students, and Residential Life and Student Activities offices can work to promote such activities with students, thereby providing a possible buffer against parents’ efforts to discourage these activities. In addition, this suggestion is consistent with one of the mandatory CAS standards for Housing and Residential Life Programs (HRLP) (2018b), which states that “HRLP must offer social, recreational, educational, cultural, spiritual, and community service programs” (p. 6).

Fifth, the finding that helicopter parenting can result in anxiety, depression, or low self-confidence for the child during college has implications for the training of faculty and academic
advising staff. More specifically, faculty and academic advising staff should be vigilant for signs of high anxiety, depression, or low self-confidence in students. If any of these signs are present, the faculty member or academic advising staff member can broach the topic with the student. One possible outcome of such a discussion is that the student is referred to the student counseling center. This suggestion is consistent with one of the CAS standards for Academic Advising Programs (2018a), in Section 7.3 Personal Training and Development, which states that AAP personnel must engage in continuing professional development activities. More specifically, “personnel must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified personnel, and must have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgements” (p. 17). Also, Residential Life and Student Services offices can work to make students more aware of (a) the signs of high anxiety, depression, or low self-confidence; (b) the importance of not ignoring such signs; and (c) the appropriate steps to take to address these signs.

Last, in terms of the implications of the findings for higher education in dealing with parents who engage in helicopter parenting, orientation professionals should be aware of this when creating programming for parents and prospective students before the school year starts. Students and parents could be provided with materials such as a checklist of things the student should be able to do (e.g., make their own appointments, contact their professors by email). Additionally, perhaps special sessions can be created for parents (e.g., parents of first-generation college students) and sessions on building more resilient students (e.g., dealing with disappointment). Similarly, during summer orientation, students should be given presentations about skills they need to develop in order to be successful as undergraduates and how expectations on them will differ from expectations during high school.
Implications of the Findings for Further Research on Helicopter Parenting

The findings of the present study have a number of implications for further research on helicopter parenting. Before discussing these implications, though, it should be mentioned that, given the very small number of prior qualitative studies of helicopter parenting, the present study was necessarily exploratory and involved investigating the full breadth of participants’ experiences of helicopter parenting. As an exploratory qualitative study, then, it would be valuable to investigate some of the findings more fully in further qualitative or other research, and these findings are discussed, where relevant, below.

First, anxiety emerged as a major psychological consequence of helicopter parenting during college, and it can take a variety of forms. Although the present study was able to reveal a variety of ways in which anxiety manifests as an effect of helicopter parenting, it would be valuable for further qualitative and quantitative research on helicopter parenting to make anxiety (and other psychological consequences of helicopter parenting during college) a more explicit focus of investigation and to explore them in more depth. This future research could also examine more fully the ways in which helicopter parenting-related anxiety manifests in the child’s life and its personal and interpersonal consequences.

Second, further qualitative research could expand on the findings of the present study as they relate to the negative effects of helicopter parenting on the child’s personal relationships with other people during college. The present study was able to reveal some of these negative effects, but it would be valuable for further qualitative research to explore this aspect of the phenomenon in more depth, as well as the positive and negative effects of helicopter parenting on these other people themselves. Similarly, the effects of helicopter parenting on the child’s relationships with college instructors and administrators should also be investigated more fully.
Third, it would be valuable for further qualitative research to focus more explicitly on college-aged children’s efforts to deal with helicopter parenting. More specifically, further research could investigate more fully children’s use of avoidance, refusal, and compliance to deal with helicopter parenting, including when each of these strategies is used and its consequences for the child, parent, and other people. Moreover, the context for using each strategy could also be explored. Conducting such research seems particularly important given that helicopter parenting shows no signs of decreasing as a social phenomenon, and the child’s efforts to counter it may represent the most effective means of reducing helicopter parenting.

Fourth, the sample for the present study included participants who were white, African American, and of mixed race. It would therefore be valuable for further qualitative research on helicopter parenting to include college-aged participants from other ethnic/racial groups (e.g., Latinx, Asian American). In addition, as mentioned earlier, all of the participants in the present study were unmarried and without children. Although it may be much less common for undergraduate students to be married and/or have children, it is also important to understand their experiences with helicopter parenting. Similarly, further qualitative research should explore how first-year undergraduates, graduate students, and community college students, for example, experience helicopter parenting. Finally, the present study focused on conventional nuclear families with mother/father households or single parent, mother-headed households. Further research could examine the experiences of college students who experience helicopter parenting who have same sex parents; single parent, father-headed households; foster parents; or any other familial makeup.

Fifth, it would be valuable for further qualitative research to examine the experiences of students at other M1 institutions or at other types of post-secondary institutions such as R1
universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, or vocational institutions in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States and other parts of the country.

Sixth, as discussed earlier, the present study relied exclusively on in-depth, open-ended, individual, qualitative interviews. It would therefore be valuable for further qualitative research to investigate helicopter parenting using other qualitative data collection methods such as participant observation, document analysis, open-ended survey items, or focus group interviews, for example. Doing so may reveal other important aspects of the phenomenon of helicopter parenting.

Seventh, the present study has revealed a variety of ways in which helicopter parenting can influence the child prior to and during college. It would be valuable for further qualitative and quantitative research to examine the ways in which helicopter parenting continues to exert an influence over children after they have graduated from college. In addition, such research could establish if or when these children’s financial dependence on their parents decreases or ends.

Eighth, it would be valuable to conduct qualitative research on middle school and high school students’ experiences with helicopter parenting. Such research is important for more fully understanding the origins of helicopter parenting and providing added context for helicopter parenting as it is experienced by the child during college.

Last, as discussed earlier, to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of helicopter parenting, it would be valuable for further qualitative research to examine the experiences of parents who engage in helicopter parenting, college instructors’ or administrators’ experiences with helicopter parenting, and undergraduate students’ experiences with peers who experience helicopter parenting.

**Implications of the Study for Qualitative Methodology**
The current study also has a number of implications for qualitative methodology in general. First, there was a very low response rate to the recruitment email that, as mentioned earlier, was sent to undergraduate students using a listserv at the institution. Given the considerable number of emails that undergraduate students likely receive each day, the effectiveness of an e-mail solicitation is likely reduced significantly. For qualitative research that involves undergraduate students, it may be more effective to use face-to-face solicitations, which are much more personalized than a solicitation email. For example, researchers can ask instructors of undergraduate courses for permission to make a brief research presentation and solicitation at the beginning of their classes. The ability to associate an actual person with information about the study may be an important factor in motivating undergraduate students to consider participating in research.

Second, when I met with each of the participants for the structuring interview, I was shocked to learn that none of them were aware that they would be compensated for their time if they participated in the study. More specifically, all of the participants were surprised to learn that they would be compensated for their participation, and they stated that they had simply planned to be interviewed. This situation suggests that the participants either did not read completely the recruitment e-mail and/or other information about the study or did not remember reading the information about compensation. Given that all of the participants were unaware of the issue of compensation, the former explanation seems more likely. It should be added that I made the decision to use a relatively short recruitment email because the need to read a longer email might have resulted in the email going unread. Instead, as discussed earlier, information about compensation and some other aspects of the study was included in a Qualtrics form, which participants were able to access through a link in the recruitment email. Qualitative researchers
who study undergraduate students should therefore be aware that this population may be less likely to read recruitment (or other research-related) emails fully. Similarly, to maximize the outcome of any email recruitment effort with undergraduate students, researchers should be sensitive to the length of the recruitment email that is used.

Third, during the structuring interviews, I found that the participants were very reluctant to provide information about their family’s socioeconomic status (SES). Also, some of the participants did not know the meaning of this term or which socioeconomic category described their family’s income. It is possible that undergraduate students in general, or specific subsets of this population, are self-conscious about providing information about SES, and requesting such information carries the risk of undermining rapport between researcher and participant. As a result, for qualitative research on undergraduate students that requires collecting information about SES, it may be a better strategy to collect basic demographic information using a form that each participant completes prior to the interview process, for example. Doing so would likely reduce participant self-consciousness or discomfort.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, during the data gathering interviews, I found that all of the participants required more than the typical level of feedback from me, as far as my use of active listening skills to encourage them to elaborate (e.g., “yes,” “uh huh,” “okay”), to provide full descriptions of their experiences. I did not feel that this situation was due to an inadequate level of rapport, the age difference between the participants and I, or the power differential between the participants and I (i.e., a Ph.D. candidate interviewing undergraduate students). The situation resulted in my providing continuous nonverbal feedback (e.g., head nods, smiles) to participants and occasionally using one of the above verbal responses. Also, I became somewhat concerned about the extent to which I was using these active listening skills, but the participants appeared to
want validation as they spoke. At times, the participants also expressed concerns about the adequacy of their responses (e.g., “Is that what you’re looking for?” “Do you need more?”), despite my use of supportive statements (e.g., “Thank you for sharing that with me,” “Thank you. That is very valuable for me to know.”) at regular points during each interview. Qualitative researchers who conduct interview-based research with undergraduate students should therefore be aware of the potential need to use a high level of active listening skills to obtain complete responses to interview questions and to maintain the flow and atmosphere of interviews. Similarly, it is important for researchers to ensure that they use an adequate number of supportive statements during interviews with participants from this population.

Fifth, at times, I had strong emotional reactions to some of the participants’ descriptions of their experiences with helicopter parenting. That is, I had a variety of negative emotional reactions (e.g., anger, sadness) to their descriptions of parental behaviors and the effects of those behaviors on them. My initial impulse was to want to provide the participants with some form of low-level counseling, which would have been ethically inappropriate, and I stopped myself each time and instead used brief, appropriate, emotionally supportive statements. Nevertheless, emotional reactions, whether positive or negative, to participants’ descriptions need to be made part of the researcher’s ongoing reflexive work. Qualitative researchers who study undergraduate students should therefore be mindful that the phenomena they investigate have the potential to affect them emotionally in the same way that I was affected in this study. Equally important, before research begins, researchers should have in place specific ways of dealing with such emotional reactions if they occur, such as debriefing with another research team member, if relevant, or a trusted colleague or friend, for example.
Sixth, roughly half of the participants asked me after the data gathering interview had ended if I had ever experienced helicopter parenting. They asked me questions about how I had grown up, how my parents had interacted with me while I was in high school and college, and how my parents interacted with me now. As we left the interview room, I briefly shared some personal information in response to these questions. It is important to add that during the interview process, I did not volunteer any information about my upbringing or my parents because doing so could have influenced the participants’ descriptions of their experiences with helicopter parenting (i.e., it could have been “leading”), but this information was also not asked of me. Qualitative researchers who study undergraduate students should therefore be aware that participants may ask them personal questions, and they should consider, beforehand, how they will respond to such questions, whether they occur during the data collection or afterward. Most forms of qualitative research assume that researchers will respond to such participant inquiries in an open and authentic way, but within mainstream qualitative research, if participants’ questions are related to the phenomenon that is being investigated, doing so during the data collection is seen as carrying the risk of influencing participants’ understandings and/or descriptions of their own experiences of the phenomenon. In such circumstances, an effective strategy would be for the researcher to keep responses to personal questions brief and abstract and to do so tactfully, so as to avoid undermining rapport.

Seventh, in almost all cases, after the data gathering interview had been completed and the participant and I were leaving the interview room, he or she spontaneously shared more information that was relevant to the phenomenon. This information was useful to the study, but, unfortunately, it was not possible to record it. It is important to add that, as indicated in the interview guide (see Appendix D), the final interview question that I asked each participant was,
“Is there anything else that you think would be important for me to know?” My sense was that these participants felt more comfortable sharing their experiences when the digital recorder was not being used. If this is in fact true, then it may have been reflective of the level of rapport that I was able to achieve with each of these participants. As discussed earlier, I completed a structuring interview with each participant, and one of its main purposes is to begin the process of establishing rapport. It may therefore be valuable for interview-based qualitative research that focuses on undergraduate students to devote more time to the establishment of rapport with each participant, and this could involve the use of a lengthier structuring interview, or even multiple structuring interviews, prior to conducting the data gathering interview, for example. It is also possible that the level of rapport that I was able to establish with each of these participants was limited by my status as a Ph.D. student and researcher. Thus, qualitative researchers who conduct interview-based research with undergraduate students should be aware of this potential threat to rapport and may want to consider using a trained undergraduate student, for example, to conduct interviews.

Last, the response rate for the member checks was relatively low, with only two of the eight participants providing feedback about the write-up of the findings. It should be added that a reminder email was sent to those participants who had not responded to the initial member check email within two weeks, and none of these participants provided feedback. This low response rate may have been due to the busy nature of undergraduate students and/or the considerable number of emails that they likely receive each day. As a result, qualitative researchers who study undergraduate students may want to consider other ways to conduct member checks. For example, it may be more effective to schedule a face-to-face meeting with each participant to obtain feedback about the write-up of the findings. Moreover, the write-up of the findings could
be emailed to the participant prior to the meeting or introduced at the meeting and used as a springboard for discussion of its adequacy and accuracy.
Chapter Five: Conclusions

In this study, I sought to understand undergraduate students' experiences with helicopter parenting. To do so, I chose qualitative methodology, in part because of the relative lack of qualitative research on helicopter parenting and in part because of qualitative methodology's emphasis on meaning, holism, and understanding human experience as it is lived. I conducted open-ended, individual qualitative interviews with eight students at one M1 institution in the mid-Atlantic region of the country, and explored the phenomenon in depth with each of them. From the analysis of the data, a wide variety of aspects of the phenomenon were revealed, and some of the findings are significant in that they add to our knowledge of helicopter parenting.

The findings reveal that helicopter parenting is not uniformly negative in nature and that it has both positive and negative consequences for undergraduate students. In terms of the latter, helicopter parenting can result in higher academic achievement, academics being made the top priority, and the development of good study and other academic habits, but it can also result in guilt, depression, low self-confidence, self-blame, and a wide variety of forms of anxiety.
Chapter Six: Summary

The purpose of the study was to understand the experiences of undergraduate students who experienced helicopter parenting. There is little qualitative literature on the topic (Cullaty, 2011; Kwon et al., 2017). This literature focused on undergraduate students’ experiences with autonomy development and, in particular, how overparenting influenced their ability to make good decisions (Cullaty, 2011) and Korean-American undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parents, including the students’ perceptions of helicopter parents, the prevalence of helicopter parents, and the impact of these parents on the students’ development (Kwon et al., 2017).

In order to study the phenomenon of college students who experienced helicopter parenting, I utilized qualitative methodology for a variety of reasons (i.e., qualitative methodology focuses participants’ experiences of a phenomenon; qualitative research seeks to recognize how participants understand their experiences; qualitative methodology take the context of the phenomenon into account (Patton, 2015); qualitative methodology seeks to understand the phenomenon as a whole (Patton, 2015)).

Eight participants of varying racial/ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses were interviewed for the study. All transcripts were transcribed by a transcriber and then were coded using a form of whole text analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2015; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Miles et al., 2014). Codes were then grouped into categories.

This study found seven themes in regards to the experiences of undergraduate students who experienced helicopter parenting. The outcomes for participants were both positive and negative and had far reaching effects. Several significant findings were discovered through the study. Helicopter parenting prior to college took the forms of either academic issues (e.g., efforts
to improve grades) or social issues (e.g., efforts to alter the child’s friendship group). Helicopter parenting during high school also influenced a variety of aspects of the participants’ daily lives. Finally, most of the participants had a variety of reactions to the helicopter parenting that they experienced during high school (e.g., crying, experiencing embarrassment, experiencing frustration, or being diagnosed with depression).

Helicopter parenting during college took the forms of influencing academics and extracurricular activities, social activities, financial issues, employment during college and career choice, and specific aspects of daily life. All of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in their academic lives (e.g., the decision to attend college, the decision to remain enrolled in college, the choice of specific university, grades, course load, academics in general, choice of major or minor, FERPA-related issues). Almost all of the participants experienced helicopter parenting in their social lives (e.g., forbidding all or specific kinds of socializing, attempting to control travel to events, attempting to control dating, forbidding alcohol use). Half of the participants experienced financial support or financial control from their parents. Finally, many of the participants’ parents influenced their daily lives or employment during college.

Other parental characteristics of parents who engage in helicopter parenting were either viewed as positive or negative. The positive parental characteristics include being caring and/or supportive, creating a positive home environment, and being a best friend. The negative parental characteristics were being closed-minded, being overly protective, always needing to be right, or creating tension during interactions.

In terms of personal consequences of helicopter parenting, all of the participants have been negatively affected psychologically by helicopter parenting. Most of the participants experienced anxiety as a result of helicopter parenting, while several constantly seek parental
approval or reassurance. In regards to academics, most of the participants have been affected positively by helicopter parenting (e.g., higher academic achievement, academics being made the highest priority, development of good study habits and other academic habits, the development of greater respect for instructors and supervisors).

In terms of consequences of helicopter parenting for others and relationships with others, helicopter parenting has affected their personal relationships with other people and/or these other people directly in an almost exclusively negative manner. Additionally, half of the participants have had helicopter parenting affect other people in the participants’ lives directly.

All of the participants have made efforts to deal with helicopter parenting, be it in a personal manner or thought various forms of assistance from siblings or friends. All of the participants have attempted to deal personally with helicopter parenting (e.g., engaging in various forms of avoidance, engaging in various forms of compliance or cooperation, engaging in various forms of refusal, acknowledging or realizing the reason(s) for helicopter parenting, attempting to provide the parent with feedback about his or her helicopter parenting). Almost all of the participants received help from siblings and/or friends to deal with being helicopter parented (e.g., assistance that focuses on the parent, assistance that focuses on the participant).

Finally, all of the participants had goals for themselves associated with education, career, or helicopter parenting. In terms of education, all of the participants have the educational goal of completing an undergraduate degree. Also, most of the participants have specific career goals, and almost all of the participants have goals that are related to helicopter parenting itself.

A number of implications of the findings for higher education, implications of the findings for future research, and implications of the study for qualitative research were found and discussed.
End Notes

1. I understand that while it may be grammatically appropriate to use “his or her” in this instance, I am utilizing the singular “their” throughout my dissertation as a gender-neutral singular pronoun in accordance with the current APA manual.

2. It should be emphasized that Guba and Lincoln (1989) later rejected the trustworthiness criteria in favor of new criteria that were consistent with the constructivist qualitative paradigm. More specifically, they came to view the trustworthiness criteria as foundationalist in nature and as maintaining the quantitative methodological concepts of validity, reliability, and generalizability but using the language of qualitative research (Lincoln, 2001). As a result, these criteria were seen as incompatible with the interpretive/constructivist assumptions that guide qualitative inquiry in general.

3. “I can’t even” is a phrase used in popular culture, whereby the speaker is in such a state of shock that they cannot form a cohesive response or finish the sentence. This phrase is an alternative to “I don’t even,” which was popularized in the 2004 movie Mean Girls (Michaels & Waters, 2004).
References


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parenting as a distinct construct from other forms of parental control during emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*, 1177–1190.


Appendix A

Recruitment Email
Dear [insert name],

I am a Ph.D. student in the Educational Research and Evaluation (EDRE) program at Virginia Tech, and I am studying undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parenting. For this study, the research has defined helicopter parenting as the hovering of one or both parents over their child, such that they are over-involved in their child’s life and use parenting techniques that developmentally exceed what is needed by the child. I have obtained ethical approval to conduct this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech.

The study involves using one-on-one interviews to explore your experiences with helicopter parenting. After an initial meeting to help you prepare for the interview process, no more than two hours would be needed to interview you about your experiences with helicopter parenting. After I completed analyzing the interview data for all of the participants and developed a discussion of the findings, I would contact you again to ask you to review the discussion and give me feedback about how well it captured your experiences with helicopter parenting (this is also called a member check). Completing the member check would likely take no more than an hour of your time. In total, participating in this study would require no more than four hours of your time. Also, all of the above interviews will take place on your university campus, during the next two months.

As a benefit to you of participating in this study, I will provide you with a copy of my dissertation, if you are interested in receiving it. Also, you will be compensated $30/hour for the time that you spend being interviewed and $30 for completing the member check. To be eligible to participate in this study, you must (a) have completed at least two consecutive semesters of full-time undergraduate study, (b) be completing a traditional degree (that involves mainly face-to-face courses) rather than an online degree, and (c) view one or both of your parents as having engaged in helicopter parenting during the time that you have been an undergraduate.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the attached Qualtrics form by no later than [date]. You can also use this Qualtrics form if you have any questions for me about this study. I would like to add that as a participant in this study, your identity will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to me. I hope that you will consider participating in my study, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Lauren Hatfield
Ph.D. student
EDRE Program
School of Education
Virginia Tech
Appendix B

Consent Form
Title of the Research Study: A Qualitative Investigation of Undergraduate Students’ Experiences of Helicopter Parenting

Investigators: Dr. Serge F. Hein (Principal Investigator), Department of Leadership, Counseling and Research, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Lauren Hatfield (Co-Principal Investigator), Department of Leadership, Counseling and Research, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (e-mail: hlauren6@vt.edu), phone: (860) 301-6004

I. Purpose of the Research Study

This study involves research, and its purpose is to investigate undergraduate students’ experiences with helicopter parenting. The study is being conducted as dissertation research for the co-principal investigator, Lauren Hatfield, who is a student in the Ph.D. program in Educational Research and Evaluation at Virginia Tech. The results of the study may be used to develop one or more papers for publication in academic journals or for presentation at academic conferences. The data collected during this study may also be used for other research purposes or for teaching purposes. The sample for the study is anticipated to include six to eight participants, all of whom are of adult age and current, full-time, undergraduate students at a M1-designated university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

II. Procedure

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide some basic demographic information later in this meeting. This meeting will require one hour or less. During a second meeting, which will take place within two or three weeks, you will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview of two hours or less. This interview will involve sharing with Lauren Hatfield your experiences of helicopter parenting. The interview will take place on your institution’s campus or at another mutually agreed upon place.

The findings from the study will be used to develop a dissertation, and you will be asked to complete a member check for a portion of this document. More specifically, the member check will involve reviewing the discussion of the findings from the study and providing Lauren Hatfield with feedback about how accurately and fully the discussion captures your experiences with helicopter parenting. The discussion of the findings from the study will be e-mailed to you, and the process of completing a member check will require one hour or less. All of the above-mentioned activities that you participate in will occur over a period of approximately four months.
III. Risks

The risks associated with participating in this study are considered to be minimal.

IV. Benefits

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the dissertation that results from this study, Lauren Hatfield will provide you with one.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

The demographic data that are collected from you during this first meeting may include information that could potentially identify you, such as your stage in the degree program and chosen major. The data that are collected from you during the above-mentioned interview may also include information that could potentially identify you, such as your name, stage in the degree program, and chosen major. Your identity, and that of any people whom you mention, will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to Lauren Hatfield and possibly a transcriber, who will be required to adhere to the requirements of a Statement of Confidentiality for Transcriber. Any information in the above-mentioned demographic data that could potentially identify you or anyone else whom you mention will be altered when it is included in the dissertation.

The audio recording of the above-mentioned interview will be transcribed, and false names will be used for your name and for the names of any other people whom you mention. Also, any other information in the audio recording that could potentially identify you or anyone else whom you mention will be altered during the transcription process. The above-mentioned false names will also be used in the dissertation.

The demographic data that are collected from you, the audio recording of the interview, all paper and electronic copies of the interview transcript, and all paper and electronic versions of the data analysis will be stored securely when they are not being used. Also, the demographic data that are collected from you, the audio recording of the interview, and the signed consent form that is retained by Lauren Hatfield will be stored securely in a separate location from the remainder of the above-mentioned data. Only Lauren Hatfield will have access to the demographic data that are collected from you, all paper and electronic versions of the data analysis, and the signed consent form. Only Lauren Hatfield and the transcriber will have access to the audio recording of the interview and paper and electronic copies of the interview transcript. Also, at no time will Lauren Hatfield reveal identifying data or any other identifying study-related information to anyone without your written consent. The above-mentioned data and the signed consent form will be destroyed three years after formally closing this study with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech.

Please note that the Virginia Tech IRB may review this study’s data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for overseeing the protection of human participants in research.
VI. Compensation

You will be compensated $30/hour for the time that you spend being interviewed and $30 for completing a member check. For the time that you spend being interviewed, you will be compensated at the end of the interview process. For the member check, you will be compensated after you have completed it. In both instances, compensation will be in the form of a VISA gift card.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

It is important for you to know that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Also, your refusal to participate will result in no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to withdraw from this study, any information about you and any data that you have provided, will be destroyed promptly. You are also free to choose to not answer any question or to not respond to what is being asked of you, and this choice will result in no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participating in this study, you will be compensated for that portion of the tasks that you have completed, in accordance with the Compensation section of this consent form.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which Lauren Hatfield determines that you should not continue in the study.

VIII. Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you can contact Lauren Hatfield, whose contact information is included at the beginning of this consent form.

If you have any questions or concerns about how this study is being conducted or your rights as a participant, or if you need to report a research-related injury or event, you can contact the Virginia Tech IRB at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

IX. Participant’s Consent

I have read the Consent Form and the conditions associated with this study. I have also had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

__________________________________________________ Date __________________

Signature of Participant

__________________________________________________

Printed Name of Participant
Signature of Co-Principal Investigator

Printed Name of Co-Principal Investigator
Appendix C

Preparation Guidelines for Data Gathering Interview
Dear [participant’s first name],

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. By interviewing you, I hope to gain a detailed understanding of your undergraduate experiences with helicopter parenting. As I mentioned earlier, I am a Ph.D. student, and I am completing this study for my dissertation in the Educational Research and Evaluation program at Virginia Tech.

Your participation in this study involves two meetings with me. The first one, which we are doing today, gives us an opportunity to become better acquainted and to learn more about each other’s backgrounds. It also allows me to explain to you the nature of my study and my reasons for selecting you, and to answer any questions that you may have. Before our next meeting takes place, please take some time to think about the experiences that you have had with helicopter parenting as an undergraduate student. For example, please reflect on the characteristics of your parent(s), and any other family members. Also reflect on the experiences that you have had with helicopter parenting as an undergraduate and any effects that it has had on the various parts of your life. I would also like you to reflect on any experiences you had with helicopter parenting as a high school student or earlier and any effects that it had on you at that time. Please also think about any ways you have tried to deal with helicopter parenting in the past. Last, please reflect on any goals that you have for yourself as far as your education, career, or dealing with helicopter parenting. These topics may, of course, deal with only some aspects of your experience with helicopter parenting. Please reflect on any other experiences that you see as relevant to the study.

Also, some experiences may stand out more in your mind than others. For each of these experiences, please think about the thoughts, feelings, and any bodily sensations that occurred for you at the time. I would also like you to reflect on the context for each experience. This could include the circumstances or events that led up to the experience, the physical setting, or any other people who were present. As you think about your experiences, you may want to write down important thoughts or details so that you can refer to them during our interview. Doing this, though, isn’t essential. During our interview, I will ask you a number of questions about your experiences with helicopter parenting. Please respond to these questions in whatever way you feel is most appropriate. I also want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers in this type of interview: I want to learn about your experiences, whatever they have been for you. It is important that you describe your actual experiences, just as they happened for you. I will also ask you to describe your experiences in as much detail as possible.

Last, I would like to mention again that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your identity will be kept confidential at all times and will be known only to me. If you have any questions about the study, or if you would like to discuss anything else with me, please don’t hesitate to call me at (860) 301-6004. I look forward to our interview!

Lauren Hatfield
Appendix D

Interview Guide
Interview Guide

A. Parent, Family, and Degree Characteristics

I would like to start by focusing on what your parent[s], [other family members], and your family life in general are like and your choice of major.

1) Please describe for me what each of your parent[s] is/are like.

2) Optional- How would you describe your [brother/sister/siblings]?

3) How would you describe your family life in general?

4) Please describe for me the major that you have chosen.

B. Nature of Helicopter Parenting

Now I would like to explore your experiences with helicopter parenting at various points during your education.

5) Please tell me about any experiences that you had with helicopter parenting while you were in high school or earlier.

- choice of post-secondary institution

6) Please describe your experiences with helicopter parenting while you have been in college.

- Cognitive
- Social
- Emotional
- Behavioral

7) Apart from the helicopter parenting that you’ve experienced, how would you describe other aspects of your relationship with your parents while you have been in college?

C. Consequences of Helicopter Parenting

Now I would like to explore any ways that helicopter parenting has affected the various parts of your life while you have been in college.

8) Please tell me about any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your relationship with your parents.

9) Optional- Please describe any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your relationship[s] with your [brother/sister/siblings].
10) Please tell me about any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your social life.

- relationships with friends and other students attending college
- relationships with friends and others not attending college
- dating

11) Please describe for me any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your relationships with instructors or other people who work at the university.

12) Please describe any ways that helicopter parenting has affected you academically as a student. This could include your behavior in and out of class, your grades, your choice of major, and so on.

- Behavior in and out of class
- Decision making
- Grades
- Choice of major
- Choice of career
- Attitude toward current institution
- Attitude toward (completing) postsecondary education

13) Please tell me about any ways that helicopter parenting has affected you personally. By this, I mean any ways that helicopter parenting has affected you physically, emotionally, psychologically, or otherwise.

D. Efforts to Deal with Helicopter Parenting

Now I would like you to think about any ways that you have tried to deal with helicopter parenting, either on your own or with the help of others, while you have been in college.

14) Please describe any ways that you, yourself, have tried to deal with helicopter parenting.

- approaches that involve dealing with parents directly or indirectly
- approaches to dealing with helicopter parenting in high school or earlier

15) Please describe for me any ways that other people have helped you to try to deal with helicopter parenting.

E. Future Goals

Last, I would like to focus on any goals that you have for yourself, as far as your education, future career, or dealing with helicopter parenting.

16) Please tell me about any goals that you have, as far as your education.

17) Please describe any goals that you have, as far as a career.
18) Please describe for me any goals that you have, as far as dealing with helicopter parenting.

19) Is there anything else that you think would be important for me to know?
Appendix E

Statement of Confidentiality for Transcriber
Statement of Confidentiality for Transcriber

Title of Research Project: A Qualitative Investigation of Undergraduate Students’ Experiences of Helicopter Parenting

Investigators: Dr. Serge F. Hein, Principal Investigator; Lauren M. Hatfield, Co-Principal Investigator, Department of Leadership, Counseling and Research, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

This form is intended to ensure the confidentiality of both the participants and the data collected during the course of this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate undergraduate students’ experiences of helicopter parenting. As a transcriber for this study, you are asked to read the following statement and to sign your name, indicating that you agree to comply.

I hereby affirm that I will not communicate, or in any manner disclose, publicly the identities of participants or any other information that I am exposed to over the course of transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews for this study. I agree to not discuss participants, or any other information that I am exposed to over the course of transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews for this study, with anyone other than Lauren Hatfield, the co-principal investigator.

I also agree to (a) complete all of the transcribing work in an environment that will prevent others from overhearing the information that is contained in the audio recordings of the interviews; (b) password protect my computer so that others are prevented from accessing the audio recordings of the interviews or the electronic copies of the interview transcripts; and (c) store the audio recordings of the interviews, the electronic copies of the interview transcripts, and any hard copies of the interview transcripts securely when I am not using them. Last, I agree to (a) delete all audio recordings of the interviews, (b) delete all electronic copies of the interview transcripts, and (c) destroy any hard copies of the interview transcripts that I have created when Lauren Hatfield has asked me to do so and to then notify her, in writing, that I have done so.

____________________________________
Signature of Transcriber

____________________________________
Date

____________________________________
Printed Name

____________________________________
Signature of Co-Principal Investigator

____________________________________
Date

____________________________________
Printed Name
Appendix F

Coded Transcript
Jay Interview

L: OK. Alright, so I want to start by focusing on what your, umm, your mom and your family life is like in general and then your choice of your major. So, can you please describe for me what your mom is like.

J: Umm, my mom is like um, I guess like a momma bear. She’s like always trying to look after, ‘cause she has all boys, so she’s always trying to like, take care of us, um, she’s pretty nice. Not really mean at all. I mean I guess when I was younger she was more like stern but once she started working more she kinda like… sorry letting this off the leash more but like none of us were too wild um, um, (unintelligible) she’s hard working, and she’s independent like she, we’ve never had like, a male figure in the house. It’s always been her so she’s pretty like, independent on her own.

L: That’s great. Uh, so how would you describe your brothers?

J: Uh we’re all like completely different. Like my older brother he’s twenty… He just turned 25 on March 5th. And he’s like the exact opposite of me. He’s like he drop out of school and he like went like the bad route I guess you can say. And I don’t know why that happened but he just kind of was the one. And my little brother, he’s like he a swimmer, he’s like the good kid. He’s cool. And then there’s just me. I’m just like, chill. First one to go to college, (unintelligible) some stuff. So… I guess we all have a pretty good relationship to my little brother. We don’t have the best relationship just because there’s the age gap. He’s, he’s like 11 and (unintelligible) be 21 so like, he, I was 8 when he was born so we really didn’t get to connect. But, me and my older brother we were like this growing up [crosses fingers]

L: ‘cause, you know we were kinda like came up together

J: ‘cause you’re closer in age?

L: Yeah, we’re close in age. Yeah 4 years.

J: Yeah. Ok, so then how’d you describe your family life in general?

L: Um hm

J: Uh, it’s pretty good. We usually try to gather up on like big holidays. We try to get together and do something. My mom, she always plans a trip during either spring break or the summer time. So yeah, we have a pretty good relationship. We have a group chat we always, I talk to my mom every day. I talk to my older brother not as much as I would like to, but, like we still all talk.

L: Yeah

J: So we have a pretty good relationship.

L: And did they live close by?

J: No. Uh my older brother he lives in our home town in (State)
L: Um hm
J: and then my mom lives in (State) that, she's stationed, and my little brother lives with him.
L: Interesting. Cool. So then, because of your mom's military career did you move around a lot when you all were kids?
J: Yes. A lot, like, so my mom went into the military when I was like 5, I would say, so we got to Maryland. It was the first place we lived. We were there for, like, 5 years but right after that we moved like every year after that 'cause she went to like Australia so, I moved 3rd grade, went to (State) for 4th grade. Did half of 5th grade. Then we went to Connecticut. I did 5th grade and 6th grade in Connecticut. Moved back to (State) for 7th grade. Then moved back to Connecticut for 8th grade. Then 9th grade I moved to (State). So, we moved like, I moved a lot of different schools.
L: OK. So switching gears a little bit then, can you tell me about the major that you've chosen for yourself.
J: Uh, Sociology
L: Um hm
J: Um I chose that major... I like Sociology now but I think at the time when I chose it, 'cause I came in a pre-major...
L: Um hm
J: but, I remember they had like (unintelligible) and I said I want to do something with computers and my mom was like hey you should do something with computers. You're always playing on your phone. Like every parent does.
L: Um hm
J: And when I went to the orientation it wasn't interesting to me. So like now I'm just going to go undecided. And then Sophomore year, um, I think after I did orientation I did - a social worker. I was like I want to be a social worker. That's pretty cool. And then, I didn't like that so I moved to Sociology. But, I feel like one of the main reasons that I chose that, like now I really like it but at first 'cause I was never good at math. And like, I didn't want to be a Computer major because I saw like, you got to do all these math classes I know I'm going to fail so I don't want to like, set myself up. So, I feel like I might have taken the easy way out, but like, I do like my major, but I feel like that's kind of what there is not to (unintelligible)
L: Yeah. So your mom encouraged you to do Computer Science or something like that. What happened when you wanted to switch your major?
J: Well, she was mad. She was, 'cause she's all about like she like yeah you need to get this job so you can try to get some money. And she was like you trying to do this. Look at how much they're making and they don't really make a lot of money and being like a social worker or something like that. So for a long time she was all like, um are you sure you want this major. She was trying to get me to pick up like a minor in business, like, it's never been like, a minor or major in something that I like. It's always been like, you should do this because, this is going to, I know this is going to work out for you so she was always trying to get me to do that.

Commented [HL6]: Mother is military
Commented [HL8]: Attended a large number of elementary and middle schools due to where mom was stationed
Commented [HL10]: Major chosen to avoid difficult courses (math)
Commented [HL11]: Mother disapproves of choice or major and encourages minor for financial reasons and employability.
L: It's about quality of life and...
J: Quality of life and money.
L: Um hm
J: that she wanted me to do something like that.
L: So what does she say now you have the Sociology major?
J: She's still like on my back trying to get me to pick up like a business minor. 'cause she's, I guess she just is convinced that I'm not going to get a job with this major so she's like you need to have some type of backup. I mean I guess it could be a good thing but she's definitely like super pushy about that.
L: Are you considering choosing a minor?
J: No
L: No?
J: No. I mean I, I don't know, yeah, no. Not Business or anything like that because I'm not interested in that.
L: Yeah
J: I'm not going to do something that I'm not interested in.
L: I get it. I definitely get it. Alright, so, let's talk about your experiences with helicopter parenting at various points during your education. So can you tell me about any experiences that you had with helicopter parenting while you were in high school or earlier?
J: Uh, I mean just to like get a refresher, helicopter parenting, that's like a parent who's overly involved...
L: Uh, ok.
J: in your...
L: Yeah
J: Um, makes sense that, ha, I mean I guess I can start with, can I start with now in college?
L: Yeah
J: Uh, I guess now in college my mom is the one like, so when I don't have a job my mom's (unintelligible) person like, look in, seems like, "yeah you need a new-.", "look in here to get this job, get this job." And, like, when I don't have a job she's giving me like a lot of-. I don't know if that counts as being a helicopter parent but, like she's given me a lot money to, like, cover my rent...
L: Um hm
J: and then like, like when I got in a car accident I didn't have a-, I've been in like three car accidents.
L: Oh my God.
J: Yeah that sucks... And she's... Every time she'll like kinds give me like... put her foot down like, "no you're not getting another car." But she'll eventually, like a mother (unintelligible). I've gotten a car like since I've wrecked them, so...
L: Um hm
J: she's always like the one, like taking care of me and I know that because like my friends, they're all like, working these jobs, getting (unintelligible). Me, I'm like, I know I don't have to work because my mom is, like I hate to say that but like my mom is literally my backbone in life.
L: Whatever I need something she's going to give it to me.
J: Um hm
L: Um hm
J: Um, in high school, um, I really don't want to say it... I guess in high school she was kinda maybe like every other parent. When I turned 16 she told me to get a job. Just like... 
L: Um hm
J: just get my foot in the door, like, any other parent would. But, I guess that's like the most, she didn't really do, it's like more now. She's more of a helicopter parent now than she was.
L: That's interesting
J: Yeah, I think it could be maybe 'cause she's like, she's never had a son go to college. She didn't go to college...
L: Um hm
J: herself so she's like, excited for me. And she maybe doesn't want me to be all stretched out. So now she's like, anything like, she's like super (unintelligible)...
L: Um hm
J: or if she can help.
L: So you said you talk to her almost every day.
J: Um hm
L: and you said, obviously, the choice of major, maybe she has some opinions about that, about working.
J: Yeah
L: What about your social life: people you hang out with; stuff you're doing?
J: Uh, how, does she have an input on that?
L: Um hm
J: Um, I guess not as, 'cause I never really hung out with like, people that I didn't feel like were going to be (unintelligible) influence on me so she didn't really ever have to check me on that.
Like I when I had friends, like, I mean I guess you can say when I had friends she always wanted to try and meet their parents.

L: Yeah

J: In high school (unintelligible) she never let me stay at someone’s house, like, all my friends have sleep overs. I was never, I never stayed at anyone’s house in high school ‘cause she just was like, you don’t need to be staying at other people’s houses. You don’t know what they’re doing and. So I guess like a protecting thing?

L: Unh unh.

J: So, she was like, yeah they can come stay over here but you’re not, you’re not going to stay at their house, so all of high school I never got to stay at people’s houses. Unless it was someone like, I played basketball, if it was someone like she had met their parents. Then she’ll let me stay over there. But if she didn’t really know them or hadn’t met them multiple time I wasn’t staying at their house, so, I guess she had bad (unintelligible)....

L: Yeah

J: Social life. I wasn’t able to go to sleep overs. Unh, beach week in high school, I didn’t get to go do that because my mom didn’t like me staying....

L: Unh unh

J: Like at other people’s houses or not with parental supervision.

L: Yeah

J: So.

L: So what about now. So if you, let’s say you were going to go away on spring break and it was like the hotel or something and you were going to go to Florida, would she let you go, or would she have input on that?

J: Definitely would have input. Like she, I mean, I’ve gotten to the point now where like, I knew that I’m like kinda grown in a sense so I can kinda get away with more but she’ll definitely be like, no you don’t need to do this. Like, um, for example: this concert called Rolling Ladders is like a big music festival.

L: Unh unh

J: The tickets are like $400 and at first I’m like uh, yeah I really want to go to this concert. She was like, no. She was like you’re not going to this concert to pay $400. And I’m like, I’m like, what? What, with my money I can’t? And she was like really giving me a hard time and eventually like when the concert came I just kind of bought the ticket anyway so that I really, because it was non-refundable so I’m...

L: Unh unh

J: Not going to waste my money so...

L: Yeah
J: I just bought the ticket. And then she kind of helped my try to plan it. But at first she was like, you don’t need to be going to this place. And like, I have a car and like, yeah she bought it but, she doesn’t like when I try to drive long distances because she still feel like it’s her car, so.

L: Yeah. I get it.

J: Yeah

L: OK. So, one thing we didn’t touch upon, what about your choice to go to college. What influence did she have over that?

J: Uh, every influence like, it was go to college, go to the military, get out of the house, like it wasn’t really like, never, no trade school or maybe get like a job. It was like senior year came around and she was just like pressuring me out like, go take this SAT, like, go do this ACT because you’re going to college.

L: Um huh

J: So I didn’t really want, I (unintelligible), I don’t really want to go to college. She was like, you’re going, like, if, I don’t know what else you want to do. You’re either going to college or into the military. Me, I’m like, I don’t want to go in the military so I guess college is like where it’s at. So, yeah, that’s why I’m here.

L: And then what about this specific college, university? How did you end up here?

J: Uh, honestly, one of my friends, I had this friend in high school named Jack and he was like, he like yo, we should go to, like I hate to say this but he was like, yo we need to go to (university). It’s so lit, like.

L: Hmm

J: And I’m like what? Because I never heard of (university) because, like yeah I say I’m from like, (large city), but like, I didn’t really come up there, so I don’t really know what everyone else knows about the area but, as soon as I said I might be going to (university) everyone was like: yo that’s such a fun school, party school. I’m like, oh, what’s up. I’m with it and, it was the only school I applied to because he said he was going. And when I got in he ended up not coming for the summer. Yeah, he and, like, he was supposed to be my roommate and he ended up not coming. So, I (unintelligible) but, yeah my friend. And then my mom when she found out, she started doing research, she was like, so, she was like, I heard that this is a pretty big party school. Is that why you want to go here? And I’m like, no, not really it’s just a cool school. And around that time she found out that she got orders to go to Georgia.

L: Um huh

J: So, like towards the end she was like, are you sure you don’t want to go to school like, in Georgia?

L: Um huh

J: She said I’d be close to you and I can help you out but, I was like, I mean I already applied here so it was too late.
1. L.: Great. OK, so apart from any helicopter parenting that you’ve experienced, how would you describe other aspects of your relationship with your mom now that you’re in college?

2. J.: As in like?


4. J.: Um, me and my mom have a really good relationship.

5. L.: Um hm.

6. J.: It’s like, she’s like a, I guess like a best friend now. Like, we, like I said we text every day like, on Instagram, she got an Instagram, we’ll like send each other funny photos, like, we’re like that now so it’s pretty cool. I don’t get to see her much because like, I can’t really just leave school to drive like 5 hours to go home and stuff like that. But, man we have a pretty good relationship.

7. L.: Hm

8. J.: We talk every day. And all that. FaceTime, everything!

9. L.: Perfect. Um, OK, so now I want to explore any ways that helicopter parenting has affected various parts of your life while you’re in college. So, can you tell me how the helicopter parenting has affected your relationship with your mom?

10. J.: Um, as in like?

11. L.: So you said that maybe now she’s a little bit more hands on than she was before so how is that affects your relationship at all?

12. J.: Um, I guess, uh, sometime if I want to take initiative she’ll kind of get mad at me for doing that. My- I’m not going to say mad but she’ll be like feeling some type of way like. I remember I was going to move out of my apartment to try to move in with my girlfriend and she was just like, no. She’s like, no you’re not doing that. I’m like what do you mean. It’s going to save money. She was like, no, you’re not moving out of that apartment. And like I could have if I wanted to…

13. L.: Um hm

14. J.: because she can’t do anything but I didn’t and that was an argument we had for a little bit. Um, I don’t know if this counts but like, I need so, I used to have braces…

15. L.: Um hm

16. J.: and, like, (unintelligible) dentist appointment but, like, she’s always trying to get me to go to the dentist. And like she sent me a whole list but like, me I’m not trying to call them and be the one that’s making that appointment when I feel like she should be the one that do it and like, yeah but (unintelligible) and stuff, but I’m like, you know what to say. I’ve never done this before.

17. L.: So that’s, and that’s why I won’t make a dentist appointment. That she isn’t trying to take the initiative to set up my appointment. Now I guess it is my fault. But I still feel like she should be the one that sets up the appointment because it’s like, I’m under her insurance until I’m like 25 or something because I’m in school. So, yeah that was something we’ve had to argue about before.
L: Did you end up moving in with your girlfriend?
J: No, I'm, I'm just over there all the time but I didn't move in.
L: Ok. Hey, that works. Um, Jay can you describe any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your relationship with your brothers?
J: 13:31 Um, how does that... I mean, (unreadable) I guess, in regards to me, um, my older brother, I mean I guess 'cause he, like I said he took like the bad route, and he eventually like, he moved out. When we came to (State) he didn't come with us.
L: Um huh
J: And he was the one that like, yo, she is like doing too much for you. You need to be like, independent like, yada yada yada. You, you like you growing up some and, and him were arguing one day 'cause I'm like yo, like, I'm not about that. To do all this. If she's willing to, you know, take care of me and kind of like, put me on her shoulders then why should I have to do more. And he wasn't having that 'cause, like, when they, when he was growing up she, like I said, we were like working class to where she is now and, they did like, (unreadable) so he didn't really have much and he had to work on his own so, to see her give me all this stuff and like, help me so much, like push me to do college. He was like, yo, you need to be like appreciative of this and like, don't take it for granted. So, I mean I guess that's that.
L: Yeah, that's great. What about your younger brother?
J: My younger brother. He doesn't. Yeah he doesn't care about anything. He's like, he's to, he's in like a world of his own man. Like all he does is play video games. So.
L: Mn. That's interesting. Ok, so tell me about any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your social life?
J: My social life? Um, I guess, like I said in high school I wasn't able to go to any...
L: Um huh
J: I think, I couldn't go to like parties, really 'cause my mom was like why you going out past, I think my curfew was midnight, which sounds like late but that's not really even late when you're a senior in high school 'cause everyone's out.
L: Um huh
J: So midnight was my curfew. Um. I couldn't go to people's sleep overs. And then, now, um, my social life, I guess, um, I had like a bad roommate experience my sophomore year. I was living with these two females and my, they pretty much knew like how involved my mom was involved in my life...
L: Um huh
J: and like how she was doing this for me and like, how (unreadable) this and they would like, passionate about it like, talking crap about me. Yeah, they would just talk crap about me all the time to like, and they, they wouldn't say it to my face I'd find out from other people that they're...
E: Uma
F: basically because my mom was taking care of me,
L: That’s hard
F: Yeah, it sucks, but I mean, manable.
L: What about any relationships with friends who, do you have any friends who didn’t go to college?
F: Mum, ‘yes.
L: Did it, has the helicopter parenting affected your relationship with any of those friends?
F: ‘Um, not necessarily because like in High School my friends, they all, like one of, I had like two
best friends in high school and one of them went military and then the other one to another
college...
L: ‘Um ‘um
F: but, no one, like, none of my friends I could say are like not doing anything, so, I guess we’re
all great, good.
L: Good. ‘Um, describe for me any ways that helicopter parenting has affected your
relationships or your attitudes towards instructors or other people who work at the university?
F: ‘Um, are you saying like how my mom has had an effect on how I see them?
L: ‘Um ‘um
F: ‘Um, I’m trying to think. Example... ‘Um, I guess I can say like if something, maybe like a
professor (unintelligible) if I feel like I’m not getting something in a class, my mom, like if I tell
her that she’s the one that’s like, you need to go like, press them and that, talk to them like, me
I’ll be like, I mean I guess I’ll just take this grade and it’s like my fault.
L: ‘Um ‘um
F: She’s the one that’s like you need to be the enforcer. Go talk to this professor. Go email him.
Go to their office hours. So I guess, does that count?
L: ‘Yeah, definitely. So if something happens, if you bring her a problem she will help?
F: She’s the one that tells me, like, she’s the one that’s like, you need to do this. Like I’m not
really good at like...
J: solving problems. So she’ll be the one like, yeah you need to go do this, go do that, and she’s never been to college so how does she really know what, of course I’ll take her word for it because...
L: Yeah
J: It’s her.
L: Do you find that it usually works?
J: Um, to me it does ‘cause I feel like if it’s coming from her then it works somewhere.
L: Yeah. Great. Um, so what about like I know you have had jobs and stuff on campus before. Is it the same thing? With, like you just talked about professors. Is it the same thing with any bosses or supervisors?
J: 17:51 Um, but I can honestly say, I’ve never, I haven’t really had like any bad experiences with bosses on campus.
L: Well that’s good then.
F: Yeah. (Name) has been like the only one like...
L: Um, Ok, so describe any ways that helicopter parenting has affected you academically as a student? And so this can include your behavior inside and outside of class, your grades, your choice of major, or anything.
J: Um, I guess I said the biggest effect on my choice of major.
L: Um hm
J: Like I said, like, my mom was always trying to get me to do something like business or (unintelligible) or something that was going to make me money. And like, she did try, like I can, she tried so much to even do something like that but I just, I wasn’t going for it. Like I didn’t...
L: Yeah
J: I knew like I’m not, ‘cause I talk to anybody, yo, don’t do something because of the money. Do it ‘cause it’s going to make you happy.
L: Um hm
J: And she doesn’t want to hear that. But that makes, (unintelligible) something in me, so, I guess in that regard, it didn’t really work but she definitely had like that output on what I did.
L: 18:44 Ok, and so what about a future, a choice of future career after you graduate?
J: Um, (pause) I guess, I need you, ok, so, after I graduate I’m going in the military.
L: Um hm
J: And she’s not, like, she’s in the military and she’s not for that. Like she doesn’t like that.
L: Interesting
F: Yeah she doesn’t want me to go into the military. Like, I remember one time, it, like, not to get off topic, but...
I: yeah
F: one time, um, it was right after freshman year and I was really trying to not come back to university.
I: um hm
F: I didn’t really like school. Like I said, I didn’t want to come back. But, I was talking to recruiters and stuff and I needed to get my birth certificate from her to like, you know keep going through the process and stuff and she didn’t want to give me my birth certificate. She was like, she was like I don’t think you should stop going to school to go in the military. And I’m like, I’m like well I’m going to do this. She was like, no you don’t need to do all that. And she kept like, putting it off...
I: um hm
F: putting it off. And eventually I was like, I guess you don’t want me to not come back to school cause you’re not going to give me my birth certificate and I kind of need that to keep going.
I: um hm
F: So, yeah, she’s definitely the reason I’m still here because she didn’t want to give...
I: Yeah
F: me the information I needed to leave.
I: So how does she feel then about you potentially going into the military after graduation?
F: I mean, (pause) she’s, (pause) she’s like ok with it now because like, I mean she won. Like I, if I finish school she won...
I: um hm
F: ...in that aspect, but, um, she just, like, when I do say I want to go in the military she just says don’t go Army. She’s like, go Air Force.
I: ok
F: or something else, but don’t go Army. Because she’s in the Army.
I: She is
F: Yeah she’s giving me her, like, back(unintelligible)
I: um hm
F: This isn’t where you’re going to be at. Like, you’re worth more than that, and...
I: ok
F: So, yeah.
L: Wow. Ummm (pause) so what about ways in which helicopter parenting has affected your grades?
E: Umm (pause) I could say, I guess it's helped me for the better.
L: Um hm
E: For the most part. Like I'm not going to say I'm like no straight A student or nothing but, um, my mom was definitely like, (unintelligible) if I have trouble with something I'll ask her what she knows about it. And she'll be like, all wait, cause she has like, married, it's crazy that I just remember this but her, uh, she got like an on-line, like, since she's been in the military she did like on-line classes and it's been in Sociology. Yeah, and I did, like it's crazy that I just now remembered that, but it was in Sociology. So like, I have a question or something and I'll ask her and then she'll give me some feedback and I'll just go off of that.
L: Great
E: Yeah, she's helped me out.
L: Awesome. And you think your grades are higher because of that? Or they're better?
E: Umm, I'm not going to say higher, but they're probably better because like, I got her, like in my ear, like, keep doing good. And then, like, she'll give me like, incentive. So like yeah, she's definitely (unintelligible)
L: Awesome
E: She's the motivating factor, not myself.
L: External motivation.
E: Yeah
L: Umm. What about your attitude towards completing college?
E: Um, towards completing. I guess (pause) I mean I kinda, yeah I kinda went over that. Like yeah, she's like, she's the one that's making me stay here 'cause like, if it was up to me I wouldn't even be here.
L: Um hm
E: But, she's like, you need to do this 'cause she's, kinda, kinda got me like convinced that if you don't go to college you won't make money.
L: Um hm
E: So I'm like, man I need to do this college stuff, so I can succeed because mom said so, and, yeah.
L: Yeah. So even now if you, if she gave you that option you'd want to leave (university) now?
E: Ye, yeah. I have...
L: Ok
J: to say like, I don’t know, it’s just ‘cause school is just, I really don’t like school that much.
L: I get it.
J: Yeah, that’s why when you said six years I’m like, oh man.
L: (laughs) Yeah, I didn’t know that when I started, that it was going to…
J: Really
L: Be at least, yeah, so that’s, so I (laughs), I got tricked kind of. Umm, alright and then, with the final one from that topic, so your behavior inside and outside of class. Umm, so this could be your attitude towards attending class or participating in class, anything like that.
J: Umm, she doesn’t really have an effect on that.
L: Ok
J: Naw, I just, yeah, she doesn’t have an, I just chill.
L: Uhm
J: I just sit back. I go to, I, I’m not going to say I go to class as much as, like I know if she know how much I wasn’t going she would definitely like, put her foot down but she just doesn’t. Because there’s no way for her of knowing.
L: Because you just don’t tell her and then…
J: No, I don’t tell her at all.
L: Ok, I mean that, that’s an effect though. That you, you know you can’t tell her…
J: Yeah, exactly.
L: Or else she’ll be upset about it. Umm, ok, so now can you tell me about any ways helicopter parenting has affected you personally, and by this I mean, it could be physically, emotionally, psychologically, or anything else.
J: Umm, I feel like it’s definitely affected me psychologically. Umm, kind of with my confidence, like, somethings that I know I should be doing…
L: Uhm
J: I’m not doing because my mom is doing it for me. Like I, I have friends that are like, like people that didn’t have their parent or parents in their life. They’re like starting their own car payments. They’re like, paying their own bills, insurance, and I’m like, you know, I couldn’t never do that because I don’t know how, like how do I go, like I can’t cook. I’m like probably 21 and I still can’t cook anything besides like pancakes. And that’s not good because my mom’s always the one…
L: Uhm
J: that like doing all this for me. And, I just feel like that’s kind of mess me up a little bit in the long, like know, I hate like, like now it sounds good to be able to have someone like in your
corner all the time and like, hovering over you a little bit, but, in the long run like she's not going to be here on my back forever so it like kind of sucks...

L: Um hm

J: 'cause I know that eventually there's going to be a time when I have to like, man up and, it's going, I'm going to be like scramble for myself kinda because I don't know...

L: Yeah

J: the real world. THEN (unintelligible) it sucks 'cause, like right now I'm in college but, I feel like I'm not going through the same college struggles as everyone else because they have like, they're stressed out about school and stuff like, me and school stressed, but I don't even care like, that much...

L: Um hm

J: about school as they do 'cause they're like, paying out of pocket and stuff. Like, I'm not paying. I have no debt to my name for loans, like, yeah it's like I have it really sweet and I, I don't think I get it because my, like, she's there like, kinda pushing me through everything and kinda like, doing everything for me and so, definitely messed me up like, psychologically, and like, with my confidence, because certain (unintelligible) I just can't do unless I have something.

someone there to help me do it.

L: Yeah. So does she have a plan then, or do you all have a plan after you graduate? Are you going to move to (State) where she is?

J: 25:04 No, she said I can't come back. She said like once you're out you're out. I'm not going back like, I mean like my plan is to just like, graduate and then like, hopefully be like, enlisting...

L: Right

J: right after so I can just go to basic and then, start my life....

L: And then they'd decide where you go.

J: Um hm

L: Um hm. Ok. Oh yeah, I forgot about that. Ok, um so now let's think about ways you've tried to deal with, or cope with helicopter parenting. Either on your own or with the help of others while you're in college. So, can you describe any ways that you yourself have tried to deal with or cope with the helicopter parenting.

J: Cope with this. In like any, any aspect of it

L: Any aspect. Yeah.

J: Um, how have I tried to cope with it. Unnnnn. I guess I try to, I try to make decisions that'll make her happy.

L: Um hm
J: Where like, as far as myself like, I do something like, umm, getting involved on campus, I feel like I did that probably for her and not for myself. I hate to say that but like...
L: No
J: ‘cause she’s, she wanted me to like, kinda make this college thing work. And I remember she used to try and get me to go like, Greek and I was never interested in...
L: OK
J: like fraternity sorority life. But she’s always trying to push me, yeah, go do this, go do that...
L: Um huh
J: and I didn’t want to do that but, I did get involved on campus like she wanted me to, so I guess she had like a positive effect on that and I kinda cope into like her vision of what college should be, like for me because I’m trying to do stuff that she would want me to do and, you know, live a lifestyle for her. But, and any other aspects, um, I haven’t really had the, too much...
L: Yeah. Um, have you, in any way have you ha, tried to ha. Ok. Hold on. Sorry. Describe for me any other ways that other people have tried to help you deal with that?
J: 26:48 Umm, let me see. (long pause) I guess (pause) I guess my older brother, like I said...
L: Um huh
J: he, he’s the one that’s always like, yeah you’re taking this stuff for granted so, he’s the one like tries to like give me the edge to try to be more like, independent like, maybe stop asking for stuff as much, ‘cause I know I do kinda ask for stuff like, I ain’t going to say a lot, but I do ask. I feel comfortable asking her ‘cause I know she’ll do it.
L: Um huh
J: as he’s the one that like, don’t ask her for stuff when you know you can go do it yourself. Like, I can go get another job and make money. As far as like, and like I don’t have to ask her for stuff...
L: Um huh
J: anymore. So he’s the one that’s trying to help me cope. I guess like, break out of that, like having a helicopter parent.
L: Yeah
J: and he’s definitely trying to interfere. Like he’ll even be talking to her about how she’s doing too much for me and like, she needs to cool out but she’s still like, she feels like, she didn’t get that coming up so she wants to it for us. [Like, she’s said that like, how like when she was growing up her, like my grandma was never home so it was always just them. And she was like, she didn’t want that to happen to us so she wanted to like, give us everything she can.
L: Um huh
J: and more, so, yeah.
L: Great. So, you and your mom are kind of on the same page with how you’re going to react. And then it’s your older brother who feels like things should be different?

J: Yeah. It’s my older brother and like my whole family really, like they don’t like, like, I’m like, I was like the kid that they would like, talk about, like…

L: Hmm

J: 28:11 because yeah, I mean I was like, always the spoiled kid that’s like getting babied all the time. And it’s only because my mom could do that, like she…

L: Mm hm

J: every. I feel like everyone should, like, to an extent just like, help out as much as they can. Like I know it might seem like too much but, if you can help, why not help them. And they, it’s like they kinds, like my brother and them they kinds like, they like to see struggle for some reason. I don’t know why…

L: Mm hm

J: but like they feel like everyone should struggle because, I guess it makes them better maybe…

L: Mm hm

J: but, I don’t know, so it’s definitely (trails off)

L: So when you said your whole family feels that way, do you mean like your extended family?

J: Yeah, like my mom’s side, like…

L: Un hm

J: my cousin’s up they’re always like, this man J, uh, he ain’t got nothin by his self. It’s all his mom. And I’m like, what, like…

L: Un hm

J: I’ve worked, like I’ve saved up my own money it’s just she’s helping me as well so, they kind of like, create their own connections of like, me, and…

L: Yeah

J: it’s because they think I’m just a spoiled, pretty kid. Ain’t like, it is to an extent, but at the same time I’m st-, kinds doing something myself but they don’t see that. They just see her and just automatically see like, you know he’s getting it all from her.

L: Un hm. Do you feel like that’s affected your relationship with that side of the family?

J: Un hm. It used to when I was younger. Like, when I was younger I guess it used to ‘cause they used to talk about it. Like, when I moved down there for unnnm, 7th grade, I got like my own debit card and stuff and they didn’t like that I had like a debit card and I was. Yeah, I don’t, it’s crazy right? Like my family man, they’re, (State) I think it’s something in the water, but they just didn’t like how I was just getting all this stuff, and they would really talk about me. So yeah, at that time…

Commented [HL50]: Upset that his brother and extended family describe him as spoiled as a result of being helicopter parented.
L: That’s really hard.
J: Yeah, at the time I didn’t like that. And she would even, like, (unintelligible) yeah they’re really coming, like, coming for me like that, so that wasn’t cool.
L: And then do you feel like your mom defended you then to...
J: Yes. One hundred, yeah, one hundred percent. My mom’s always in my corner. Like, she’s the only one. So.
L: That’s great.
J: Yeah, she is.
L: Unum, OK, and in the last section I want to talk about any future goals that you have for yourself, as far as education, future career, or dealing with the helicopter parenting. So tell me any goals that you have for yourself as far as education.
J: Uh, finish up this, uh, last year hopefully, next year. And then, I probably won’t go back to col. I mean, I don’t know, I want to go in the military to get a GI Bill to pay for like, a Masters or something but that’s like, I’m not really tripping if I can do that. So education wise, um.
L: Well you have very concrete plans for yourself.
J: I hope it works out.
L: Yeah
J: It sounds good I hope.
L: It does. Unum alright, so then this kind of goes off that. Any goals that you have for yourself as far as a career.
J: As far as a career?
L: Unum
J: Unum, yeah, just like, hopefully get into the, the Air Force. I want to be an officer, like, I didn’t do ROTC or anything. But, I feel like, I do, some people are telling me it’s not a problem to get into RO, Officer Candidate School without doing ROTC because I have a degree, so if that works out hopefully I’ll get to be an officer. Or something.
L: OK, great. And then what would you do after that?
J: Uh, I mean hopefully like, do your 20 years, retire, get maybe like a job working for the government or something.
L: Yeah. Cool.
J: Something like that.
L: Unum, do you have any other goals for yourself as far as dealing with helicopter parenting or coping with it?
J: Coping with it. Um, (pause), I guess I do want to deal with more because, like I was talking
to my girlfriend, like I want to be more independent and, like, try to tell my mom to like, cool
out. (Unintelligible) because I feel like it will help me in the long run like, right now it might
suck to like not have someone like, like your angel hovering over you all the time but, I'm like in
the long run it'll help me. So, yeah, I definitely plan on telling her to like, chill out, with like,
how much she does for me. But then like a nicer way...
L: Um hm
J: like, maybe tell like, hey, like I know you're doing this, but like maybe don't do this for a
little while. See how that goes.
L: Um hm
J: and then, you know.
L: Would you do that during college or afterwards?
J: Uhh, during college.
L: OK. And there's no right or wrong answer, you know?
J: Yeah, probably during college. 'Cause after college I don't, like I don't see her having that
much of an effect on me as far as like helicopter parenting after college. Like right now I feel
like she's doing, like I said, just 'cause like, I'm the kid, I'm the golden child right now so she's
doing all this stuff but, afterwards I feel like it won't (tails off)
L: Like you'll be an adult, the second...
J: like, yeah, I'll be like...
L: you graduate
J: Yeah, I feel like once I graduate I'll be like, an adult, like, I'm done with all this stuff.
L: Um hm. And have you talked to your mom about that or that's just the feeling that you get?
J: That's just the feeling that I get.
L: OK
J: Like, yeah, I don't know, it's, like my mom like, like she's really nice so she'll say
something, but she'll do another thing, like, so far as like if I said something about, or no she'll
say something like yeah, I'm going to cut you off. She's joking, like-
L: OK
J: I'm getting the same things constantly. Like she'll just say that to I guess make me feel like I
need to step up but, she never does it.
L: Um kay. Um, and then finally is there anything else that you think it would be important for
me to know?
J: Um, as far as like helicopter parenting?
L: Anything, yeah.
J: Um, I don't know if this is helpful but I feel like helicopter parenting isn't good. For like, I feel it isn't good for the individual. Maybe for the parent it could be good, like 'cause it gives them that feeling like, yeah I'm helping them out for the better. Like making them, like in my mom's case she's giving me something that she didn't get so I'll, you know that probably makes her feel good, but as far as like the individual or, the child, like, too much help can be a bad thing. 'Cause it'll affect you, like I said (unintelligible) Like, it's a lot of stuff that I know I should be able to do but, I don't know how to do that because I've always had her like, doing everything for me, taking care of me, setting up appointments. Like I'm 20 and not setting up appointments because I want my mom to do it. Like, that's not good. Um, and then, really like my, kind of, I feel like my outlook on like life thing has been affected as well by, that, helicopter parenting. Like, I feel like, like I say I, I know I say it's a bad thing but I feel like everyone should still be helped at the same time so I feel like when I get older I'll probably be a helicopter parent to, like, taking care of my kids even though I just said like, it's not a good thing 'cause I feel like it just makes the parent feel better about themselves. Like it's something like you wish you could give someone that you didn't get.
L: So where do you think that line is then between helping and helicopter parenting?
J: Uh, I feel like helping, uh, is a necessities. Uh, helicopter parenting is just doing too much, like. Necessities and one, necessities that's like, um, I wouldn't even put college in necessities 'cause not everyone gets to go to college and can pay for it. Like I know people paying for it themselves. So I wouldn't put that in like the necessities. Uh, that's definitely some helicopter parenting. 'Cause I'm going to college for free. Through my mom, like. Um, and another line I guess would be, um, I don't know, like, anything that's like, extracurricular. I don't even know if that's the right word, but like anything that's not a need. A need would be, um, high schooling, uh, school supplies. Stuff like that. Getting you into like, make like some after school program could be a need 'cause you need that social life. But, um, going that extra mile is like, taking over like, control of their life I think. That'll be doing too much, and that's when they 'come, turn into helicopter parenting 'cause my mom, I guess she's like helped me and like doing the good stuff, but she's got like that control factor. It's a little like, it's not, and that's not like a negative thing when I say control, it's just like she's controlling me to make me do something I maybe wouldn't have done unless it was for her.
L: Yeah.
J: Was that, I don't know if that was...
L: No, that was great. Yeah. You said before, like, when she tells you what to do to your professors or, you know, what to do with them, and stuff, you said that she has control but sometimes it works out for the better?
J: Yeah, I like, I feel it like it works out for the better 'cause like, like I said it's like when it's coming from her it's like it feels different, like to have, like, as far as like, say like a, I know for instance let me tell you, the first day of class come to office hours if you have questions I won't do it but like, once my mom says it, it's like, ok maybe I should go into these office hours 'cause she's telling me to do it. And that's how, like, you know, she kind of like, kicking me to do that. That's like the help me factor.
L: Yeah but you wouldn’t go if your mom didn’t tell you to go?

J: Naw I probably wouldn’t. (unintelligible) If she didn’t tell me to go to some of these office hours I don’t think I would, (pause) because, (pause) I don’t know. Like I just feel like when she’s telling me to do something it’s like, and she has no way of even finding out that I’m even doing this stuff, but it’s just like…

L: That’s true.

J: It’s just like that, I’ve a guilty conscience, like, with her that’s like, I have a guilty conscience. If I don’t do something like, I don’t lie to like my mom or like nobody really but, with her I’m definitely gonna do what she asked me to do.

L: Yeah. That’s a good point. She wouldn’t know if you did it any way but she trusts that you would tell her the truth.

J: Yeah she trusts me, so.

L: Yeah.

J: I always do what she tells me to do or like, at least consider what she would want me to do when I do something.

L: Um hm. So if she told you to do something, like when she wanted you to go Greek and you didn’t want to do that, what did that conversation look like?

J: Uh, it was kinda like, she, she wanted be like, she like, oh you ain’t never gonna go be like one of these so and so fraternity or something. And I’m like, so I never did want to be those. And she like, you should ‘cause it’ll look good on this and that and, you know, it’ll be fun for you. And I’m like, naw, like it, it’s just not me. And she, I mean she didn’t really take it hard or nothing, she was just kind of like, I think like, well you should really reconsider that, like. She wanted me to do it like she was living through me or something.

L: So then when you did get involved on campus, but it wasn’t Greek life, was that good enough for her, that you were involved?

J: Yeah, that was, yeah, I can say that, yeah, she was praising me a lot on Facebook. Like, when I got the (Campus) job that was like, she thought that was pretty tight.

L: That is, it’s awesome.

J: Yeah, yeah. But, but, I would say yeah that’s something to be hyped about. So, yeah, she definitely was, like, man he’s taking like these leadership roles like, and then like I said the golden child that’s when she’s always talking about me on her Facebook. So, you know when I got involved on campus that was like good for her. Like she wanted, like that made her, I feel like that made her feel like I was doing college. When I started getting like, she seen the results like, right now she’s, I’ve never even showed her like my final grades or nothing it’s all word of mouth like. I don’t lie but, she isn’t really seen anything and I feel like with that, she saw like…

L: OK so do you think that there’s anything else you need to tell me about helicopter parenting, your relationship with your mom, anything?
1: Um, well do you feel like I touched, I feel like, I don't know if I answered the questions.
2: L: Yeah, no, this was great. Um, I really appreciate it and I feel like I have a pretty good idea of, you know, how it's affected your life and your schooling and your attitude towards everything. Um, I do want to know though really, you know you just, you've said multiple times everything's word of mouth with your mom, and she believes you, um, even if it's not the best, you know. What, what would you say is the reason you don't lie to her?
3: J: Uh, (pause) That's a good question.
4: L: I'm just curious because some people would just lie. Yeah, yeah, I'm going to office hours, or, you know,
5: J: Ummm, I don't know. It just makes me feel bad. 'cause it's my mom. Like I, I, like we have that such a good relationship and like, she's doing all this for me like, the least I could do is like not lie to her like, why lie to everyone, there's nothin'. I mean nothin' bad would happen if I like lied. Know what I'm saying? Like it wouldn't, nothin' bad would happen if I don't do what she says but, it just like makes me feel better. Makes her feel better. So why not just do what I said I would do?
6: L: Yeah. Do you think if you got into like really bad trouble, is there any situation where you wouldn't tell her?
7: J: Ummm, yeah I wouldn't tell her. Yeah if I got in trouble I wouldn't tell my mom. I know I wouldn't. Cause she would be so let down like, (unintelligible) like, this whole, like, me being in college. If it was something like, say for example, that could get me locked up or like, out of school that would her her probably more than it hurts me and I wouldn't want her to like, find out about that so I would definitely keep it under the rug. I would tell my older brother. 'Cause he's the one, like he'll probably able to give me some insight on what to do, but I wouldn't tell her.
8: L: No. Because you don't want her to be hurt about it?
9: J: Yeah, I don't want her to be hurt about it and I know, like, if I mess up, everything is gone. Like, the relationship gone, like, like I said the helicopter parenting, all the stuff I get out of that and how she's, you know, trusting me. That's going to cut off too. So, that's definitely why I don't do bad stuff. Like I don't get, I've never gotten in trouble like, in high school I was never suspended from school. No referrals. So, yeah she's definitely a big factor behind that.
10: L: Awesome. That's really cool. OK. If you don't have anything else to tell me, we're all set.
11: J: Ok
12: L: Ok
13:
Appendix G

List of Categories and Associated Subcategories
**Category 1: Origins of Helicopter Parenting**

### Middle School

#### General
- 514. Helicopter parenting started in middle school
- 134. Hated being helicopter parented as a child; wanted freedom

#### Academic Issues
- 368. Harsh punishment for B on math test; dad doubted she applied herself
- 441. Worked out an issue with her teacher but mom went to superintendent anyway

#### Efforts to alter friendship group
- 436. Mom withheld electronics and social activities to get her to change her friend group

### High School

#### Influences of Social Activities
- 18. Mother strictly controlled sleepovers in high school
- 148. Mother didn’t allow sleepovers
- 317. Went to lots of sleepovers to get away from helicopter parenting
- 318. Hurt mom’s feelings that she didn’t want to host sleepovers and have friends around her mom
- 521. Dad strictly monitored sleepovers
- 82. Mother regulated friend outings in high school
- 84. Mom strictly controlled all aspects of social life in high school
- 144. Mom strictly controlled social events/ attendance
- 149. Mother strictly controlled going to friends’ houses
- 166. Mom strictly controlled high school friendships; friends not allowed to come over
- 542. She rejected all social invites because she assumed dad wouldn’t allow her to go
- 543. Had one friend
- 518. Dad strictly controlled social life
- 522. Dad had to meet any parents before she could go to their house
- 534. Dad strictly controlled with whom she could ride in a car
- 545. Dad disapproved of friend’s mom; allowed friend over but Claire couldn’t go to friend’s home
- 254. Didn’t have many friends in high school; only from church
- 274. Only one friend from childhood didn’t have helicopter parents; told Jane behavior wasn’t normal
- 472. Mom tries to helicopter her high school best friend
- 273. High school friends loved mom

#### Academic Issues
- 359. Dad chose high school classes for her based on potential lucrative STEM degree; bad at math
- 360. Dad wanted her to take extra summer math (unnecessary)
- 442. Mom was in constant contact with teachers
| 443. Mom chose AP classes for her despite previous poor grades |
| 444. Parents didn’t believe her or teacher that she was trying but couldn’t understand the material; blamed poor grades on her lack of trying |
| 549. Dad in constant contact with teachers |
| 550. Dad closely monitored homework completion and studying |

**Influences on Aspects of Daily Life**

| 151. Mom didn’t allow walking to neighborhood store |
| 85. Mother forbid Beach Week trip |
| 86. Had to turn in written document whenever she wanted permission to go somewhere socially |
| 520. (high school) couldn’t attend beach vacation with friend’s family (sharks and drowning) |
| 153. (high school) Wouldn’t allow him to swim because of drowning fear |
| 34. Mother imposed midnight curfew in high school (parties) |
| 319. Thought curfew in high school meant mom didn’t trust her |
| 316. Had curfew in high school but brother does not |
| 546. Dad didn’t allow dating |
| 547. Boys weren’t allowed in her bedroom |

**Reactions to Helicopter Parenting**

| 406. Fell into depression because of dad’s restrictive rules; didn’t have friends |
| 118. Very embarrassed by mom’s actions and wanted a parent who didn’t care |
| 119. Presumed helicopter parenting was result of mom not trusting her |
| 234. Never had rebellious phase |
| 271. Never coped with helicopter parenting in high school |
| 389. Chose to live alone in high school when mom deployed rather than living with dad (HP) |
| 564. Went to a therapist because she couldn’t talk to her dad about her depression |
| 567. Her approach to dealing with helicopter parenting was “I would probably cry.” |
| 568. Had frequent arguments with dad over the frequency of purchasing “women things” because he didn’t understand and refused to talk about specifics |
| 159. Cried at night because he couldn’t wait to get away from his mom |
| 184. Never wanted to be at home with mom |

**Nature of Helicopter Parenting**

| 83. Helicopter parenting got worse after she lied to mom about where she was going |
| 87. Mother required herself to be on all bank accounts |
| 152. Mom would show up places to check the honesty of his plans |
| 497. From high school onward, parents searched her car for contraband |
| 515. Dad gave directives on clothes and chores |
| 215. Helicopter parenting started when she got her license at 16 |
## Category 2: Helicopter Parenting during College Can Take a Variety of Forms

### Influences on Academics and Extracurricular Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attending College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>116. Only went to community college to not let mother down</td>
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<tr>
<td>265. No option but to finish college; doesn’t want mom’s anger or guilt</td>
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<tr>
<td>447. Mom wanted her to quit Target Institution and attend community college for original major; did not accept R’s dislike of major</td>
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<tr>
<td>452. Mother wanted to pull her out of Target Institution for drinking at age 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Mother is directive about attending college</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Mother gave choice between college or military</td>
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<tr>
<td>115. Never wanted to attend college; only went to make mom happy</td>
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<tr>
<td>139. Mom always prioritized education</td>
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<tr>
<td>143. Mother gave choice: military or college</td>
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<tr>
<td>221. Mom has not received raises or promotions because of no college degree; Jane and sisters didn’t have the option to not go to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342. Always felt expected to attend college; no other option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Attaining a college degree to achieve success; “because Mom said so.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222. Grandparents wanted her to attend a close college; mother wanted her to attend an inexpensive college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Tried to quit school and enlist in the military; mother wouldn’t give him his birth certificate so he gave up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Only remains enrolled in university due to mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117. Wanted to quit college; mom wouldn’t allow it</td>
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<tr>
<td>431. Mom called master’s program when Rebecca hadn’t heard about admission decision</td>
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<td>432. Mom doesn’t understand chosen professional field or information given about field and graduate school; Mom calls schools</td>
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<td>435. Parents are not familiar with this graduate school process; try to control the process because they think she does not understand it</td>
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<tr>
<td>439. Mom wanted to call the master’s program that rejected R; first time R ever put her foot down</td>
</tr>
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### Choice of Institution

| 27. Mother wanted him to stay closer to her for college |
| 96. Mother disapproved of choosing a college based on boyfriend |
| 301. Parents only allowed matriculation at Target Institution because of prestigious nursing program; would not have been okay with easier major |
| 90. She attended community college and then 4-year institution |
| 93. Mother suggested community college to ease college transition |
| 94. Mom encourages community college as a financially responsible decision; mother paying entire college tuition |
| 523. Dad approved of Target Institution because he visited multiple times |
| 560. Dad loves Target Institution |
| 155. Chose university because of distance from home; mom couldn't visit without warning |
173. Wishes she had chosen a university even farther away from parent(s)
25. University choice made based on friend and party reputation
370. Chose Target Institution because coworker suggested it
371. Dad concerned about Target Institution’s party reputation
447. Mom wanted her to quit Target Institution and attend community college for original major; did not accept R’s dislike of major
561. Chose Target Institution for major and to be with her best friend

**Choice of Major or Minor**

11. Mother disapproves of choice of major and encourages minor (financial and employability decisions)
12. Mother encourages minor for employability
40. Felt pressure to pick a lucrative major because of his mother’s encouragement
176. Chose major because of mom’s encouragement of lucrative major
294. Mom pushed her into nursing major because it is financially lucrative and there are other nurses in the family
338. Mother encouraged lucrative major; feels her creativity was suppressed
366. Chose communications/PR major because family member does PR
409. Picked communication major to learn how to better deal with helicopter parenting
150. Chose major because of the breadth of scope
211. Political science major influenced by family’s encouragement of discussions
261. No effect on choice of major, but encourages bachelor’s degree and graduate school
339. Mother doesn’t value less rigorous majors
446. Major change led to increased helicopter parenting
448. Changed major without her parents knowledge to avoid argument

**Course-Related Issues**

171. Holds himself to a very high academic standard because of mom; hard on himself for Bs.
181. Gives 100% effort to anything he does because mom modeled work ethic
256. Has good academic habits because she was scared of guilt from mom
259. Mother’s guilt trips= very high college grades (3.9/4.0)
484. Pressure from mom to take 18 credits per semester, even when not necessary
373. Dad very directive about taking 18 credit hours/semester
553. Dad disapproves of dropping courses; thinks any bad grades are the result of not trying or skipping classes
475. Conflict with mother over demand to use disability accommodations
140. Mom holds him to a higher academic standard than siblings
299. Mother’s strict attitude about grades causes tears and distress
554. Pressure to get good grades comes from dad’s paying her tuition
474. Mom offers to contact instructors whenever classes are difficult
**General Academics**
38. Takes mother’s advice regarding college even though she’s never attended
Mother still gives suggestions on what to do and not do (e.g., going out before
a test)
303. Mom gives input on academic and social aspects of her life; causes
distress
343. Getting pressured from mom to graduate early
379. Followed dad’s academic rules one semester; ended up on academic
probation and depressed
266. Feels mother places unrealistic academic expectations on her
99. Mother checks all accounts and emails in secret even though she offers
information
341. Nervous that administrators/supervisors look down on her for mom’s
calls
445. Continuous cycle of mom breaking into her email and Rebecca changing
the password
323. Parents upset that FERPA doesn’t allow them to contact university
administrators
372. Dad very upset about lack of access to her information (FERPA)
449. Mom was very upset FERPA did not allow the school to give her access to
R’s academic records

**Extracurricular Activities**
52. Mother constantly pressures him to get involved on campus
97. Mother discouraged any clubs/orgs because emphasis should be on
academics
260. Never joined any social clubs in high school or college because mom
didn’t want her to take time away from schoolwork
378. Dad’s academic rules included no socializing or extracurriculars

**Influences on Social Activities**
35. Roommates privately critical of mother’s involvement in his life
168. Has very few true friends; does not trust easily
378. Dad’s academic rules included no socializing or extracurriculars
401. Dad’s directives to give up all social activities included lunch
402. Depressed when forced to give up her friends per dad’s directive
403. Following dad’s ultimatum put strain on friendships
451. Helicopter parenting increased when she joined a sorority and had friends
unfamiliar to her parents
250. Mom discourages dating
251. Currently dating; doesn’t spend every night alone with schoolwork
252. Feels mom’s expectations of not dating at all are unrealistic
404. Has never dated because she wants to avoid confrontation with dad
154. Mom tries to control social and academic trips
170. Mom taught him to treat any univ professional with respect even if he hates them  
207. Mom expected Jane to continue acting as parent to sister (also attends Target Institution)  
305. Mom gives input on academic and social aspects of her life; causes distress  
453. Mom gives directives about not drink ever, even at legal drinking age  
525. doesn’t trust that she isn’t underage drinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences on Financial Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87. Mother required herself to be on all bank accounts (high school and college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Mother is directive about how personal money can be spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>177. Mom has always controlled his personal finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179. Mom required him to sign FERPA waiver or else she wouldn’t pay for college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295. Financial stress of paying for college led mom to take it out on the kids context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311. Mom financially supports her by paying tuition and groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322. Financial support in college meant parents’ rules had to be followed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>377. Dad refused to pay tuition because she didn’t follow his academic rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380. Dad required her to quit jobs and clubs before he would pay tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>382. She decided to take loans rather than adhere to ultimatum anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>392. Dad financially pays for all bills and necessities; doesn’t want her to work or spend money on extras. She doesn’t want to be beholden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>393. Any money from dad comes with stipulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>394. Dad thinks no money should be spent on frivolous things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>554. Pressure to get good grades comes from dad’s paying her tuition</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences on Aspects of Daily Life</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30. Allows mother to make decisions about his living arrangements to avoid her anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324. Mom called T.I. and got involved in housing issue without Molly’s knowledge; molly embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>529. Still adheres to dad’s very strict cleanliness rules and clothing rules; negatively affects relationships with roommate and boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>175. Anxiety connected to daily decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66. Mom controls his decision-making but he admits that she makes better choices than he does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>524. Dad calls and texts frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156. Mom requested phone calls 4x a week; he refused but ends up talking every day</td>
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<tr>
<td>455. Parents request to track location through iPhone, but she denies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Mother controls car use (views as her own)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Mother has always influenced making his appointments; mother has argued with him about making his own appointments but she always relents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
186. Mom sets 8pm curfew during breaks
414. with PCOS. Dad didn’t want her tested because he said she’d use a medical condition as an excuse for poor academic performance
517. Dad gives directives on all aspects of her life (living, social, financial)
519. Dad was military police office; used fear of violent crime to scare her into behaving
544. Have to ask dad’s permission to snack at home
154. Mom tries to control social and academic trips
235. Talks to mom every day
320. Parents wait up until she comes home
4450. Continuous cycle of mom breaking into her email and Rebecca changing the password
463. Mom gives her a curfew when visiting home
469. Feels she isn’t allowed to do what her sisters could at her age
515. Dad gave directives on clothes and chores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences on Employment during College and Career Choice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment During College</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Mother is directive about obtaining a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. Expectation that she would be home for dinner even when working non-traditional retail schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>374. Dad very directive about not working during the academic year in order to achieve higher GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>386. Dad wanted to interfere with school-year job to get her dismissed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>457. Parents call to verify her location when she is at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>476. Parents want to visit place of employment to meet supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment After College</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Tried to quit school and enlist in the military; mother wouldn’t give him his birth certificate so he gave up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Mother encourages Air Force branch after graduation and not her branch for safety reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Mom says he can’t move back into her house after he graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113. Mother influence decision to pick a lucrative career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>557. Dad influences career decision because of financial implications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events Outside of College Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20. Resists mother’s efforts to prevent him from attending concert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100. Still provides mother with detailed documents about traveling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101. Difficult for mom to let her travel without her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132. Needs to provide mom with all details of travel plans (she has veto power)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210. Mom requires returning home from college most weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218. Mom and grandparents stay awake until she gets home; causes guilt that she’s keeping them awake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405. Scared of confrontations with dad over the choices she makes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### General forms of helicopter parenting and Related Behaviors

- 57. Mother defends him to extended family over accusations of being spoiled
- 102. Describes mom as a “warden”
- 223. Mother would use silent treatment when upset with choices made
- 224. Mom makes it clear when she doesn’t approve of choices made
- 227. Mom instills fear into siblings to avoid mistakes
- 325. Mother wants to intervene with any college issue
- 340. Always nervous mom will call university about problems behind her back
- 131. Mom wants things done her way
- 146. Mother’s experiences with racism increased worry and helicopter parenting
- 183. Considers helicopter parenting mentally abusive because he felt like he was being controlled
- 358. Dad requires persuasive paper before making a decision to do something
- 376. Dad says his experiences in basic training prepared him to give college advice
- 395. Relationship with dad is “terrible”
- 415. Dad doesn’t believe her depression is real
- 396. Dad is very adamant that if he had raised her, she would be more compliant
- 397. Dad says that not following his every directive is disrespectful
- 400. Mom gives advice; dad gives directives
- 416. Dad is the only stressor in her life
- 555. She was never able to question dad’s choices so she doesn’t question instructors’ choices
- 528. Dad withholds all contact for a month if he doesn’t approve of her choices; negatively affects her emotionally
- 538. Has depression; dad does not believe in it
- 429. Mom is overbearing
- 438. Parents demand perfection
- 462. Parents do not trust her

### Reactions to Child’s Feedback

- 190. Mother stonewalls attempts to talk about helicopter parenting
- 242. Mom now admits helicopter parenting did damage; trying to decrease
- 385. Dad withheld contact when she wouldn’t give him access to all her educational records
- 397. Dad says that not following his every directive is disrespectful
- 566. Tries to talk to dad about his reactions to her decisions; he withholds contact

### Influences on Physical Wellbeing

- 414. Diagnosed with PCOS. Dad didn’t want her tested because he said she’d use a medical condition as an excuse for poor academic performance
### Category 3: Other Characteristics of Helicopter Parents

#### Positive Characteristics

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Mother provides high level of financial support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mother is very caring and highly supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Mother eventually relents and is helpful in planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Describes mom as “best friend”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Communicates with mom every day by multiple means (text, call, FaceTime, Insta, memes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Grades are higher because he asks mom for academic help and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>Getting good grades; “She’s the motivating factor, not myself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>Very caring and honest mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121.</td>
<td>Now, believes helicopter parenting happens because mom loves her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142.</td>
<td>Mom worked multiple jobs to support household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>158.</td>
<td>Mother is extremely caring; will drive to him if he needs anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203.</td>
<td>Mom is very involved, trying to be both parents at once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239.</td>
<td>Mom is supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246.</td>
<td>“I was always mom’s favorite”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287.</td>
<td>Describes relationship with mom as “pretty close”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310.</td>
<td>Mom is supportive and loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512.</td>
<td>Would approach dad with any problem because he gives good advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>535.</td>
<td>Dad is very supportive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### Negative Characteristics

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>189.</td>
<td>Describes mother as close-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284.</td>
<td>Mom’s brother died at age 30; made her overprotective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285.</td>
<td>Parents differ in response to Molly being upset: dad is kind and mom is harsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>302.</td>
<td>Transition to college was difficult on mom; wanted more communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308.</td>
<td>Describes mom as parent and not best friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>364.</td>
<td>Interactions with dad are “tense”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501.</td>
<td>Dad is overprotective and thinks he’s always right</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Category 4: Personal Consequences of Helicopter Parenting

#### Psychological Consequences

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<table>
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### Anxiety

175. Has anxiety connected to daily decision-making  
229. Anxiety disorder because of mom’s inducing of fear and guilt  
326. Anxiety over not getting all As  
327. Mother’s response to any grade below A results in anxiety and crying now  
331. Very anxious in social settings; breaks plans often  
333. High anxiety over grades, anxiety from mom also  
334. Would have blamed herself if she had not gotten into major  
337. Has social anxiety  
340. Always nervous mom will call university behind her back about problems  
344. High anxiety because of mom  
304. Parents put extra stress on her by asking to report back on grades  
305. gives input on academic and social aspects of her life; causes distress  
296. Mother’s extreme emphasis on scholarships distressed her  
299. Mother’s strict attitude about grades causes tears and distress  
384. Stress from conversations with dad last several days  
399. Anxiety when she doesn’t listen to dad’s directives  
458. Anxiety around telling parents anything  
481. High test anxiety resulting from helicopter parenting  
483. Helicopter parenting didn’t affect attitude toward completing degree but causes anxiety about completing on time  
477. Feels constant anxiety over grade performance  
267. Helicopter parenting caused anxiety, perfectionism, high stress  
537. Feels distressed that she can’t talk to dad about her mental health

### Perfectionism, Obsessive thinking, over-preparing, over-planning

257. Describes herself as obsessive due to HP  
258. “Perfectionist tendency”; upset with herself if she’s not perfect  
268. Mom’s characterization of her as perfect created pressure to be perfect  
279. Mom made her feel “that I was a horrible human being if I ever made mistakes”  
237. Growing up, taught to repress emotions; led her to not confront mom about helicopter parenting  
306. Second-guesses her ability to make decisions for herself  
307. Second-guesses her actions and judges other people by mom’s teachings  
328. Unable to deal with failure; describes failure as anything less than perfect  
338. Mother encouraged lucrative major; feels her creativity was suppressed

### Anger or resentment

388. Being helicopter parented made her angry all the time  
390. Interactions with dad made her constantly angry

### Guilt, Depression, low self-confidence, self-criticism

415. Dad doesn’t believe her depression is real
402. Depressed when forced to give up her friends per dad’s directive
538. Has depression; dad does not believe in it
225. Has “overactive guilt complex”
226. Tries to figure out what she should feel guilty about versus what she’s been manipulated into feeling guilty about
228. Afraid to make decisions to avoid feeling guilty over her choices
256. Has good academic habits because she was scared of guilt from mom
218. Mom and grandparents stay awake until she gets home; causes guilt that she’s keeping them awake
459. Thinks parents will hate her, be mad, or be disappointed with any small failure
461. Constantly seeks reassurance from parents that they love her
559. Always looking for father’s approval
173. Harder on himself than mom is; detriment to his lifestyle

### Academic Consequences

122. Credits her personal and academic success to being helicopter parented by mother
111. Feels that having a helicopter mom has made her more respectful of instructors/supervisors
127. Credits all academic success to helicopter parenting
259. Mother’s guilt trips = very high college grades (3.9/4.0)
256. Has good academic habits because she was scared of feeling guilty due to mom
332. Academics are top priority
335. Attitude toward academics is detrimental due to HP
478. Feels pressure from parents to get all As
482. Helicopter parenting results in sometimes refusing to do any homework even when she knows she needs to (self-sabotage)
551. Credits dad now for her good study/homework habits and good grades

### General

231. Makes most decisions based on what mom would want rather than what she wants
233. Overly cautious about making decisions to avoid disapproval from mom
241. Result of helicopter parenting: “basically it made me afraid to live”
237. Growing up, taught to repress emotions; led her to not confront mom about helicopter parenting
243. Helicopter parenting causes strain on their relationship
228. Afraid to make decisions to avoid feeling guilty over her choices
110. Mother’s influence has made her over-prepare for things
106. Being HPed taught her to work better with people with differing thought processes
122. Credits her personal and academic success to being helicopter parented by mother
123. Finds herself engaging in helicopter behavior with her friends because she cares about them
128. Tries to educate friends about benefits of helicopter parenting
98. Mother’s requests for academic information caused tense relationship
137. Identifies a lot of mom’s behaviors in himself but not in his siblings
133. Has very specific cleaning tendencies inherited from mom
161. Now thankful for being helicopter parented because he never got into trouble
162. Despite having friends who recreationally use drugs, he would never because he doesn’t want to let his mom down
163. Afraid of incarceration (emphasized by mom)
167. Learned his observation skills from mom; makes judgement in first 15 mins if someone is a good person
174. He had predicted he’d go wild and party in college; actually had an overabundance of caution because of fear of trouble
168. Has very few true friends; does not trust easily
290. She never procrastinates; mom taught her not to
329. Needs regimen/schedule to be happy
330. Spends hours planning schedule of her week; inflexible
298. Adheres to all mom’s rules about socializing because of fear or punishment; brother does not
336. Some friends won’t invite her to social activities because she’s cancelled so many times
309. Regrets not being as social in college; attributes it to mom’s warnings
31. Mother has always influenced the making of his appointments; mother has argued with him about making his own appointments but she always relents
62. Believes adulthood starts immediately after college; lacking necessary adult skills
63. Believes HPing isn’t good for a child's development
398. Helicopter parenting by dad improved relationship with mom
407. Negatively reacts to directive from men in power positions
383. Dad’s ultimatum caused tension in their relationship
529. Still adheres to dad’s very strict cleanliness rules and clothing rules; negatively affects relationships with roommate and boyfriend
182. Views helicopter parenting as emotionally abusive
183. Views helicopter parenting mentally abusive because he felt like he was being controlled
188. Views HPing as emotionally and psychologically abusive
405. Scared of confrontations with dad over the choices she makes

**Category 5: Consequences of Helicopter Parenting for Others**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences for Relationships with Others</th>
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</table>
526. Dad doesn’t approve of current roommate and has issued directive to not live with her next year
529. Still adheres to dad’s very strict cleanliness rules and clothing rules; negatively affects relationships with roommate and boyfriend
35. Roommates privately critical of mother’s involvement in his life
321. Dad’s ultimatum forced divorced parents to talk (toxic relationship)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences for Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>472. Mom tries to helicopter her high school best friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321. Boyfriend doesn’t understand having curfew in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297. Mother now expects Molly’s brother to behave like she did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106. Being HPed taught her to work better with people with differing thought processes</td>
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</table>

### Category 6: Efforts to Deal with Helicopter Parenting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avoidance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>230. Avoids telling mom things because she wants to avoid guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270. Felt as though mom had a right to know every detail of her personal life; now doesn’t share everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269. Always overplans or overthinks conversations with mom before she calls; tries to avoid topics which will lead to fights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105. Purposefully omits information about plans (to mom) to avoid fights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120. Refused to talk about certain topics with mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187. Doesn’t want to go home during college breaks because of constant questioning from mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470. Doesn’t bring up school in conversations with dad to avoid questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>387. Has not told dad about studying abroad to avoid confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>391. Avoids any topics with dad that lead to confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>418. Tries to compromise by giving dad some information but he wants more</td>
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<tr>
<td>473. Does not share the identity of her instructors with mother so mother cannot contact them</td>
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<tr>
<td>467. Doesn’t want to go home or answer phone calls from mom; wants to avoid confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470. Doesn’t tell her mom about new friends to avoid questioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>479. Tries to only tell mom about final grades because she feels anxiety telling mom about individual grades; every grade below an A causes an argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>489. Only ever tells her parents part of the truth to avoid questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>456. Tells sisters all location details for safety but sisters aren’t allowed to share information with mom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
312. Does not tell mom what she’s doing if it will cause mom to worry
313. Does not tell her mom when tests and assignments are upcoming to avoid stress
346. Coping with helicopter parenting: discloses less information to mom in order to avoid fight/stress
48. Doesn’t tell his mom how infrequently he attends class
533. Would lie or sneak around instead of telling dad something that would cause a fight
488. Wants to avoid having her parents show up at Target Institution

**Refusal**

20. Resists mother’s efforts to prevent him from attending concert
156. Mom requested phone calls 4x a week; he refused but ends up talking every day
238. Now verbalizes frustrations to mom about helicopter parenting
417. Debates cutting off all contact with dad over helicopter parenting
455. Parents request to track location through iPhone, but she denies

**Compliance or Cooperation**

68. Never lies to his mother about anything
69. Would lie to his mom if he was in real trouble so as not to hurt her
30. Allows mother to make decisions about his living arrangements to avoid her anger
51. Makes decisions to comply with mother’s requests
67. He always considers his mother’s advice
116. Only went to community college to not let mother down
231. Says she makes most decisions based on what mom would want rather than what she wants
237. Growing up, taught to repress emotions; led her to not confront mom about helicopter parenting
530. Always sends her dad her plans/location because she knows he’ll ask
529. Still adheres to dad’s very strict cleanliness rules and clothing rules; negatively affects relationships with roommate and boyfriend
38. Takes mother’s advice regarding college even though she’s never attended
191. His only dealing/coping method is crying

**View of Helicopter Parenting**

124. (Now) approaches any conversation about helicopter parenting respectfully because mom’s intention is love
129. Recognizes why mom helicopter parents; recognizes benefits
147. Admits concern for physical safety is a good rationale for helicopter parenting
240. Recognizes helicopter parenting comes from a need to protect
280. Admits helicopter parenting comes from a place of love and protection
314. Admits helicopter parenting is done out of love
192. Resigned to the fact that mom will never change her behavior
145. Disagrees with mother’s rationale for being strict
348. Thankful that mom isn’t even worse with helicopter parenting

**Attempting to Provide Feedback about Helicopter Parenting**

531. Tells dad her plan even if it means he’ll withhold contact for displeasure
566. Tries to talk to dad about his reactions to her decisions; he withholds contact
Assistance from Other in Dealing with Helicopter Parenting

32. Older brother discourages helicopter parenting
53. Older brother encourages more independence from mother
54. Older brother encourages mother to provide less support
78. She and brother will try to solve problems before involving HP mom; kids and mom will try to solve problems before involving grandparents
107. Close relationship with brother to be united against mom
164. Very close relationship with siblings; banded together to protect each other from mom
165. Unspoken agreement between siblings to not tell mom who was guilty.
193. Feels he cannot approach siblings for help coping with HPing because they also experience HPing
315. Brother encourages not talking to mom as often and giving fewer details
468. Positive relationship with sister resulted from them trying to intervene on her behalf
539. Positive relationship with younger brother; they protect each other from dad
194. Best friend also experiences helicopter parenting and listens to him
349. College roommate provided emotional support with dealing with helicopter parenting
492. Friends give suggestions to curb helicopter parenting that she knows will not work
421. Only coping mechanism is talking to friends
490. Reaches out to sister for advice on how to deal with helicopter parenting
471. Doesn’t tell friends about mom’s helicopter parenting
78. She and brother will try to solve problems before involving mom; kids and mom will try to solve problems before involving grandparents

Helicopter Parent’s Own Efforts to Reduce Helicopter Parenting

242. Mom now admits helicopter parenting did damage; trying to decrease

Category 7: Future Goals and Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58: Finish undergraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>59: Join the military, get the GI Bill to pay for a master’s degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>125. Graduate and give credit to mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195. All educational goals are based on being helicopter parented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196. Wants to attend graduate school in [far away state] for physical distance from mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213: Obtain a PhD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 276. Attend graduate school  
351. Graduate and pass licensure exam  
422. Graduate on time  
493. Graduate college  
494. Obtain a PhD  
570. Obtain a bachelor’s degree |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 59. Join the military, get the GI Bill to pay for a master’s degree  
60. Become an Air Force officer  
197. Career goals are based on getting distance from mom  
198. Become a lawyer  
199. Wants to work in family law as a result of being helicopter parented  
423. Go into military  
424. Have salaried job  
571. Have same job as dad (HP)  
352. Become a traveling nurse to learn to be less rigid |
| **Helicopter Parenting**    |
| 61. Wants to be more independent from mother  
201. Goal is to cope with being helicopter parented  
278. Goal is to “not give my children a childhood they have to recover from”  
353. Goal is to speak up for herself when mom’s behavior is causing distress  
354. Goal is to be less anxious around mom  
425. Goal is to become financially independent of dad to eradicate power dynamic  
486. Goal is not to be her mom  
487. Does not want future kids to have anxiety  
495. Goal is “to get my mom to back off and not be so overbearing”  
496. Goal is to stop helicopter parenting behavior before she attends graduate school  
572. Goal is to have better communication with her dad and try to see his side |