

Divorce Before vs. After Age 50



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Roughly one-half of marriages will end in divorce (Kennedy and Ruggles, 2014; Amato, 2010). Between 1990 and 2010, the divorce rate for people over age 50 doubled. Now, 1 in 4 individuals who gets divorced is aged 50 and older (Brown and Lin, 2012). We use data from the 2010 Health and Retirement Study to compare people ages 50 and older who divorce before versus after age 50 and also include individuals who experienced a divorce both prior to and following age 50, termed "divorce careerists."

59% of individuals who divorce after age 50 are "Careerists"

*Divorce Careerist:
Individual who experienced a divorce both prior to and following age 50.*

The majority (83%) experienced a divorce only before age 50

Just 7% divorced only after age 50

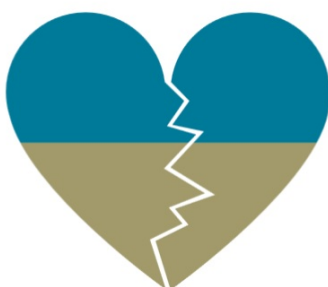
Divorce careerists comprise the remaining 10%

Divorce Subgroups among Individuals Ages 50 and Older

Gender by Divorce Subgroup

The majority of older adults who only divorced before age 50 are women (53%)

Divorce Before 50



Older adults who only divorced after age 50 are disproportionately men (66%)

Divorce After 50



Divorce Careerists are more often men (52%) than women (48%)

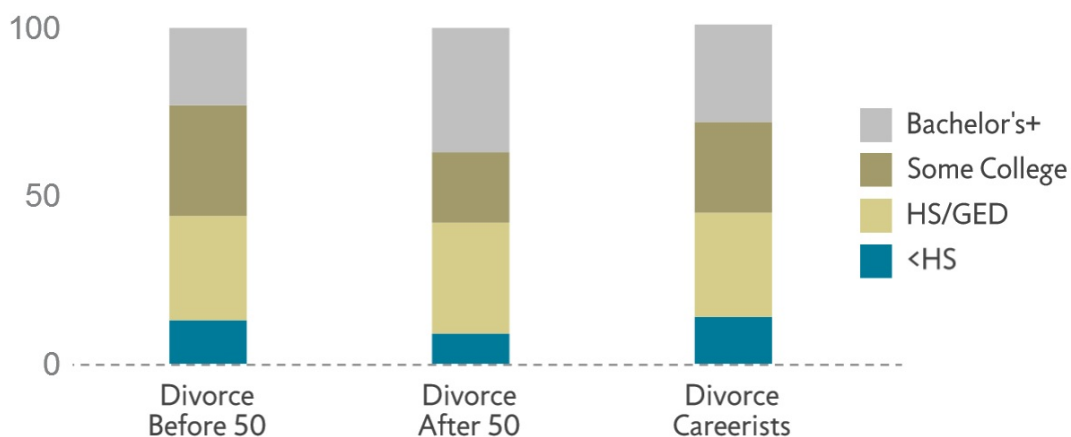
Divorce Careerists



Men Women

➤ Educational Attainment Differs by Divorce Subgroup <

- Among those who only divorced before age 50, the largest share has some college education but no Bachelor's degree (33%). <
- Those who only divorced after age 50 most often hold a Bachelor's degree (37%). <
- Divorce careerists are most often only high school graduates (31%). <



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Data: Health and Retirement Study, 2010

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