



# **FAMILY & PARENTING ISSUES**

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# Learning Objectives:

- Understanding of family dynamics and effect on behaviour
- Knowledge of parenting styles
- Awareness of common family and parenting issues
- Knowledge of therapeutic interventions



# Family Dynamics

- Family dynamics pertain to the family's pattern of relating to each other.
- Family dynamics are influenced by the structure of the family, the personalities of each family member, cultural background, values, and personal or family experiences.
- The role of family members, parenting style, absentee parent and values, can significantly impact the family dynamics which in turn influences the child's/adolescent's psychosocial development and behaviour.

# Parenting Styles

- The interaction of parental control and warmth with children and adolescents determines parenting style.
- Four parenting styles exist – authoritative, authoritarian, permissive/indulgent and uninvolved/neglectful.
- Studies have shown that parenting style impacts a child's psychosocial development and determines positive or negative psychological and behavioural outcomes.



# Parenting Styles

- Adler identified two parental styles that contribute to problems in adulthood – pampering and neglect.
- Pampering – parent overprotecting a child, giving him too much attention, and sheltering him from the negative realities of life.
- Pampered/sheltered children later become ill-equipped to deal with realities, may doubt their own abilities or decision-making skills, and may seek out others to replace the safety they once enjoyed as a child.

# Parenting Styles

- Neglect - A neglected child is not protected from the world and is forced to face life's struggles alone.
- Neglected children may grow up to fear the world, have a strong sense of mistrust for others and may have a difficult time forming intimate relationships.



# Parenting Styles – Warmth & Control

- **Authoritative** – Moderately high control, high warmth.
- Accept and encourage the growing independence of their children
- Have open communication with children, flexible rules
- Children found to be best adjusted - most self-reliant, self-controlled, socially competent, better school performance and higher self-esteem.

# Parenting Styles – Warmth & Control

- **Authoritarian** – High control, low warmth
  - Issue commands and expect them to be obeyed.
  - Have little communication with children, inflexible rules, children gain little independence from parents
  - Children found to be withdrawn, moody, fearful/anxious, unassertive and irritable
  - Girls tend to be passive and dependent during adolescence
  - Boys may become rebellious and aggressive



# Parenting Styles – Warmth & Control

- **Permissive/Indulgent** – Low control, high warmth
- Have few or no restraints on child
- There is communication from child to parent, much freedom and little parental guidance, no setting of limits by parents
- Children found to be aggressive and rebellious, socially inept, self-indulgent and impulsive
- In some cases children may be active, outgoing and creative.

# Parenting Styles – Warmth & Control

- **Indifferent/Neglectful** – Low control, low warmth
- Set no limits for children, lack affection for children
- Focus on stress in their own lives with no energy left for children and often show hostility
- Children tend to show high expression of destructive impulses and delinquent behaviour.



# Parenting Styles and Effects

PARENTING STYLES			
Authoritarian	Authoritative	Neglectful	Indulgent
<p>This is a restrictive, punitive style in which the parents exhort the child to follow their directions and to respect work and effort. The authoritarian parent places firm limits and controls on the child and allows little verbal exchange.</p>	<p>This style encourages children to be independent but still places limits and controls on their actions. Extensive verbal give-and-take is allowed, and parents are warm and nurturing toward the child.</p>	<p>This is a style in which the parent is uninvolved in the child's life. This style of parenting leaves the child feeling that other aspects of the parents' lives are more important than they are.</p>	<p>This is a style of parenting in which the parents are highly involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them. Indulgent parents let their children do what they want to do which frequently leads children to expect to get their own way.</p>
<p>Children of authoritarian parents are often anxious about social comparison, fail to initiate activity, and have poor communication skills.</p>	<p>Children of authoritative parents are socially competent, self-reliant, and socially responsible.</p>	<p>Children whose parents are neglectful are socially incompetent. They show poor self-control and do not handle independence well.</p>	<p>Children whose parents are indulgent rarely learn respect for others and have difficulty controlling their behavior.</p>

# Approach to Disciplining

- Parental disciplining describes attempts to control a child.
- Disciplining may take various forms and may be harsh. e.g. corporal punishment – spanking/beating, verbal violence (shouting) or other physical forms of punishment (pinching or hitting).
- Corporal disciplining practices have been associated with adverse mental health outcomes - behavioural and emotional problems, e.g. lowered self-esteem, poor school achievements and delinquent behaviours.



# Approach to Disciplining

- Harsh disciplining practices may be closely akin to child abuse and will depend on levels of severity.
- Effective punishment requires a three-prong approach:-
  - good parent-child relationship
  - the use of reinforcement strategies to enhance positive behaviours
  - removal of reinforcement, or punishment to eliminate undesirable behaviour.

# Parent-Child Conflict

- Parent-child conflict can result from poor parenting style, harsh disciplining and behavioural problems.
- Parental conflict can have both positive and negative effects on behaviour.
- Conflict that does not lead to separation can be used to teach the child conflict management and resolution.
- Children could become anxious and distressed due to tension created.



# Divorce/Separation

- Divorce/separation is associated with weakened parent-child relationships.
- Children and adolescents are placed at risk for a variety of emotional, behavioural and academic problems.
- Psychological problems include anxiety, depression, lower self esteem and emotional distress.
- Behavioural problems - disruptive behaviours, e.g. being oppositional with authority figures and getting into fights.
- Academic difficulties - lower grades and dropping out of school.

# Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence presents significant risks of harm to a child's physical, emotional and social development.
- There is a common link between domestic violence and child abuse.
- Among victims of child abuse, 40 per cent report domestic violence in the home.



# Domestic Violence

- Children do not have to be hit in order to suffer the effects of violence.
- Witnessing violence in the home will also have detrimental effects.
- One third of the children who witness the battering of their mothers demonstrate behavioural and/or emotional problems.
- Problems include stuttering, anxiety and fears, sleep disruption, excessive crying, school problems, and psychosomatic disorders (IHS/BIA Child Protection Handbook - 2005).

# Domestic Violence

Psychological and behavioural problems caused by domestic violence include:-

- suicidal ideation and attempts
- low self esteem
- depression
- aggressive behaviour toward others
- delinquency and poor school adjustment
- modelling behaviour, learned victim/aggressor roles
- runaway episodes
- alcohol/drug experimentation
- continuation of violent behaviour in adult relationships.



# Treatment Interventions

- CBT
- Family therapy
- Group & Individual therapy
- Parent-Education Training
- Parental involvement in therapy

# RESOURCES

- Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, *Guidance for effective discipline* (1998). <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org>
- IHS/BIA Child Protection Handbook. *The effects of domestic violence on children* (2005). [https://www.ktiknsn.gov/site/assets/files/1051/effects\\_dv\\_children.pdf](https://www.ktiknsn.gov/site/assets/files/1051/effects_dv_children.pdf)



# RESOURCES

- Mackenbach JD, Ringoot AP, van der Ende J, Verhulst FC, Jaddoe VWV, Hofman A, et al. (2014) *Exploring the Relation of Harsh Parental Discipline with Child Emotional and Behavioral Problems by Using Multiple Informants. The Generation R Study*. PLoS ONE 9(8): e104793. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0104793>
- UNICEF, *Behind closed doors. The impact of domestic violence on children (2006)*. <https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/BehindClosedDoors.pdf>