Class 5
Parent-Child Interactions,
Family Structures, and
Sibling Influences
Lying Behavior

Undermines the quality of the parent-child relationship in predictable ways...

Parents should...
- Build strong relationships with their child.
- Know their child’s whereabouts at all times.
- Have some sense of control over their child.
- Have and demonstrate interest in their child’s activities.

When these qualities are strong
- Aggression is low.
- Delinquency is low.
- Teens and Tweens show greater levels of self-control.

Engels, Finkenauer, & van Kooten, 2006
Parent-Child Forgiveness

TRIM—transgression-related interpersonal motives

What you might intend when you feel harmed.

You have…

- motivation to avoid people who hurt you.
- motivation to avenge your sense of hurt.
- motivation to act positively toward people who hurt you (turn the other cheek).

Hoyt, Fincham, McCullough, Maio, & Davila, 2005
PTRIMS—perception of the transgressor’s interpersonal motives

What you think others intended when *they harmed* you.

You may think…

*they* were motivated to avoid people who hurt them.

*they* were motivated to avenge their sense of hurt.

*they* were motivated to act positively toward people who hurt them (turn the other cheek).
What are we forgiving?

- An actor’s one time action.
- A general pattern in one person’s behavior.
- The effects on a relationship when two people come together.
Behaviors Associated with Forgiveness

Less avoidance
Less vengeance
More benevolence
Elements Affecting the Process

*Forgiveness*—a response to a single transgression that can be seen either as situational or as a characteristic of the transgressor.

*Forgivingness*—a personality disposition to be forgiving, someone’s tendency to forgive easily.

*Forgivability*—a general tendency to obtain forgiveness from others or a person who is easy to forgive.
Mothers and teens agreed on whether fathers deserved forgiveness. (forgivability)

There was more reciprocity in the forgiveness process between two parents than between either parent and the teen. (forgivability ↔ forgivingness interaction)

Most children reported feeling the same way about both parents, although there were sample and demographic differences that could not be untangled.
Child-Household Interactions

How does a stimulating environment strengthen efficacy or do self-efficacy beliefs cause a child’s evaluations of home? (Not simply!)

**Moderator effects**—(comes first in a causal chain) how the child’s self-efficacy beliefs related to peers and family affect reactions to home environment, social behavior, and overall adjustment.

**Mediator effects**—(come between two parts of a causal chain) how the child’s beliefs about home and social behavior affect self-efficacy beliefs about school and family and how that affects overall adjustment.

*Bradley & Corwyn, 2001*
A primary goal in promoting efficacy is to enable individuals to “take charge” of opportunities while remaining less dependent on what environments offer or demand.

This type of efficacy allows adolescents to be less reactive to environmental pressures while still learning from others and from situational factors.
Do the dominant household values pull for…

- extroversion rather than introversion.
- task-orientation rather than distractibility.
- considerateness rather than hostility.
Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy

Are features of the environment…

- Physically and aesthetically comfortable?
- Ripe with learning materials?
- Full of opportunities for modeling?
- Fostering self-sufficiency?
- Including regulatory activities?
- Offering a variety of experiences?
- Conveying acceptance and responsibility?
Within supportive relationships, regardless of family structure, home-school collaboration can help adolescents learn the skills needed for self-regulation.

- Keep classroom and household organized.
- Build clear rules that are followed consistently.
- Involve adolescents in decision-making.
BUT…

Parents can cause psychological distress that is problematic if they treat their teens and ‘tweens as equal partners in household decision-making.

- Consider a study of divorced mothers and their daughters.
- Girls generally tend to internalize information more than boys.
- At this age, teens can do relatively little to remedy financial hardship.
- The resulting psychological distress can commonly lead to problematic behaviors.

Lehman & Koerner, 2002
Negative Family Effects

When relationship quality with parents is poor, sibling conflict is high. Antisocial behavior is associated with high levels of sibling conflict. Antisocial behavior is also associated with sibling warmth/closeness.

---

Are sibling relationships a context for delinquency training?

*Criss, & Shaw, 2005*
Sibling Relationships

**Sibling de-identification**—the tendency to avoid comparing oneself to siblings and compare oneself to adults or peers outside the family. Most common among first-borns.

**Sibling barricade**—parenting practices used with one child have the opposite effect on a sibling. Paradoxical and contrary to theories of vicarious learning in that the reaction of a sibling is the opposite of the target child.

*Feinberg, Neiderhiser, Simmens, Teiss, & Heatherington, 2000; McHale, Updegraff, Helms-Erikson, & Crouter, 2001*
Social Comparison Styles

*Downward comparison*—looking lower in a hierarchy (often to younger siblings) when making ability comparisons. Enhances self-esteem when youth feel vulnerable or threatened.

*Upward social comparison*—looking higher in a hierarchy (often to older siblings) Fosters feelings of incompetence initially but can lead to increased effort and motivation.
Birth Order Effects?

All effects are moderated by the adolescent’s self-esteem and emotionality but not gender.

Global self-worth and emotionality moderates reports of parents’ differential treatment of siblings.
In families where social comparison is high…

Older siblings perceive more affection.

Younger siblings perceive more negativity and controlling behavior.

Most siblings see differential treatment as fair, but those who see it less often are more likely to be profoundly affected by the difference when they do notice it.
Older siblings generally see less differential treatment than younger siblings.

Older siblings may engage in more sibling de-identification, but this is also a way of dis-associating with a poorly functioning sibling.

Parental influences on first-born are more marked (for better or for worse) than is the case for other siblings.

Stronger associations are evident between an older sibling’s behavior and that of younger siblings (imitations), but not often the reverse.
Having siblings of the opposite sex benefits girls more than boys. Boys do not imitate their sister’s intimacy skills, but girls are likely to imitate their brother’s social control skills.

Updegraff, McHale, & Crouter, 2000
An Ironic Differential Treatment Pattern

As siblings were treated equally over time, reports of externalizing problems increased.

Yet, as sibling relationships improved over time, children’s depressive symptoms decreased.

Can families weather the storm of improving favoritism in the decision-making process?

*Richmond, Stocker, & Rienks, 2005*
Intimacy Effects

Sibling intimacy…

• is highest between sisters.
• is stable over time for same-sex dyads.
• shows a U-shaped change for mixed-sex dyads with the lowest point being in early adolescence.

Kim, McHale, Osgood, & Crouter, 2006; Kim, McHale, Crouter, & Osgood, 2007
Parent-child intimacy has been closely aligned with sibling conflict. (Is favoritism creating tension?)

Father’s marital love for mother is closely associated with sibling intimacy. (Could this be modeling?)

Kim, McHale, Osgood, & Crouter, 2006; Kim, McHale, Crouter, & Osgood, 2007
Some teens talk with their siblings more often than their parents. Deeper disclosures when the sibling relationships are warm. This form of intimacy is not associated with rivalry, conflict, or power plays. (both may occur) Warmth/intimacy was not associated with the number of reciprocal or complimentary relationships. Content analysis suggests that siblings discuss negative feelings and disclose more often when they are unhappy with their sibling than when they feel happy or content.

*Howe, Aquan-Assee, 2000*
Adopted Teens and ‘Tweens

Comparison of 3 groups—adoptees in adoptive families; birth youth in adoptive families; birth youth in nuclear families with no adoptees.

Overall, adoptees showed higher levels of delinquent behavior, illicit drug use and poor school adjustment, but higher functioning with respect to responding to social problems and fewer withdrawn behaviors.

Sharma, McGue, & Benson, 1998
• Adopted boys were the least withdrawn.
• Adopted girls exhibited higher levels of delinquent and externalizing behavior than other girls, but had fewer social interaction problems and were less withdrawn than non-adopted girls.
• Adoptees are 2 to 5 times more likely to be referred for counseling.
Youth with No Siblings

Research findings are contradictory, but this may be because there are three types of only children rather than one.

**Well-adjusted**—functions like others with siblings (talkative, assertive, poised, gregarious, but not fearful, aloof, self-defeating or reluctant to act.)

Rosenberg & Hyde, 1993
Impulsive, acting out—functions to gain attention (self-indulgent, under-controlled, think-skinned, self-dramatizing, but not prideful about objectivity, over-controlled, or self-satisfied.)

“First-bornish”—functions like the stereotype for first-borns (dependable, productive, sympathetic, and fastidious, but not under-controlled, deceitful, or hostile.)
Thank you for listening!