



Parenting for Today's Adolescents

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This article explores parenting of adolescents in modern times, as the adolescent period is marked by physical, psychosocial and emotional changes such as identity formation, mood swings and peer pressure. The work of raising adolescents by parents in the modern era is difficult because it necessitates finding a balance between traditional values and the rigorous demands of modern life. Parents may find it challenging to find the time and energy necessary to establish a genuine connection with their adolescent children due to the fast-paced nature of modern living. The growing distance in the proximity and communication between parents and adolescents makes them more vulnerable to unsafe behaviors. Better parenting practices such as honest communication, nonjudgmental attitudes, and emotion regulation can enhance teenage self-confidence, independent decision-making, and communication.

Keywords: Parenting; adolescent; communication; risky behaviors; sexual and reproductive health issues; early marriage.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Parenting of adolescents can be extremely difficult as this developmental stage is characterized by substantial physical, emotional, and social changes. The pervasive influence of media and interpersonal connections also can impact adolescents' life [1,2]. Parents are often stressed with the challenges related to sexual and reproductive issues of adolescents such as young pregnancy, motherhood, and incidence of sexually transmitted diseases [3] and also with numerous developmental challenges. Many sociological, environmental, economic, emotional, and health care difficulties such as lack of parental direction, peer pressure, unequal gender power dynamics, early marriage, insufficient schooling, excessive alcohol and drug use, and low self-esteem contribute to experimentation of early sex and to adolescent pregnancy [4] makes parenting task as challenging.

2. CHALLENGES OF PARENTING THE ADOLESCENTS

Distance between parents and their children may increase as a result of parent-teen conflict, logical and ethical defenses, and the development of values and opinions in adolescents. Parents now-a-days find it difficult to strike a balance between raising their children with traditional values and living a modern, hectic life. Some of the challenges reported were communication issues, influence of technology and social media, problem with identity formation, development of health-risk behaviors, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues, peer pressures, issues on autonomy and independence and academic pressure etc.

With regard to communication issues it is reported that adolescents often talk more private and may not communicate openly with their parents. The family structures and transitions may affect adolescent sexual development especially sexual communication [5]. Adolescents often are less inclined to ask their parents for help these days due to the rapid growth of technology, which makes it harder for parents to provide the essential direction [6]. Moreover the adolescent characteristics like biological vulnerabilities, exploration of identities and values may make it more difficult for parents to adopt to the parenting practices such as closeness, support, monitoring, and conflict resolution [7,8]. Substance use, early sexual activity, violence, accidents, suicide-related

behaviors and mental health issues peaks at this time [9] and are all significantly linked to reduced parent-adolescent intimacy [10]. Adolescents with poor behavioral beliefs on SRH issues demonstrated risky sexual behaviors [11]. Increased pre-coital behaviors were reported with an authoritarian parenting style [12].

Adolescents are less influenced by their parents and more influenced by their peers. They may learn bad habits from peers such as watching pornography and sexual activities from mobile, showing disobedience towards teacher and parents, bullying others, eve-teasing, stealing, cheating, destructing, aggressing, doing risky things or breaking rules, passing on nasty comments, taunting etc. makes parenting a difficult task [13].

Conflicts can develop between parents and adolescents on rules and boundaries as the adolescents are striving for independence. Adolescents' disobedience is linked to parental divorce, father-grandparent conflict, physical violence, and maternal rejection [14].The adolescents are stressed with the academics too. The increased academic pressure may lead to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, or have suicidal thoughts [15]

3. PARENTING STYLES AND ADOLESCENTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Generally two types of parenting styles are prominent. They are authoritative and non-authoritative parenting styles. Authoritative parenting is a parenting style that balances warmth, discipline, and autonomy. It involves setting clear boundaries, encouraging independence, and providing guidance without being overly controlling. This style is associated with positive outcomes like higher self-esteem, better academic performance, and lower behavioral problems [16] decreased problematic internet use [17] positive social adjustments, resistance to peer influence as well as lower levels of substance use and is found to be more warm and supportive [18].

Non-authoritative parenting, is characterized by a lack of structure, discipline, and involvement in adolescents' life. The common types are permissive parenting, uninvolved parenting, neglectful parenting, indulgent parenting and authoritarian. Adolescents who perceived their parents as authoritarian had decreased autonomy [19] and more peer problems [20]. A less amount of personal development was

experienced by those who believed their parents to be permissive, [19] and both authoritarian and permissive parenting can lead to violent and damaging actions [20] and also create more conflict [21]. Alcohol use of adolescents [22] and self-harm were highly correlated with lack of emotional warmth from the father, excessive maternal rejection [23], decreased psychological control and reactive control [24]

4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

Adolescents value the authority, friendship, and emotional support of their parents' relationship [25] Mother-child attachment is linked to emotional experiences, while father-child attachment is linked to emotional coping mechanisms [26]. Adolescents become more self-assured and develop self-esteem when their parents and adolescents have an egalitarian relationship [27] Depression and risky sexual behaviors are found to be less with positive parent-adolescent relationships [28,29,30]. Adolescents with authoritative parents reported having the best relationships with both parents, followed by parents who were indulgent, authoritarian, or neglected [31].

During adolescence, disputes between parents and adolescents are more frequent and serious [27]. Discrepancies between parental concepts and adolescents increased from early to middle adolescence, and those between fathers and their adolescent daughters increased from middle to late adolescence. Parents and children perceive conflict intensity differently, and the degree of the discrepancies is influenced by the personality of the child and the parent [32]. On days when there was disagreement, both parents and teenagers had reduced wellbeing and can lead to depression as well as affect the behavioral autonomy [33,34].

Adolescents communicate more openly with their parents, if the family has a healthy emotional climate [35] But the parent-adolescent interactions are getting challenged due to social constraints, embarrassment and poor communication. Cyber victimization and addiction on internet is stronger for adolescents with low parent-adolescent communication [36]. Parents need guidance on communication, conflict management, sex, mental health, alcohol and drugs use [37] as adolescents preference source of information found to be friends than parents [38].

5. MEASURES FOR BETTER PARENTING PRACTICES

Psychological support group can make parents more confident and enhance communication with their children [39] Parenting education program showed a rise in authoritative parenting styles and a decline in authoritarian and uncaring ones [40]. Parental education using culturally-appropriate methods [41] and seeking guidance from parenting resources and professionals, improved the quality of parenting and lead to less psychological disturbances [42]. The parents who demonstrate unconditional care and support can gain their adolescent children's acceptance as role models [43].

6. DIMENSIONS OF PARENTAL ROLES ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH OUTCOMES

Parents' roles are organized into five dimensions, each of which has specific influences on adolescents. They are connection, behavior control, respect for individuality, modeling of appropriate behavior, provision and protection. Parents and adolescents' connection need to made up with behaviors like warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern and nurturance that convey to adolescents that they are loved and accepted. Parental actions should focus on supervising and monitoring adolescents' activities, establishing behavioral rules and consequences for misbehavior, and conveying clear expectations for behavior for shaping or restricting adolescents' behaviors.

Respect for individuality involves allowing the adolescent to develop a healthy sense of self, apart from his or her parents. Acknowledging and permitting this sense of individual worth and identity is important for all adolescents. There are various sets of norms that influence adolescents' actions, depending on the social domain. Parents can become role models for their behaviors and attitudes by providing examples of how to behave in relation to many areas of daily life, including health.

Provision and protection includes the parents' provision of the resources that they can, and seeking out resources when they cannot. It entails efforts by parents to seek out relationships and opportunities within the community that can supplement what the family is able to provide [44].

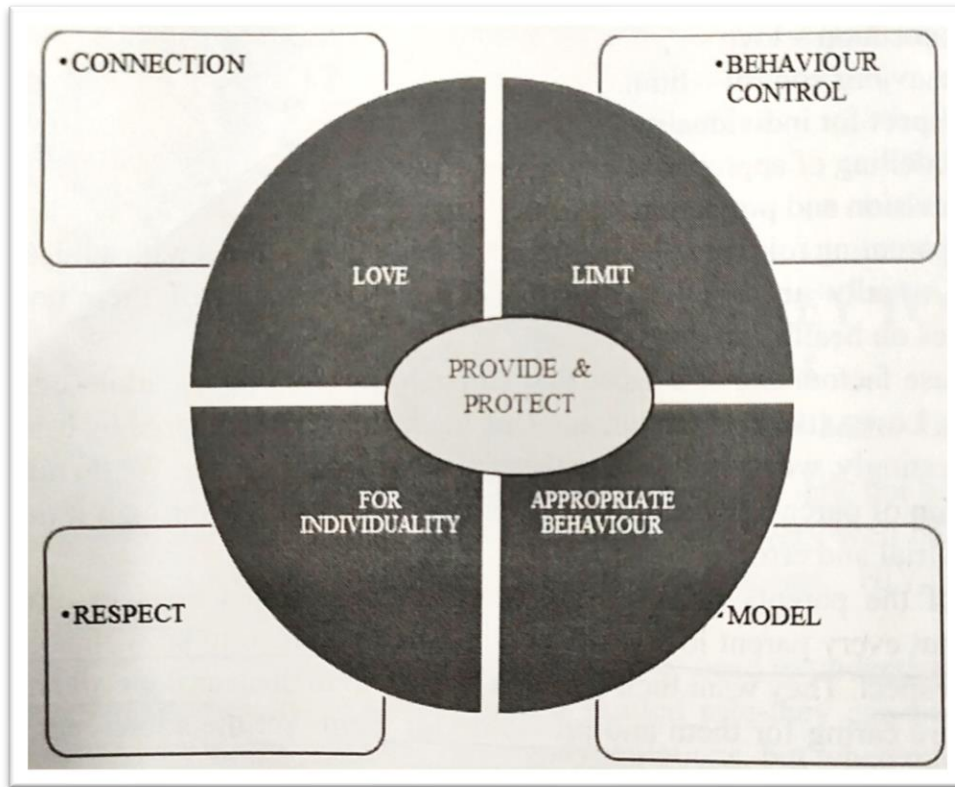


Fig. 1. Parental role dimensions

Source: Saxena, M.K. Parental concern as key to adolescent health (based on WHO report) [44]

7. BENEFITS OF BETTER PARENTING PRACTICES

Healthy parent-adolescent connections foster teenager's physical, mental, and social wellbeing [45,46,47] which include their moods, emotions, school environment etc. [48]. The sexual risk-taking behaviors found to be less with effective parent-adolescent communication [49]. Moreover the attachment and security between parents and their children predicted improvements in social skills, a decline in delinquency [50] promote adolescent learning and acquiring skills and development of self-esteem [45]. Parental praise and understanding make a special contribution to leadership, goal-setting, teamwork, and overall life skills [51].

Better parenting make adolescents feel safe and supported. Parents can foster safe peer interactions, [47] protect youth from risk patterns like victimization, bullying, and sexual harassment [52] promote emotional well-being, and lower the risk of mental illness, eating disorders, and drug use [53] Parents' involvement in their children's lives significantly impacts their development by improving communication skills, fostering family decision-

making, and enhancing autonomy and self-efficacy in professional decision-making [46,54].

Less favorable parenting leads to decreased brain adaptation and cognitive control activity, while positive maternal behavior predicts slower cortical thinning and reduced volumetric growth in the right amygdala [55,56].

8. CONCLUSION

Inconsistencies, delusions, shocks, and uncertainty in social interaction and self-discovery make adolescence a difficult time. In order to address the inquisitiveness about love, life, and relationships, parents can give them factual, age-appropriate, and scientific information on marriage, relationships, sexual abstinence, healthcare access, and counseling in a friendly environment. Instead of setting goals for their adolescents, parents should carefully listen to them, show empathy, offer clear expectations, and let them to make their own decisions and make family homes a safe haven for them under parents care. Parents must understand that each adolescent is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to parenting during this stage. Flexibility, understanding, and

maintaining a strong, supportive connection can help navigate the challenges of parenting the adolescents today.

CONCENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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