

Module A2: The Family: Influences and Dynamics

Entry Scenario:

Sara is a 14 year-old girl with insulin dependent diabetes that is out of control with a HBA1C of 12.5%. Her teacher's report that about six months ago, Sara started to skip school one or two days a week, and that her school performance has dropped noticeably. Sara's parents who divorced five years ago have shared custody, meaning that the teenager alternates between families according to a schedule. The parents divorced because of personality differences, with the father being very lenient and the mother very rigid and controlling. The father has married a woman with three boys older than Sara, two of which are into drug use. Sara's mother has 3 year-old twins from her second marriage, and stepchildren aged 8 and 10 who live with her most of the time. The parents have discovered that Sara does not always return home at night when she has reported being with the other parent. In fact, the parents do not know where she spends the missing nights.

General goals: for learners. By completing the module the participant will be able to:

- I. Understand the evolving nature of the concept of family, and its organizational diversity
- II. Understand the potential impact of family functioning and dynamics on adolescent development, and the interrelationship of adolescent physical and mental problems and family functioning.
- III. Evaluate family functioning and dynamics, describe the role of the provider and address problematic situations within the adolescent's management plan

Goal I: Understand the evolving nature of the concept of family, and its organizational diversity

| Training objectives | Training tools | Activities, issues, and questions |
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| Key topics to be covered | | |

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| <p>A. Understand the evolving nature of the concept of family, and its organizational diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical and modern views of family - Diverse contexts (culture, religion, socio-economic, etc.) - Varied organizational structures | <p>Mini-lecture and class discussion</p> | <p>Class lists the diverse organizational and living arrangements of today (classic, single parent, second marriage “blended” in remarriage, extended, homosexual relationships, etc.). Discuss prevailing judgments of these structures, especially in terms of ‘negative’ or ‘positive’ effect on adolescent. Discuss the recent changes in our notions of family and how the changes might affect adolescents.</p> |
| <p>B. Consider how one’s personal background from family of childhood and present day family situation may influence participants’ conceptions of family functioning, and ability to interact with different families.</p> <p>C. Analyse the ,Generation Gap’</p> | <p>Small group discussion (Objectives B and C)</p> | <p>In what specific ways do participants think that their personal background as well as their present situation (possibly as parents themselves) might influence the way they define and interact with families?</p> <p>Describe the potential for discordant interactions between teenager and parent in terms of the life stage of adolescence versus the stage of mid-life. What are the classic <i>clashes</i>, and how can these be understood in view of the tasks of development?</p> |

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| <p>D. Identify stressors on family functioning and the likely effect on adolescent development</p> | <p>Mini-lecture with class discussion</p> | <p>adolescents, or provoke problem behavior. Consider the developmental tasks of adolescence.</p> <p>Case study: Describe how an authoritative family would handle the situation of a 13 year-old girl, a 15 year-old boy, and a 17 year-old girl staying overnight with friends unsupervised in a countryside cabin. Describe the reactions of a permissive family towards the same situation.</p> <p>Class lists some common stressors to family functioning (i.e. Alcoholism, divorce, unemployment, migration, death). Participants describe examples from own practice or personal experience that illustrate the effect of family stress on adolescents. Discuss the effects in terms of adolescent's bio-psychosocial development. What typical situations interfere with the well being of most adolescents in their relationships with their families? Discuss also the impact of an absent father (workaholic, constant traveller, divorced) on adolescent development for boys versus girls</p> |
| <p>E. Identify adolescent problems which stress family functioning and demand good parenting skills</p> | <p>Interactive lecture, participation of parents of adolescents with specific problems such as chronic illness</p> | <p>Class considers problems such as chronic illness (including mental disease and mental retardation), or drug misuse starting during adolescence. List effects on well functioning families and on dysfunctional families.</p> <p>Case study: In a happy and busy highly professional family with four children, the second child gets acute leukaemia at age 14. Discuss how the providers can help the family to cope with this situation for the best of everyone involved.</p> |

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| <p>assessment, including obtaining relevant information and evaluating the impact of family functioning on the adolescent's development</p> <p>- Olson's circumplex model</p> | <p>Objectives B and C</p> | <p>A 13 year-old girl complains of headaches. Her parents divorced two months ago. She is living half of the week with her mother and the other half with her father. She mentions she feels like she is living in 'no man's land'. A fight for the 'possession' of the girl is taking place.</p> <p><u>Question:</u> How has family dysfunction probably affected the health of this girl?</p> <p>Analyze the situation; refer to Olson's circumplex model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Cohesion</i> (disengaged, separated, connected, enmeshed). Evaluate emotional bonding, family involvement, parent-adolescent relationship, and internal and external boundaries. 2. <i>Change</i> (chaotic, flexible, structured, rigid) Evaluate leadership, discipline, negotiation, roles and rules. 3. <i>Communication</i> =listener's skills, speaker's skills, self-disclosure, clarity, continuity, respect and regard. |
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| <p>C. Demonstrate ability to address problematic family situations which interfere with an adolescent's case management</p> | | <p>Case study A 16 year-old adolescent boy with phenylketonuria (PKU) lives in a family characterised by lack of leadership, erratic discipline, recent dramatic role shifts, too much change in the recent years (parental divorce, boy living first with his mother, then with his father against his wishes); father had never been able to understand what having PKU meant. His phenylalanine blood levels are becoming excessively high; father and boy have not been able to communicate with each other for several weeks. At the consultation, the father complains of not being respected and the boy complains of not being understood by his father. What would you like to change in the family dynamics of the case study?</p> <p>Skills to be practiced: Questioning in a non-judgmental way, balancing empathy and distance between the individual adolescent and the parents, facilitating communication among the different members of the family, supporting and balancing everyone's issues and concerns</p> |
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Resources

Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems

<http://www.haifamed.org.il/pictures/files/circumplex%20model%20of%20marital%20and%20family%20systems.pdf>

Olson's circumplex model: <http://www.uwagec.org/erurfamilies/ERFLibrary/Readings/CircumplexModelOfMaritalAndFamilySystems.pdf>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2849274/> Hogue A & al. Early Therapeutic Alliance and Treatment Outcome in Individual and Family Therapy for Adolescent Behavior Problems. J Consult Clin Psychol. 2006 February; 74(1): 121–129.

Parenting Styles (According to Baumrind & Steinberg)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana_Baumrind

http://www.devpsy.org/teaching/parent/baumrind_styles.html

<http://www.oberlin.edu/faculty/ndarling/lab/psychbull.pdf>

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| | Demanding | Not demanding |
| Empathetic | <i>Authoritative</i> | <i>Permissive</i> |
| Not empathetic | <i>Authoritarian</i> | <i>Unconcerned</i> |

Appendix 2

Additional case studies for role play and practice for Goal III

1. During an intake interview, a 14-year-old girl and her parents start to argue over the fact that the girl spent her pocket money to buy a tiny T-shirt. Apparently she goes out in mid-winter with no coat on because she wants to show off her new T-shirt. Her parents are very angry and stressed, and warn her that she will catch a cold and will get sexually molested. Role-play and discuss: What would one ask the adolescent and her parents in order to clarify both sides of the problem? How does one 'read' both adolescent and parental perception and understanding of the problem? How would one support the parents and the adolescent in clarifying their respective needs and demands?



2. A 15 year-old girl with diabetes mellitus comes to consultation with her parents who are afraid that she misses insulin shots when she is not under their control. The girl complains of excess supervision and of not being able to socialize as much as she would wish; she says her parents look after her as if she was 10 years old.

Key Questions

- Who is handling the disease management (blood tests, shots, etc.)?
- Who feels responsible for what?
- How is she autonomous besides diabetes?
- Do both parents have the same opinion about the situation?