Training Module

Culture & Adolescent Development

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Today we will discuss:

Culture

SES & Poverty

Ethnicity

Media & Technology

And the roles they play in adolescent development.

Culture Revisited

Culture: the behavior patterns, beliefs and all other products of a specific group of people that are passed on from generation to generation

Individualism
- Priority to personal goals
- Promote values that serve self
- Pleasure, achievement, competition, freedom
- Achievement is for individual - power, status, & competition
- Independent
- Privacy, sleep alone, bath alone
- Cognitive dissonance is common
- Less contact between mother and child
- Self-concept described in personal traits

Collectivism

- Priority to group goals
- Values promote group
- Security, obedience, harmony, personalized relationships
- Achievement is for the group
- Interdependent
- Co-sleeping, co-bathing
- Cognitive dissonance is infrequent
- More mother-child contact
- Holding, cuddling, hugging
- Self-concept described in group affiliations

Categories of Culture

Individualistic

- Western cultures
- U.S.
- Canada
- Great Britain

Collectivistic

- Eastern cultures
- China
- Japan
- India
- Thailand
- Mexico

Values parents hold in raising children and adolescents.

Individualistic

- Personal choice
- Intrinsic motivation
- Self-esteem
- Self-maximization

Collectivistic

- Connectedness to family and other close relationships
- Orientation to the larger group
- Respect and obedience

Criticisms

- We all need both a positive sense of self and to be connected with others
- Individualism...
  - Individualism (in psychology) may undermine our basic need to be connected
  - Higher crime, suicide, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, divorce, abuse of children, mental health concerns
- These concepts are very broad and may be overly simplistic
  - Families often value and teach a combination

Childhood to Adulthood

- Rites of Passage: ceremonies or rituals that mark and individual's transition from one status to another, such as the entry to adulthood
- Very elaborate and dramatic in some cultures
  - Symbolic separation from parent (mother)
  - Symbolic death and rebirth
  - To gain access to adult specific activities
  - Seem to be declining due to exposure to Western culture in Africa
  - Native American girls have a coming-of-age ceremony to support girls in adolescence (pivotal possibly vulnerable time in development)
- Western cultures lack formal rites of passage

Western Rites of Passage

- Graduating high school
- Bat mitzvah, bar mitzvah, confirmation, social debuts
- Sexual intercourse
- Driver's license
- Voting
- Drinking
- Absence of clarity or consistency - attainment of adult status is ambiguous

Socioeconomic Status

Important to look at cultures within cultures.

- **SES:** a grouping of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics
    - Vary in power, influence, and prestige
    - Power to attain occupations or education
    - Difference in abilities to obtain or control resources

- **Low, middle, and upper**
    - **Low SES:** low-income, working class, blue collar
        - Factory worker, manual labor, welfare recipient
    - **Middle SES:** middle-income, white collar
        - Sales, manager, professional (doctor, lawyer, teacher, etc.
    - **Upper SES:** top of their field, corporate executives, political leaders, wealthy individuals.

SES & Adolescent Development

Where they live.
Where they go to school.
What they are able to do (sports, activities, vacations).

Lower SES Parents
- Want children to conform to society
- Expect to have authority over children
- Use physical punishment more
- More directive & less conversational

Higher SES Parents
- Concerned with developing "initiative", motivation, and delay of gratification
- Children are encouraged to discuss and participate
- Less likely to use physical punishment
- Less directive & more conversational

Lower SES <u>Children & Adolescents</u>

- Low SES tends to be a broad risk factor
- At risk for low achievement
- At risk for emotional problems
- Social maladaptation, depression, peer conflict, juvenile delinquency
- At risk for dropping out of school
- However, this is NOT true for ALL adolescents from low SES backgrounds
- Positive educational outcomes for adolescents has been linked with high parental educational aspirations

Higher SES <u>Children & Adolescents</u>

- Face challenges too
- High rates of substance abuse
- Males have higher adjustment difficulties than females

Poverty

Defined as economic hardship

Family structure & ethnicity

- 42% female-headed households
- 8% married couple households
- 33% AA, 27% Latino, 10% non-Latino white

In 2006, 17% of children under 18 were living in poverty (increasing)

Poverty: Psychological Effects

- Poor are powerless
- Vulnerable to disaster (financial)
- Range of alternatives is restricted
- Lack of education and lack of prestige
- More conflict in the home, less social support
- Authoritarian parenting
- Watch more TV, less access to books, computers
- Schools are inferior, less monitoring by parents
- Environment is often dirty, polluted, and dangerous

Ethnicity

Cultural heritage, nationality characteristics, **race, religion, and language**
- Ethnic minority
- Ethnic diversity continues to grow
- High rates of immigration
    - Many stressors
    - Adolescent problems connected with acculturation due to conflicting with parents and cultural heritage

Adolescence & Ethnic Minority Youth Development

Special juncture - awareness of ethnic and cultural differences

Ethnic identity development
- Aware of how majority culture views own culture
- Aware of how own culture views majority culture
- Aware of negative appraisals, conflicting values, and restricted opportunities can impact choices and plans for future
- Minority culture? Majority culture? Bi-cultural identity?

We must consider...

Ethnicity & SES

Differences & Diversity

Prejudice, Discrimination, Bias

We have many cultures. Can we learn something from other countries that have many cultures?

Media

- Television - more time than in ANY other activity
- Media multitasking is a trend (text, iPod, ...)
- Playing video games tends to peak in early adolescence, then decline
- As adolescents age
    - TV watching and playing video games decreases
    - Music listening & computer increases

Social Policy & Media

- Encourage responsible programming
- Support public efforts to make the media more adolescent-friendly
- Encourage media literacy programs
- Increase media presentations of health
- Expand opportunities for adolescent's views to appear in the media