

Psychological consequences of weakening familial bonds

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In previous centuries, American domestic life mainly consisted of practicing religion and spending time bonding with one's family. As occupations, providing for the household, and a need for extracurricular activities have grown in importance, family has become less of a priority. Families spend significantly less time communicating with each other with everyone off at different locations for jobs or extracurriculars. This lack of family time has caused numerous negative consequences that have the ability to detrimentally affect the mental health of American citizens.

As family becomes less of a priority in America, the individuals have the potential to be affected by psychological consequences as a result of the lack of timespent bonding family. One of the major causes of adolescent depression is a weakening relationship between the parent and child. The U. S. National Library of Medicine discusses the importance of establishing a bond between parent and child, and the effect a negative relationship can have on a child's emotional state.

A strong parent-child relationship helps a child feel understood and supported and allows the child to have a much easier time trusting others and finding confidence in him/herself into adulthood (Moretti and Peled 3-4). As stated by Erin J. Lee of the Rochester Institute of Technology, it is likely for a child to develop depressive symptoms when one or more of the parents display such symptoms, or when the parents' marriage becomes unstable. Symptoms of depression are especially relevant in a single parent household as that parent must be the provider and caregiver of the family. When the child sees the effort a parent exerts to keep the household functioning

properly, the child becomes more aware of the dissatisfaction of the parent who must carry out these tasks (Lee 1).

Modern parents are constantly balancing work with raising children, leaving less time for their children. This imbalance may cause a child to feel as though he/she is less of a priority, a burden on the parent, or insignificant. These feelings become a catalyst for depression. The relationship between the parent and the child is not only crucial to the child's mental health during adolescence, but throughout adulthood as well. U.

S. National Library of Medicine writer Russell A. Ward describes the importance of the bond shared between parent and child in adulthood. When the relationship between parent and child is strong in adulthood, both the parent and child tend to lead happier, healthier lives (Ward 10). It is understandable that retired parents are likely to feel as if their lives are empty without the duties of raising a child. Having the time to talk with their children to stay updated and hear about their successes in life provides pleasure for them.

When adults are constantly busy with work, they may have a tough time finding time to spend with their own family, thus making it even harder to find time to talk with parents, and negatively affecting their own well being as well as that of their parents and their families. Divorce is another major familial factor that contributes to psychological health within children and adolescents. In a New York Times article, author, Tamar Lewin states that within the past forty years, mainly between the 1970's and the 1980's, divorce became more common. As both parents no longer wished to live with

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one another, but requested to have the children live with each of them, joint custody became a popular solution allowing children to spend time evenly with both parents. Children under joint custody spend their childhood divided between two separate households, constantly switching gears from living with one parent to the other.

This causes the children to feel alone or as if they are different people in each parent's home. This consistent managing of different personalities is likely to cause anxiety, and can make the children feel unsupported by one or both parents (Lewin 1-4). According to Leah Cameron of the College of DuPage, children of divorce tend to spend more time with one parent than the other. When children are aware that they have another parent but do not see him/her often, they feel abandoned and often blame themselves for the parent's absence. Additionally, the parent that the children live with for the majority of the time, unfortunately, tends to try to turn the children against the other parent (Cameron 1, 3). This can cause children to have general trust issues with others.

Psychological consequences in childhood are not just present due to poor relationships between the parent and the child. Often, if a child has other siblings, those siblings can impact the child's emotional state during childhood. The U. S. National Library of Medicine's writers Mark E. Feinberg, Anna R.

Solmeyer, and Susan M. McHale, wrote how the strength of the bond between siblings is often determined by how the parents treat each child.

When the children are treated similarly in reward and punishment, they get

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along better with each other. If siblings are warm and welcome to each other, then they are welcoming and kind in the relationships that they form with their peers while also performing better academically. For the most part in sibling relationships, the older sibling acts as the model and the younger sibling tends to take the same actions or follow along with what the older sibling does.

So, if the older sibling is behaving inappropriately, the younger sibling will behave so as well. These authors discussed about how, “ Branje and colleagues reported that one sibling’s behavior problems were associated with the other’s depression (Branje, 2004),” which is a clear demonstration of the impact the older sibling has on the younger (Feinberg, Solmeyer, and McHale 2-5). With family becoming less of a priority, and less time is spent with the siblings, especially with older siblings who can provide advice based on their experiences, the younger child is more likely to develop depression, a lack of self-esteem, maladjustment in education, or aggression. Some may feel that parents (and older siblings) should be less involved in the lives of children (and younger siblings) so that the child can become independent and learn to provide for him/herself. However, the parent-child relationship should not be sacrificed to encourage independence as this relationship determines the child’s social confidence with others. Children live a happier life when provided with the support needed during childhood and adolescence in order to grow into an adult that has the confidence to lead an independent life.

This evidence clearly displays how important familial bonds are to the overall well being of children, especially the bonds shared between parents and children in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, and the relationships shared between siblings. Children need to be able to communicate well with parents and siblings in order to be healthy mentally and to form sturdier, more trusting relationships with those outside of the family. Some of the best ways to do this today are through organizing an appropriate amount of time specifically for family or through family therapy, which can help the family to better bond with each other. Family is very important to everyone's psychological well being and should be more of a priority in the everyday lives of Americans. References Cameron, Leah. "The Possible Negative Emotional and Psychological Consequences in Children of Divorce.

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