

Good example of essay on dysfunctional environments among families in america

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Over the years family violence has dominated the media where millions of families go through the devastating effects in the family structure. Many have attributed these forms of violence to the way the society perceive women as well as their positions in the family. The women are perceived inferior and have a limited value at the personal levels, which in most cases leads to power conflicts between the man, as the head of the family, and the wife. It also leads a number of children and women, who are the main victims of physical, physical, emotional and sexual abuse by a member of the family (Rodriguez, et al. 173). In some instances, many of the victims die due to the injuries they suffer from the same, while others remain traumatized by the whole ordeal. The children in such situations often fall victim of circumstances that include: unemployment, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, mental illnesses or even death. Schools and mental institutions have reported an increase in children who display externalizing behavior problems that include physical and verbal aggression, defiance, lying, stealing, truancy, delinquency, physical cruelty and other criminal activities (Schoenfeld, 41).. These issues bring about the difference between what a functional family and a dysfunctional family is. However, it raises the question, what is a dysfunctional family and how is it described? What makes a family to be involved in a dysfunctional environment especially in a country with so much wealth and services? Similarly, what are the available types of dysfunctional families? The focus of this paper is discussing dysfunctional environment among families in the United States. It will particularly address these issues, through answering the above questions.

Dysfunctional families are those that are engaged in violence, conflicts,

misbehavior and abuse or even neglect of the children. These families are presented by environments where parents are the major results of co-dependent adults who may also be affected by circumstances like addiction of substances such as alcohol or drugs. This may be accompanied by untreated mental illness. Traditionally, the family was considered as the core foundation and stabilizing force in the society. The media headlines have grabbed the attention of the public by reporting incidents of spouse beatings, child abuse, sexual abuse, murder, drugs and substance abuse or even alcohol related accidents. These incidents are characterized by activities or rather environments such as alcoholism, violence and other obsessive and compulsive disorders that dominate the emotional climate in millions of American families (Rodriguez, et al., 183).

Arguments, divorce, runaway children or emotional cutoff between family members have been some of the turmoil these families have undergone. Many people leave their homes with the belief that they will be able to forget their family and childhood problems. This is curtailed by the fact that even after they leave, they still face the same challenges, feelings and relationship patterns that they left the family environment (Schoenfeld, 47). Families living in these types of environments fail to provide for their children's emotional and physical needs. The communication with these families limits the children's expression of feelings and needs. The children are noted to have low self-esteem and feel that their feelings are not being considered.

Dysfunctional families are characterized by various patterns that occur in their daily activities. They portray environments that contribute to the cutoff

of families as well as the severe effects faced by children. These patterns are characterized by circumstances where one or both the parents have an addiction or compulsion towards drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, gambling or even overworking. These activities strongly affect the family members as some of them are neglected and end up suffering. In most cases, children bear the burden as parents are very engaged in such activities (Langan, 124). These environments may also occur due to the fact that either one or both parents apply threats or physical violence as a way to control the children. Children face the challenge of violence where they are forced to participate in punishing siblings. They are also exposed to living in fear or explosive outbursts from their parents or siblings.

The other difference between functional families and dysfunctional families that affects families in America is that, dysfunctional families portray an environment where either one or both parents mistreat their children and treat them as possessions. This situation makes children feel like their only purpose in the family is to respond to the physical and emotional needs of their parents. They are expected to support the parent or cheer them up when they feel depressed. Secondly, it occurs when a parent or even both fail to provide or threaten to withdraw the financial or basic physical care of their children. This may be accompanied by the fact that dysfunctional environments occur when parents are unable to provide their children with the adequate emotional support (Langan, 133-134).

In addition to this, if a parent applies authority over their children in the way they address their children, then the children will become defiant and even take sides in conflicts between parents. Dysfunctional families are not able

to provide a healthy environment for its members. They often have a sophisticated way of doing things where rigid rules that are often unspoken are used. These rules lead to family break ups as no one is collaborating with the other and they are doing things in their own ways. These rules range from: the ability to talk about or express their feelings openly, addressing issues or relationships directly, not being selfish, always remain strong and perfect just to mention but a few. Normally, they guide the family members as they apply in most instances but they end up causing more harm than good. They discourage open and honest communication between family members by bringing about ineffective relations between family members (Nelson, 54).

Many dysfunctional families in the United States are characterized by various factors. These factors are normally brought about by alcoholism, drug abuse and violence. However, research from counseling professionals in America have indicated that there are other forms of environments that lead to dysfunctional families. These include situations such as: alcoholic and chemically dependent families, emotionally or psychologically torn families, physically or sexually abusive families and the fundamentalist or rigidly dogmatic families (Langan, 114). These situations have similar characteristics as the family members have poor communication patterns, low self-image and loss of identity. The members portray self-destructive ways that hinder them from relating in appropriate ways. The family rules observed in these environments require the members to maintain the secrets of the family, they are unable to identify and express their feelings, they play one another within the family and are unable to relate in ways

such as playing or having fun. They also portray a high tolerance of inappropriate behavior with identities overlapping with others. These traits exhibit the degree of dysfunction that exists in the family and how often they occur (Ang, 39).

In the United States, many counselors have indicated that children, who portray violent behaviors especially in school, often acquire the behavior from their parents. These children exhibit these traits due to circumstances such as: ignorance, criticism for their thoughts and feelings, parents that are intrusive and over protective, parents that are inappropriately distant and not involved with their children, restrictions from full and direct communication with other family members, forms of physical violence, exposure to drugs or alcohol and excessive structures and demands placed on their time, choice of friends or behavior (Aday, 39). This may also occur due to the fact that dysfunctional families conversely receive no guidelines or structure. The results of these activities are that, the abuse and neglect inhibit the development of the trust the children have in themselves, the world and the parents. It also affects them in their adult life as they find it difficult to trust the behaviors and words said by others. It also brings about challenges in the way they make their judgments carry out their activities and their own sense of self-worth. Children are largely affected in their school work as well as their social life where their relationship with other students is lowered (Aday, 45).

Violence in dysfunctional families brings about a situation where the victims don't only suffer physically but are also tormented psychologically. In these families especially in the United States, the husband perceive himself as the

sole power in the family, who has the authority to control his family in all aspects (Buelow, 13). A ferocious relationship portrays an environment where the prevailing partner is not in a position to place him/herself in the victim's situation. Similarly, the victim tries their level best to please their partners by engaging in activities similar to those of the perpetrators. They end up blaming themselves and putting up with the inappropriate behavior portrayed by the perpetrator. This mostly occurs in women who choose to stay in violent relationships even after they are battered (Allen, 212). The reason behind this is that they are physically, emotionally, and psychologically reserved in connection to their process of decision-making, and thus, are unable to leave. This brings about upsetting situations, where women suffer from loneliness, shame, fear, low self-esteem, and depression. Incidentally, studies have indicated that victims of dysfunctional families experience greater forms of violence, power inequality, personal and economic dependency as well as inaccessibility to supportive measures. Most of these victims often take into consideration that if they leave the violent relationship, they will be abandoning their children and thus choose to stay. Others abide by their religious and cultural beliefs that prohibit them from leaving their spouses regardless whether they are being abused or not (Thackeray, 177). This is accompanied with deeper consideration of the benefits and costs of maintaining the household or terminating relationship. Women are greatly affected by any forms of separation as they suffer significantly, from an economic point of view, from walking out of a relationship, locating job opportunities and childcare, as well as lacking intimate interactions. Lack of these essential resources such as finances

inhibits the ability of the victims to care for their children (Thackeray, 169). This is coupled with other resources, more especially housing and shelter from the government for such victims who are assaulted and their limitation in terms of numbers in various communities. It is largely argued that walking out of a ferocious relationship adds to the harshness and propensity of bodily injuries, especially to women and their children.

The criminal justice in the United States has raised concerns over the abuse of alcohol and drugs. This has emerged due to the information gathered from research where alcohol and drug abuse have been indicated as causative constituents of abuses of spouses and the children. The women who get assaulted experience serious psychological and emotional stress that affects their parenting responsibilities to a greater extent. Many of them start abusing alcohol and drugs as a way of releasing pressure and stress, which eventually turns into neglecting of their children (Buelow, 13). In some cases the women have been reported to have killed their husbands so as to avoid more physical and emotional abuse. The criminal system requires such women to claim self-defense in defense of their actions. Lately, the term insanity applies in many cases involving mentally abnormal defendants, where the assaulted victims are expected to prove that during the time the crime occurred they were not in their right state of mind. They should prove that they were not in a position to distinguish right from wrong (Thackeray, 155).

Research conducted in the field of alcoholism and violence among dysfunctional families has shown environments where the victims and the perpetrators are likely to mistreat and neglect their children. It has also

indicated that violence has portrayed by abusive parents emanated from their childhood as they went through similar situations. The sins of parents and the failure of society to amend the situation have also contributed to the development of such situations (Buelow, 12). Their children are unable to acquire social appropriate problem solving skills and thus end up becoming aggressive towards others in the society. This largely affects children who are traumatized by violent acts within the family who are likely to develop psychological, behavioral and cognitive problems at one point in their lives. It also affects their social interaction aspect at some point in life. According to (Thackeray, 179) research has shown that these children portray symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder which brings about a wide range of characteristics. These traits include: flashbacks, numbness, restriction to affect, sleep disorder and problems with intimacy and sexuality, depression, rage and anger, guilt, shame, anxiety, low self-esteem and somatic complaints.

Dysfunctional environments among families in America may be treated through several aspects where the main problem should be identified. This should include establishing the painful or difficult experiences that took place during the perpetrators childhood. It should also require respect among the family members in terms of ensuring an emotionally safe environment, a resilient foundation and privacy of space, body and thought. This should be coupled with accountability and apologies and allow reasonable expression of emotions (Buelow, 11). Parents should be supportive and work as a team which would require courtesy to encourage siblings to work together.

Finally, empowerment of the family members as well as the society should

be observed in order to facilitate the decision making process. Children should be encouraged to take positive steps that would help in improving their self-image and appearance. The treatment procedure should be directed towards the needs of each individual involved in the family matter. Appropriate screening methods would help determine the victim's psychological state and treatment possibilities (Buelow, 13).

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