EQUAL PARENTING TRAINING PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

EQUAL PARENTING

Co-funded by
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INTRODUCTION

The project's vision is to facilitate equal parenting to raise happier families by breaking stereotypes of mother and father roles.

What if the idea of being a parent wasn't limited to only one of the parents in as in most cases? What would happen if we raised our children in an equal parenting environment, detrimental to many people's lives?

This project aims to do this by training Youth workers/ educators and bringing ideas to formal education and curricula to the different educational institutions and organisations. Breaking the stereotypes in traditional parenting and removing the barriers within the family and among the parents will provide equal parenting models. Therefore, future generations won't have to deal with the complicated parental roles and be brought up happily.

There is no training for youth workers or lessons for young adults about acting equally as parents for kids. They need to share life and responsibilities equally, not decided by their gender. And youth workers don't know how to explain this to young adults or young parents in non-formal education.

We aim to develop a comprehensive training methodology with all the tools, exercises and real-life experience for youth workers and young adults to gain the knowledge of how to explain this to young adults in the right way with the help of external experts.

Module 1
Breaking Stereotypes

Module 1: Breaking stereotypes

Module Introduction

Parenting stereotypes based on gender are the beliefs and expectations that parents and society have about how mothers and fathers should behave and what roles they should play in their families. These stereotypes are often influenced by the culture, religion, and history of the place where parents live, and can vary from one region to another.

Breaking stereotypes and equal parenting are ways of challenging and changing these beliefs and expectations and creating more opportunities and choices for parents and children regardless of gender. Breaking stereotypes means recognizing and questioning the assumptions and biases that underlie the stereotypes, and providing alternative or counter-stereotypical examples and models.

Equal parenting means sharing the responsibilities and rights of parenting based on equal rights, rather than based on gender roles. Breaking stereotypes and equal parenting can benefit both parents and children by reducing conflict, increasing cooperation, enhancing communication, and promoting well-being.

Through this module we will cover identification of common parenting stereotypes in society, outline the consequences of parenting stereotypes and explore the ways to break parenting stereotypes.

Case Study

Priya is a 32-year-old mother of two children, aged 6 and 3. Priya works as a software engineer in a multinational company and earns more than her husband, Rajesh, a journalist. Priya enjoys her career and wants to continue working after having children. However, she also faces criticism and judgement from her relatives, friends, and colleagues, who think she neglects her children and her husband by working too much. They often tell her that she should quit her job, work part-time, and focus more on her family. They also question her ability to raise her children properly and suggest that she should hire a maid or send them to boarding school.

Priya feels frustrated and guilty by these comments and tries to balance her work and family life as much as possible. She often works from home or takes days off when her children are sick or have school events. She also tries to spend quality time with them every day, by reading stories, playing games, or doing homework together.

Answer the questions below according to the case study

● Why does Priya face criticism and judgements?
● Why does she feel frustrated and guilty by these comments?
● What can be done for Priya not to feel frustrated and guilty?

Stereotyping is defined as an 'over-generalised' belief that people from a certain group will behave in a certain way. Stereotypes can exist in all aspects of our lives, and one of them is the children's caregivers and especially their parents.

Parenting stereotypes can originate from various sources, including historical traditions, media portrayal, religious beliefs, and societal norms. Historical roles assigned to genders have shaped expectations around parenting, as traditional divisions of labour confined women to nurturing roles while men were seen as providers. Media, including TV shows, movies and advertisements, often perpetuate and reinforce these stereotypes, portraying mothers as selfless caregivers and fathers as distant breadwinners.

Mothers and fathers used to have distinct roles, and those roles were rather rigidly segmented. What tasks and responsibilities assigned to a mom and what tasks and responsibilities assigned to a dad in a family were quite different and did not intersect at all. The place of women in a society was restricted to a private sphere so that the mother was focusing on staying at home while nurturing and taking care of her child. Thus, mothers were the main parent who directly had an interaction with a child. On the other hand, men who belong to the public sphere can work, do politics and make decisions. As a result, fathers were the financial provider, a disciplinarian with the ultimate authority, and decision-maker whose word went unquestioned.

Women getting out of the private sphere as well as with the participation of them in the labour market led to the decline of strict distinction between parenting roles attached to mothers and fathers that have been had. Also, they started intertwining. Now that providing shelter, food and clothing are not just the father's role but also the mothers' while fathers can also nurture through love and attention and provide dedicated time to the kid, and play an active role in their kids' lives. But there are still stereotypes in society that are assigned to mothers and fathers based on their gender.

Further reading:
King, Kathryn R. (1995). "Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work". Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature

Picture by Bright Side

- What do you feel when you look at two pictures?
- What is the difference between women?
- Could you compare them with each other?
- In a dream world, what parenting stereotypes are attached to motherhood? Does it show reality?

Case Study

Michael and Sara are a married couple and they have been together for 7 years. Michael works in a company, and Sara is a housewife. She takes care of 2 children aged 3 and 5. Michael leaves home early in the morning to catch a bus for work and comes home around 6 PM. After he arrives home, what he wants is just to have dinner with his family, sit on the couch and watch TV until he sleeps. Since he feels exhausted, he doesn't like playing with children and sometimes gets disturbed by the noise. Sara complains about Michael not helping her with household chores and taking care of the children.

She feels so tired of dealing with household chores and taking care of and meeting the 2 children's needs every day. She tries to talk about the struggles she faces and how she feels about the situation with Michael but he doesn't understand her at all. When Michael was a child and later in his life, his mother did manage the same things like cooking, ironing and looking after kids that Sara did every day. Although his mother had to care for 3 children instead of 2 children, He never heard of his mother complaining about her workload or failing to do anything.

His father was away from home for days for work. However, he doesn't go somewhere for work just like his father, just to the office and comes back home and tries to look after the children. He would say he is even better than his father. Sara appreciates his effort in supporting their family financially but he needs to do more to help her. Finally, This conversation ends up in a disagreement.

Answer the questions below according to the case study
- Why is Sara discontent with the situation?
- What is the reason behind Michael's attitude towards chores and children?
- What could have been done to avoid this disagreement? What would be your suggestions?
How will this situation affect children and their future parental roles?

Albert Bandura, a recognized psychologist in the field of social learning, has written extensively on one of its key concepts, "modelling". He points out people learn by imitating the behaviors they see around them, those social models they grow up or interact with. Children imitate adults in a good way or bad way. Almost without parents realizing it, their small eyes study and hone in on them, working in behaviors, copying gestures, and internalizing words, expressions, and even roles.

Children learn by observing and imitating those around them. Their immediate family, relatives, friends, games, toys, and school influence their development and point of view, as do the media and society. Socialization is the process by which children learn to assimilate values and norms, live in society, and acquire knowledge. This is decisive for their future since it is how they construct their identity.

Children learn what they are shown. For example, in a home where the father is not involved in the housework and the childcare while the mother takes care of the children and the house, the son's desire to help the mother and learn and do housework will be less because children generally identify more with the parent of their sex, they are motivated to imitate that parent's interests and activities. That's why he will find his father closer to him and copy his father's behaviour.

Activity: Generational Stereotype Mapping (5 minutes):
● Provide each participant with a large sheet of paper or a digital document.
● Instruct participants to draw a timeline with three sections labelled "Past Generation," "Current Generation," and "Next Generation."
● Ask participants to think about the parenting stereotypes they have observed in their family.
● In the "Past Generation" section, participants should write down the stereotypes they believe their grandparents or earlier generations adhered to.
● In the "Current Generation" section, participants should list the stereotypes they believe their parents or their own generation have faced or perpetuated.
● In the "Next Generation" section, participants should speculate on the stereotypes that might be passed on to the next generation.

Group Discussion (3 minutes):
● Divide participants into small groups
● Instruct each group to share and discuss the stereotypes they mapped on their timelines.
● Encourage participants to consider how these stereotypes were transmitted, whether through family traditions, societal norms, or other means.
● After 3 minutes of group discussion, bring everyone back together for a brief whole-group discussion.

Case Study

Gemma is a 12-year-old girl who began school, and her teachers gave her many take-home group projects to get done. One time, when she turned to invite her friends to her house to do group projects. When her friends arrived at her home, they were warmly welcomed by her dad. Her friends were slightly surprised because they didn't expect her father to be at home in the middle of the day as their fathers were barely at home.

They asked him where Gemma's mom was, and he said she was working. He prepared lunch for them and later baked some cookies. Her friends were weirded out about the situation. Gemma couldn't understand what's going on with her friends. Then, she finds out why they acted so weird because her father is a househusband. She never thought it was something weird because His father had been at home since he was born, and this was normal for her. Her father and mother have been doing the housework together, and therefore she did not think about the responsibilities and roles assigned to the mother and father in a gender-divided way.

Answer the questions below according to the case study

●Why did Gemma's friend get surprised when they see her dad at home?
●What is the reason for them having these parental stereotypes?
●What are the effects of parenting stereotypes on children

Gender stereotypes are deeply ingrained in our culture. In fact, stereotypical social roles continue to be passed down from generation to generation through differential socialisation, especially traditional roles such as "mother and housewife" for women, and "father and provider" for men. Most of the time, adults are not even aware of these stereotypes as they educate their children.

Parenting stereotypes based on gender can affect how parents treat their children, what values and skills they teach them, and how they support their development. Parenting stereotypes based on gender can also affect how children view themselves, their parents, and their future. When parents consistently buy female-stereotyped toys such as dolls and tea sets for their daughters, or male-stereotyped toys such as trains and dinosaurs for their sons, they implicitly link their children's sex to gender roles.

These roles are encouraged as the children play with the toys in different ways.
Parents also convey indirect messages during early childhood via how the household is organised. They may model stereotypical male and female behaviour in the way they divide work, care and housework. Because children generally identify more with the parent of their own sex, they are motivated to imitate that parent's interests and activities.

When boys and girls are treated differently at home, there is a good chance that they will not develop and behave in the same way. Children then use these ideas and expectations and apply them in similar situations. For example, a girl who has imitated her mother doing housework is more likely to assume that housework is for girls when playing, and then assume that chores are for girls in other settings. When girls grow up and start their own families, they will be more likely to take on the responsibilities of their households. Boys often play outside and contribute little to the household chores.

This phenomenon is called "differential socialisation." It is the tendency to behave differently depending on a person's gender. Children are categorised as "girls" or "boys" instead of being simply thought of as "children." This affects children's ways of thinking, their identities, and their responsibilities and roles when they become mothers and fathers.

Activity: Experience Exchange

Form a circle of participants. Have everyone match with the person on their right. Ask the questions below and give 2 minutes to discuss the questions with their partners. At the end of 2 minutes, change the question.

Questions:

1. Are there roles and responsibilities assigned to mothers and fathers based on their gender in your own family or environment? What are they?

2. Do your parents tend to have gender-stereotypical expectations for you?

3. Are a girl and a boy born in the same house and raised by the mother and father in the same way?

4. Relating to the 3rd question, how has this affected you?

Case Study

In a traditional rural community, Sarah and David were navigating the complex terrain of parenthood under the weight of societal stereotypes. Sarah was a stay-at-home mom, while David worked long hours to provide for their family. They adhered to stereotypical roles, largely influenced by their cultural and generational background, which portrayed fathers as breadwinners and mothers as caregivers. This adherence to gender-based stereotypes was particularly challenging for Sarah, who longed to pursue a career outside the home but felt constrained by societal expectations.

As their children, Emily and Ethan, grew older, Sarah and David began to recognize the limitations of these stereotypes. They saw how these roles constrained their individual aspirations and hindered the development of a more equitable partnership. Slowly, they started breaking away from these stereotypes by seeking support from their community and sharing household and childcare responsibilities more equally.

David, in particular, took on a more active role in parenting, challenging the traditional notion that fathers couldn't be nurturing caregivers. Their journey was marked by struggles and resistance from some within their community who clung to traditional parenting stereotypes. However, Sarah and David's determination to provide a more balanced and fulfilling life for their family ultimately led to a gradual shift in perception, sparking conversations about the need to reassess and redefine parenting roles in their community.

Answer the questions below according to the case study
● What are the key parenting stereotypes evident in this case study, and how do they influence Sarah and David's roles as parents?
●What strategies or support systems can parents like Sarah and David utilize to help them navigate and overcome traditional parenting stereotypes?

Gender roles are behavioural patterns attributed to women and men by society. The concept of gender inequality emphasises the different, unequal behaviours and attitudes that individuals are exposed to due to their gender and makes itself felt in areas such as economy, health and education.

Another structure that suffers from this inequality is the family, the smallest building block of society. Men and women are shaped by gender roles and by establishing a family, it continues to convey these roles from generation to generation. In a study (2007); For women, the most feminine work was seen to look after the child when she/he gets sick. Another is to prepare food for the child. Other works that are feminine for women are cooking, washing dishes, cleaning, washing laundry, ironing, dressing the child, deciding on the house, contributing to the family budget and solving family problems. Masculine works according to men are business tracking, repairing, and making a living of the house. According to these views of men and women, it shows that the roles transferred are accepted and internalised by both sexes. It is seen by the researchers (2007);

As the level of education of individuals increases, the discrimination in gender decreases. Therefore; It is essential that the dissemination of training on gender inequality, turning the existing education system into a transformative and egalitarian one rather than nurturing gender roles, and education should be accessible by everyone.

Women's strengthening and informative training programs should be prepared in order to free themselves from traditional roles and thought patterns, develop independent personalities, express themselves and effectively participate in the decisions taken in the family. However, the workshops and training for men should not be forgotten because it will not be enough to give education or raise awareness of women. At the same time, raising awareness of men will accelerate the transition to the equal parenting process and will lead to the breaking of stereotypes in society. Thus, men can look at gender problems from a wider window and have an awareness that both spouses should have a say for the development and health of the family.

Generally, the target parent mother is selected on websites selling baby products or on websites for babies/children. We understand this from the design and the language used by the websites that such websites strengthen the connection between the mother and the child and consolidate the existing stereotypes instead of changing and transforming gender roles. It is obvious that the change in this type of parenting website will contribute to the concept of equal parenting in a good way.

Additionally, the female figure is generally used in the displays of baby care rooms in shopping centres and stores. The fact that the caregiver in the family is a mother is reinforced by such indicators. The fact that the baby care room indicators do not only emphasise the mother will prevent the reproduction of the mother's caregiver role. Looking around the world; paternity leave is on average 9 days. Less father's leave causes him to spend less time at home, and therefore, more mothers to take care of the caregiver, causing the father to be less involved in the child's life. Increasing paternity leave; it will enable the father to be more involved in the child's life and to fulfil his parental responsibilities equally.

Lastly, embracing an equal parenting approach will help both parents at home and work. Equal parenting is a concept that parents share equally in parenting and household duties Raising children or doing housework or being a breadwinner aren't a duty to be fulfilled solely by a mother or a father, but a responsibility that is to be equally shared by both parents. Changing diapers, night feedings, picking up and dropping kids to school, attending PTMs, helping with holiday homework, and helping with exams can be done by both parents regardless of stereotypes.

Additional resources:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtvUZ64vuao

Tell the participants that you will form small groups for this activity. Groups can be 2-3 or 4 people. It is important to have both men and women in each group. After creating the groups, give each group a piece of poster paper and markers. Ask each group to write down the 24 hours of a pair given to them. After giving the instructions, distribute the small papers that you have prepared before the activity, indicating the roles of the couples, to the groups, one for each group, and start the work. Couples have 15 minutes to write their 24 hours. If needed, an additional 5 minutes can be added.

Couples Roles:
1. 46 year old company executive
   38 years old not working
2. 30 year old unemployed
   25 years old goes to the cleaning
3. 30 year old tradesman
   25 years old tailor
4. 27 year old civil servant
   25 years old teacher
5. 38 years old paediatrician
   37 years old brain surgeon

Discussion questions:
• Which of the jobs do you attribute to a woman and which to a man? Are there any jobs that you think are better done by men or women?
• When we look at the working hours of the same couple, are their wages equal? If different, why?
• Can you compare the couples in terms of sociability?
• Who might be responsible for maintaining the house?

Summary

The norms and stereotypes in our lives are changing and transforming day by day. Considering that we, as human beings, change and develop with each passing day, it could not be expected that these thought patterns, which are human products, will remain the same. One of them is the parenting roles in society.

The parenting roles that existed 100 years ago and the parenting roles that exist now are not the same. Also, parenting roles 100 years from now will not be the same as they are now. Therefore, we should not forget that these stereotypes in society are concepts that can change and transform and that they are also products of the time we live in. We know that the father's job is not just to support the family financially. At the same time, the father is a figure who can take care of the family members, show his love, see the needs and wishes of the family members and take action accordingly. The time has changed and fathers are also involved in household chores and taking care of children.

These stereotypes and norms in society pass from generation to generation so that next generations learn these patterns from their parents and grandparents. For example, Children learn how to act from an early age by observing what their parents and their immediate surroundings do and how they behave and then start imitating what they see. In order to break this flow of information and to see a more equitable and sharing role in the roles of mother and father in the future generations, young adults who are already parents or who are on the way to becoming a parent have a great responsibility because the power to initiate this change is in their hands.

Module 2
Division of Responsibilities

Module 2 : Division of Responsibilities

Module Introduction

This module equips parents with strategies for equitably dividing child-rearing and household tasks. Learn how to foster a balanced family life through effective task sharing and communication between both parents.

Learning Objectives

● Understand how to evenly divide household and parenting responsibilities.
● Learn how to adapt traditional roles for a balanced parenting approach.
● Master conflict management techniques specific to task division.

Goals

The aim is to provide parents with communication skills and practical strategies for balanced role-sharing, ultimately enhancing family relationships. It also offers an overview of research findings to guide your equal parenting approach.

Addressing Misconceptions

This module dispels common myths, such as one parent doing all the work. It emphasizes the importance of both parents being actively involved in child-rearing and household chores.

Summary

Focused on collaboration over competition, this module helps parents set fair expectations and work together effectively. The end goal is not just balanced roles, but also a healthier family dynamic and constructive problem-solving in parenting challenges.

Case Study

John and Jill are a married couple with two children, aged 4 and 6. They both have to demand, full-time jobs that require them to work long hours at the office. As such, they find it difficult to provide the same level of care and attention to their children that they would like.

To address this problem, John and Jill decided to establish an equal parenting division of responsibilities in their household. This means that each parent is equally responsible for managing their child's daily needs during their designated days off from work. On these days off, both parents will be required to complete equal amounts of labour towards caring for the children, including preparing meals, working on homework assignments, helping with chores, attending extracurricular activities, etc.

Additionally, when both parents are present in the home during the weekdays or on weekends when neither parent is at work, they will divide up responsibility for tasks relating to childcare as equally as possible. This may include taking turns driving kids to school or activities or alternating between who will handle bath time or bedtime duties each night.

To ensure fairness and accountability within this system of shared parental responsibilities, John and Jill have agreed upon certain parameters that must be

followed by each parent for it to be effective. These parameters include both verbal and written agreements regarding which tasks each parent is expected to complete when they are not at work; additionally, these expectations must be communicated between both parents so there is no confusion about who is responsible for what when it comes time for tasks to be completed. Furthermore, a monthly review process has been created so that any disagreements or disputes can quickly be addressed without disrupting the flow of parental duties within the house.

By establishing an equal parenting division of responsibilities in their household and working together as a team to support one another in meeting their respective responsibilities as parents, John and Jill have been able to achieve greater satisfaction with how they handle childcare duties while also allowing them more quality time with their children than before implementing this system into their lives.

Discussion:
- What are the benefits of establishing an equal parenting division of responsibilities in a household?
- What are the challenges that may arise in implementing this system?
- How can the use of verbal and written agreements help in ensuring fairness and accountability in shared parental responsibilities?
- What are some other ways in which parents can ensure that they provide adequate care and attention to their children despite demanding, full-time jobs?

Role-Playing Activity:
Divide the participants into pairs and assign each pair a different scenario that may arise when implementing an equal parenting division of responsibilities, such as one parent not fulfilling their responsibilities, a disagreement about how to complete a task, or a child becoming upset about the change in routine. Each pair should then role-play the scenario and come up with a solution that adheres to the established parameters of the system.

Pros and Cons Debate:

Divide the participants into two groups, one advocating for the implementation of an equal parenting division of responsibilities and the other against it. Each group should take turns presenting their arguments, followed by a rebuttal from the other group. This can help participants understand the potential benefits and challenges of this system and may lead to a more nuanced discussion about how it can be implemented effectively.

Theoretical part / Context

The concept of equal parenting is not just a progressive ideal but is rapidly becoming an essential framework for modern families. At its core, equal parenting signifies that both parents are equally accountable for all facets of raising their children. This encompasses not only the obvious tasks like childcare but also decision-making, emotional support, financial contributions, and domestic chores, which are critical to a child's upbringing.

The concept of equal parenting is not a new one. Still, it is becoming more widely recognized and accepted in modern times. This shift in thinking has come about as a result of changing attitudes towards gender roles and a greater understanding of the importance of involving both parents in the upbringing of their children. Studies have shown that children who have both parents actively involved in their lives tend to do better academically, socially, and emotionally. However, achieving true equality in parenting can be challenging. Many factors can impact the division of responsibilities between parents.

Equal parenting is a holistic approach to child-rearing where both parents equally share the hands-on and decision-making responsibilities. This goes beyond just the routine tasks of feeding and caretaking to include substantial involvement in educational decisions, healthcare, extracurricular activities, and emotional well-being. The goal is to create a harmonious, collaborative parenting environment where both parents contribute to nurturing the child, while also maintaining their individual pursuits.

By deeply understanding the full spectrum of equal parenting, one can better appreciate its complexities, benefits, and societal shifts supporting its adoption. This multidimensional understanding provides a solid theoretical foundation for parents seeking to implement equal parenting practices in their own families.

Additional Resources: Role of Fathers https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=22022&lang=en

Division of responsibilities when it comes to equal parenting is an essential component of a successful and healthy relationship between parents. This can be achieved by establishing clear roles for both parties, understanding the special needs of each family member, and recognizing the unique contributions each partner makes towards the growth and development of their children.

The division of parental responsibilities begins with understanding the fundamental differences between custodial and non-custodial roles as defined in a court order. A custodial parent is typically responsible for providing care, supervision, financial support, education, medical care and other services related to a child's overall well-being. On the other hand, a non-custodial parent should provide financial support, including child support payments. Parenting time may also be allocated between the two parents under certain circumstances.

In addition to these basic responsibilities, equal parenting involves both parties sharing equal rights when it comes to making decisions that affect their children's lives. This includes shared decision-making over important matters such as medical treatments, school choices, extracurricular activities and religious affiliations. Parents should strive to work together collaboratively so that they can reach an agreement on all major issues without always resorting to court intervention.

It is also important for parents in an equal parenting situation to learn effective communication skills to discuss issues calmly and respectfully and create an atmosphere where both parties feel heard and respected. This can help prevent heated arguments that ultimately lead to conflicts or stalemates over decision-making processes.

Another critical aspect of maintaining an equitable division of parental responsibilities is learning how to handle conflict situations effectively so that any disagreements are resolved quickly without causing lasting emotional damage or placing undue stress on either party involved in a dispute. Parents should strive to show respect for one another's opinions while still working towards finding solutions that are beneficial for all family members involved in a dispute. It is also important for them not just to consider their own needs but their children's needs as well when settling disputes or making decisions about key matters affecting their lives.

Finally, setting expectations around household chores is another important part of creating an environment where everyone feels valued and respected within an equal parenting setting. This may involve discussing who will do which tasks around the house such as laundry or lawn care as well as deciding who will take primary responsibility for grocery shopping or errands such as picking up prescriptions from the pharmacy.

Establishing these boundaries ahead of time helps avoid confusion later down the road while allowing both partners time away from childcare duties to pursue individual interests or hobbies outside of parenting duties too!

Exercise 1

Discuss in a group of participants:

This module aims to educate participants about their parental responsibilities and what they mean. The module focuses on topics such as sharing household chores, financial contributions and decision-making authority among both parents. It will also look at how communication skills and problem-solving techniques can help couples navigate difficult conversations related to parenting.

Try to explore more:

Participants will explore the issues surrounding equal parenting from a theoretical point of view, looking at the historical context of gender roles in childcare as well as current trends in society.

Exercise 2

In this exercise, participants will learn about parental responsibilities as they relate to equal parenting. We will discuss the concept of "division of responsibilities" in the context of equal parenting, and identify the various tasks and roles parents must take on to make it a reality.

The first step is to define the term "division of responsibilities" in equal parenting. This means that both parents are equally responsible for making decisions about their children, such as their educational, health, and emotional needs. It also means that both parents should share the workload at home; this might involve one parent handling some chores while the other takes care of another set of tasks. Ideally, these duties should be split fairly between both partners.

Next, we can look at specific examples of how an equal division of parental duties can be implemented. One way is through shared decision-making; this entails discussing important issues involving your children and making joint decisions regarding them. In addition, each parent should divide up household tasks such as cooking meals, cleaning up after meals, doing laundry, etc., so no single person is solely responsible for all the work necessary to keep the house running smoothly.

Finally, we should consider how these roles can be changed if needed; life changes over time, and sometimes one partner may need more help than another due to increased commitments or different interests. Both partners need to remain flexible and open-minded about adjusting their roles accordingly. Hence, everyone involved has a sense of balance and fairness in the relationship.

This exercise provides an overview of what parental responsibilities mean concerning equal parenting and what steps you can take to ensure you work together as a team when raising your children. By understanding the concept of "division of responsibilities" and making sure that each partner contributes equally (or as close as possible) when it comes time for decision-making and household duties, you can create a strong foundation upon which all other aspects of your children's upbringing will be built upon successfully!

Role-playing, games or analysing a picture about what is right/what is wrong or what changes could be done.

Case Study

Smith family - Developing a parenting strategy

The Smith Family is a typical family of four living in the suburbs of San Diego. It consists of two working parents, Sarah and David, and their two children, Matt (8) and Ella (10). The Smiths have always wanted to have an equal parenting approach, but until recently haven't had the time to sit down together and discuss what that could look like for them.

After hearing about the benefits of equal parenting from a friend at work, Sarah decided to take the initiative to work out an equal parenting strategy for the Smith household. She set aside some time for her and David to map out a plan that works for everyone in the family.

Make a discussion:
The first step was for each member of the family to think about what kind of things they might be interested in doing or taking responsibility for as part of their equal parenting approach. Both Sarah and David were keen on involving their children in this discussion so they asked them both what kinds of tasks they would like to help with around the house. Matt liked cooking, while Ella liked cleaning – so it became clear that those were roles they could assume as part of their parental duties.

Sarah and David then split up other tasks based on their strengths – such as grocery shopping (David) or organizing family events (Sarah). This way all members of the family were contributing equally while still focusing on activities they enjoyed doing.
Aside from sharing responsibilities, Sarah and David also discussed setting boundaries around certain tasks and issues such as discipline. They agreed that any disciplinary measures should be taken jointly by both parents so that there is no confusion between them when dealing with difficult situations at home.

They also decided on a reward system for when their children went above and beyond when completing household chores or meeting other expectations set by them as parents. disciplinary measures should be taken jointly by both parents so that there is no confusion between them when dealing with difficult situations at home.

They also decided on a reward system for when their children went above and beyond when completing household chores or meeting other expectations set by them as parents.

Overall, by discussing their equal parenting strategy ahead of time, Sarah and David gave themselves a strong foundation to work from when problems arise or if changes need to be made later down the line. All members of the Smith family are now happier with this new arrangement since it allows them all to contribute equally to maintaining order within their home while still having plenty of opportunities for fun along the way!

● Role-playing may be used to visualise the case study
● Discussions, pros & cons debates, small games ,etc.
One suggestion for using role-playing to visualize the case study is to divide a group of participants into different roles, such as Sarah, David, Matt, and Ella, and have them act out the equal parenting strategy that was developed in the case study. This can help participants better understand how the strategy works in practice and allow them to identify any potential challenges or issues that may arise.

Another suggestion is to have discussions or debates about the pros and cons of equal parenting. This can help participants explore different perspectives and ideas related to the topic and facilitate a deeper understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of equal parenting.

Small games can also be used to reinforce the key concepts and principles of equal parenting, such as teamwork, communication, and shared responsibility. For example, a game could involve dividing participants into teams and assigning them different household tasks to complete within a certain time frame. This can help participants understand the importance of working together and sharing responsibilities to achieve common goals

This module is meticulously crafted to empower parents in constructing a parenting strategy that is not only effective but also equitable. The module delves into the intricate balance of responsibilities between parents and offers a blueprint for effective communication, aiming to nurture a peaceful family environment.
.
The theoretical foundation of this exercise lies in the concept of equal parenting, which is based on the idea that both parents should be actively involved in raising their children and share responsibilities equally. Establishing a clear plan and division of labour within equal parenting ensures the strategy works for everyone involved.

The exercise recommends creating a list of all the tasks involved in parenting and assigning responsibilities to each parent based on their strengths and preferences. This approach is based on the shared and task-based responsibility models, two standard methods in equal parenting arrangements.

The shared responsibility model involves parents taking an equal role in childcare duties such as feeding, bathing, dressing, and supervising playtime or homework. On the other hand, the task-based responsibility model involves one parent taking on specific tasks. In contrast, the others handle others, depending on individual strengths and preferences.

In addition to dividing up responsibilities, the exercise emphasizes the importance of involving children in the discussion and assigning duties to them where appropriate. This approach fosters responsibility and independence in children while lightening the load for both parents.

Finally, regular check-ins and positive reinforcement are essential for ensuring everyone stays on track with their responsibilities and feels appreciated for their efforts. This exercise provides practical tools and strategies for implementing equal parenting within a family unit, ultimately leading to better emotional well-being for children and a harmonious family atmosphere.

The concept of equal parenting has been around since the 1920s, but it wasn't until the 1960s that it became mainstream. At that time, many traditional beliefs about gender roles were challenged and replaced with new ideas about relationships between men and women. In the decades since then, more families have adopted equal parenting as an ideal model for raising children. Equal parenting involves both parents being equally engaged in all aspects of childrearing – from setting rules and providing discipline to participating in sports or education.

Additional resources: Bonnell, K. B., & Little, K. L. (n.d.). "The Co-Parenting Handbook: Raising Well-Adjusted and Resilient Kids from Little Ones to Young Adults through Divorce or Separation."

Exercise 1: Family Task Assignment and Strategy Planning

Objective: To collaboratively identify and allocate parenting and household responsibilities among family members for a more balanced and effective family dynamic.

Instructions:
● Task Listing: Begin by making a comprehensive list of all household and parenting tasks—grocery shopping, meal preparation, homework assistance, disciplining, cleaning, etc.
● Family Meeting: Sit down as a family to discuss your list. Ensure that everyone has a say, including children.
● Task Allocation: Identify which tasks each family member is best suited for. Consider individual skills, time availability, and the energy required for each task.
● Assign Roles to Children: Don't overlook the children—assign age-appropriate responsibilities to help them build responsibility and lighten the parental load.
Interactive Components:
● Use role-playing or games to simulate real-life scenarios and how tasks will be managed.
● Analyze pictures depicting family roles to identify what could be improved, or discuss what is portrayed well.

Follow-up:
1. Regular Check-ins: Set periodic meetings to assess how well everyone is keeping up with their assigned tasks and to provide positive reinforcement.
2. Flexibility: Remember, plans may need to adapt. Be open to assisting each other as life's unpredictabilities arise.

For Individuals Without a Partner or Group:

If you're managing parenting tasks solo, modify this exercise to suit your situation:

List your responsibilities and prioritize them according to importance and time sensitivity.

Involve Children: If possible, include children in a conversation about the list, and assign them tasks as appropriate.

Self Check-ins: Regularly review your list to ensure you're on track. Be sure to give yourself credit where it's due, as positive reinforcement is beneficial even when self-administered.

Case Study

John and Sarah - making a plan

John and Sarah are a young couple in their early twenties who both have full-time jobs. They recently had a baby, and they're struggling to adjust to the new demands on their time. As an unmarried couple, they wanted to take equal responsibility for raising their child and make sure that both of them felt included in the process. To accomplish this, they decided to implement an equal parenting division of responsibilities in their home.

Their first step involved making a plan for how John and Sarah would divide tasks related to their daughter. They took stock of what needed to be done daily, such as feeding her, getting her dressed and ready for bed, or taking her out for walks. From there, they divided these tasks between themselves according to who had more experience in each area; Sarah was better at changing diapers while John was more adept at calming her down if she got fussy.

Make a discussion

Once the primary duties were sorted out, the couple agreed that neither one would take total responsibility for any one task—instead, both would stay involved with everything related to their daughter's care. This meant that when Sarah needed help with something like preparing dinner while getting their daughter ready for bed, John could step in and provide assistance so that she wouldn't have to do it all alone.

They also made sure that both parents were present during activities like playtime or story-reading so that each parent could take turns or participate together if desired.
This helped create positive bonds between father and daughter as well as engender a sense of family unity from an early age. Finally, the couple established clear expectations about how each partner would show respect for the other's role—for example, providing support instead of criticism whenever possible or praising each other's efforts rather than picking apart mistakes.

By working together to create an equal parenting division of responsibilities from day one, John and Sarah ensured that no one was burdened by the overwhelming tasks associated with raising a baby on their own. Through open communication about shared goals and clear plans for dividing up responsibilities among themselves, they managed to achieve balance in parenting while setting a strong foundation of mutual respect within their family unit going forward into the future.

Role-playing - Try to visualise the case study
Visualizing the case study can help learners understand the scenario better and put themselves in the shoes of John and Sarah to see how they can implement equal parenting division of responsibilities in their own lives. To make the most of the exercise, learners could try to imagine themselves as John or Sarah and think about how they would feel in their situation.

They could also try to visualize the different scenarios that might arise and think about how they would handle them, using the strategies outlined in the case study. After visualizing the case study, learners could discuss their thoughts and ideas with the group to gain more insights and perspectives.

To ensure accountability with their new agreement on dividing parental duties, John and Sarah commit themselves to schedule monthly check-ins where they can evaluate how things are going for each other as well as review their goals for parenting harmony.

They also agree to provide each other with verbal feedback so any problems or issues can be discussed early on rather than let resentment build over time due to miscommunication or lack of understanding about who is responsible for what task.
By role-playing through this content on equal parenting division of responsibilities, John and Sarah learn effective strategies for achieving balance in parenting; strategies such as clear communication about expectations; mutually agreed upon division of regular weekly tasks; regular check-ins; setting clear goals; providing verbal feedback; etc...

With this newfound knowledge, John and Sara are now better prepared than ever before when it comes time for them both to share in parenting duties!

Discussions, pros & cons debates, small games, etc.

● What are some of the advantages of implementing an equal parenting division of responsibilities in a family?
● How can open communication and clear expectations help to create a more harmonious family environment?
● Are there any potential downsides to dividing parenting responsibilities equally between partners? If so, what are they?
● What are some strategies that John and Sarah used to ensure that both partners felt included in the process of raising their child?
● How can other couples who are struggling to balance work and parenting responsibilities apply the principles of equal parenting division of responsibilities to their own lives?
● How can regular check-ins and verbal feedback help to address any issues or problems that arise in the process of dividing parenting responsibilities?

These questions can be used as a starting point for group discussions or debates related to the case study. Participants can share their own experiences and insights on the topic, and explore different perspectives on how to achieve balance in parenting responsibilities.

Making plans and parenting strategies are ways of using and implementing various techniques, practices, and guidelines to raise children effectively. Equal parenting is a form of parenting that strives for a balance between the roles of both parents in providing care and guidance for children. The goal is to ensure that both parents are equally involved in raising their children and share decision-making responsibilities.

Equal parenting is a form of parenting that seeks to create a balance between the roles each parent plays in providing care and guidance for their children. This approach creates a shared responsibility between parents regarding raising their children and making decisions.

To better understand equal parenting strategies, many resources are available online, such as books, articles, websites, and videos. There are also workshops, seminars, and group activities that allow individuals to learn more about the concept.

One important aspect of equal parenting is understanding how both parents should divide tasks. These can include day-to-day tasks such as feeding or bathing the child or larger issues such as financial decisions or discipline strategies. Both parents must come together to agree on how tasks will be divided so that each parent feels equally supported and involved in caring for their child(ren).

It's also beneficial for communication between couples—ensuring that they discuss potential conflicts or disagreements regularly. Finally, once an agreement has been made on task division, it's important to regularly reassess this agreement to reflect any changes or new needs that have developed over time with the maturity of the child(ren).

Additional resources: Vachon, A. V., & Vachon. (n.d.). "Equally Shared Parenting: Rewriting the Rules for a New Generation of Parents."

Exercise 1:

It begins by having participants examine the traditional roles of parents and the expectations associated with them. Participants should consider the types of duties each parent typically performs, such as cleaning, cooking, grocery shopping, disciplining children, etc., and what expectations are placed on each parent.

The second step involves discussing challenges to balancing parenting responsibilities. This may include time constraints due to work or school commitments; different parenting styles; abilities or lack thereof; financial resources available; familial support structures; etc. Through this discussion, participants can identify potential sources of tension that may arise in attempting to achieve balance in parenting.

Next, participants should identify their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to parenting responsibilities. Then they should discuss the strategies they believe will be most effective in creating a fair division of responsibilities between both parents. This might include setting goals for how much time each parent will spend with their kids per week (for example one hour every day), creating a regular schedule for chores and other family tasks, establishing clear rules and boundaries around discipline, finding ways to support each other financially or emotionally depending on the individual's needs, and so forth.

Finally, the exercise ends with each participant creating an action plan based on all the information gathered during the discussion process. This includes writing down specific objectives that need to be achieved to create greater balance within their family unit as well as strategies they can implement to reach those objectives. Each participant can then discuss their action plans with facilitators or peers as needed to refine their goals and make adjustments if necessary.

Role-playing, games, or analysing a picture about what is right/what is wrong or what changes could be done.

Case Study

Jim and Mary's different styles of parenting

Jim and Mary are a married couple with two children, ages 4 and 5. They both work full-time - Jim is an engineer and Mary is a kindergarten teacher. As parents, they differ when it comes to parenting styles and division of labour within the family. Jim grew up in a traditional family where the father was the primary breadwinner and had the final say in all matters. Mary, on the other hand, was raised in a more modern household where her mother worked outside of the home and her father shared more of the domestic responsibilities. Both approaches have their merits, but conflicts often arise when their expectations of each other do not match their own beliefs about how parenting should be done.

Make a discussion (what's happening, what is the effect of it…)
When it comes to the division of labour, Jim takes on more of the outside responsibilities such as mowing lawns, taking out the garbage, and light repairs around the home. He also makes most of the financial decisions for their household as well as manages any investments or savings plans that they may have.

Mary's primary focus is on ensuring that their children are safe, healthy, happy and well-educated by spending time with them reading books, playing games or outdoor activities helping with homework when needed and generally providing emotional support to make sure they grow into confident adults. When it comes to discipline both parents agree that respect should be earned through responsible behaviour but there are discrepancies in how this is carried out; Mary favours less harsh punishments while Jim believes in using physical punishment whenever necessary.

Despite these differences in parenting styles, there are some areas in which they do agree namely providing a strong moral compass for their children so that they can make informed decisions on their own later in life; they both believe firmly that

teaching work ethic from an early age will help form important values later on such as respect for authority figures, discipline to stick at tasks until completion and resilience when things don't go according to plan.

In conclusion, it appears that although this couple has different views on how best to raise their children they have been able to come together and create an environment where each parent plays an integral role in making sure their children turn into successful adults who can cope with life's challenges head-on whilst still having fun along the way.

This case study demonstrates that equal parenting does not necessarily mean equal roles but rather an understanding that certain duties can be delegated between two people depending upon individual strengths without undermining either's contribution towards creating a healthy family unit.

Role-playing: Try to visualise the case study

Scene: A young family of four is gathered in the living room discussing their roles and responsibilities.

Father: So, we all agree that equal parenting is the best way to raise our children?

Mother: Absolutely. We need to make sure that both of us are equally involved in raising and taking care of them.

Daughter (age 9): What does it mean?

Father: It means that both Mommy and Daddy will take on different roles in parenting and share the responsibilities. For example, Daddy might take care of getting you dressed for school in the morning while Mommy helps with homework in the evening.

Son (age 10): But what if there's something only one of you can do? Like when I needed a dad to come to help me build a Lego car?

Father: That's okay too! It doesn't mean that one parent has to do everything; it just means that we'll both be equally involved. We can also ask for help from other people when needed, like Grandma or Grandpa or even your friends' parents if necessary!

Mother: And don't forget that we'll also need to cooperate when it comes to decision-making - we'll have to consider each other's opinions when making big decisions about our family!

Both children: Okay, sounds good!

Father: Alright, let's get started then! Who wants to go first?

Discussions, pros & cons debates, small games ,etc.

Equal parenting is an evolving family structure where both parents actively share the roles of nurturing, disciplining, making decisions, and providing financial support for their children. It dispels traditional gender roles, pushing for a balanced approach where each parent's involvement in their children's lives is considered equally valuable.

Definition/Explanation:
Equal parenting promotes shared decision-making and equal responsibilities in childcare and financial support. This concept challenges gender norms, allowing both parents the opportunity to actively and equally contribute to their children's lives.

Challenges in Implementing Equal Parenting
1. Cultural/Societal Expectations: Deep-rooted societal norms can often stigmatize parents who break traditional gender roles.
2. Parenting Styles: Different approaches to parenting can clash, requiring compromise and negotiation.
3. Finances: Especially in single-income households, sharing financial responsibility can become complex.

Case Studies:
● Divorcees: Co-parenting agreements are crucial for outlining each parent's roles and responsibilities.

● Single Parents: Even in a single-parent household, the principles of equal parenting can be applied through open communication and shared decision-making with the absent parent when possible.

● Homosexual Couples: These couples often face societal stereotypes about parental roles which can hinder the implementation of equal parenting.

Conflict Management:

1. Communication is Key: Open dialogue should be maintained to discuss expectations, disagreements, and responsibilities.

2. Written Agreements: Documents detailing the co-parenting plan can help avoid disputes and ensure that both parents are on the same page.

Additional Resources:

● Bauserman. (2002). Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, "The Consequences of 'Equal' Parenting Time Arrangements for Children's Well-Being and Relationships with Their Parents."

● Online forums, blogs, and books by experienced co-parents offer valuable insights for conflict management and effective communication strategies.

This theoretical framework aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of equal parenting by addressing its key aspects, challenges, and potential solutions, enriched with diverse case studies and resources for further learning.
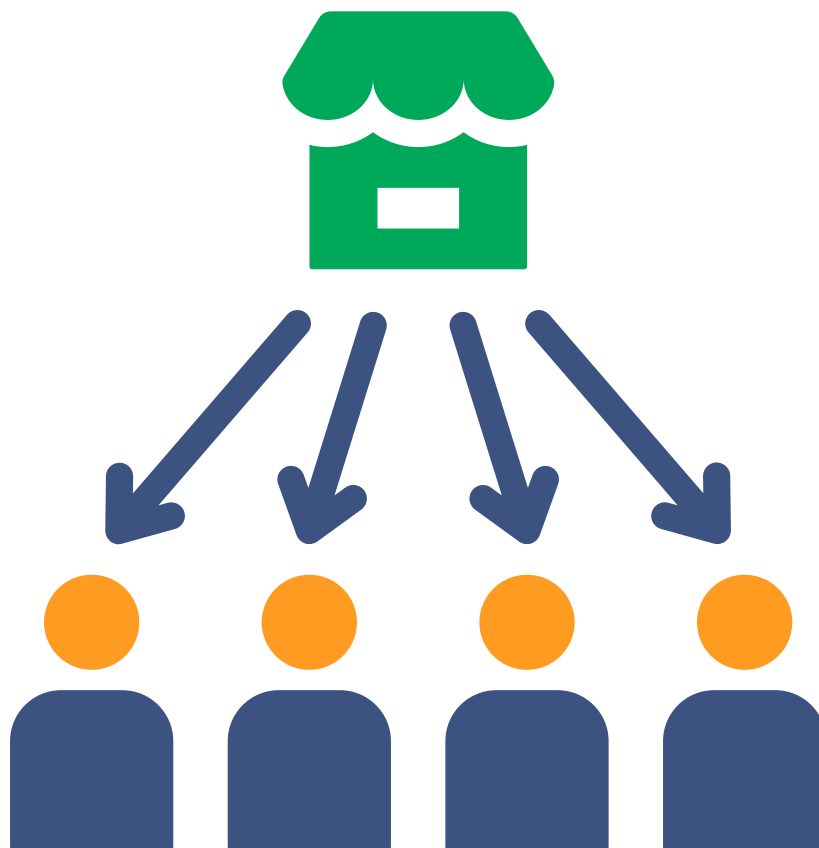
Exercise 1: Role Play on Diverse Parenting Responsibilities

Objective: To understand the nuanced roles and challenges different types of parents face.

Instructions:

1. Role Assignment: In a group of 3-4, each person assumes a role of a specific type of parent.

2. Discussion: Discuss your assigned responsibilities, challenges, and communication strategies.

3. Comparison: Share your findings and compare how responsibilities differ among roles.

Questions for Reflection:

● How do you communicate with your child?

● What strategies do you employ for effective parenting?

● What challenges do you face and how do you overcome them?

Exercise 2: Equal Parenting Across Family Structures

Objective: To examine how equal parenting can be adapted to various family compositions.

Instructions:

1. Brainstorm: Generate a list of parenting roles for various family types—single-parent, co-parenting, same-sex couples, foster, adoptive, etc.

2. Attribute Allocation: Associate each family type with roles and responsibilities, including protection, nurturance, guidance, discipline, and ensuring safety.

Exercise 3: Discussing Financial Equality in Parenting

Objective: To explore how financial responsibilities can be equitably distributed among parents.

Instructions:

1. Group Discussion: Talk about the division of financial responsibilities like childcare costs and extracurricular activities.

2. Solution Brainstorming: Come up with strategies for addressing financial inequities in various family setups.

Topics to Consider:

● Handling finances in single-income households.

● Fair division of shared items or expenses among siblings.

Exercise 4: Exploring the Impact of Equal Parenting on Sibling Dynamics

Objective: To examine how different levels of parental involvement can affect the relationship dynamics between siblings.

Instructions:

1. Scenario Building: Imagine two siblings with varying levels of parental involvement and how they interact in different settings.

2. Analysis: Discuss the power dynamics and fairness between siblings in terms of rules, responsibilities, and guidance.

Interactive Components:

Role-playing, games, or picture analysis can be used to explore the scenario in depth.

Summary

The Equal Parenting Module Division of Responsibilities aims to equip young adults with the knowledge and skills to develop a parenting strategy that works best for their families.

Through case studies, they will understand the roles of mother and father in raising healthy children and be able to apply them in their own lives. They will learn how different types of parenting can have different roles and responsibilities and how this affects the family.

Young adults will understand the importance of equal parenting, including parental responsibilities and what they mean. This module also encourages participants to create strategies for achieving balance in parenting.
For example, parents can practice co-parenting by sharing responsibilities such as providing emotional support, discipline, help with schoolwork or housework, taking turns watching after the kids, attending parent–teacher conferences together, etc.

All these strategies should be established on mutual agreement between both parents. In addition, parents need to be open and honest with each other about expectations and changes to reach a common goal: creating an environment that nurtures their children's development.
Finally, parents need to model positive behaviour and provide unconditional love so children can grow emotionally and physically strong

Module 3
Equal Opportunities for Work & Leisure

Module Introduction

The aim of the module "Equal opportunities in work and leisure" is to provide support to families, enabling them to ensure that both parents can access meaningful and productive activities outside the home. This module seeks to explore how best to ensure that both parents have equal access to gainful employment, develop their career paths, and find ways to balance family life with leisure time. It also looks at how best to ensure that parents can make informed decisions about childcare options, allowing for time for each parent to pursue their interests without compromising on the quality of care for their children.

Additionally, this module will look at ways of tackling systemic barriers that prevent women from having equal access in the workplace, such as reducing pay gaps or offering flexible working arrangements. By exploring these issues, it is hoped that families will be able to create a more equitable balance between work and leisure which allows both parents the opportunity to pursue meaningful activities while still providing the necessary care and support for their children.

Objectives of the module:
● Raise awareness of the importance of equal opportunities in employment and leisure activities for both parents within a family unit
● Explain the importance of fostering an environment that allows each parent to reach their full potential while building supportive relationships with their partners.
● To develop an understanding of the concept of Equal Opportunities for Work and Leisure and its implications. This will include recognising and appreciating diversity, identifying barriers to equal opportunities, considering legislation that applies to equal opportunities, evaluating policies and procedures that support equal opportunities, understanding best practices in equal opportunities, and building strategies to promote equitable access to work and leisure activities.

Case Study

John and Mary are a married couple with two children. Both are employed full-time in their respective fields, with John working as a financial analyst and Mary as a school teacher. However, due to the demands of work and family life, John and Mary have been dealing with an unequal division of labour at home for some time.

Mary has taken on most of the childcare responsibilities while John works longer hours or takes on extra projects at work; as a result, she often finds herself feeling overwhelmed and unappreciated.

What strategy should these parents adopt?

Equal parenting allows both parents to balance their family and work responsibilities in a more equal manner. This type of parenting has several distinct advantages for working parents, with the most obvious being that it involves each parent sharing equally in the nurturing and caring of their children. This can relieve some of the workload and stress faced by a single parent or by one partner who may be overwhelmed when solely responsible for all child-related tasks.

Equal parenting enables both parents in a family the opportunity to work, contribute economically, and still have time to enjoy leisure activities. With equal parenting arrangements, both parents can spend quality time with their kids but also take turns handling home responsibilities like childcare and errands. This allows them to have more free time to pursue their own interests.

One of the biggest advantages of this kind of arrangement is that it encourages better communication between spouses. It also gives each parent an equal say in decision-making and allows for negotiations that help balance economic needs and individual interests. In addition, it can create a sense of mutual respect among parents by emphasising shared responsibility in managing the household.

By having an equal division of labour at home, couples can split up tasks based on their individual preferences and skillset, which ultimately creates more time for leisure activities. For example, one parent might be better suited for cooking meals while the other is better at helping with homework or making sure children get enough sleep. This type of arrangement helps create a healthy work-life balance for all members of the family unit.

In addition to providing couples with more freedom in terms of work and leisure, equal parenting also promotes financial independence by allowing each parent to become financially secure without relying on others' support or resources. This means that children can develop important life skills such as budgeting and saving money while understanding the value of hard work from both parents' perspectives.

Additional Resources:

The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read by Philippa Perry,The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children by Shefali Tsabary

Activity1: Discussion

Now that you have a clear understanding of the benefits that equal parenting in work and leisure brings for parents and consequently for children, let's look back at this unit's case study and discuss the following questions:

● What are the potential consequences of an unequal division of labor at home for John, Mary, and their children?

● What are the challenges that John and Mary are facing when it comes to their unequal division of labor at home?

● What strategies do John and Mary have for balancing childcare responsibilities with their professional commitments?

● What kind of compromises or arrangements can they make to help alleviate the stress associated with their current arrangement?

● What other resources or support systems do John and Mary have in place to help them manage their workloads more effectively?

● What kind of techniques could be used to encourage open communication between John and Mary regarding this matter, both now and in the future?

● Can you relate to this case study? What would you do in this situation?

Case Study

Jenna and Toby have been married for five years and had two young children. Jenna had put her professional career on hold for 6 years to stay at home with her children, but now that they were both a little older, she was eager to get back into the workforce. She went online and started applying for various jobs in an administrative capacity, thinking she could use the skills she had developed as a stay-at-home mum.

However, this proved to be much more difficult than Jenna had expected. Employers seemed much more hesitant when they discovered that Jenna was a mother of two young children. On a few occasions, she has turned away without even getting an interview simply because of her family commitments. With each rejection letter that arrived in her inbox, Jenna's resolve waned until finally, after months of trying, she gave up looking altogether.

Meanwhile, Toby phoned his friends who worked in different companies and asked them if they knew of any available vacancies that could accommodate a working mother of two. After weeks of persistence on Toby's part, he managed to secure an entry-level position at a local advertising agency where Jenna could start building her career again. However, it became painfully clear during this process how difficult it is for women - especially mothers - to get hired in today's competitive job market.

Questions for discussion:
● What motivated Jenna to start looking for a job after 6 years of staying at home with her children?
● What skills did Jenna use as a stay-at-home mum that she thought would be useful in an administrative capacity?
● What specific challenges did Jenna face when it came to applying for jobs due to her family commitments?
● How did the employers respond when they discovered that Jenna was a mother of two young children?
● How did each rejection letter that arrived in her inbox affect Jenna's resolve and determination to find a job?

Equal parenting enables both parents to effectively manage their family and work responsibilities in a more balanced manner. This approach brings numerous advantages to working parents, prominently characterized by the shared involvement of each parent in nurturing and caring for their children. This equitable distribution of responsibilities alleviates the burden and stress that a single parent or an overwhelmed partner might encounter when solely managing all child-related tasks.

For working parents, achieving a balance between work and family life is crucial. This balance can be particularly challenging for women, especially those who are re-entering the workforce after having children or contemplating the prospects of pregnancy. Despite these challenges, embracing the principles of equal parenting can offer valuable benefits that contribute to healthier families, personal growth, and career advancement.

Balancing Personal Fulfilment and Family Obligations:
Equal parenting provides both partners with the opportunity to share childcare and household duties, enabling a more equitable distribution of work. This balance grants working parents the time to invest in their careers without compromising the quality of their family life. Women, who often grapple with the societal expectation of managing both career and motherhood, can find empowerment in this approach as it supports their ambitions while nurturing their role as mothers.

Empowering Women's Professional Pursuits:
Women who wish to maintain their careers while raising children often encounter significant challenges. The prospect of juggling professional commitments with parenting responsibilities can be daunting. However, embracing equal parenting can empower women to pursue their professional aspirations without sacrificing their roles as mothers. This empowerment not only contributes to women's personal growth but also drives gender equality within the workforce.

Strengthening Partner Relationships:

Equal parenting encourages open communication and collaboration between partners, fostering healthier relationships. Active participation from both parents in parenting responsibilities leads to a stronger partnership and a greater sense of shared accomplishment. This mutual support also provides women with the reassurance that their partners are equally committed to their children's well-being, thus alleviating potential stressors associated with returning to work or managing pregnancy.

Supporting Maternal Well-being:

The challenges women face when returning to work or navigating pregnancy are compounded by societal expectations and demands. The pressures of maintaining professional success while tending to family obligations can lead to stress and exhaustion. Equal parenting mitigates these pressures by offering a network of support. With partners sharing parenting responsibilities, women can focus on their careers with confidence, knowing that their families are equally supported.

Cultivating Empathetic Future Generations:

Equal parenting not only benefits working parents but also molds the perspectives of future generations. Children raised in households where both parents actively participate in family life are more likely to understand the importance of collaboration and respect across genders. This valuable lesson contributes to a more inclusive and equitable society.

In conclusion, equal parenting promotes a harmonious balance between personal and family life, offering numerous advantages to working parents. For women, this approach holds particular significance by providing the support needed to navigate the challenges of returning to work or managing career aspirations during pregnancy. By fostering healthier partnerships and nurturing both professional growth and parental roles, equal parenting empowers women to lead fulfilling lives as working mothers.

Additional resources: Equally Shared Parenting: Rewriting the Rules for a New Generation of Parents - Marc Vachon & Amy Vachon
All in: How Our Work-First Culture Fails Dads, Families, and Businesses and How We Can Fix It Together - Josh Levs

Activity 1: Negotiating Work and Family Responsibilities

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Objective: To practise negotiating work and family responsibilities in a supportive and constructive way.

Instructions:

1. Divide the group into pairs and assign one person in each pair to be "Jenna" and the other to be "Toby."

2. Explain the scenario to the pairs: Jenna and Toby are married with two young children. Jenna has been a stay-at-home mom for six years and is now looking to return to work. Toby is supportive of Jenna's desire to return to work and wants to help her find a job.

3. Ask each pair to take 5-10 minutes to prepare for a role-playing conversation. Jenna and Toby should negotiate how they will share the responsibilities of work and family to ensure that they both have fulfilling careers and are able to spend time with their children.

4. After the preparation time, each pair should take turns role-playing the conversation in front of the group. Encourage them to use active listening skills, be open to compromise, and communicate their needs and desires clearly.

5. After each role-playing conversation, allow time for the group to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

6. Finally, ask the participants to reflect on the exercise and how it has influenced their understanding of the importance of equal parenting and work-life balance.

Case Study

Holly is a divorced mother of two. She was married for ten years, but the marriage felt apart when the parents were overwhelmed with pressure and the love disappeared. During that time Holly has consistently worked to support her family, and now she sees herself working even more! Her ex-husband does his best to contribute too, but Holly rarely finds time for herself anymore. With all the responsibilities of being a mother and working, she felt increasingly overwhelmed and exhausted.

Holly desperately wants to take some time off, just so she can spend some quality time doing something just for her. Now and then, she would love to do a hobby or go out with friends, but it seems impossible with such limited free time. Even when she can find an hour or two alone at home, her mind races worrying about her children and all the other things that need to be done around the house.

The lack of "me-time" begins to take its toll on Holly; she becomes increasingly stressed day after day until eventually, she feels constantly irritable and resentful towards her family members. Even though her ex-husband is still present in the childrens lives and does his best to support her in every way possible, she feels that it's not enough - she needs some free time away from her parenting duties to de-stress and recharge. But how?

How common do you think Holly's situation is, where a working parent feels overwhelmed and unable to find time for themselves?

The process of equal parenting takes into account both parents' strengths and abilities, allowing each parent to come up with creative ways to interact with and entertain their children.Giving both parents an equal opportunity to participate in leisure activities with their kids, it allows them to bond over shared interests and activities that would not be possible if only one parent was responsible for such endeavours.

When families successfully engage in leisure activities together through an equal parenting style, parents become better role models for their children - teaching them about fairness and respect by example rather than just talking about these values out loud without demonstrating them through action. These are all essential life skills for any child growing up in today's world; thus making sure that these values are instilled from an early age will help set them up for success throughout adulthood as well.

However, in addition to the importance of family leisure activities, it is crucial not to forget how important the individual leisure activities of both parents are. One of the most significant advantages of equal parenting is that it provides more leisure or free-time activities for individual parents. The concept of equal parenting encourages participation from both parents in the everyday tasks associated with raising a family, giving each parent additional time to pursue individual leisure activities.

Equal parenting allows for a better balance between the two roles, resulting in less stress and greater satisfaction for both parents. With more time available to them, parents can engage in hobbies like painting, music, exercise, gardening, reading ,and writing. These activities provide creative outlets and allow them to explore their interests as well as our world on a deeper level.

In addition to providing an escape from the daily monotony of caring for children, individual leisure activities can help improve mental health. Studies have shown that participating in recreational activities can reduce stress and increase happiness by improving overall psychological well-being. Activities such as playing sports or learning a new instrument have also been linked to improved memory and enhanced cognitive function – which can be especially helpful when juggling work or school commitments with raising children.

Equal parenting also helps balance out financial obligations within dual-income households since both parents are contributing financially while still being able to enjoy individual leisure activities. With both adults working part-time or full-time jobs, they have access to more resources that can be used for recreational pursuits such as vacations and trips to museums or other cultural events. Some couples might even take up a sport together such as tennis or sailing – helping them maintain strong bonds while exploring new interests together.

Overall, equal parenting makes it possible for couples to build stronger relationships through mutual understanding and shared responsibilities while still having enough time for individual pursuits outside of their family life. Through these leisure activities, adults can gain valuable knowledge about themselves and develop meaningful connections with others within their communities – ultimately leading happier lives through better mental well-being and stronger interpersonal relationships.

In that case, here are some tips for parents or future parents to implement equal parenting for leisure time activities:
● Communicate with your partner: Communication is key in any relationship, and it's especially important when it comes to parenting. Talk to your partner about your desire for equal participation in leisure time activities and come up with a plan that works for both of you.
● Plan ahead: Schedule leisure time activities in advance and make sure both parents have equal opportunity to participate. This will help avoid any last-minute conflicts or misunderstandings.
● Share responsibilities: Divide household and parenting responsibilities equally so that each parent has time to participate in leisure activities. This may mean sharing tasks like cooking, cleaning, and childcare.
● Be flexible: Be willing to adjust your schedule or plans as needed to accommodate your partner's needs and desires. This will help ensure that both parents have equal opportunity to enjoy leisure time activities.
● Prioritize self-care: Make time for self-care activities, such as exercise, hobbies, or spending time with friends. This will help you recharge and reduce stress, making it easier to be present and engaged during leisure time activities with your family.

By implementing these tips, parents or future parents can ensure that they have equal opportunity to participate in leisure time activities and enjoy the benefits of a balanced and fulfilling family life.

Activity1: Discussion

Going back to the case study of this unit, how do you think Holly solved her problem of lack of time for herself?

How can families better manage stress caused by balancing work and parenting roles?

What advice would you give someone in a similar situation to Holly's to help them cope with their responsibilities and make time for themselves?

Activity 2: Quiz

Question 1: How does engaging in leisure activities together through an equal parenting style benefit children?

A) It allows parents to have more time for individual hobbies.

B) It helps parents focus solely on their work responsibilities.

C) It teaches children about fairness and respect through example.

Correct Answer: C) It teaches children about fairness and respect through example.

Question 2: What advantage does equal parenting offer in terms of individual leisure activities for parents?

A) It leads to increased financial stress for the family.

B) It provides additional leisure time activities for both parents.

C) It restricts parents' opportunities to explore new interests.

Correct Answer: B) It provides additional leisure time activities for both parents.

Question 3: How can participating in individual leisure activities help improve parents' mental well-being?

A) It adds to the daily stress of caring for children.

B) It doesn't have any impact on mental health.

C) It reduces stress and increases overall happiness.

Correct Answer: C) It reduces stress and increases overall happiness.

Question 4: What role does communication play in implementing equal parenting for leisure time activities?

A) It's not necessary to communicate with your partner.

B) Communication is key in establishing a plan for equal participation.

C) Communication only matters in work-related discussions.

Correct Answer: B) Communication is key in establishing a plan for equal participation.

Question 5: Why is it important to be flexible in scheduling leisure time activities?

A) Being inflexible improves time management.

B) It allows you to have more time for individual hobbies.

C) It ensures both parents have equal opportunity to enjoy leisure activities.

Correct Answer: C) It ensures both parents have equal opportunity to enjoy leisure activities.

Question 6: How can parents recharge and reduce stress to be more engaged during leisure time activities?

A) By overloading themselves with additional tasks.

B) By avoiding self-care activities altogether.

C) By making time for self-care activities like exercise and hobbies.

Correct Answer: C) By making time for self-care activities like exercise and hobbies.

Question 7: What benefit does equal parenting offer for maintaining strong bonds between couples?

A) It leads to increased conflicts and misunderstandings.

B) It restricts couples' opportunities to explore new interests.

C) It enables couples to explore new interests together and build stronger relationships.

Correct Answer: C) It enables couples to explore new interests together and build stronger relationships.

Question 8: How do equal parenting and engaging in leisure activities impact children's upbringing?

A) They have no impact on children's upbringing.

B) They teach children the value of solitude and independence.

C) They teach children essential life skills, fairness, and respect.

Correct Answer: C) They teach children essential life skills, fairness, and respect.

Case Study

It was a typical morning in the household of two busy nurses, and both parents were gearing up to go to their respective shifts at the hospital.

Ana and Sophia knew that it wouldn't be an easy job managing the kids while they were both having to work shifts, night shifts, and holidays. But they took time to plan so they could make it all work - they decided to switch off every week between days and nights, so one parent would take care of the kids while the other worked. It wasn't a perfect system, but it allowed them both to stay employed while keeping a steady relationship with their children.

On top of that, they always made sure to keep communication open with their children about what times they needed to be home or away from home for work. That way the kids never felt neglected or unheard when it came to their parents' work schedules.

Debriefing Questions:
● What challenges did the two parents face when they both had to work shifts?
● What efforts were taken by the parents to make sure they could successfully manage the kids while they had to work shifts, night shifts, and holidays?
● How did the parents ensure that their children never felt neglected?
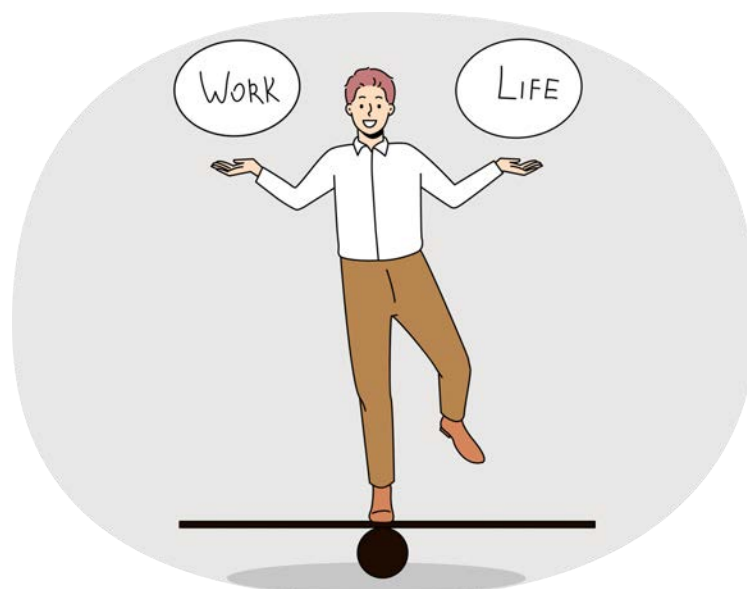
It's important to acknowledge that balancing work and leisure can be challenging for all parents. However, when both parents share parenting responsibilities equally, it's crucial to establish clear boundaries and communication to ensure that both parents can prioritize their work responsibilities while still having adequate leisure time to relax and recharge. One helpful framework to consider is the concept of "work-life balance," which refers to the ability to effectively manage one's work and personal life in a way that minimizes stress and maximizes well-being. Achieving work-life balance requires intentional effort and attention to one's priorities and boundaries.

Another important consideration is the impact that a lack of work-life balance can have on individuals and families. Research has shown that work-related stress can lead to negative outcomes such as burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased overall well-being.

Here are some tips to Create A Balance Between Work And Leisure When Practicing Equal Parenting:
● Communicate needs, personal and professional, to the employer and negotiate, formally or informally, some aspects. For example, work factors that cause stress (eg unrealistic deadlines) or which, on the contrary, make you feel good (eg a quiet workspace); the workload or the way you are organized; the possibility of a flexible or condensed schedule (for example, avoiding peak hours of traffic or allowing you to leave earlier to take care of the family).
● Leave the workspace during lunch break and set an alarm to remind to take regular breaks during the day.
● Avoid checking email, answering phone calls, or scheduling meetings outside of working hours.
● Be assertive – say "no" when you cannot manage more tasks (personal or professional) or when you perceive that the requests made are unreasonable.
● Establish a Work-Life Balance: Working parents should focus on maintaining a balance between work and leisure time, while still being able to be present as equal parents. To do so, it's important to communicate with one's partner and family to make sure that everyone is on the same page when it comes to their roles. This will help ensure that there are no issues with the division of labor in the home. e.

● Set Clear Expectations: To achieve equal parenting, it's important that both partners need to understand their responsibilities and expectations within the family unit. Each partner should attempt to create a framework of expectations that outlines how much time each party will contribute towards parenting duties, as well as any other necessary tasks related to the upbringing of children. This expectation-setting process is key in ensuring that both partners feel equally involved in parenting decisions and responsibilities.

● Utilize Support Systems: It's important working parents need to understand that they can rely on friends and family members for additional support if needed. Being able to reach out for assistance can help reduce stress levels and allow each parent more time for leisure activities or simply some much-needed rest or relaxation without feeling guilty about not being able to spend enough quality time with their children.

● Make Time For Fun & Leisure: Once parental responsibilities have been taken care of, it's equally important for both parents to take some time off from the usual routine of work and childcare duties to enjoy some fun activities or just plain old leisurely downtime together with their kids or by themselves. This ●helps build strong emotional bonds between children and parents while also contributing towards an overall better work-life balance within the household.

● Prioritize Sleep & Self Care: Finally, in order to maintain an equitable balance between being a parent and working full-time, it's essential that at least 8 hours of sleep per day be scheduled into one's daily routine. Additionally, self-care practices such as meditation or yoga are also beneficial in helping reduce stress levels due to juggling multiple responsibilities throughout each day while practising equal parenting principles at home!

● Prioritize: Evaluate your current job in terms of how it fits lifestyle-wise with being an equal parent.

● Be realistic – you don't have to and can't do everything "perfect", "always". It's important that you prioritize what's really important to you.

Ask for help: if balancing the personal and professional dimensions represents a difficulty that is difficult to resolve or you feel that your performance in personal and professional tasks is compromised, ask for help, either from a friend, family member or a professional such as a psychologist.

By following these tips, parents or future parents can create a healthy balance between work and leisure, leading to a happier and more fulfilling family life.

A**dditional Resources:**
"Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time" by Brigid Schulte-
https://hbr.org/topic/subject/work_life-balance

Activity 1: Creating a Work-Life Balance Plan

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Objective: To help the youths develop a plan for creating a healthy work-life balance when practising equal parenting in the future.

Materials:

● Pen/pencil

● Paper

● Optional: laptop or tablet for research

Instructions:

1. Introduce the concept of work-life balance and its importance in creating a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle.

2. Explain the tips for creating a work-life balance when practicing equal parenting that you previously discussed with the youths.

3. Divide the youths into pairs or small groups.

4. Provide each pair/group with a piece of paper and a pen/pencil.

5. Instruct them to discuss and write down their own ideas for creating a work-life balance plan when practicing equal parenting.

6. Encourage them to research and include additional tips they find helpful.

7. After 20-30 minutes of brainstorming and discussion, ask each pair/group to share their plan with the rest of the group.

8. Facilitate a discussion about the different ideas and strategies presented and ask the youths to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

9. Encourage the youths to take their plans home and share them with their families or future partners.

Activity 2: Discussion

Going back to the case study of this unit and after several tips on what to do to balance family life with work and leisure, what strategies would you use to improve Ana and Sophia's situation? Or do you consider that these parents are doing a good job and should continue to use the family management method that they have used so far?

Equal opportunities for work and leisure are essential for the development of a healthy, happy, and productive society. Equal parenting can provide a platform for families to make sure that everyone is getting an equal share of both work and leisure responsibilities.

This will create a more equitable family dynamic, foster better communication between parents, ensure that all family members develop their interests and abilities without being overwhelmed by expectations or obligations, and give children the opportunity to build strong relationships with both parents.

When people have equal access to both work and leisure activities they are provided with the resources to pursue their passions, hone their skills, and invest in meaningful relationships which can positively influence their overall well-being. Ultimately, equal opportunities for work and leisure help to create a culture of respect—respect for each other's time, interests, and talents—which is essential for creating positive change in families today.

Module 4
Domestic Collaboration

Module 4 : Domestic Collaboration

Module Introduction

This module aims to teach young adults the importance of domestic collaboration to create a successful parenting partnership.

The objectives are to:
- Understand the benefits of domestic collaboration both for parents and children
- Develop strategies to overcome any obstacles that may prevent effective domestic collaboration

Along the Units of this module, learners will understand the importance of collaboration and communication between parents, how to interact with people close but outside the family, how to overcome obstacles that prevent effective domestic collaboration and will find strategies to create a successful parenting partnership.

Through concrete examples, the learners will acquire knowledge regarding:
- The most important theories on social feeling and capacity of identification, which is the base to develop a balanced identity in the social context (based on Adler's theory).
- The cognitive development phases (based on Piaget's theory).
- The 4 types of attachment relationships as a result of the ties of the children with their parents.
- Effective cooperative communication between both parents and parents with children drives children towards a Secure Attachment (based on John Bowlby's theory).
- Effective cooperative communication with people close but outside the family (i.e. school figures, educators in leisure activities, other parents and relatives of the family).
- Emotional Intelligence according to Goleman

Case Study

Maria is 4 years old. She is in the conceptual phase of cognitive development, therefore she is egocentric (she thinks that everyone can know her thoughts or desires), but she is unable to move from general to particular reasoning and vice versa.

Maria in the evening does not want to go to sleep at 20:00 and her father does not support his wife in sticking to this decision. In the presence of Maria, he voices his disapproval of his wife's view on the matter and shows a lack of concern regarding the importance of having a routine for Maria. He goes as far as suggesting the mother allow Maria to watch the TV until she falls asleep.

Potential Effects and Effective Solution:
Routines appeal to a child's sense of order. That is why it is of utmost importance to try to organise the world around Maria. Maria's father does not seem to understand at the moment that routines are essential to help his child; because of this he overlooks their benefits: they help her to predict what will happen next, thus giving her reaffirmation and some sense of security to be derived from. Even if both of Maria's parents share the goal to raise her emotionally stable and intend to prepare her to deal with the complexities of the world, their conflicting ideas about her upbringing can lead them to a severance of communication.

As demonstrated by the pedagogical theory, there are a few things that need to be taken into consideration for a positive and cooperative dynamic that is at the base of Equal Parenting to take place.

It is essential to remember that parents provide their children with the first model of what a relationship is and what it looks like. Therefore, the first thing that Maria's father ought to respect is not to talk negatively about her mother in front of the child, even if this negative talk is expressed only by mere facts such as disavowing her measure.

Communication with members of the family happens not just with plain words but using body language, behaviours and attitudes as well, even when unintended. In this concrete case, the couple exhibits poor conflict resolution ability. However, as previously stated, exposure to discordant non-violent conflict between parents exerts negative effects on child development as well; if a situation like this were to solidify and become recurrent it would certainly translate into behavioural problems.

It is most important to have a consistent attitude as parents and it would be useful to set routine check-ins for the parents to talk privately about their child, including any decisions that need to be discussed and made together like in this concrete event.

Many people become parents when they still have little information about the development of children, their needs, effective techniques for adapting to parenthood, ways to help children learn self-discipline, and so on. This is why disagreements often occur. In addition, everyone lives their parental role according to different assumptions, personal histories, and daily experiences; this increases the likelihood that parents sometimes disagree.

Parents who recognize and admit that parenting is not easy can do so without much disagreement. When alone, Maria's mother should speak to her partner and remind him that parenting is an ongoing challenge, explain to him the importance of routines for children and kindly ask him for his support in this challenge. It is important that both parties need to adopt a long-term perspective.

Do not confuse short-term symptoms and emotions with long-term goals, so that a critical moment does not become the reason for a quarrel that drives a wedge between parents and ends up in the disruption of communications. It would be advisable to ask themselves "Will this matter in an hour, a week or a year?" The attitude of both should be calm and cooperative because it certainly benefits parents to be supportive and patient with one another.

Active listening is the base for a mutual comprehension of the difficult role of being a parent.

Having a list of identified purposes as parents to be revised during critical moments like these is also helpful since it can help to hark back to a better understanding of each other by identifying exactly where the conflict lies. Some couples work together to put on paper the purposes they have as a family and as individuals.

If and when needed, Maria's parents can look for an objective third person. Some couples find it helpful to be able to compare their ideas and differences with other people's points of view. Sometimes they talk to a third person they both trust to act as a mediator, one that will be supportive of both parental figures rather than prone to taking sides.

Discussion Activity

1. Ask the participants what social feelings may be, by inviting them to write keywords on posts and stick them on the whiteboard. Going to the posts, start collecting the keywords per area and engage participants in a discussion to re-create together the meaning of social feeling. Close the session with a brief, but effective definition.

2. As above, do the same with the concept of "good communication in the family".

3. To explain the 4 attachment styles, create 8 cards (4 with the name of the attachment styles - 4 with the definition as shown in the graph). Ask the participants to combine each type with the right definition. Now start a discussion.

4. As above, do the same with the 5 Children's cognitive development phases, according to Piaget's theory.

Theoretical part / Context

There are a few theoretical concepts that parents need to better understand the practical objectives of this MODULE.

These concepts are:
- The meaning and the importance of social feeling and the capacity for identification, according to Adler's theory.
- The 4 attachment styles, according to John Bowlby.
- The children's cognitive development phases, according to Piaget's theory.
- The importance of communication between parents

The Social feeling is a basic human instinct that makes people feel the need to join social groups and cooperate with others. According to Adler, it must be stimulated in a social context in order to develop. This instinct develops through the child's creativity and is influenced by circumstances and experiences. The social feeling is the capacity for identification, which makes it possible to establish friendly relations and deal with work, social integration and love. However, the development process doesn't always go in the right direction. What can be the causes and consequences? According to Adler, the causes of a bad on incomplete development of social feeling can be linked to various events and situations. For example, the child's role in the family, their birth position and relationship with siblings, or the presence of conflict and/or non-cooperation between the parents.

To better grasp the importance of effective communication between both parents and parents with children (inner family) it is needed to have an overview regarding the 4 attachment styles.

CONFIDENT

I basically believe that my needs will be met. I have a good view of myself

When I was a child I could count on the person who cared most about me, he/she was concrete, coherent, sensitive. I was a curious, confident child.

I am a confident partner. I tend to have a good view of others.

AVOIDANT

I basically tend to deny my needs, I believe they will NOT be met.

The person who cared most about me was cold and distant, discouraging my emotionality.

I am very independent. I feel discomfort in interpersonal relationships and in sharing my feelings.

I was an explorative and emotionally distant child (I didn't cry or ask for much). I did not cry when my parents left me.

ATTACHMENT STYLES

The person who cared most about me was incoherent, sometimes sensitive, sometimes negligent. I was an anxious, unconfident, angry child. I cried when my parents left me.

I do not trust that my needs can be met.

I am an unconfident, jealous, clingy partner. I fear losing the people I love.

I perceive my needs in a confused manner.

The person who cared most about me was scared, passive and frightened me. I was a passive, angry, worried, unresponsive child.

I have destructive and violent relationships. I want very close ones, but at the same time I reject them.

AMBIVALENT

DISORGANIZED

Children's cognitive development phases, according to Piaget's theory. Cognitive development takes place through the assimilation of information and exchanges that take place directly with the environment, therefore inside and outside the family.

Sense-motor (0-2 y.o.)

The child verifies behavior patterns by repeating behaviors for observing the consequences.
Like that child produces new information in interaction with the environment.

Preconceptual (2-4 y.o.)

A child's thinks that everyone knows his/her thoughts or desires (egocentric), The language is strengthened (more vocabulary), but to move from general to particular reasoning and vice versa is not possible.

Children's cognitive development phases (Piaget)

Intuitive thinking (2-7 y.o.)

The child is not able to mentalise the action performed towards a goal or purpose.

Concrete operations (7-11 y.o.)

The coordination between the actions performed increases, but cognitive processes are still linked to actions and therefore bound to a purely verbal phase.

Formal operations (11-14 y.o.)

Hypothetical-deductive reasoning allows the creation of purely imaginative scenarios, and various types of action. During this phase, the capacity for judgment, the relativity of viewpoints, operations on symbols, and measuring activities are developed.

Family ties get stronger when parents agree on important issues. For this reason, good communication in the family is another essential factor for children's well-being. Communication between members of the family happens not just with words but through body language, behaviours, and attitudes as well. If negative methods are used to communicate or to avoid communication, it can make the situation worse and even affect who the children become as adults.

Tine Thevenin, author of 'Mothering and Fathering', observed in her work that in most cases "conflicting ideas about ways of raising children led to a breakdown in communication between mothers and fathers... even though the shared goal of both was to raise children who were emotionally stable and prepared to deal with the complexities of the world."

Some couples report that their disagreement derives from differences of opinion concerning everyday life that, when left unresolved, only tend to get worse. Exposure to (non-violent) conflict between parents has negative effects on child development as well; it has been proven that exposure to couple conflict can affect children of all ages (including babies) and can manifest itself in different ways such as increased anxiety, depression, aggression, and hostility. In some cases, with adolescents, anti-social behaviour and criminality ensue, as well as negative educational outcomes.

Additional resources:

Adler, Alfred. (1951). The practice and theory of individual psychology (P. Radin, Trans.). New York: Humanities Press. (Original work published 1920)

Rutter M (2008). "Implications of Attachment Theory and Research for Child Care Policies". In Cassidy J, Shaver PR (eds.). Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications. New York and London: Guilford Press. pp. 958–74. ISBN 978-1-59385-874-2.

Block, Jack (1982). "Assimilation, accommodation, and the dynamics of personality development". Child Development. 53 (2): 281–295. doi:10.2307/1128971. JSTOR 1128971.

Bakir, A., Rose, G. M., & Shoham, A. (2006). Family communication patterns: Mothers' and fathers' communication style and children's perceived influence in family decision making. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 19(2), 75-95.

Exercises

A safe and happy environment at home is the key to good physical and mental health. In today's busy society, it is essential to remember that your family is your central pillar of support and love. Strong family life also offers stability during periods of stress and life transitions.

Therefore, plan "Do Things Together as a Family". The objective is that all members of their family engage in family routines, like brushing teeth together which can help to build a harmonious environment that contributes to good mental well-being. These can also include having regular meals together or taking holidays as a family. It is important to spend one-on-one time with each family member to build trust and share burdens. Emotional support from the family can help alleviate stress.

Benefits are:
Value of family
Stronger connection
Positive life at home makes it easier to go through life.

Now, with your family members make your daily and weekly to-dos list as individuals. Once all of you got their list, select what you can do together and plan the chosen activities as a group. Find a way to include everyone in something that you usually do alone. Remember to reserve a spot for "free time", especially on weekends. During everyone's free time, plan an activity outside, like a day trip or play a sport together to increase the family bond

Case Study

Michelle is having her first day in kindergarten. Both of her parents are somewhat conflicted with the idea, as it implies not only a return to their previous work routine but a step that will also deprive them of much of the time spent with their toddler. It is nonetheless necessary, since their schedule is going to be fairly busy from now on, and they both acknowledge the need to implement a workaround.

It is then agreed that Michelle's mother will take her since she starts working at a later hour than the father, and he will pick her up in return. But when the time comes and the mother is about to leave her in the hands of her teacher, Michelle gets scared, starts crying inconsolably and demands that she stays or go away with her.

Her mother, heartbroken, caves into Michelle's emotional response and apologises to her. In a further attempt to appease her, she tells her that she will be right back, thus leaving her in distress and expectant of her return. After some time and in the face of her unremitting emotional upheaval, the teacher is forced to call the parents back so that either one of them can come to pick her up earlier than they were supposed to. Begrudgingly, at the mother's request, the father leaves work earlier to go pick her up.

The situation not only renders both parents helpless and confused at the end of the day but also proves to be a cause of friction and makes them have second thoughts about the measure.

Potential Effects and Effective Solution:
The first thing both parents should keep in mind is that the early schooling of their child is not to be considered solely for practical reasons, i.e. for the daycare's convenience sake, but that it is ultimately a step that will be to their daughter's benefit since it is wherein her socialisation process outside her family will start taking place.

When it comes to toddlers and preschoolers you should be aware that not always does emotional intelligence appear and develop naturally on their own. More often than not, this needs proper stimulation and guidance. Indeed, children pick up a lot on their own but that means that they learn by example too. So be mindful that you are being watched and looked up to for clues. Everything you do can affect the expressive intelligence of a child. Therefore, parents need to remain calm, reassuring, confident, and resolute about the fact of going to school, especially if there is any clinging or if the child bursts into tears.

Unfortunately, Michelle's mother has simply made matters worse by trying to comfort her with apologies and white lies (two big no-nos), as well as by inadvertently letting her doubts, guilt and hesitation transpire. That affects the emotional intelligence of the child. Beware that children find out about emotions from their own parents, by imitating them. It is them who give children the first lessons about emotions, and others' reactions to them; the latter teaches them how to identify the emotions of others and how to react accordingly, how to express their needs, wishes, expectations, hopes, fears, frustrations, and dissatisfaction.

Through her emotional reaction to the experience of separation, Michelle's mother has involuntarily set her daughter's disposition for kindergarten to be negative. Separation anxiety is a normal and necessary part of development and more often than not it indicates that things are well with the child rather than not. During the first year of life, something called object constancy is established in the child's mind. What object constancy refers to is the fact that the baby remembers that mommy or daddy continues to exist even after one or both leave the room.

This means that a real attachment between parent and child is now established which manifests itself in the baby's fear that once mommy has left the room she might not return. It is not clear why some children experience this anxiety upon beginning school while others do not. In any case, parents are urged to remember that if their child is one to experience this difficulty it is certainly no one's fault and that the child will eventually outgrow it. Regularity and consistency are what builds confidence in the child that things remain normal and stable even during times of separation.

Separation anxiety expresses itself in many forms such as temper tantrums, clinging to the legs of either parent, screaming and crying, and other behaviours that are meant to arouse guilt and fear in parents. One of the worst things a parent can do is to surrender to the child's fears and allow them to remain at home.

What the mother should have done instead is to let Michelle know she and her father trust the teacher to be in charge while they are not around and give her reassurance by informing her that she will learn new things there and meet many other children like her with whom she will be able to play. His father could have also tried to restate the aforementioned to her child when called in, thus hinting at a consensual decision made by him and the mother for her to explore new boundaries, stressing the fact that it is an experience for her to enjoy.

Building trust and rapport with the teacher eases much of the separation anxiety the child experiences when left alone to his/her own devices for the first time. A good idea would be to allow the child to meet the teacher before school begins. This meeting should include a chance for the child to explore the environment of the classroom.

Note that young children do not make hard distinctions between home and school and that school and family are not isolated from one another, as they both share responsibilities in the education of children.
Although it should go without saying, parents can also address their concerns to the teacher or school administration for their tranquillity.

Many parents, however, never interact with the school unless the school works hard to promote parental engagement in their child's schooling. Take heed of the fact that parenting goes beyond ensuring that the basic needs of the offspring are satisfied, as it also implies that parents are warm and responsive to their children, communicate with them, and support their development.

Parental interest in the cognitive and socio-emotional development of their children typically promotes healthy behaviour and better performance than otherwise.

It would have been advisable for both parents to talk her into it beforehand and to give her clues best suited to her age. Early schooling provides the child with many new experiences for which he/she has not acquired words yet, so building anticipation and talking her/him into it will help to expand the kid's vocabulary, creating all the while with a positive image around the upcoming experience for the child to associate it with.

Numerous studies conducted during the late nineties have determined that combined parental involvement is conducive to a better adaptation to the school environment and that it contributes to the children's optimal socialisation. Research, conversely, shows that the lack thereof is one of the main factors that contribute to poor performance and adaptive problems.

As a side note, due to prevailing stereotypes regarding traditional gender roles, it has been observed that in many instances such tasks as taking the kids to the school centre, interacting with teacher figures, keeping track of the related activities, and eventually taking care of discipline problems were still left for mothers to perform. Results show that the consistent involvement of both parents is advisable, especially from a young age, as it greatly benefits children when compared to those who only have their mother rearing them.

Additionally and as a resource, they could have lent some small personal object for her to keep in their absence (e.g. a handkerchief) and to be given back to them upon their return, as it has been repeatedly proven to be of much use to mitigate the anxiety a child experiences when separated since it relies upon the appearance of object constancy and it effectively reinforces it.

Another useful tool that young kids seem to be very fond of and quickly comforted by is what has been named "box of kisses" or "kissing box", which is a small empty box for the child to carry where the kisses and affectionate displays of their parents (e.g. hugs, tickles, caresses and so on) are purportedly stored.

Michelle's parents could easily assist her in its creation and decoration, storing their tokens of love, care and affection for her to use whenever needed in their absence. Alternatively, they can also be drawn in individual pieces of cardboard and the child paints them in different colours. The parents can describe these as a rescue to be used from whatever discomforting feelings may arise in the child in their absence.

So, as an example, one of them could say "this kiss I'm giving you will be red and you may use it whenever you miss me". Or "this hug that I gave you and that you have painted green will make you feel good whenever you are scared". Children at this stage have magical thinking and for them, magical solutions do indeed work and are of much assistance. Not only is the tool useful to the kid for the regulation of his/her own emotions but it also helps her/him to recognize them and name them accordingly.

Discussion Activity

1. Ask participants to point out **what are the perceived benefits of early schooling** of children in their view and what they figure the most commonly associated difficulties and challenges may be. Make a list to include all answers.

2. Have them guess **what style of education is more beneficial** (competitive vs cooperative) to a child and give their reasonings to justify their opinion. Make it to be a poll by means of which you can measure and reflect the beliefs of the participants around the issue.

3. Have them discuss and decide whether they believe the sample they have produced is representative of society. **Engage participants in a debate** around the different responses given, noting both the commonalities and the discrepancies that have come up as a result.

Another important psychological and pedagogical concept worth investigating is the one developed by Gardner of Emotional Intelligence. He also proposed the concept of multiple intelligence types (distinguishing between intrapersonal and interpersonal ones, while introducing the notion of social intelligence).

The 4 Domains and 12 Competencies of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence results from the interaction of intelligence and emotion and is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour". In a broader sense, it has also been described as "the ability to use emotional information constructively and be adaptive.

Emotional information consists of an individual's subjective emotional reactions and information communicated by the emotional reactions of others" (Bar-On, Parker, 2011, p. 173).

In contrast to Gardner's concept, where personal intelligence types are aimed at self-awareness and the evaluation of others, Mayer and colleagues believe that EI is used to recognize and use the emotional states of oneself and others to solve problems and regulate behaviours. There are currently three different models of EI in existence, as described by Faltas (2017):

● Mayer and colleague's *Ability* model
● Bar-on's *Competencies* model
● Goleman's *Performance* model

Mayer et al. divide the skill set of EI into four basic functions (perceiving emotion, understanding emotion, managing emotions and using emotion to facilitate thought and regulate behaviour), while Bar-on's model consists of five main scales (self-perception, self-expression, decision-making, interpersonal, and stress management) and twelve subscales, and Goleman's model defines EI as a group of skills and competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skill or relationship management. Goleman further classifies these skills or competencies into twelve additional subcategories, resulting from his research in the workforce.

What is important here, despite the different theoretical approaches to EI, are the valuable findings that the numerous studies conducted on the subject have brought about. Most notably, it has been established that there exists a relationship between the presence of high EI scoring and academic attainment, that such scoring of EI is inversely related to bullying, violence, and substance abuse, and that it constitutes a measure of adaptation, success, content, and well-being.

Those **children sustained and stimulated emotionally** by their parents are open, optimistic, and creative, with good results, and **are much less inclined to violence**. It is not that these children do not experience fear or anger from time to time during difficult situations, but since they are emotionally healthier they get calm much more easily.

More and more research is based on the importance of developing the emotional intelligence of kindergarten-age children, obstructions in their capacity to express freely some negative or positive emotions, children's difficulties in identifying their own emotions or those of others around them, and their hardships while adapting to a new environment, namely, that of the kindergarten. Sometimes, all or part of these problems will last well into adolescence or maturity. There are children, well-prepared intellectually, whose behaviour might be inclined towards aggressiveness, have different pathological attitudes, and might display antisocial traits. These aspects explain why this development becomes a necessary component and tool of the instructive process.

Emotions are important for survival and have a key role in making decisions, setting boundaries, communicating, and unity (Roco, 2004). EI also helps parents to recognize the emotions and feelings of their children. **At kindergarten age, EI and personal development happen simultaneously** and increase each other permanently by making the child do different and pleasant tasks according to his/her wishes, needs, expectations, and interests. Multiple formative interventions can develop emotional intelligence. It should be noted that the family atmosphere is essential for the stimulation and development of emotional intelligence, especially in pre-scholars.

So we need to prepare children emotionally for their future by giving them all the means that can allow them to make their resources to be able to adapt to the environment easily.

Expressing your emotions, labelling your feelings, and talking about them aloud tell children when you feel pleasant and tough emotions. We all have feelings, and children will learn to understand and recognize them from people in their immediate surroundings.

They are constantly watching and listening to the adults in their lives. It is important to facilitate children with ways to recognize, understand, label, express, and manage their feelings since this ability will support them in gracefully dealing with life's ups and downs in this increasingly complex world.

Additional Resources:

● Davis, Katie; Christodoulou, Joanna; Seider, Scott; Gardner, Howard (2011), "The Theory of Multiple Intelligences", in Sternberg, Robert J.; Kaufman, Barry (eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence, Cambridge University Press, pp. 485–503, ISBN 978-0521518062

● Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. J. Sluyter (Eds.), Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications (pp. 3–34). New York, NY: Basic.

● Bar-On, R. (2006). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). Psicometha, 18 (Suppl.), 13–25.

● Goleman, D. (1995). Emotional intelligence. New York, NY: Bantam.
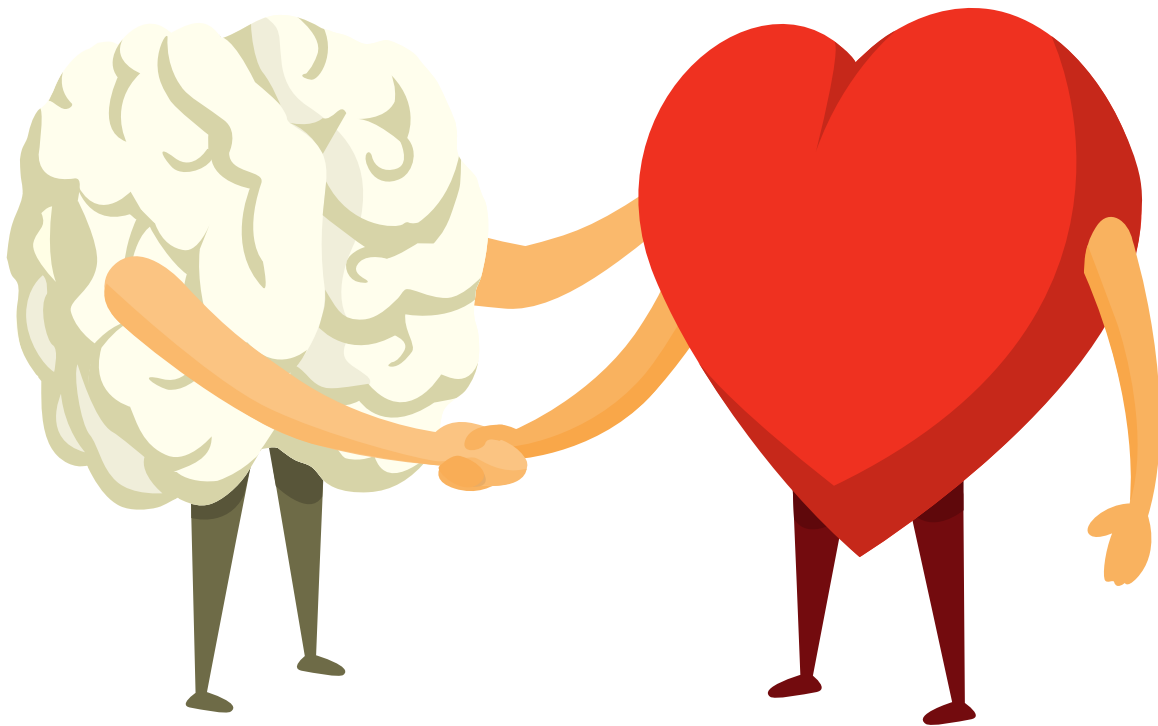
Prepare a list of tasks of the different people who compose the family (at least, 2 parents and 1 child).

Every day, things need to run at home: going to work to earn money, buying food, doing sports, and extra-school activities, sleeping, etc. These tasks can be represented as small figures, i.e. buying food as a shopping cart; working as a laptop, etc. Now create a timeline on paper of the day and, in cooperation with your child, ask him to introduce the figures into the right timeline for all of them: 2 parents and a child(ren).

By filling in the timeline, the child will understand that he needs to go to school/kindergarten while his/her parents are busy somewhere else to allow for the home routine to go on.
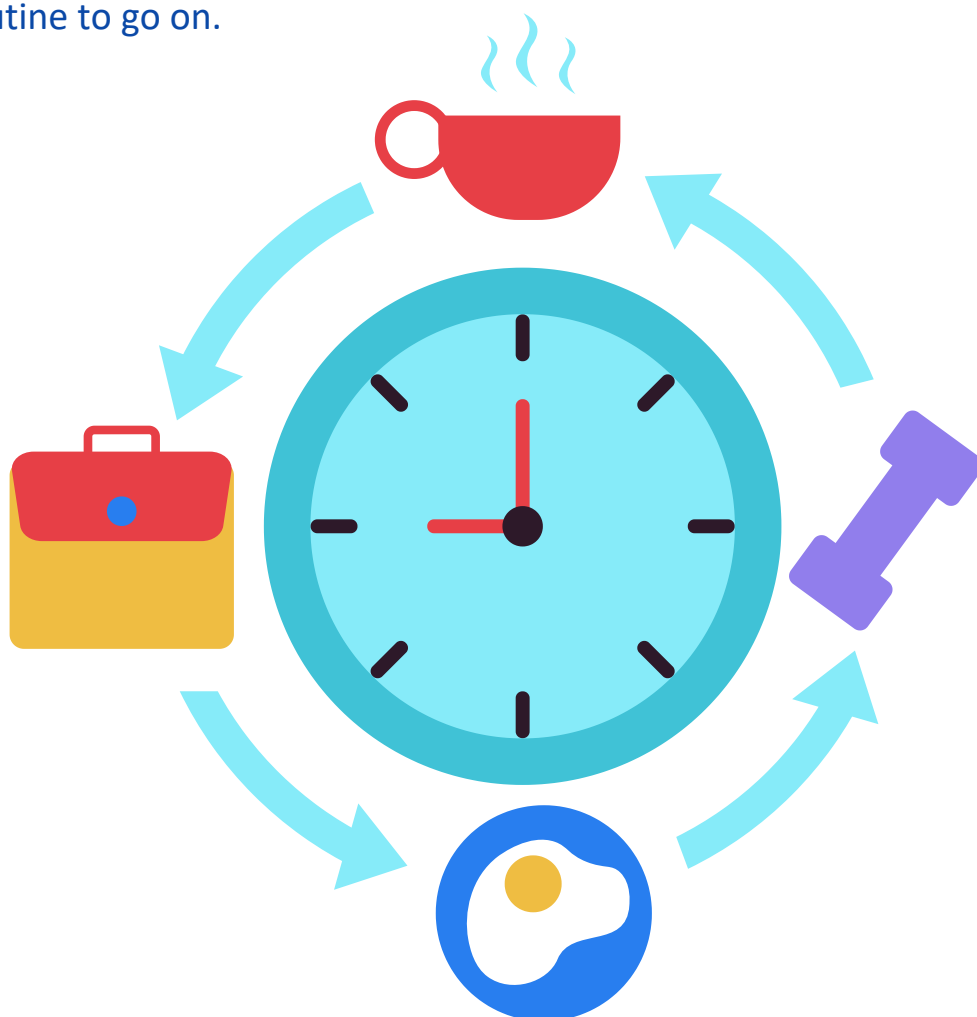
Case Study

Mike is 7 years old and loves playing tennis. At the sports club, there are many other children and it is a good opportunity to socialise. One day Mike goes back home crying because he lost a match with John. Parents deem his reaction to be an overstatement and start speaking with their child to understand the reason why he seems to be so upset. Mike cannot accept that John played better than him and eventually confesses to his parents that John has made fun of his performance. Losing John meant Mike exposing his weakness, so he is now dreading it will turn into further emotional abuse in the form of teasing and mockery.

Since there is no way to calm him down his father decides to go speak with the tennis trainer, who explains to Mike's father that John is extremely stirred up by his parents' demand to always strive to be "the best" and that the child is bullying the other children. The tennis trainer does not know what to do to revert the situation, since he is not willing to confront Mike's parents and tell them off because of the potential risk of losing clients. He'd rather stay away from the conflict and just stick to doing his job.

Mike's father goes into a fit of rage and once back home says to his partner that he wants to face John's parents. His partner invites him to calm down first, as she sees the need to face John's parents more constructively.

Potential Effects and Effective Solution:
Some parents feel that exposing kids to competition teaches them real-life lessons about winning and losing. The benefits of this approach are the build-up of qualities like resilience and perseverance. Kids can learn how to lose and still feel good about their efforts.

Others, however, feel that competition tends to do more harm than good since competitiveness places too much pressure on kids and can cause unnecessary stress and anxiety. Children who are placed in competitive settings often feel disappointed, defeated and bad about themselves.

Instilling competitiveness in kids can be destructive and toxic indeed, as in the case of John. Competition can also erode self-esteem, as it was the case for Mike because of the pressure exerted on him by John.

Either way, the truth is that there are pros and cons to both approaches.
To ward off these negative experiences and for the sake of cooperation, parents can remove the competitive aspect of activities and declare everyone a winner. In other words, it is possible to foster the "everyone gets a trophy" mentality. That is what Mike's parents should try to communicate to John's parents and to John himself. It would be important for John to understand the importance of his cooperative attitude with other children.

Therefore, it would be advisable to speak with his parents first, and once they have their support, to speak with the child to let him understand the positive sides of sports for all. Healthy competition can teach kids that it is not always the best who are successful, but rather those who work hard and stick it out that are the real winners in the end. The key is to find healthy ways for kids to compete.
 Keep in mind that competitiveness by itself is generally not a bad thing; it is how people approach competition that can make them unhealthy.

As a parent, how do you react in a situation in which competition has turned into a conflict between children? While it can certainly be difficult to restrain your emotions, it is important to take a measured approach to reach the best possible conclusion. You should ask yourself first: "Does the situation require my intervention?", "Will my involvement help to lessen the conflict?" and "Which way can I handle the situation best?".

The way to approach such a situation would be to show empathy and respect right from the start, both for John's parents and the child.

Most people, when facing situations like this, are concerned about offending other parents and prefer to avoid confrontations for good reason: most people are quick to jump to the defence of their children and can easily interpret your comments as an attack on their child and their parenting skills. Bring up the issue softly without blame or criticism, so the other persons do not feel threatened. If you happen to say something offensive about the other person or their child, stop the conversation and apologise.

It is okay to name and label the reprehensible behaviour, but only as long as it is done in a way that is not condemnatory and with no judgement implied.

Unfortunately, telling parents that their children are misbehaving can unintendedly hurt their feelings.
By starting in a peaceful tone and showing due respect, the chances of getting a defensive response will be minimised, although it should be kept in mind that you cannot control the other person's reaction or feelings.

It is nonetheless advisable that the conflict be addressed as soon as possible with the use of good manners and make it count for the children involved as an example of educational value. The more you can do on relationship building with the other parents, resolving the conflict in as kind and gentle a way as you can, the better example you set for your child.

It would help to ask John's parents what their thoughts about the problem are and what possible ways of tackling the issue they think might be there. You should always treat the other parents as the expert on their child, which will give you insight into his/her personality and needs, and maintain a collaborative feeling between parents by acknowledging their perspective. Express your own limits and boundaries, but in a way that doesn't imply blame.

Mike's parents should explain what their assessment of the problem is, and constructively and actively look for solutions in a cooperative way, rather than focusing too much on evaluating the other child or family.
It is not for Mike's parents to discipline John in any way, but they should be able to respectfully call out his behaviour as long as it is harmful to their child. They should strive for clarity when setting out what and where their limits are.

The discussion should be focused on the positive role of sports, like that it promotes teamwork and improves social skills, i.e. cooperation and respect for others, which are essential parts of social integration.

Healthy competition helps kids see that competition is not only about winning or losing. If winning is the only goal that a child values and pursues, it is bound to create an unhealthy environment. Hence, John should be encouraged to adopt a more constructive attitude around the activity and help his peers to do better instead of denigrating and making fun of them. When kids have a growth mindset they are more likely to approach competition healthily, understanding that if they do not do well it will not be the end of the world. They should be taught that it is always possible for them to learn and improve.

John's parents should be reminded that sport at this age is mostly just an exercise to create a disciplined and goal-oriented attitude to succeed in other aspects of life and that it is okay for children to lose, as long as they are working hard, putting in their best effort and learning from the experience.

The best lesson children can learn from the competition is that the biggest competitor is themselves. By taking the focus off of winning and having them focus on things they can control instead, like their effort, we support a growth-based mentality rather than one that is too fixated on outcomes and results.

In other words, kids not only need to learn to believe in themselves and their abilities, but they also need to acknowledge that their identity has little to do with either winning or losing and that ultimately it is their qualities, attitude, and character that matter. John's parents should also be made aware of the fact that one of the most valuable aspects of the competition is failure and that their kid would learn valuable things if he also were to be allowed to lose.

One thing parents can do to better prepare children is share their experiences with failure and what they learned from it. This way, when children experience challenges or failure, they will see it as a way of life and will be able to move on and get over it while remaining reasonably unperturbed.

Unfortunately, some parents withhold love and approval when their child does not perform up to their standards or win a competition, as it appears to be the case with John.

The downside of such an attitude is that the child will thus learn to fear not feeling loved or secure. Furthermore, they could easily start believing that they will never be good enough that they are lacking in some way, and that their parents will never value them unless they win. The most common after-effect of such an attitude is that children will start working their tails off trying to make their parents happy, but trying to impress their parents at all costs can be most detrimental to their mental and emotional well-being.

That approach inevitably ends up creating what is known as performance anxiety. Oftentimes children end up refusing to partake in any competitive activity, to the extent of faking illness.

On the other hand, children greatly benefit when their parent's love, approval, and support are given unconditionally. It should be no different when they lose.

Mike's father has done the right thing by approaching his son's tennis coach first. Their talk has brought up understanding and has given him much-needed perspective on the underlying cause behind the conflict. However, due to a lack of awareness of his educational role and authority on the matter, the coach has failed to nip the conflict in the bud, further aggravating it using his indifference. By simply stepping aside and moving out of the way he has silently acquiesced to John's inappropriate and abusive displays of bravado.

Regardless of whether it is, understandably, that the tennis coach would have been fearful of mediating in such a situation because of monetary reasons, it would be socially valuable that he could be made to understand the same relevant points to be implemented in his profession for the benefit of the future generations.

Managing conflict in sports is all about attempting to get the most positive outcomes out of a conflict situation. Teaching young athletes sportsmanship and ways to manage their emotions is also a vital part of a coach's role. It is most important to manage conflict in a skilful manner, as undoing the damage caused in the heat of a moment can sometimes take a long time and a great deal of effort. Sometimes, due to conflict arising in a highly competitive setting, relationships can go beyond repair.

That is precisely why conflict must be addressed before it reaches a degree of deterioration. An appropriate way to manage an escalating conflict is to have a productive conversation between the parties involved.

Discussion Activity

1. Ask the participants what the added value of practising sports may be for children, by inviting them to write keywords on posts and stick them on the whiteboard. Going to the posts, start collecting the keywords per area and engage participants in a discussion to re-create together the meaning of practising sports for children.

2. As above, do the same with performance anxiety, aiming to come up with an approximate definition between them and ask them what could probably cause this problem in children and what the associated psychological effects they think could be.

3. Now make a brief but effective definition of both concepts and connect the results obtained by crossing the added value of practising sports with performance anxiety. Start a discussion with participants and arrive together at a positive conclusion.

Sports prevent child obesity problems and improve coordination, agility, balance, and space perception. They also help to get rid of stress and anxiety and to control sleep disorders. That is why it is recommended that children who tend to get easily irritated play a sport, as it is an outlet to channel their emotions.

But sports also support cognitive development and strengthen self-esteem. Likewise, sport promotes the need to try until the goal is reached, and reaching goals leads to improving self-esteem.

Sports also teach the importance of rules and their acceptance with good grace and respect for others. To summarise, sports help to develop discipline and exercise self-control.

It is not important to become a professional athlete, but being part of a sports team will help children nurture the quality of discipline for the rest of their lives and will show them that they need to try if they want to succeed at what they do. What is more, being part of a team promotes respect, tolerance, and equality. At the same time, it promotes responsibility and strengthens the feeling of belonging in terms of commitment and identification that an individual has towards the group and the activity they are doing together.

However, it is not rare for children to experience what is known as performance anxiety when placed amidst a competitive environment. Such a phenomenon can make them refuse to take part in an activity that they find pleasant and enjoyable. Indeed, avoidance is usually an indicator or a symptom.

Additional resources
● Warren, Marilyn. (2012). Sport and Crime Prevention [Documents]. https://jstor.org/stable/community.34616469
● Theodore S. Ransaw. (2017). Cool Papas: Six Fathers in Mid-Michigan Who Utilize Play in their Fathering Involvement to Help Their Children Learn. Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men, 6(1), 1–31. https://doi.org/10.2979/spectrum.6.1.01

Create some cards containing the Pros of practising sports, and some cards of the possible NEGATIVE ATTITUDES taken by the sports tutor and/or parents.

PROs can be: a positive health impact; new connections with peers; leadership; teamwork; fair play; etc.
NEGATIVE ATTITUDES can be: to promote too much competition; to push sons/daughters to think to be the best; to undervalue the other youngsters; etc.

Put the cards in two different columns. One player picks up a negative attitude and one player picks up 2 Pros (i.e. 2 cards). According to the relation to the 2 positions, start having a discussion trying to support your "thesis". Who has the Pros, needs to reason both cards. A third person is a referee, who will appoint points for each reasonable reply given to each other.

This role play wants to train parents in having good argumentation at the time to face people outside the family to create propositive relations

Case Study

Sharon is 26 months old and still needs nappies. Sharon's grandparents are pushing for the weaning or removal of nappies because she is old enough, they say. However, Sharon is not capable of pointing to the toilet or potty or going directly to the place for her bodily needs yet. Furthermore, she does not feel annoyed by the soiled nappy. She still feels comfortable. It is not easy to find a balance in this situation, especially when Sharon stays at her grandparents' home and they insist on keeping the nappy away. The child feels conflicted and at fault and this is not good for her self-esteem.

Potential Effects and Effective Solution:
Grandparents sometimes are too present. Oddly enough, in 99% of cases, grandparents described as overly intrusive will not be the parents of those complaining but their partner. Living together is never easy. It is already difficult to live in close contact with your parents/children/partners. If you then add in-laws...

All this is absolutely understandable, but maybe before you get angry you should have a chat with someone who is living the situation outlined above: you will find that having grandparents available is a great blessing. Unfortunately, the package includes all the advantages but also the disadvantages: character, ideology, little quirks, etc. Take it or leave it. If you are thinking of leaving, go back and have a chat with the person who has absent grandparents.

If you still feel that your parents (or more likely in-laws) are too intrusive, do not hesitate to set limits. It may seem difficult to talk about it but it is better to set boundaries than to breed resentment that ends up poisoning your relationship. However, remember to be reasonable and think about the good of everyone: not only what you want but also what is right for your child, your partner, and the grandparents themselves. Whether you like it or not, they are an important part of the family.

Do not wait for your partner to set the limits, with the excuse that they are his/her parents.Your partner likely supports you because he/she loves you but does not agree 100 per cent with what you demand. So take responsibility and, with all the gentleness you can muster, establish a constructive dialogue.

As with the case of Sharon, keep in mind that your partners' parents are used to other habits when pedagogical and psychological suggestions were not so well-known or that widely available. It would be interesting also for them to discover new things if you provide them with this new information.

The child can be considered ready when:
● The nappy remains dry for several hours.
● The child points to the toilet or potty or goes directly to the place for bodily needs.
● The child uses the words "poo" and "pee" in a relevant and contextually appropriate manner to indicate that it is about to go or has just gone.
● When imitating other children (in the nursery context), he pulls down his trousers for example.
● When he is annoyed by the soiled nappy.
● When he has passed the 'oppositional' phase typical of two-year-olds. This last criterion is not a "sine qua non" condition but must be taken into account to circumscribe adults' expectations of children.

The first step is to get your partner involved and ask for his/her support whenever you are to speak to his/her parents. Both of you should make it clear that grandparents are also to respect educational rules. Once you get to speak to them, it would be supportive to ask them what makes them happy in your relationship. Creating a harmonious dialogue for a constructive relationship is always an added value for all the people involved

Discussion Activity

1. Ask participants whether they have ever experienced any disagreements regarding the upbringing of their children with the children's grandfathers, if present, and what their issues have been about.

2. Have them share and describe at length their experience, the associated feelings that the situation has brought up and what has been the outcome in case they have been able to effectively resolve the situation .Make sure they are concise and specific regarding the strategies applied while trying to solve the issue and ask them what the difficulties encountered in the process if any.

3. Make a list of the topics around which the different conflicts previously described revolve.

4. Start a debate to bring in other participants' opinions and points of view regarding said cases.

Whenever children interact with their grandparents, there is a real possibility that something may go wrong. First of all, grandparents in most cases do not live with the child and cannot know the child as well as the parents. The children themselves may be a little stressed about leaving their parents to find themselves in an unfamiliar environment or one that is not part of their daily routine.

Grandparents may not have a child-proof home. Or they may not take the parents' recommendations seriously, considering them inexperienced by comparison. The list could go on and on; surely this is a situation that could take a turn for the worse without good communication and clear expectations.

Conversely, talking and setting reasonable expectations can make the relationship with the grandparents highly satisfying for everyone, so here is how to set the relationship with grandparents correctly.

TIPS to create a good relationship with grandparents

- **Talk to grandparents about THEIR rules:** grandparents may demand a certain level of peace and quiet, there may be areas of the house off-limits, etc. Since we have the authority and responsibility, it is only right that we set these rules with our children.

- **Explain OUR educational strategy and ask the grandparents to respect it:** surely we have something proven to work with our children. We ask the grandparents to cooperate with these "working techniques" and try to be clear.

- **DOING PRACTICE:** before leaving the children alone with their grandparents, let's invite them to our home to do some practice, to see how the children react to the new company and whether the situation is viable or not before it's too late.

- **Personal objects:** when we leave the children with their grandparents, remember to also bring their toys and personal objects so that they have something reassuring and familiar with them. After a few times, if everything has gone smoothly, we can also decide to leave some of these items at the grandparents' house.

- **Planning:** in addition to planning the visits, it is also important to plan the children's activities during the time they will spend with their grandparents, which improves the chances of the new situation being successful.

At birth, the child's brain and nerve pathway development are not yet complete and it takes about three years to reach final maturity: this immaturity is the reason why, especially in the first year, the baby goes through stages that reflect his intellectual as well as emotional growth.

Sphincter control is linked to the psychomotor development of the baby.

Sphincter control

Sphincter control is acquired on average between the ages of two and three years: children usually keep their nappies on for a variable period of time during the night, when it is more difficult to feel the urge to urinate; however, by the age of five, nocturnal enuresis still affects 15% of children. This disorder has been attributed to several causes: disturbing events such as the birth of a baby brother or the start of school, changes in sleep or bladder capacity or a transient deficiency of a hormone called antidiuretic, which is usually secreted mainly at night and acts on the kidneys by reducing urine production by about half compared to daytime. Depending on the cause, treatment may be behavioral, pharmacological or psychotherapeutic. If, on the other hand, a child over three to four years of age has not yet achieved control over defecation, we speak of encopresis: in the absence of organic problems, it may depend either on a condition of chronic constipation or on a behavioral disorder (rejection of the adult). In the first case, treatment consists of alvo re-education to remove the causes of constipation, while in the second case, treatment is psychotherapeutic.

Additional resources

Dowshen, S., MD (Ed.). (2017). Bonding with grandparents. Kids Health. Retrieved December3,2020,from
https://kidshealth.org/Nemours/en/parents/grandparents.html

Exercises

Group the participants in pairs and, in turn, have them reenact the conflicts that were previously described in the warm-up activity. Pairs that expressed such conflicts should play the grandparents' role according to their referred case, while the remaining pairs should alternatively play the parental roles and try to sort out the situation according to their best judgement. Start a discussion after each case has been revisited and done with.

Ask participants to share their impressions regarding how the situation has made them feel and what approaches taken by the parental roles seemed to work best at diffusing said conflicts. After gathering all the resulting information, ask them to reach conclusions together.

Summary

As we have seen throughout the content of the units composing this module, the most important factor is to achieve desirable results that ultimately end up in the consolidation of a good domestic collaboration between parents to ensure the well-being of children. One of the main key factors is to adopt good communication dynamics, not only between parents but also with all agents involved.

Children are extremely sensitive to their environment, so any situation handled poorly by adults in their closest surroundings can impact their cognitive and emotional development, either fostering it or arresting it. It is so for better or worse. It is a widely known fact that traumas or experiences badly assimilated in childhood tend to have definitive repercussions in the formation of individuals, which are typically carried over into adulthood. Thus, it is crucial to assist their emotional development by ensuring that good policies are set in place instead of leaving things to chance.

As the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Caring for your children and being loving to them is nothing but a starting point. As a parent, it just lands you on square one. Equal Parenting course wants to support you, as a young parent, in educating yourself on the matter and to provide you with concentrated material intended as initial training. To delve into more details, you can refer to other official resources.

Talk things over with your partner as many times as necessary to make sure you have a joint parental program for your child. Envision strategies that allow you to circumvent easily avoidable conflicts beforehand. Revisit goals and discuss adjustments whenever the need arises, but do so together and cooperate, aiming for coherence, solidity, and consistency. Be mindful of the fact that no one is born knowing how to raise children, and that even seasoned parents with lots of experience still have things to learn and often make mistakes.

An important aspect to have in mind is that in most unnerving situations (and parenting will certainly provide you with more than one) the old adagio still applies: easy does it. Do not ever let parenting challenges get the better of you or your partner and, when overwhelmed, apply emotional restraint for your children's sake.

Take into account that if you are unable to solve familiar conflicts efficiently as parents, your child probably will take it as a frame of reference that will impact his/her behaviour in the future. As a responsible and resourceful parent with plenty of literature at your disposal, you should know better than that.

Module 5
Good Role Models

Module 5 : Good Role Models

Module Introduction

And they lived happily ever after...

We've all heard this end of a story as children. But no one tells how they lived happily ever after. How many children did they have? How did they bring up and educate them? Were they good parents? What made them good parents?

As we all know, children do not come with instructions for use. From the moment a child is born each parent faces a bunch of questions that threaten to overwhelm from day one: What should I do? What shouldn't I do? Will I harm them? What is the best way to...?

As the child grows, the number of questions continues to grow in a dangerous way: What should I say and what should I keep to myself? Should I help them or let them do it alone? Should I punish or reward them?

And all the time, the main question stands out: How to make my child grow up as an independent, successful and happy person?

In this module, we will look at the different roles that a parent can play. And of course, how this will affect our children. What is the role of the father and what is the role of the mother in a family? What is parenting style, and how does it affect the child? Why can we talk about good and bad role models? How do we determine what is good and bad?

From the very beginning, we want to clarify that speaking of the role of father or mother, we do not refer to parents by gender, but by what role they play in the lives of their children. Nowadays, we know different types of families/couples - mixed couples; a family with children from previous relationships; single parents; and same-sex couples... With regards to all of them, however, the child needs both father and mother, and their roles are not necessarily performed by one GENDER or the other, and sometimes even performed by only one parent.

Case Study

Michael and Jane were a young couple from a small provincial town. They had been married for two years when they found out they were expecting their first child. As inexperienced parents, Michael and Jane had no idea how to handle the responsibility of bringing up a child.

Shortly after the birth of their son, Michael and Jane's parenting skills began to show some disadvantages. Michael worked a lot of hours, tirelessly trying to ensure thefamily's financial stability, but he didn't have much time left to devote to caring for his son.

Meanwhile, Jane had to take care of her baby 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with little rest and support from Michael. Instead of relying on him for help and advice, she decided to take responsibility for all aspects of parenting, as if she had all the answers. As she was completely exhausted, she reacted too harshly when her son behaved badly, and it was difficult for her to stay calm in these stressful situations. Very soon their son learned that an outbreak into hysteria is the only way to get the attention of his parents and eventually gain what he wants.

What would you do if you were in Michael's or Jane's place?

The role of the mother and father in the different stages of a child's life is presented in the following table.

Age of the child	Role of mother and father
0-1 year	The child is in emotional symbiosis with their mother. At this stage, it is important what the mother feels about her child and what is her attitude towards the father. This is crucial for building a child's trust in the outside world.The role of the father is to support the mother at this stage and provide her with enough time to rest, to make her feel happy.
1-3 years	The child is socially and intellectually more developed but still needs to feel the security of their parent's presence. The mother still performs the role of an emotionally supportive parent. In the life of the child, the father figure appears to be an authority, framing what is allowed and forbidden.
3-5 years	The child becomes more independent and acquires greater confidence in themself. They can express themselves better, make friends and get to know the world around them. At this stage, the parents need to be patient and understanding, as the child learns through trial and error. Parents should devote enough time to play, and behavioural correction should be based on understanding and support. The role of the mother in this period is to provide emotional support and give guidance. The role of the father is to encourage and set boundaries for the child.

5-7 year	Through play, the child feels their place in the adult world and develops by imitating worthy roles. The increased urge to copy parents or "ideal images" created by the child's imagination increases the inner tension that children experience as they learn how to cope. At this stage, the child already forms their self-assessment. At this age, children may start to lie. The role of the mother is to provide emotional support and guidance, while the role of the father is to provide both discipline and praise
7-11 years	The child begins to think more abstractly and has an increased need for affirmation from their parents.They need to provide structure and guidance in developing skills and principles. For that, parents need to be strict, but fair and generous. The role of the mother is to listen and understand, to rely on the child to cope on their own, and the role of the father is to support the child to cope with existing requirements. At this stage, the behaviour and self-esteem of the child are getting influenced by their peers too.
11-13 years	The child can manage their activities and perceive decisions. They look more inward. It is important to encourage them to develop their childhood talents or what they succeed in. The role of the mother in this stage is to listen, understand and support, and the role of the father is to serve as a mentor who teaches, punishes and praises. At this stage, the gradual withdrawal of parents from the child should begin

13 age	This is a period when the child forms their identity. At the end of this period, they must know who they are, what they want and how to achieve it. The role of parents is to jointly direct this process. The role of emotional security and respect that the mother has to provide should be transferred into the child's will, consciousness and social skills. The role of the father is to serve as a teacher who profiles the skills related to responsibility, discipline and prudent management of a child's own time. At this stage, parents should withdraw from the child and give them independence. At the end of the stage, the child should be fully ready to live an independent life.

As we have seen in different stages of a child's life, their parents have to play different roles - to set boundaries or to teach, to support emotionally or to give knowledge. But the goal, however, is one - to bring up a successful, safe and strong child.

What if for some reason the parent is alone?
When the parent is only one, they must accept both roles. They must provide physical and emotional support, set boundaries, and be fair, patient and understanding. It is important to know that the role of mother or father can also be occupied by another figure who is not from the family - a grandparent, another person - a friend of the parent or even a teacher. When this happens, the parent should play the role of the missing figure in the child's life, regardless of gender.

Additional resources: Angela Abela and Janet Walker. Contemporary Issues in Family Studies: Global Perspectives on Partnerships, Parenting and Support in a Changing World.

Now that we are aware of the roles of mother and father in the different stages of child development, let's go back to the case from the beginning of this unit and have a brief discussion:

● Where did Michael and Jane go wrong?

● What should Michael change in his relationship with Jane and the child?

● What should Jane change in her relationship with Michael and the child?

***

Now let's have a little fun with a game. To do this, we need two volunteers who will take on the roles of children. The remaining participants will be divided into two groups: the group of mothers and the group of fathers. Each group will have to say what their reaction will be to the child's behaviour and why. Your trainer will give instructions to the volunteers on how to behave

Case Study

John and Mary Smith were married in their late twenties with a young daughter aged five. They lived on the outskirts of a small town. John was a full-time accountant, and Mary took care of the house and their daughter Haley.

One day, John came home from work later than usual. It was almost 10 pm in the evening. When he got home, he found Haley still awake, even though it was too late. She waited 4 hours for her father to come home and to have dinner together, as they usually did on weekday evenings.
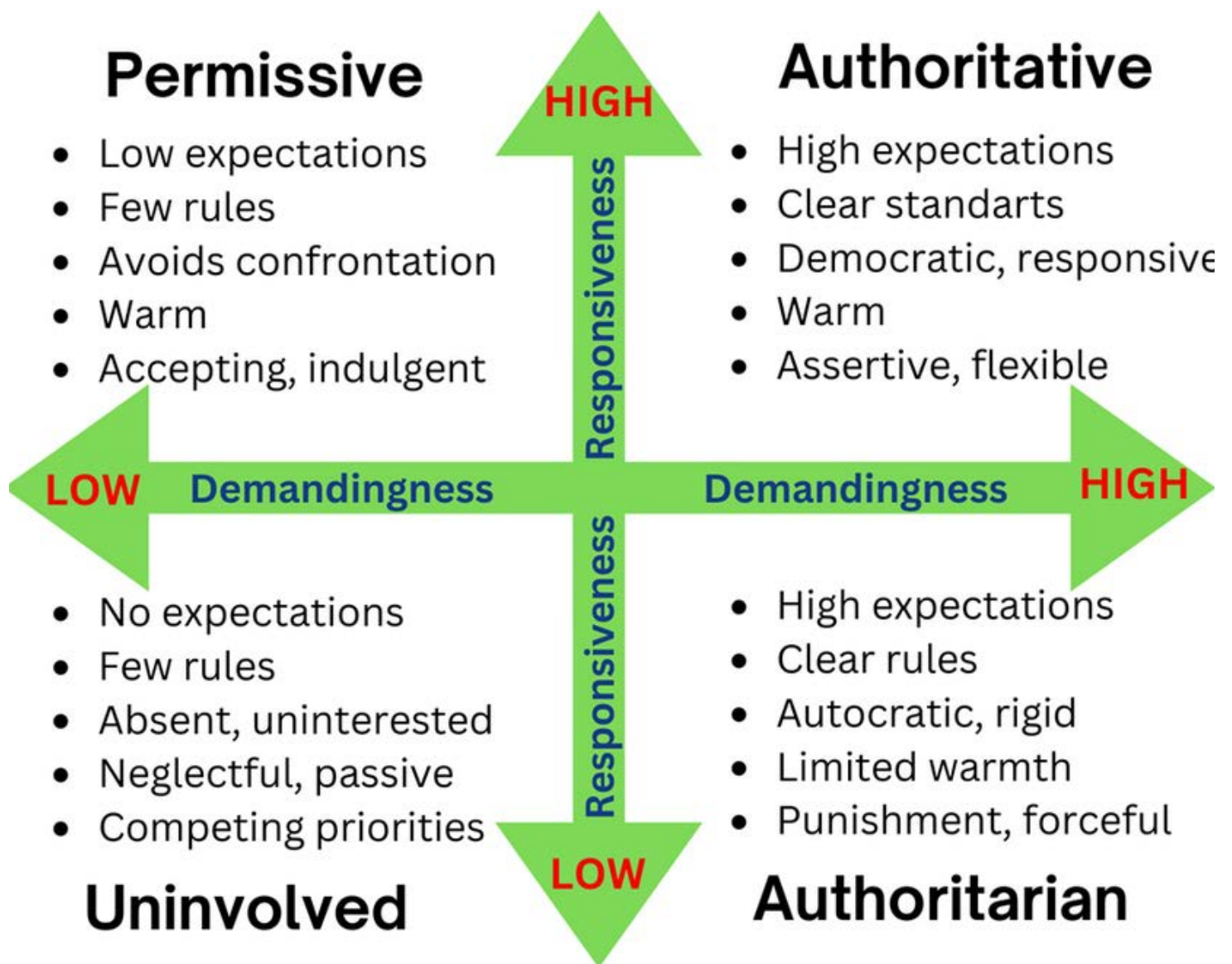
John felt guilty that Haley had stayed awake after her bedtime, and tried to compensate for this by giving her chocolate before going to sleep. But when Mary saw this, she scolded him for spoiling their daughter instead of disciplining her for staying up too late.
***

What would you do in John's place? What about Mary's place? Why?

Before that, however, it is worth clarifying that what style of parenting we tend to practise depends to great extent on us, but also on the parenting model that we have learned in early childhood from our parents or the people who took care of us.

Permissive

HIGH

- Low expectations
- Few rules
- Avoids confrontation
- Warm
- Accepting, indulgent

Authoritative

- High expectations
- Clear standarts
- Democratic, responsive
- Warm
- Assertive, flexible

Responsiveness

LOW   Demandingness   Demandingness   HIGH

Responsiveness

Uninvolved

- No expectations
- Few rules
- Absent, uninterested
- Neglectful, passive
- Competing priorities

LOW

Authoritarian

- High expectations
- Clear rules
- Autocratic, rigid
- Limited warmth
- Punishment, forceful

Parenting styles of upbringing

1. Authoritarian (autocratic)
Parent transfers their own beliefs and behaviours onto their children, expecting them to obey strict rules. This type of behaviour is characterised by a high level of control. It teaches children to be obedient and follow instructions without having their own opinion or independence. Discipline is forced through punitive and repressive methods of upbringing, as well as through inconsistent communication.

2. Authoritative (authoritative, but democratic)
It is characterised by control, full-value communication, encouraging discussions about the rules of conduct, and joint decision-making. In such families, parents have power, expressed through care and advice to their children. They recognise and promote growing autonomy, responsibility and independence and the "right to be heard". They are ready to step back if appropriate.

3. Permissive (liberal)
It is characterised by a low level of control and warm relations, and children are often forced to make independent decisions. There is a weak level of discipline in the family, the behaviour of the child is not regulated by prohibitions and restrictions,and they are given almost complete freedom. These parents communicate openly and extremely sensually, communication is in the direction of the child to the parents.

4. Uninvolved (chaotic)
There is a low level of control, low expressed restrictions and requirements, cold relationships, lack of interest in parental functions and educative tact, and disinterest in children. These parents are "closed" to communication and burdened with their problems.

To illustrate better what has been observed above, we suggest looking at the following table:

Style of cultivation	Acceptance and commitment	Control	Granting autonomy
Authoritarian	cold, rejecting, humiliating	many requirements, forces and penalties apply	Decisions are made instead of the child, their point of view is not heard
Authoritative	warm, responsive, attentive, sensitive	reasonable maturity requirements are made and explained	the child is allowed to make decisions by their readiness, they are encouraged to express their thoughts and desires
Permissive/ Liberal	warm but unduly indulgent	There are almost no requirements.	The child is allowed to make decisions before they are ready for that.
Uninvolved/ Chaotic	emotionally detached and distanced	There are almost no requirements.	Disinterest in decision-making and the child's point of view

Recently, a fifth parenting style has been defined - the style of over-involved parents. They are present in every aspect of their child's life. These parents are also known as "snowploughs" or "helicopters" because they clear any obstacle in their child's path, constantly hover around them and do not allow them to do anything independently. For these parents, the commitment and control are 100%, and there is practically no granting of autonomy.

Additional sources: https://www.parentingforbrain.com/4-baumrind-parenting-styles/

Let's go back to John and Mary from our case study and try to determine each of them and what style of parenting they embody and why.
***

Now we're going to split up into pairs. Each of you will take on the role of a journalist and will have 5 minutes to interview the other one.

Here is the task of Journalist 1: You are researching on how people raised their children in the past. What did they think was right and wrong? What perceptions did they have about the upbringing of their children? (Write down what are your findings to present them to the group. You can use your own experience and describe how your mother and father bring you up.)

Journalist 2: You are doing research for the present(current) perception of people about upbringing, what is considered right and what is not? What are modern beliefs?" (Write down your findings to present them to the group.)
When you're done, your trainer will tell you what to do.
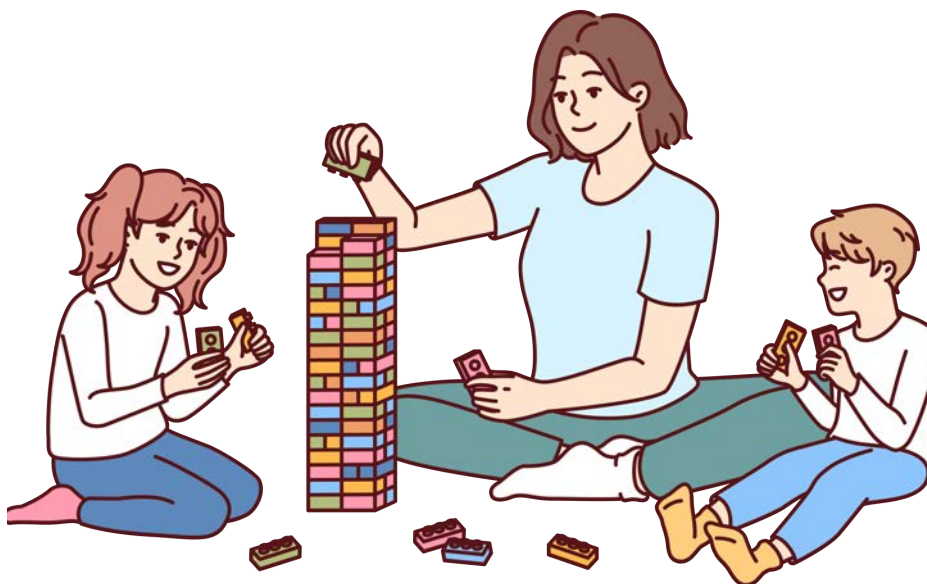
Case Study

George and his wife Claire had been married for five years when their first child was born. The couple was elated by the fact that they were going to become parents, and decided to prove themselves as wonderful mother and father. Although they both had different views on upbringing, they were able to agree on some principles that would underlie their parenting style.

Unfortunately, George and Claire soon realised that this agreement was not enough. When their son turned five, it became increasingly clear that both of them disagreed on his upbringing. George believed that the best way to raise him was to be strict and take a firm stance - he believed that children should be disciplined from an early age and be given rewards only when they do something good. On the other hand, Claire felt more comfortable taking a calmer approach - she believed that children should be allowed to learn through play and experimentation, rather than through strict rules or punishment.

The differences between George's and Claire's styles began to cause tension at home, but they could not find a medium approach, because each of them felt sure of his beliefs and own methods of upbringing. Over time, things got worse and that finally started to cause conflicts between them, which affected their son as well.
***

Which parenting style would you refer to George and Claire?
What do you think will be the result for their son having in mind the parenting style used by George and Claire?

In the previous unit, we analysed the main parenting styles and what is the behaviour of the parents for each of them towards the child. Here we will consider what influence each style has on the development and formation of the child.

Parenting styles and children's behaviour are summarised in the following table.

Style of upbringing	Children's behaviour
Authoritarian parents Firm maintenance of the rules, confrontation and punishment of bad behaviour, expression of anger and disapproval, the rules are not clearly defined, children's opinions and desires are not taken into account, cold relations and lack of empathy for what is happening to the child, there is no planning of joint actions	**Conflicting and irritated children** Fear, sadness and unhappiness, easily irritable, lazy, hostile, full of guilt, stressed, aggressive, unfriendly, aimless
Authoritative parents Confirm and explain the necessity of setting rules, demonstration of displeasure and bitterness as a response to bad behaviour, demonstration of pleasure after showing positive behaviour and providing support, rules are clear, children's opinions and desires are discussed, there is warmth and empathy	**Friendly children** Good self-control, self-esteem, high level of activity, warmth, concern, friendliness, good stress management, interest and curiosity, success orientation

Permissive (liberal) parents Few rules, inconsistency in discipline, warmth and leniency, yielding to the pressure of the child	**Impulsive-aggressive children** Resistance and disobedience to the demands of adults, self-centred tendencies, easy irritability, loss of self-control, impulsivity aggressiveness, striving for dominance
Uninvolved (chaotic) The rules are not clear, compliance is not required, weak requirements and expectations of mature and independent behaviour, neglect or acceptance of bad behaviour, hidden indifference, lack of feedback	**Impulsive-aggressive children** Resistance and disobedience to the demands of adults, low self-confidence, lack of orientation to achievement, lack of self-control, aimlessness

Referring to the consequences for children, we can define the best style of upbringing as the authoritative one. However, more than one style has its place in a child's life as they grow up. Many experts recommend a mixture of parenting styles - for example, the role of the father to be taken over by the authoritarian parent in early childhood - when boundaries should be defined and a safe environment should be provided for the child and the role of the mother - by the authoritative one.

During puberty, the role of the father must be performed by an authoritative parent, and that of the mother can be performed by a permissive one.

Whichever style of parenting you target, however, it's a good idea to notice the symptoms of unacceptable behaviour in the bud and try to correct your behaviour as well as that of your partner.

Exercises

Let's look again at the case from the beginning of this unit. Can we predict what will happen to George and Claire's son? What should they change in themselves?
***

Sticky notes

On the table in front of the board there are 3 piles of sticky notes: green symbolises the area of "Complete freedom"; yellow - zone "Relative freedom"; red - the "Forbidden" zone. Each of you will come out and write one possible action for his child for each of the three zones. And then we'll have a brief discussion.

Case Study

A little over a year ago, I had the chance to meet Tom and Sue, a couple in their late thirties with two young children. The day I arrived at their home was particularly hot, and as soon as I got inside, I felt the warmth of love and care emanating from the family. Tom and Sue smiled broadly as they welcomed me, and immediately their two children, three-year-old John and five-year-old Sarah ran toward me with open arms. As I spent time with them throughout the afternoon, it became clear to me that Tom and Sue held a special place in their hearts.

Despite being heartfelt and attached, Tom and Sue had very different approaches to parenting. Sue took a more calm approach to discipline, encouraging independence but giving guidance when needed. When something went wrong for John or Sarah, Tom necessarily intervened if he felt things get out of hand. During my visit, I saw first-hand how the carefully balanced interaction between Tom and Sue can give John and Sarah confidence that everything in the world is fine, even when things aren't perfect. I witnessed a memorable incident shortly after dinner when Sarah spilt her juice all over the table while trying to reach for a toy on the floor.

Sarah cried. In an instant, both parents went into action. Sue quickly picked up some towels from the kitchen, and Tom fell to his knees next to Sarah to calm her tears. As soon as she got back under control, he stood up with his hand on her shoulders to clean up the mess together before finally hugging her gently and telling her reassuringly that everyone sometimes makes mistakes. It was such a beautiful moment - a moment when it became abundantly clear how important it was for both parents to help children learn from their mistakes by providing them with love and support in difficult times.

***

What did you notice in the family's behaviour? What are the styles of both parents according to the description before the event and what kind of behaviour did they show during the event? Do you like this family model?
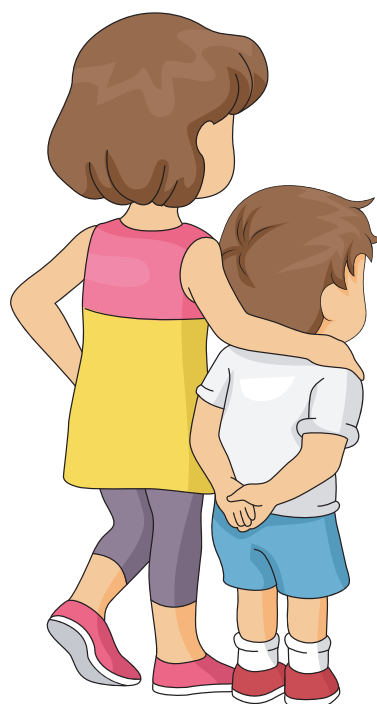
We will briefly consider our relationships with children in several directions: behaviour; communication and discipline.

Behaviour:

When teaching children desirable behaviours, it's important to make sure the techniques are age-appropriate, effective, and positive. Talking to your child about the desired behaviour can be a great way to start. Explaining to the child why their behaviour is unacceptable and how they should work to change it can be helpful in guiding them to the desired behaviour. It is also important to make sure that any penalties used are age-appropriate and will help them understand the outcome of their actions without being too strict or excessive.

In addition, it can be useful to provide a quiet place for a certain period of time for the parent and child to discuss what happened and how to move forward in a constructive way. Finally, moments of encouragement during this process are essential, as they give the child recognition for their efforts to try to change their behaviour. All of these techniques combined can help to learn the desired behaviour effectively and positively while strengthening the bond between parent and child.

Remember, that children learn more from what they see than from what they hear. What children should see in your behaviour:
● showing attention to others,
● argumentation for an act,
● praising others,
● not marking the outbursts,
● hearing
● not paying attention to the rude remarks of others

Positive feedback is very important in the formation of a behaviour pattern. How would you react if your employer only emphasised your inappropriate behaviour, even if their intentions were good? It's better to focus on good behaviour than bad behaviour. Make it your goal to notice something every day that deserves praise. Generously rewarded with love, hugs and praise, accompanied by an explanation of what the child did right.

Communication

Practise active listening. Active listening is a communication technique that is used to engage with the other person and show them that you are actively paying attention, understanding them, and responding to them. It involves listening attentively to the speaker using nonverbal cues, such as a nod or eye contact, to indicate that you are listening attentively.

Active listening can be especially helpful in parent-child relationships, as it can help build trust and respect between both parties while helping children feel more comfortable expressing their opinions to their parents. It not only creates an environment of mutual understanding between parent and child, but it can also help parents better understand how their child feels and learn how to provide them with the best support.

Active listening involves asking questions that show interest in what the other person is saying, repeating what is said so that both sides agree, refraining from judgmental or biassed statements about what is being said, and empathising with the other person's feelings. This type of communication allows for a more open dialogue between parent and child, which in turn will foster a healthy relationship built on trust and understanding.

Benefits of Active Listening:

● It helps the child to get rid of negative feelings by expressing them freely.

● It helps to develop relationships related to warmth and empathy between parent and child.

● It makes it easier for the child to make decisions.

● It helps the child to more easily listen and understand his parents.

Discipline

It is important to be consistent when disciplining the child. Draw up a set of rules and make sure the penalties or rewards are always the same for the same behaviour. When imposing discipline, be sure to explain to the child why the behaviour was wrong and be aware of the consequences if it repeats.

Be calm and respectful,and do not use physical punishments, as this will only lead to more harm than good. Instead, emphasise positive reinforcement, such as praise and rewards when children demonstrate good behaviour. Finally, make time for regular conversations with your child and discuss their feelings. This promotes a better understanding of good and bad, as well as enables them to express themselves.

Discipline requires patience, but with careful planning, it is possible to create effective boundaries for children that will help them develop their social skills, self-esteem and respect for others.

Whining and tantrums of children

It is usually due to one of the following reasons:
● You don't answer your child when they ask you kindly about something.
● The child does not receive enough attention from their parents and feels neglected.
● The child gets what they want when they whine.

For each of the three reasons, the common thing is a lack of attention from the parent.
Depending on the situation, the parent's response may be:
● Stay calm and don't show that you're embarrassed or angry.
● Secure the space around the child so that they do not get injured and leave them alone.
● If they are in danger of getting hurt, hug them and start talking quietly and lullaby.
● Tell your child that you'll talk again when they calm down.

Preventing whining from becoming a habit should happen from the moment it appears for the first time. Find out what it is due to and act! Do not give in to the screams and tantrums and ignore them.

Additional sources: Eanes, Rebecca. Positive Parenting in Action

Now that we know what a good parent-child relationship should look like, let's go back to the case from the beginning and see what and how Tom and Sue did.
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With this game, we will practise how not to give bans. We have banned cards ready. Each of you will draw a card and you will have to read what is written on it, reformulating the sentence so that it does not contain the word don't. E.g.: "Don't scream!" It might sound like this: "Speak calmly, please."

Summary

A good role model of parents is essential for a child's proper development and can have a lasting impact on them. Both mothers and fathers play a vital role in the upbringing of their children, providing love, guidance, structure, and discipline. When one parent is missing, their role can be occupied by another person close to the family and even by the child's teacher. Different styles of upbringing also affect the way children grow up. According to the age of the children, it is good for them to change to give support and autonomy at the same time.

To ensure effective parenting that will help children develop into secure adults with strong values, it is important to find a balance between upbringing and discipline. As role models, parents should be polite, but firm in setting boundaries. They need to ensure consistency in their expectations, as well as positive support for good behaviour. Parents should strive to develop an environment in which open communication between them and their child allows them to honestly discuss feelings without fear of judgment or punishment. In addition, family rituals, such as eating together regularly, discussing the past day, or sharing bedtime stories, can promote the sense of security that is necessary for healthy emotional development.

By teaching their children problem-solving skills, listening actively, and encouraging self-expression, parents can help develop a child's self-esteem so that they can grow into responsible adults who feel all right with themselves and others around them.

Showing respect for others, including strangers, will eventually become part of the child's character and encourage empathy. Giving children the opportunity to observe good examples from people outside the family circle can also help shape their behaviour so that they can recognize good from bad at an early age. Good role models do not necessarily always come from the family, they can come from the community in which we live or even from media, movies and books in which positive characters appear with admirable qualities such as courage, loyalty, tenacity, etc.

Remember, however, that children learn more from what they see than from what they hear.

Module 6
Family well-being

Module Introduction

When families practise equal parenting they reap multiple rewards from improved communication to enhanced attachment bonds among family members. This type of partnership allows couples the opportunity to build strong relationships with each other while still providing ample emotional support and guidance for their children.

Research has shown that not only does this help create more secure familial environments but it also promotes improved psychological well-being for all those involved, making it an important tool for modern families striving for healthier dynamics within their households.

Case Study

Life in the Smith household was far from harmonious. With six children, parents John and Marie were often overwhelmed and exhausted. The two had very different parenting styles and constantly argued over how to best discipline the kids. As a result, the atmosphere in the house was tense and chaotic.

The kids weren't immune to the tension either. They bicker incessantly and frequently refuse to cooperate or follow directions. With so much negativity in the air, it was no wonder that family dinners were awkward and uncomfortable affairs. Despite their differences, John and Marie had tried desperately to make things work but with little success.

As time went on, it became clear that things weren't going to get better anytime soon. The family's lack of emotional connection and poor communication skills created an unhealthy environment full of resentment, judgement, withdrawal, and disconnection from one another. It eventually reached the point where even simple tasks around the house turned into fierce power struggles between parent and child.

Reflecting questions:

1. What are the primary sources of tension between John and Marie? How does this affect the children's behaviour?

2. Why do you think John and Marie have struggled to find a way to parent their children effectively?

3. What strategies might the Smiths use to create a more harmonious home environment?

4. How do you think the kids in the Smith household feel about their situation?

5. What would be the long-term impact of chaotic family life on the children's well-being and development?

The importance of family well-being cannot be overstated. It is essential that each member of a family feel safe, secure, and supported while having the opportunity to grow, learn, and express themselves. A family's well being means having a sense of belonging and acceptance in their community, with strong bonds and trust between each other. This connection enables them to communicate effectively and build a trusting relationship which allows for better problem-solving and decision-making skills.

In sum, family well-being is critical in providing a safe space for learning how to manage emotions while building meaningful relationships with others over time; most importantly though, it gives everyone involved the opportunity to thrive in all aspects of their lives – emotionally, socially, physically, intellectually and spiritually – creating a foundation of strength that will last throughout one's lifetime.
Key skills for effective family well-being

1. Communication - Learning how to effectively communicate with each other is key to a healthy family dynamic.
2. Respect - Respecting each other's opinions and feelings will help create a supportive home environment.
3. Compromise - Flexibility and compromise are essential components of any successful relationship, especially when it comes to families.
4. Empathy - Having empathy and understanding towards one another's needs and perspectives will help avoid unnecessary conflict.
5. Patience - Being patient with each other is important for maintaining peace in the family unit.

Aditional resources:

● Book: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families" by Stephen R. Covey

○ A comprehensive guide to improving family dynamics.

● Website: American Psychological Association - Family & Relationships

○ Offers articles and research on family well-being.

● Podcast: "The Longest Shortest Time"

○ Discusses various family issues and dynamics.

● App: Cozi Family Organizer

○ Helps manage family schedules and activities.

● Online Course: "Positive Parenting: The Basics" on Coursera

○ Teaches effective parenting strategies.

Sit in groups of 4. Based on the study, pick the picture that reflects it. Later describe what you would do to improve the situation, from your experience. Self-reflect if you experienced such situations and write 5 bullets on paper.
Later share it with the whole group and find similarities, differences and solutions

Case Study

There was a family who wanted to improve their well-being. They had been struggling with feelings of sadness and tension for some time and were determined to find a solution.

The parents decided that, before they could begin the process of improving their family's health, they needed to take care of themselves individually. So, each member of the family made an effort to engage in activities that promoted self-care and well-being. For example, the father started exercise classes, the mother began taking yoga lessons, and the children all devoted time to exploring hobbies that interested them. Each individual in the family experienced an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem as they worked on their own well-being.

As a result, this renewed energy emboldened them to tackle the issues plaguing the family's well-being together as a unit. They established ground rules that everyone could agree on, such as putting away devices during dinner time or taking weekly walks together. Soon enough, these little changes made a big difference and enabled them to start enjoying life to its fullest extent once again.

Thus, through focusing on their own mental health and making small commitments towards creating a happier home environment for everyone in the family, this household was able to achieve peace and harmony both individually and as a collective unit.

Discussion :
1. How does engaging in self-care activities contribute to improving family relationships?
2. What are the benefits of setting time aside for self-reflection and relaxation?
3. How can individual well-being lead to improved communication within the family unit?
4. How can taking steps towards achieving personal goals strengthen family bonds?
5. In what ways can prioritising one's mental health help create a healthier home environment for all?

Self-care activities can be a powerful tool for improving family relationships. Engaging in self-care promotes individual well-being, which in turn leads to improved communication within the family unit and a healthier environment for all. When individuals take time out of their day to prioritize their own mental health, it can help strengthen familial bonds, encourage personal growth and development, and foster an atmosphere of understanding.

Personal well-being is essential for healthy family dynamics. Setting aside time for self-reflection and relaxation helps individuals maintain positive outlooks and clear mindsets. This makes it easier to engage in purposeful dialogue with family members and approach situations with empathy and patience rather than frustration or anger. Furthermore, taking steps towards achieving personal goals provides an opportunity to build mutual respect within the family unit. When each member has something they are personally striving towards, it can motivate everyone else to pursue their dreams as well.

Engaging in self-care activities is essential for improving one's overall well-being—and thus—the well-being of an entire family unit. Whether it's setting aside time for self-reflection, pursuing personal goals, or taking space during tense moments; prioritizing one's own mental health can create harmony within a home environment that allows all its inhabitants to feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgement or alienation. Self-care activities contribute significantly towards creating relationships based on understanding and compassion rather than conflict or negativity.

Exercises for better self-reflection. Using these exercises will improve the person's self-image and reflect it into family life.

1. Meditation:

Take 15 minutes each day for everyone in the family to focus on their breath, practice mindfulness and increase self-awareness.

2. Gratitude Activity:

During dinner or family time, take turns expressing something that each person is thankful for. This will help create a positive atmosphere of appreciation and foster stronger relationships within the family.

Additional Resources:

1. Book: "The Self-Driven Child" by William Stixrud and Ned Johnson

○ Focuses on fostering self-driven behavior in children.

2. Website: Mindful Families

○ Offers mindfulness resources for families.

3. Podcast: "The Science of Happiness"

○ Discusses scientifically-proven methods to increase happiness.

4. App: Headspace

○ Provides guided meditation sessions.

5. Online Course: "The Science of Well-Being" on Coursera

○Teaches about psychological well-being.

Case Study

There was a family of four: a mother, father, daughter and son. The father worked hard to provide for his family while the mother stayed home to look after the children. This arrangement worked well most of the time, but over time the parents began to grow apart.

The father focused more on his job and started spending less time with his family; the mother tried her best to be both mom and dad to her two children. Over time, this caused tension between them as well as confusion for their kids as they had different expectations from each parent – one wanted stricter rules while the other was more lenient.

The lack of consistency in parenting styles resulted in discipline issues within the household; their daughter became increasingly defiant while their son began acting out in school. Despite seeking help from medical professionals and support groups, nothing seemed to get through to them.

One day, it dawned on them that what their family needed was not a strict set of rules or harsh punishment but harmonious understanding and communication between parents. It took many months of effort and dedication from both parents but eventually, they worked together as a team and achieved balance within the household by setting clear limits for behaviour, providing positive reinforcement when needed, enforcing rules consistently and having regular family discussions about expectations and feelings alike.

Reflecting questions:
Reading through the case gives us some info, on what happens to the family well being if we live in a family without certain rules and discipline.
- Do you agree?
- What is your experience?
- What are your recommendations?
Discuss different situations, give suggestions on how to improve the situations and make a table of rules and improvements.

Families with both parents equally involved in their children's lives tend to have fewer discipline problems than those with just one parent taking on the majority of the responsibilities. This is large because when children have two caregivers, they can more easily and consistently learn expectations for acceptable behaviour as well as proper consequences for breaking those expectations. With two involved parents, children gain a better understanding of why it is important to follow rules and guidelines, which is often lacking in households where only one parent is present.

In addition, having two equally involved parents helps create an environment of mutual respect between the adults and the children. When both parents are communicating openly and clearly about appropriate behaviour, there is less room for misinterpretation or confusion about expectations, leading to fewer disciplinary issues. Furthermore, when both parents are working together in parenting decisions and strategies, it can be easier to recognize potential behavioural issues before they become larger problems that require discipline.

Why are family rules important?
Family rules help children understand what behaviours are okay and not okay. As children grow, they will be in places where they have to follow rules. Following rules at home can help children learn to follow rules in other places. It is normal for children to break rules and test limits. Consistently following through with consequences when rules are broken helps your child have a clear understanding of the importance of rules. Remember, young kids sometimes break rules because they simply forget. Not all broken rules occur because kids are testing the limits. But, our responses should be the same no matter what the reason for breaking the rule.

Why should all family members know and follow the rules?
For family rules to work well, everyone needs to know, understand, and follow the rules. By doing this, children don't get mixed messages about what is okay or not okay. For example, you know screen time should be limited for young children and you want dinner time to be family time so you set a family rule that no screens are allowed during dinner time. If another caregiver checks their phone during dinner, your child may be confused. Your child's behaviour will be better if all caregivers support the rules in the same way. This is true for parents, grandparents, or any other caregivers in your child's life.

How can all family members get on the same page about rules?

Several steps can help all family members be consistent. Parents or caregivers can:

● talk about what rules would help their family and agree on which ones to set

● post the rules in the house so everyone can know them

● talk with other adults who care for their children about the rules to make sure everyone knows what is allowed and not allowed

● ask all caregivers to be consistent in monitoring and enforcing the rules

● remind children about the rules by repeating and posting them in the home

Additional source:

- https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/videos/index.html

- **Book:** "Parenting from the Inside Out" by Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell

- Discusses the neurobiology of child development.

- **Website:** Positive Discipline

- **Provides** resources for positive discipline techniques.

- **Podcast:** "Unruffled" by Janet Lansbury

- Offers parenting advice.

- **App:** ChoreMonster

- Helps families manage chores and rewards.

- **Online Course:** "Everyday Parenting: The ABCs of Child Rearing" on Coursera

- Focuses on everyday parenting challenges.

Exercise: Parenting Role Swap Activity

Objective: To help young and future parents understand the importance of equally involved parenting and how it contributes to fewer discipline problems.

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into pairs, preferably with their parenting partner or a fellow participant with similar concerns.

2. Create a list of common parenting situations that involve setting boundaries, enforcing rules, or addressing discipline issues, such as handling a tantrum, managing bedtime routines, or dealing with sibling conflicts.

3. In each pair, have one person assume the role of Parent A and the other as Parent B. Assign each parent in the pair a specific parenting situation from the list.

4. Ask Parent A to respond to their assigned situation, describing how they would handle it and the reasoning behind their approach. Encourage them to consider the importance of consistency, clear expectations, and emotional support in their response.

5. Parent B listens actively and takes notes on Parent A's approach, focusing on key points such as boundaries, expectations, and consequences.

6. After Parent A has finished, ask Parent B to respond to the same situation, incorporating the key points from Parent A's response to create a consistent and collaborative parenting approach.

7. Allow 5-7 minutes for each situation, then have the pairs switch roles and repeat the process with new scenarios.

8. After completing the role swap activity, bring the group together for a debrief and discussion on the importance of equally involved parenting and how it can contribute to fewer discipline problems.

This exercise helps young and future parents practice effective communication, collaboration, and problem-solving in various parenting situations. By working together and understanding each other's perspectives, participants will learn the value of equally involved parenting and how it can lead to better discipline outcomes for their children.

Case Study

John and Lisa had been married for five years when they decided it was time to start a family. They both worked full-time, but they wanted to make sure that raising their child would be a team effort.

To help ensure their home life runs more smoothly, John and Lisa decided to equalise their childcare and housework responsibilities. John took on the majority of the outdoor tasks like mowing the lawn and doing repairs around the house, while Lisa managed the indoor chores like cleaning and laundry. They also agreed to divide their nighttime parenting duties – alternating who gets up with the baby in the middle of the night and waking up early to prepare breakfast before work.

By equally sharing these responsibilities, John and Lisa found that they were able to reduce their parental stress significantly, as well as increase their overall well-being as a family. With both parents contributing equally in both childcare and housework, John and Lisa were able to find more time for themselves as well as each other - which resulted in fewer arguments over mundane matters like whose turn it was to do something or take care of something.

John and Lisa quickly realised that they not only shared a wonderful family life but also a great lifestyle with an equal division of labour - proof that equal division of childcare and housework amongst couples can help reduce parental stress significantly while also improving family wellbeing!

Try this exercise for equal division of childcare and housework amongst couples!

Exercise:
1. List out all the household tasks that need to be completed each week (cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, laundry, etc).
2. Divide the tasks into two separate piles - one pile representing childcare tasks and the other housework tasks.

3. Discuss with your partner: which tasks do you feel more comfortable for doing? Make sure both people are contributing to both piles!

4. Come up with a plan on how you will divide these chores between you and your partner each week so it is a fair and equitable distribution.

5. Once you have your plan ready, put it into action! Keep up consistent communication with your partner and ensure that both people are completing their allocated tasks.

When couples collaborate on childcare and housework tasks, it creates a sense of partnership between them. It promotes mutual respect and understanding by dividing the work into manageable parts that each member can handle effectively. This eliminates the feeling of being overwhelmed or taken advantage of because there is an equal division of work responsibilities between them. Moreover, this equitable distribution encourages greater communication between partners which can strengthen their relationship while allowing both to feel valued within the family unit.

In addition to reducing parental stress and improving family well-being, equal division of labour can also increase productivity levels among couples. When workloads are shared more evenly, it creates an environment in which both adults have time for career aspirations or other outside interests without sacrificing their involvement in childrearing or household duties. This helps ensure that all members can exercise autonomy within their roles as couple and parent while still having sufficient time for personal growth or leisure activities that improve quality of life.

Additional Resources:
1. Book: "Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do" by Eve Rodsky
  ○ Discusses the division of labor in households.
2. Website: Family Equality
  ○ Advocates for equal family responsibilities.
3. Podcast: "The Equal Partners Podcast"
  ○ Discusses equal partnership in parenting.
4. App: OurHome
  ○ Helps manage family tasks and activities.
5. Online Course: "Balancing Work and Life" on Coursera
  ○ Teaches how to balance work and personal life.
    https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5365149/

Try this role-play exercise for equal division of childcare and housework amongst couples!

Exercise:

1. Have one member of the couple take on the role of a 'person in need' who is looking for help with household tasks.

2. Have the other member of the couple play the role of 'problem solver'.

3. The 'person in need' should present their situation - explaining what tasks they are struggling with, how much time they have available to complete them, etc.

4. The 'problem solver' should then try and come up with solutions both parties can agree on - ways to divide childcare and housework between them, ways to make it easier for each side, etc.

5. Once both sides agreed, try and implement some of the solutions that were discussed into your daily life!

Summary

This learning module focuses on the importance of family well-being. It outlines the benefits that come with self-care for all family members, as well as emphasises how a more equitable division of housework and childcare between couples can reduce stress and improve overall well-being. A major point covered in this module is that families, where both parents are equally involved in household activities, have fewer discipline problems.

When it comes to family well-being, self-care is essential to foster a healthy and happy environment. Self-care encompasses various activities such as getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, eating nutritious meals, and engaging in leisure activities. By taking care of themselves, individuals can better manage their stress levels and become better equipped to take care of others within the family structure.

In addition to taking care of oneself, another key component for improving family well-being is for couples to divide childcare duties and housework more equitably. This helps not only redistribute stress among both partners but can also increase communication and create a healthier dynamic between them. Furthermore, research has shown that this allocation of responsibilities results in fewer discipline problems within families since both parents are more available to be active participants in parenting decisions.

Overall, this learning module highlights the importance of family well-being by emphasizing the role that self-care plays in improving it as well as pointing out how an equal division of household duties amongst couples can reduce stress levels and lead to better connectedness between all members of the family unit.

Module 7
Overparenting

Module 7 : Overparenting

Module Introduction

Overparenting, also known as helicopter parenting, is an increasing phenomenon in modern society. It refers to a parenting style characterized by excessive monitoring and control of children's lives, often beyond what is developmentally appropriate. Overparenting involves intrusive behaviours such as attending school meetings for the child, solving their problems for them, making decisions for them, and controlling their daily activities. This parenting style has been linked to increased anxiety in children, as well as poorer performance when it comes to problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Through the module we will learn:

Unit 1: Understanding Overparenting
● Define overparenting and differentiate it from healthy parenting practices.
● Identify the key psychological, emotional, and developmental effects of overparenting on children.
● Recognize the societal factors and cultural influences that contribute to the rise of overparenting.
● Discuss the potential consequences of overparenting behaviour

Unit 2: Identifying signs of over-parenting in oneself
● Detect common behaviors and patterns that indicate overparenting tendencies.
● Assess one's own parenting style and identify areas where overparenting may be taking place.
● Develop self-awareness and reflection skills to monitor and adjust one's parenting approach as needed.

Unit 3: Developing parenting boundaries for oneself and your partner.

● Establish clear and healthy boundaries to promote independence and self-reliance in children.

● Collaborate with your partner to create a consistent and balanced parenting approach.

● Implement strategies for managing parental anxiety and stress that may contribute to overparenting tendencies.

Unit 4: Strategies for avoiding the pitfalls of over parenting

● Apply evidence-based parenting techniques that encourage appropriate levels of autonomy, responsibility, and resilience in children.

● Utilize effective communication skills to foster open dialogue with children and address their needs without overstepping boundaries.

● Develop a support network of other parents and professionals to share experiences, advice, and resources for overcoming overparenting challenges.

Case Study

Case Study of Billy and Amy

Once upon a time, there was a family with two children, Billy and Amy. The parents were extremely overprotective of their children and wanted to keep them safe from any kind of harm or danger. Every morning they would make sure their children were dressed in the warmest clothes and that they had eaten breakfast. They would also accompany them to school every day, even though it wasn't necessary.

The parents wanted the best for their children but the constant hovering made both Billy and Amy feel suffocated. They felt like they couldn't express themselves properly or take risks without worrying about being judged by their parents.
One day, Billy asked his parents to take a step back and give him some space to make his own decisions as he was growing up. His request scared the parents at first, as it meant letting go of something that felt so comfortable and secure. But after much consideration, they decided that it was important to foster independence in their children and let go of the reins.

Group discussion:
Can you pinpoint the good and bad aspects of the story?
What would be the impact on the child and parents?
What could be the reason for such behaviour?
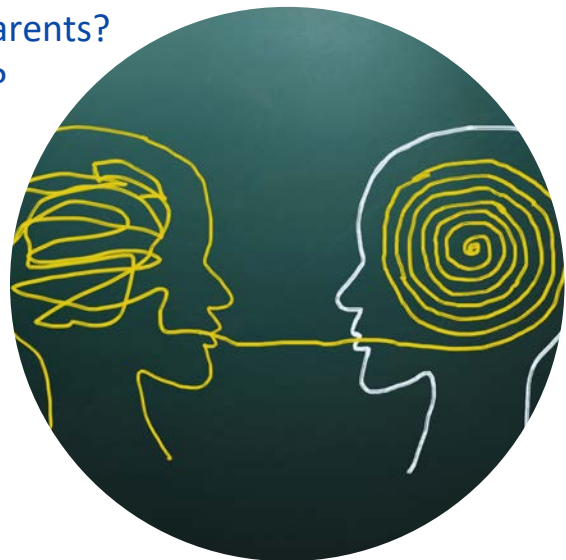
Overparenting, also known as helicopter parenting, refers to a parenting style characterized by excessive involvement, control, and protectiveness in a child's life. This behavior can hinder a child's ability to develop independence, self-esteem, and problem-solving skills. Overparenting can lead to negative outcomes such as increased anxiety, lower self-confidence, and difficulty in social relationships.

Parents may overparent their children for several reasons. Some may feel pressure to be perfect parents and see overparenting as a way to ensure their children's success. Others may have had difficult childhoods and want to spare their children from experiencing similar challenges. In some cases, parents may not be aware of the negative impact that overparenting can have on their children's development.

While overparenting can stem from a place of love and concern for one's children, it can have negative consequences. Children of overprotective parents may struggle with self-esteem, decision-making, and problem-solving skills, and may experience anxiety and other mental health issues. Additionally, overparenting can prevent children from developing the resilience and coping skills they need to navigate the challenges of adulthood.

It is important to understand the concept of overparenting because it can significantly impact children's development. Overparenting can lead to a lack of confidence in children, as they may feel that their parents will judge and criticise their decisions. This can create an atmosphere in the household full of tension and frustration. It is also important to acknowledge that children need space and freedom to make their own mistakes and figure out how to cope with them, as this is part of growing up. Understanding overparenting helps parents learn how to support their children while still allowing them the space they need to develop into independent adults.

Additional resources:

Source: Padilla-Walker, L. M., & Nelson, L. J. (2012). Black Hawk down?: Establishing helicopter parenting as a distinct construct from other forms of parental control during emerging adulthood.

This role-playing exercise is designed to help participants better understand overparenting and its effects on children.

Exercise 1:

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into two groups: one group representing parents and the other representing children.

2. The parent group should begin by discussing their personal experiences with parenting, including any tendencies they have to hover or be overprotective of their child.

3. The child group should then discuss how it feels when their parents are overly protective - such as feeling stifled, unable to make decisions for themselves, or lacking confidence in their abilities.

4. Now both groups can come together for a role-play exercise, in which the parent group acts out an example of overt parenting and the child group responds accordingly, highlighting how it makes them feel.

5. Finally, both groups should join together to discuss what an ideal balance between protection and independence looks like, from the perspective of both parent and child.

Exercise 2: Identifying Overparenting Scenarios

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3-4 people.

2. Distribute a list of 5-7 hypothetical parenting scenarios that include both overparenting and balanced parenting examples.

3 .Ask each group to identify which scenarios depict overparenting and explain why they believe the behavior is excessive or harmful to the child's development.

4. Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion within the groups.

5. Bring the groups back together and have each group share their findings. Encourage a collective discussion on the consequences of overparenting based on the scenarios provided

Case Study

Case Study: The Helicopter Parent's Self-Reflections

Story: Tom's Realization

Tom, a devoted stay-at-home dad, always took pride in his close relationship with his daughter, Lily. From the moment she was born, he was determined to be her guiding light and provide unwavering support. Tom believed that his constant presence would ensure Lily's success in all areas of her life, so he actively participated in her school events, monitored her friendships, and even helped with her homework on a daily basis.

As Lily entered middle school, she began to struggle with making decisions independently. She relied heavily on her father's guidance and found it difficult to cope in situations where Tom wasn't present. Her teachers noticed Lily's lack of self-reliance and became concerned about her ability to adapt and grow.

One day, Tom received an invitation to attend a parenting seminar at Lily's school. Curious and eager to learn new parenting techniques, he decided to participate. The seminar opened his eyes to the concept of overparenting and the negative effects it could have on a child's development

Tom began to reflect on his own parenting style and realized that his constant involvement in Lily's life was preventing her from developing crucial life skills. His well-intentioned actions were actually causing more harm than good.

Determined to change, Tom embarked on a journey of self-improvement. He started by giving Lily more opportunities to make her own decisions and solve problems independently. He took a step back and allowed her to navigate her own path, providing guidance only when necessary.

Discussion Questions:

1. What specific behaviors or patterns in Tom's parenting style indicate overparenting tendencies?

2. How can Tom effectively assess and adjust his parenting approach to foster greater independence and decision-making skills in Lily?

3. What resources or support systems might help Tom maintain a healthy parenting style over the long term?

Introduction

Why This Unit Matters

Parenting is one of the most rewarding yet challenging roles one can undertake. While the instinct to protect and provide for your child is natural, it's crucial to strike a balance to ensure you're not stifling your child's growth. This unit is designed to serve as a mirror, reflecting the subtle and not-so-subtle ways you may be overparenting.

The Thin Line Between Care and Overcare

It's easy to cross the line from caring parenting into the realm of overparenting, especially in a world filled with uncertainties and pressures. The introduction of this unit aims to set the stage for a deep dive into understanding this delicate balance. It will help you recognize when your well-intentioned actions might be doing more harm than good.

What You Will Gain

By the end of this unit, you will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to identify signs of overparenting within yourself. This is the first step towards fostering a healthier, more independent relationship with your child. You will also gain insights into the psychological triggers and societal factors that often lead to overparenting, empowering you to make informed changes in your parenting style.

What are the Signs of Overparenting?
Introduction to the Signs

Before diving into the strategies for change, it's essential to recognize the behaviors that constitute overparenting. These signs are often subtle and can easily be mistaken for diligent parenting. However, they can have long-term negative impacts on both the parent and the child.

The Signs

1. **Constant Supervision:** Always hovering around your child, even when they are capable of doing things on their own.
2. **Decision-Making:** Making all decisions for your child, from what they should wear to what activities they should participate in, without consulting them.

3. Problem-Solving: Stepping in to solve all of your child's problems, even when they can handle the situation themselves.

1. **Over-Scheduling:** Filling your child's day with structured activities, leaving little to no time for free play or relaxation.
2. **High Expectations:** Setting unrealistically high standards and expectations for your child's academic performance, sports, or other activities.
3. **Emotional Dependence:** Encouraging or allowing your child to become overly reliant on you for emotional support to the point where they struggle to manage their own emotions.
4. **Lack of Responsibility:** Not allowing your child to face the natural consequences of their actions hinders their understanding of responsibility.
5. **Intrusiveness:** Constantly prying into your child's personal life, including friendships, relationships, and academic performance.

Psychological Underpinnings

Understanding the psychology behind these signs is crucial. Often, overparenting stems from the parent's anxieties, fears, or past experiences. It can also be fueled by societal pressures that equate intense parental involvement with good parenting.

The Impact

While these behaviors may stem from a place of love and concern, they can lead to a range of negative outcomes for the child, including low self-esteem, poor problem-solving skills, and emotional dependency. Moreover, it can strain the parent-child relationship and lead to burnout for the parent.

Psychological Triggers for Overparenting

The Psychology of Overparenting

Understanding the psychological factors contributing to overparenting can offer valuable insights into why and how to prevent it. Some common psychological drivers include:

- Parental Anxiety: A fear of the world being a dangerous place can lead parents to become overly protective.
- Control Issues: Some parents may have issues with control stemming from their own upbringing or insecurities.
- Peer Pressure: The societal notion of "keeping up with the Joneses" can pressure parents to be overly involved in their child's life.
- Unfulfilled Ambitions: Sometimes, parents live vicariously through their children, pushing them to achieve what they could not.

Future Prevention Techniques

Self-Awareness: The first step in preventing overparenting is recognizing the signs in yourself. Regular self-reflection can help you become more aware of your behaviors.

2. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries that allow your child to explore, make mistakes, and learn from them.

3. **Consult Your Child:** Involve your child in decision-making processes appropriate for their age. This fosters independence and decision-making skills.

4. **Seek Professional Help:** If you find it challenging to change your parenting style, consider seeking the advice of a psychologist or a parenting coach.

5. **Community Support:** Join parenting forums or community groups where you can share experiences and learn from others.

6. **Educate Yourself:** Read books, articles, and research on balanced parenting styles and the negative impacts of overparenting.

Self-Assessment Tools

Various self-assessment tools and questionnaires are available to help parents identify their overparenting tendencies. These tools often involve a series of questions that gauge your level of involvement in different aspects of your child's life.

The Importance of Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is a powerful tool for identifying signs of overparenting. Parents should ask themselves questions like:

- "Am I making decisions for my child that they could make themselves?"
- "Do I feel anxious when my child faces challenges without my intervention?"
- "Am I setting healthy boundaries for myself and my child?"

Strategies for Change
Identifying the Signs

Recognizing the signs of overparenting is crucial for making positive changes. Here are some common signs:

1. **Micromanaging:** Constantly overseeing every detail of your child's life, from homework to friendships.

2. **Over-scheduling:** Filling your child's calendar with activities, leaving no time for free play or relaxation.

3. **Excessive Worry:** Being overly concerned about your child's well-being to the point where it affects your own mental health.

4.**Lack of Trust:** Not allowing your child to make mistakes and learn from them, showing a lack of trust in their judgment.

5.High Levels of Dependency: If your child can't make decisions without consulting you, it's a sign of overparenting.

Further Reading and Resources

For a deeper understanding, the following resources are recommended:

● The Association Between Overparenting, Parent-Child Communication, and Entitlement and Adaptive Traits in Adult Children

●Book: "How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success" by Julie Lythcott-Haims

Source: Segrin, C., Woszidlo, A., Givertz, M., Bauer, A., & Murphy, M. T. (2012). The association between overparenting, parent-child communication, and entitlement and adaptive traits in adult children. Family Relations, 61(2), 237-252. Link: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00689.x

There are four widely researched parenting styles: authoritative, permissive, authoritarian, and neglectful. The styles range from controlling to undemanding and from cold and unresponsive to loving and receptive. In recent years, over-involved parents are present in every aspect of their child's life and are often referred to as the fifth style. They are also known as snowplough or helicopter parents.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyO8pvpnTdE

Exercise: Self-Reflection Journal

Instructions: Watch the video(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyO8pvpnTdE)

1. Provide each participant with a journal or notebook.

2. Ask participants to spend 15-20 minutes reflecting on their own parenting behaviors, specifically focusing on instances where they may have exhibited overparenting tendencies.

3. Encourage participants to think about the underlying reasons for their overparenting behaviors, such as personal anxieties, societal expectations, or past experiences.

4. Ask participants to write down at least three actionable steps they can take to address their overparenting tendencies and promote a more balanced parenting approach.

5. Optional: Invite participants to share their reflections and action steps with the group, fostering a supportive and open discussion.

Case Study

Story: Finding Balance

Emma and John Johnson married for ten years and had two young children, Lucy and Max. The couple found themselves in frequent disagreements about their parenting approaches from the moment their children were born. Emma
ended up being overly cautious and protective, while John believed in a more hands-off, laid-back approach.
Their conflicting styles created tension in their relationship and confusion for their children, who received mixed messages about what was expected of them. The Johnsons knew they needed to find a solution, so they sought the help of a family therapist.
With the therapist's guidance, Emma and John began to understand the importance of establishing clear parenting boundaries and collaborating on a consistent parenting approach. They learned to communicate more effectively and find common ground, recognizing that their children needed a balance between protection and autonomy.
They worked together to set boundaries that allowed Lucy and Max to explore their interests, make mistakes, and learn from their experiences, while still ensuring their safety and well-being. By doing so, the Johnsons created a more balanced and harmonious household, fostering independence and resilience in their children.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can parents effectively collaborate to establish consistent and balanced parenting boundaries for their children?
2. What specific boundaries can be established to ensure children develop a healthy sense of independence and self-reliance?
3. How can parents manage their anxieties and stress to avoid overparenting tendencies?
4. What role can open communication play in maintaining healthy parenting boundaries within a family?
5. How can parents navigate differences in their upbringing or cultural backgrounds when establishing parenting boundaries?

Establishing healthy boundaries between parents in raising their child is crucial for maintaining a balanced and harmonious family environment. These boundaries help ensure consistency in parenting styles, minimize conflicts, and promote the child's emotional well-being. Here are some strategies for creating healthy boundaries between parents:

1. Open communication: Maintain an ongoing dialogue with your partner about parenting decisions, expectations, and boundaries. Share your thoughts and concerns openly and listen to each other's perspectives to reach a mutual understanding.

2. Respect parenting differences: Acknowledge that each parent may have different approaches, values, or beliefs about raising a child. Discuss these differences respectfully and find common ground to create a united front in parenting.

3. Collaborate on decision-making: Make important parenting decisions together, considering both parents' input and opinions. Ensure that both parents have a say in setting boundaries, expectations, and consequences for the child.

4. Support each other's roles: Recognize and respect each other's unique contributions and roles in raising the child. Encourage and support one another in fulfilling these roles without overstepping or undermining each other's authority.

5. Establish routines and consistency: Create routines and schedules for your child that both parents agree upon and can consistently follow. This helps provide a stable and predictable environment for the child.

6. Develop a conflict resolution strategy: Establish a process for resolving disagreements or conflicts about parenting issues. This may involve compromising, seeking advice from trusted sources, or employing a "time-out" to cool down before revisiting the discussion.

7. Adapt and adjust boundaries: As the child grows and their needs change, be open to revisiting and adjusting parenting boundaries. Keep the lines of communication open and be willing to adapt to new situations and challenges.

8. Prioritize self-care and the relationship: Ensure both parents take time for self-care and nurturing their relationship as a couple. A strong partnership provides a solid foundation for effective parenting.

By establishing parenting boundaries and fostering open communication, parents can create a healthy and supportive environment for their children's growth and development while avoiding the pitfalls of overparenting.

Self-care strategies are essential for parents and caregivers who want to be healthy and present for their children. Self-care is not about indulging yourself, but rather about engaging in activities that foster physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Stress, fatigue, and burnout can be common issues that parents face as they strive to care for their families. That's why it's important to learn self-care strategies that can help you manage stress and sustain your energy so you can be the best parent or caregiver you can be.

Ways to practise self-care:

• Parents and caregivers must use self-care strategies to be healthy and present for their children.

• Getting enough sleep is essential for physical, intellectual, emotional, and psychological well-being; it helps with energy levels, concentration, problem-solving skills, and mood.

• Physical activity such as gentle stretching or walking around the park together can help expel stress hormones from the body while releasing endorphins that improve overall well-being.

• Setting boundaries between yourself and others who may require your attention will prevent resentment or exhaustion due to over-commitment.

• Taking breaks throughout the day allows parents time to recharge before tackling any other duties later in the day; seeking out fun activities like attending an art class together encourages creative outlets for both parent/child alike!

E**xercise 1: Creating a Parenting Agreement**

Instructions:

1. Ask participants to pair up, preferably with their parenting partner or a fellow parent with similar concerns.

2. Provide each pair with a list of common parenting situations that may require boundaries, such as screen time, social activities, homework, and chores.

3. Instruct the pairs to discuss each situation and establish appropriate boundaries that promote a child's autonomy, independence, and emotional well-being.

4. Encourage pairs to consider their individual parenting styles and values, as well as any cultural or personal factors that may influence their decisions.

5. Allow 20-30 minutes for discussion and agreement creation. Optional: Invite pairs to share their agreements with the group and discuss the rationale behind their choices.

Exercise 2: Role Play Exercise for Parents Learning Self-Care

Two parents are discussing the importance of self-care, but the mother is having trouble understanding why she should prioritise taking care of herself. The father explains that taking breaks and doing activities for themselves can help them stay healthy, both mentally and physically.

The couple then takes time to brainstorm different activities that could be incorporated into their daily lives as a way to practise self-care. Some examples include going for a walk or jogging, reading a book, making art, listening to music, writing in a journal, practising yoga or meditation, or having alone time.

Once they have created an action plan together on how they can incorporate self-care into their daily lives, they role-play a scenario where one of them has taken some time out of their day to practise an activity that nourishes themselves.

Afterwards, they discuss how it felt and how taking this break improved their overall well-being.

Case Study

Case Study: The Smith Family's Transition from Overparenting to Balanced Parenting

The Smith family, consisting of parents Karen and David and their three children, Sarah, Emily, and James, had always been a tight-knit group. Karen and David prided themselves on their close relationships with their children and their involvement in every aspect of their lives. However, the family faced an unexpected challenge when Sarah left for college.

Sarah struggled to adapt to her new environment, lacking the independence and problem-solving skills to navigate college life. Overwhelmed and homesick, she often called her parents for advice and support. Karen and David, concerned about their daughter's struggles, Karen and David began to reflect on their parenting style and its impact on Sarah's ability to cope with new challenges.

Recognizing that their overparenting had inadvertently harmed Sarah, the Smiths decided it was time for a change. They researched and attended parenting workshops, where they learned about the importance of fostering independence, resilience, and autonomy in their children.

With new knowledge and a fresh perspective, Karen and David began implementing changes in their parenting approach. They started by allowing their younger children, Emily and James, to make more decisions independently and encouraged them to take responsibility for their actions. They also focused on improving communication with their children by fostering open and honest conversations about their feelings, needs, and concerns.

Discussion Questions:
- What evidence-based parenting techniques can help parents avoid overparenting and promote healthy child development?
- How can improved communication within the family contribute to the success of a balanced parenting approach?
- What role do support networks, such as other parents, teachers, or professionals, play in helping parents maintain a balanced parenting style?
- How can parents encourage their children to develop problem-solving skills and resilience while providing guidance and support?
- How can parents foster a sense of autonomy and responsibility in their children without overparenting?

Strategies to avoid overparenting include promoting a child's autonomy, encouraging problem-solving skills, and fostering open communication within the family. Support networks such as other parents, teachers, and professionals can also help parents maintain a balanced parenting approach. By avoiding overparenting, parents can nurture their children's confidence, resilience, and overall emotional well-being.

1. **Promote Independence:** Encourage your children to do things on their own, even if they make mistakes. This could include simple tasks such as cleaning their room or more complex tasks such as managing their homework. It is through trial and error that children learn and develop.

2. **Allow for Natural Consequences:** This can be difficult for parents, as our instinct is often to protect our children from harm or disappointment. However, experiencing the consequences of their actions helps children learn responsibility and prepares them for the real world.

3. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear and consistent boundaries. This not only refers to rules for children but also the limit of parental involvement in a child's activities.

4. Encourage Problem-Solving: Instead of solving problems for your child, guide them through the process of figuring out solutions on their own. This can help them develop critical thinking skills and resilience.

5. **Validate Feelings, Don't Fix Them:** If your child is upset, it's important to validate their feelings and provide emotional support, rather than immediately trying to resolve the issue. This can teach them that it's okay to have negative feelings, and they can manage them effectively.

6. **Practice Self-Care:** Parents also need to take care of their own physical and mental health. This not only models good self-care behavior for children but also ensures that parents are in a good position to provide effective care and guidance.

7. **Open Communication:** Foster an environment where your child feels comfortable expressing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. This encourages them to think independently and helps you understand their needs better.

8. **Educate Yourself About Child Development:** Understanding what behaviors and abilities are appropriate for your child's age can prevent unnecessary intervention and promote appropriate expectations.

9. **Respect Their Privacy:** As your child grows older, they will need more privacy. Respecting this need encourages trust and fosters independence.

10. **Seek Professional Guidance:** If you're unsure about your parenting approach, consider seeking advice from a psychologist, counselor, or other mental health professional. They can provide insight and practical strategies to ensure you're supporting your child's development without overparenting.

Strategies for Effective Communication with Other Overprotective Parents

Understanding the Mindset
1. Empathy: Understand that overprotective parents are often acting out of love and concern for their children, even if their methods are counterproductive.
2. Common Ground: Identify shared concerns and experiences as a starting point for meaningful dialogue.

Communication Techniques
1. Active Listening: Give the other parent your full attention, and refrain from interrupting when they are speaking.
2. Non-Judgmental Language: Use neutral language to avoid making the other parent feel defensive. For example, say "I've noticed that we both tend to be very involved in our children's lives," instead of "You're smothering your child."
3. Open-Ended Questions: Use questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer to encourage deeper conversation.
4. Be Honest but Tactful: Share your own experiences and challenges with overparenting, but be careful not to criticize the other parent's methods.

Building a Support Network
1. Parenting Groups: Consider joining or creating a parenting group focused on balanced parenting styles.
2. Online Forums: Online communities can offer anonymity and a wide range of perspectives.
3. Educational Workshops: Invite other parents to attend workshops or seminars on balanced parenting. This can serve as a neutral ground for discussion and learning.

Setting Boundaries
1. Respect Differences: Having different parenting styles is okay; the key is respecting each other's choices.
2. Agree to Disagree: Sometimes you won't reach a consensus, and that's okay. The important thing is to maintain a respectful dialogue.
3. Know When to Step Back: If discussions become too heated or unproductive, it may be best to take a break and revisit the conversation later.

Exercise: Role-Playing Parent-Child Scenarios

Instructions:

1. Divide participants into pairs, with one person assuming the role of the parent and the other as the child.

2. Provide each pair with a list of 3-4 hypothetical scenarios that typically involve overparenting, such as a child struggling with homework, experiencing a social conflict, or dealing with a disappointing situation.

3. Instruct the "parent" to respond to the scenario using a balanced parenting approach, focusing on promoting autonomy, problem-solving, and resilience in the "child."

4. Allow 5-7 minutes for each scenario, then have the pairs switch roles and repeat the process with new scenarios.

5. After completing the role-plays, bring the group together for a debrief and discussion on the strategies used to avoid overparenting and the challenges faced during the exercise.

Summary

This learning module aims to educate young adults about the dangers of overparenting and provide strategies to avoid it. It covers four main topics: understanding overparenting and its effects on children, identifying signs of overparenting in oneself, developing parenting boundaries for oneself and one's partner, and exploring strategies to avoid the pitfalls of overparenting.

Through theoretical knowledge, case studies, and practical exercises, participants will learn to differentiate between parenting and overparenting, recognize the negative consequences on a child's self-esteem and family dynamics, and understand the psychological background and prevention techniques for overparenting.

By engaging in self-reflection, role-playing, and group discussions, participants will develop the skills necessary to recognize signs of overparenting in themselves, cope with these tendencies, and prevent future occurrences. The module also emphasizes the importance of establishing parenting boundaries and fostering open communication with one's partner and other parents.

Upon completing this module, participants will be better equipped to promote a balanced parenting approach that encourages children's independence, resilience, and emotional well-being, ultimately leading to healthier and more fulfilling family dynamics.

SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM

Conclusion and last words

This training program consists of 7 modules and 28 units.

Module 1 - Breaking Stereotypes: aims to understand the importance of breaking stereotypes and promoting equal parenting at home.

Module 2 - Division of Responsibilities: provides suggestions on how to create a fair balance between partners.

Module 3 - Equal Opportunities for Work and Leisure: aims to provide support to families, enabling them to ensure that both parents can access meaningful and productive activities outside the home.

Module 4 - Domestic Collaboration: aims to teach young adults the importance of domestic collaboration to create a successful parenting partnership.

Module 5 - Good Role Models: studies and reflects the different roles that a parent can play.

Module 6 - Family Well-Being: deals with how to build strong relationships with each other while still providing ample emotional support and guidance for their children.

Module 7 - Overparenting: this module focuses on the increasing phenomenon in modern society which refers to the parenting style characterized by excessive monitoring and control of children's lives.

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