Social and Structural Moderators: The Role of Family and Positive Parenting

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Role of Family

- Family as Risk
- Family Managing Contextual Risk
- Family as Protective/Promotive
Family as Risk

- Violence within the family
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Child abuse and neglect
- Parenting practices
  - Harsh or coercive discipline
- Family relationship characteristics
  - Hostility, conflict, absence of warmth/connection
- Disruptions
  - Instability (e.g., multiple partners, multiple moves)
  - Parents re-entry from prison
Prisoner Re-entry into families

- In 2007 1.7 million minor children—2.3% of all minor children—had a parent in state or federal prison. The vast majority of incarcerated parents are fathers.

- Ninety-two percent of incarcerated parents are men.

- In 2007, there were 744,200 fathers with minor children in prison, up from 386,500 in 1991

(Glaze & Marushak, 2008)
Prisoner Re-entry into families

- Assuming an active fathering relates to likelihood of successful reentry by affecting other important outcomes, such as reducing depression, increasing employment stability, and decreasing recidivism.

- Care must be taken to identify potentially unhealthy and unsafe situations and to avoid exposing children to abusive or neglectful parents.

Visher, 2011
Families Managing Context
Societal Macrosystems

Proximal Social Contexts

Family
- Families monitor and manage peers

School
- Families support and promote achievement

Neighborhood
- Families protect from and manage risk

Child
Families Managing Contextual Risk

- Urban neighborhoods characterized by:
  - Concentrated poverty
  - Crime and violence
  - Residential instability
  - Poor housing quality
  - Crowding/noise
  - Built environment (e.g., parks, walkable streets)

- related to a host of poor outcomes for youth
### Family Types Across Neighborhoods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Other Urban</th>
<th>Inner-city with</th>
<th>Inner-city w/o</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-oriented</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences in how parenting behaviors may relate to outcomes in different communities

Same behaviors/types of parenting may not protect

Context impacts parenting and family functioning

Spano et al., 2009
Task-Oriented Family

Inner City Community without functioning social processes

Inner city community with functioning social processes

Other urban poor

- delinquent
- chronic minor
- escalating
- serious chronic

-1.5
-1
-0.5
0
0.5
1
1.5
2

non-delinquent
chronic minor
escalating
serious chronic
Families as Protective/Promotive

- Family critical in risk, protection, and promotion of healthy development
  - Parenting (discipline, monitoring)
  - Family relationship characteristics (cohesion/warmth, beliefs, organizational structure)
  - Parental involvement in school
Intervention

- Considering context, but not changing context
  - Social interventions with families to support and manage living within context

- Changing community context
  - Social interventions with individuals and families (e.g., Communities that Care, CeaseFire)
Family-focused interventions

- SAFE Children
  - Universal family focused intervention delivered to first grade children and their families
  - age 18 outcomes on official records of violence

- GREAT Schools and Families
  - Evidence of an “ecological effect” in schools where targeted sample received the selected (family) intervention
  - Lower student and teacher reports of aggression (school-level)
  - Effects not found at immediate post, but increasing divergence over time
  - Intervention with high-risk youth who are socially influential can affect overall aggression