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C4P News

Parenting and Maternal Depression

Research Update: *How Maternal Depression Affects Parenting*

Much research has been focused on the influence of maternal depression. A recent article explored how maternal depression and emotional awareness correlated with a mother's suggestions to her child for coping in times of stress, in this case peer victimization.

- The mother's emotional functioning (i.e. depression and emotional awareness) was shown to impact how the mother parented her child through stressful circumstances.
- Emotional awareness in the mother was correlated with coping suggestions to her child that included directly addressing the source of stress or emotions and with cognitive restructuring (thinking positively).
- Mothers with depression were less likely to encourage their child to think positively and more likely to encourage their child in attempts at ignoring thoughts or situations related to the source of stress.
- It was proposed that mothers high in emotional awareness and low in depression could possess resources that allows for more flexibility and leads to encourage more active, engaging coping strategies.

Monti, J. D., Rudolph, K. D., & Abaied, J. L. (2013). Contribution of maternal emotional function to socialization of coping. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 1, 1-23.

Implications for Child Outcomes

Mothers suffering from psychological distress often misinterpret their children's behavior, responding with anger or rejection (Lieberman, 2007). Mothers with depression are also more likely to be critical and less sensitive in their caregiving (Gravener, et. al., 2012)

The negative impact of depression on parental sensitivity is associated with various adverse child outcomes, well documented in developmental literature:

- Insecure child attachment (Toth, Rogosh & Cicchetti, 2008).
- Internalizing and externalizing problems (Silk et. al., 2006).
- Decreased social competence (Ashman, Dawson & Panagiotides, 2008)

C4P Trivia

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) 6.7% of U.S. adults experience Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

Of that population, how much more likely are *women* to experience MDD during their life time than *men*?

- A) 40%
- B) 13%
- C) 70%
- D) 95%

The first person to send the correct answer to center4parenting@utk.edu will receive a \$5 Starbucks gift card!

Featured Organization

Mental Health Association of East Tennessee (MHAET)

This organization offers a wide variety of resources for parents struggling with depression. The MHAET has recently opened an inbound-outbound peer run call center. Parents can call free of charge to speak with a peer support specialist. All peer support specialist have had experience in recovering from mental health related issues. This agency is an advocate of promoting mental health and can provide callers with treatment resources such as information on low cost treatment options, education programs (parenting classes, substance abuse classes, etc.), and support groups, to name a few. Peer support specialist are also available to just talk, and can be reached at **865-584-9125**.

MHAET also offers free depression screenings, among other screening assessments, which can be accessed online

Center for Parenting Update

The C4P welcomes three new staff members for the Fall 2013 semester; Caitlin Kennedy, Emily Stone and Kayla Sizemore.

Caitlin is a senior undergraduate Psychology major, and is pursuing a minor in Child and Family Studies. Caitlin is interested in working with children with developmental disabilities in the future.

Emily is a third year Ph.D student in the Child and Family Studies graduate program. She also works as a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Emily will be working as a graduate assistant in the C4P this year!

Kayla is a first year Ph.D student in the Child and Family Studies graduate program. Kayla has a background in Clinical Psychology and will be working as a graduate assistant in the C4P as well!