

# Social Work Intervention in Adolescent Parent-child Relationship Education During the Epidemic

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## Abstract

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has disrupted people's lives, and during home isolation, parents and children have less space to move around and more time to spend with each other. This is a special stage of life, which poses a great test to the building of parent-child relationship. In this paper, we use theories and techniques related to youth social work to suggest measures to improve parent-child relationships during the epidemic, in the hope of helping parents cope with the confusion arising from parent-child relationships during this special period, starting from cognitive, emotional, psychological, learning, life and communication aspects.

## Keywords

Youth social work; Parent-child relationship; Covid-19.

## 1. Introduction

The pneumonia caused by Covid-19 is the fastest spreading, most widespread infection and most difficult to prevent and control major public health emergency that has occurred in China since the founding of People's Republic of China. The public responded positively to the call of the Party and the Government to stay at home and isolate themselves at home. To alleviate the parent-child relationship challenges faced by adolescents at home with their parents, the following suggestions are given in this article.

## 2. Change the Cognition of the Epidemic and Accept the Status of Isolation

In major outbreaks of epidemic, the most reliable and effective approach is to reduce crowding and interrupt transmission. Parents should recognize that until the epidemic is effectively controlled, home isolation is the only correct way to avoid contracting Covid-19. As the outbreak coincides with the traditional Chinese New Year, parents need to be positive, rational and objective in accepting the home quarantine situation and be open to the present.

After parents have accepted the situation, they can try to express to their children in three sentences: the decision to segregate all people at home is scientific; it is now the safest place to be at home; life safety is the most important thing for all of us; we can now have some time together; what are your next thoughts and plans? The first sentence is guiding the child to value his or her life, the second is telling the child that he or she values the time spent with him or her, and the third is reminding the child to value time and plan ahead for his or her next time. Through positive expressions the child is made aware of the current situation and accepts it as it is, and through prior reminders the child is helped to deal with this time of quarantine at home with a more positive attitude and action.

## 3. Learn to Manage Your Emotions and Make Psychological Adjustments

If parents feel anxious, suspicious, angry, worried or frustrated during the epidemic, please understand that this is a normal emotional response to this particular crisis situation and that

there is no need for fear or panic. The uneven development of adolescents creates a conflict between 'emotion' and 'reason' during this period. Although they are able to perceive emotions and feelings like adults, they do not have the same ability to manage emotions and control behavior as adults, and have difficulty making rational decisions like adults. Parents need to understand that under the pressure of the epidemic children may also experience anxiety, panic, anger, irritability and other negative emotions. In addition, as children are in their adolescence, parents need to observe and pay attention to their children's emotional changes, accept and guide them in a timely manner, try to find the intersection with their children and avoid positive confrontation or conflict with them.

Parents and their children can learn specific ways to regulate their emotions and make mental adjustments together, such as using simple "muscle relaxation", "butterfly beats", "meditation", etc. Improve your mood, or distract yourself with exercise, music or talking. When in conflict with your child, learn to "take a deep breath", "pause" and "be quiet" to take yourself out of your anger or rage for a while and then use a more rational way. If there are serious crises in the parent-child relationship, serious emotional problems or serious psychological disorders, seek immediate help from the social support system, for example from your child's teachers or from social workers form a specialist social service agency.

#### **4. Establish Rules Together and Teach by Precept and Example**

As the rhythm of life is disrupted by the epidemic, it is important to restore the family to its original rhythm and routine as much as possible. Parents can work with their children to develop a daily schedule for the quarantine period, setting out daily waking and sleeping times, and making general arrangements for life, study, work, rest and entertainment each day, making family decisions together and following them. In the process of making the schedule, try to let the child make his or her own arrangements and discuss the schedule together, fully respecting the child's opinion. In addition, the schedule should not be too detailed and the child should be given a certain amount of free and independent time. Once the schedule has been drawn up, strictly follow the schedule and set out rewards and punishments. Set aside half an hour each evening to discuss with your child how well the whole family is doing in following the rules and what rewards and punishments each person should receive, and then enforce them meticulously.

In implementing the schedule and in living it, parents need to be aware that they are accompanying and getting along with adolescent children, and that they need to find their role and change from a 'parental mindset' to an 'adult mindset' and enforce it with an adult attitude rather than a child-like order. If you want your child to adhere to and implement a joint schedule, you need to be equally strict with yourself, otherwise you will easily cause resentment and rebellion in your child, resulting in a refusal to implement your schedule and a schedule that becomes waste of time.

#### **5. Enrich Learning Life and Respect Children's Privacy**

The phenomenon that children have no other life than studying is somewhat common during the epidemic. The main task of children in many families is to study, entertainment is minimal and family obligations are not to be fulfilled. This is very wrong. Family education should focus on the development of non-intellectual factors, such as interests, emotions, awareness, character and ideals, etc. If parents treat exams, further education and employment as the goals of family education, children will inevitably be trained to be successful and one-sided. To free children from the monotony of life, parents can invite their children to play games. Games are a magical lesson; they have no external purpose, the process itself is the purpose. Playing games not only brings joy to children, but also enlightens them to a sense of rules, competition and co-

operation. Encourage your child to participate in household chores, invite them to design and decorate their own home together, educate them about work in the home and experience the sense of achievement of being self-supporting.

For adolescents, who are at the stage of forming their outlook on life, values and the world, the most meaningful, important and worthwhile lesson to be learnt during the epidemic is the "life lesson". They can teach their children that cherishing life and learning to protect it is the most valuable knowledge, both in the present and in the future.

Parents should pay attention to their child's online listening, homework completion and time spent online, but should not interfere with their child's online chatting with classmates if they do not want to share. Do not open the door to your child's room for a "surprise check" during online classes. Leave enough space for your child, respect their privacy, encourage self-management, leave space and a certain amount of independent time for your child to socialize with classmates and friends online.

## 6. Learn to Listen and Express for Effective Communication

Families with strained parent-child relationships often suffer from a lack of listening and expression, a lack of mutual understanding, and their inability to find a suitable opportunity to have a heart-to-heart conversation. The sudden outbreak of the epidemic has allowed parents and children to spend more time together, which provides a good opportunity for parent-child communication, a good opportunity to understand the child and get to know him or her in a sincere communication with him or her.

To communicate effectively between parents and children, the first step is to learn to listen. During the listening process, both sides have to stop doing irrelevant things and listen attentively to each other, and not judge each other's ideas, just go and listen. Even if the other person has some ideas that are inappropriate or that you think are incorrect, do not rush to make comments or corrections and rush to tell the other person what you think is the correct answer. When this is done, the child will be happy and feel that "my parents can understand me", thus respecting them more and valuing their relationship with them.

In the process of expression, parents and children need to express themselves in a reasonable way, which is in fact non-violent communication, which in short means talking properly. The content to be expressed by both sides is the truth, their feelings and needs, rather than venting their emotions. If positions and emotions are pre-determined before communication, then during the process of communicating and expressing they will naturally move into the pre-determined positions and emotions, which in turn are often negative and therefore can easily lead to a breakdown in communication.

Our lives are made up of two parts, the body and the mind, and parent-child companionship requires the physical and mental presence of the parents. Physical companionship is intuitive and spiritual companionship is covert, one cannot be without the other. The sudden outbreak of the epidemic allowed for a prolonged period of physical companionship, but the realization of spiritual companionship requires a certain ability to listen and empathize, as well as the ability to construct oneself and a desire and self-requirement to grow with one's child.

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