

Disagreements, Disclosure, and Secrecy in Adolescent-Parent Relationships

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Professor of psychology at the University of Rochester, Judi Smetana leads the Social Development and Family Processes research group in the Department of Clinical and Social Sciences in Psychology at the university. Over the last 30 years, she has explored young children's acquisition of moral and social knowledge, as well as adolescent-parent conflict and adolescents' beliefs about areas of legitimate parental authority, and she has published numerous papers on adolescent-parent relationships in a variety of social and cultural contexts. In the last decade or so, she and her team have also focused on studying disclosure and secrecy with parents within the context of adolescents' autonomy development. Professor Smetana and her team have also studied disclosure and secrecy in multi-ethnic youth in the United States, including Chinese, Mexican-, and Euro-American teens as well as teenagers in Japan and Iraqi, Syrian, and Palestinian refugee youth in Jordan.

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Adolescence is often portrayed as a particularly difficult period of development, characterized by storm and stress, a generation gap between parents and teenagers, and recently, by increases in risky behavior due to a maturity gap in brain development. Based on up-to-date developmental science research, this talk will focus on "facts and fictions" of adolescence and adolescent-parent relationships. Current models of parenting will be discussed, with a particular emphasis on the challenges of parenting during adolescence and specifically, the tension between balancing adolescents' developmental needs for autonomy with parental control and monitoring of adolescents' activities to keep them safe. Normative age-related trends in adolescent-parent disagreement and adolescent' willingness to share information versus keep secrets from their parents about their activities will be discussed, and we will consider what parents can do to facilitate healthy development and parent-child relationships during the teen year, as well. As ethnic and cultural variations in these issues.

Objectives

1. To learn about current models of parenting during adolescence
2. To understand normative trends in adolescent-parent relationships
3. To become familiar with strategies for improving adolescent-parent relationships