

## **Parenting: Universal, Cultural, and Familial Aspects**

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Guerda Nicolas is a widely-recognized expert in the field of parenting, with a specialty in parenting amongst ethnic minority cultures. She has many collaborators across the world. She has obtained considerable grant funding, chiefly aimed at intervention and prevention with vulnerable ethnic minority children and families. Professor Nicolas has published a number of empirical papers and book chapters and given countless professional talks. She is the editor of a recently published book on cross-cultural parenting. She has also served as President of the Haitian Studies Association and President of the Psychology of Black Women-Division 36, Section 1 of the American Psychological Association.

Patricia Crittenden studied under Mary Ainsworth from 1978 until 1983, when she received her Ph.D. as a psychologist in the Social Ecology and Development Program at the University of Virginia. Her psychology master's thesis, on the CARE-Index, was developed in consultation with John Bowlby and her family systems research, on patterns of family functioning in maltreating families, was accomplished with guidance from Mavis Hetherington. In the last two decades, Dr. Crittenden has worked cross-culturally as a developmental psychopathologist developing the Dynamic-Maturational Model (DMM) of attachment and adaptation, along with a developmentally attuned, life-span set of procedures for assessing self-protective strategies. DMM-based theory and empirical research authored by Dr. Crittenden have been widely published as books, chapters in books, and empirical articles in developmental and clinical journals. In 2004, Dr. Crittenden received a career achievement award for "Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Child and Family Development" from the European Family Therapy Association in Berlin.

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Parents give birth to the next generation of humans and prepare them to survive, choose adult partners, and raise their children. Put another way, parenting is crucial to human survival. This symposium will address the universal aspects of parenting as well as cultural differences and individual differences among families within a culture. Because some individual differences jeopardize the survival of children (for example, child abuse and neglect) or the adaptation of children (for example, parental mental illness), it is sometimes necessary for professionals to intervene to help parents to carry out their childrearing more effectively.

*Universal aspects of parenting.* The most universal aspect of parenting is the need to raise children who both survive to reproductive maturity and as adults choose partners who will help them to raise children. Doing this is not easy: historically many children have not survived to adulthood and, even with modern medicine saving mothers' and babies' lives, many children do not develop adaptive adult behavior.

*Cultural differences in parenting.* An important difference among cultures is the history of danger, that is, there are differences in the threats that parents face when raising their children to maturity. Each speaker in this symposium will describe the historical and current threats to families in their own culture (for example, disease, starvation, cold, invasions by other people, slavery). The threats influence the parenting strategies that are discovered to be most effective. This, in turn, is seen as cultural differences in what is accepted as the best way to raise children. For example, pioneer cultures often seek out-going and independent children whereas cultures that flourish in crowded places might prefer quiet children who fit in with the group. Outcomes like these require different ways of raising children, but all cultural strategies seek the survival of individuals and of the cultural group. The speakers in this symposium will describe cultural aspects of parenting for their cultural group and show how these are adaptive, given the dangers experienced in the past and currently in their culture.

*Familial differences in parenting.* Families within a culture also differ. Some of these differences increase the adaptation of the children whereas others hamper it. Because adaptation differs culturally, beneficial and risk parenting might not be the same everywhere. Each speaker will address the types of parenting that are admired and those that are considered risky in their culture – and they will tie these to the history of danger in the culture.

*Treatment & risk parenting.* When the differences affect children’s survival or adult adaptation, professionals might intervene. A universal aspect of parent intervention is that professionals should enact in their work the strategies that they want parents to use with their children. If professionals want parents to be sensitively responsive to children, they must themselves be sensitively responsive to children. If they want parents to raise obedient children, they must themselves give clear directives, with consequences for failure, to parents. Each speaker will address the professional strategies that might be most effective in their own culture. Finally, as a corollary to these ideas, the notion of ‘parenting programs’ will be examined for cultural and familial appropriateness.

#### Objectives

1. To examine several cultures in terms of the history of danger and current dangers
2. To tie the history of exposure to danger to cultural differences in parenting strategies
3. To identify ways that intervention, in different cultures, can promote adaptive childrearing in different cultures
4. To identify the universal aspects of parenting and intervention with troubled parents

### **A DMM Understanding of Working with Hispanic American Parents.**

**Lina Acosta Sandaal: Miami**

A parent sits in front of me crying, hands clenched, shaking her head as she describes her confusion, shame and anger. She proclaims, “I should have never had children. My mother and father say I’m too weak with him, his teacher tells me to be kind to him, I have no energy to do anything.” We take a moment for the energy to pass. Then, I wonder with her: how can she weave her childhood experiences as a member of a large community of adults who cared and told her how to act, with her current experience in her “new country”, of being asked to take her point of view, her needs, and her values into account when it comes to parenting her 3-year-old, who is now throwing tantrums regularly. She wipes her tears and states, “How do I do that?”

As clinicians attempting to understand Hispanic American parents, we have to hold in mind that, depending on where you live within the United States, Hispanic-American parents respond differently to the perceived dangers to their child. For example, the coastal Southwest holds a higher threat than Miami, due to white privilege, xenophobia and the like. The parent who perceives a higher threat will act in one of two ways: anxiously push the child to “blend” into the dominant white culture, which the child can experience as a rejection and create a pattern of attachment of A6 compulsive self-reliance, or force the child to have allegiance to their native country’s traditions and values causing a response of A4 compulsive compliance. Both are stressful responses to a bi-cultural child who must master bridging all the aspects of their dual cultures.

Also in the process of transformation of information, Hispanic American parents, if raised in their country of origin, transfer faulty information as it pertains to their bi-cultural child’s experience in the USA. Hispanic American parents usually don’t recognize how the child is influenced by the U.S. school system or perhaps other American families. So the burden of safety and safe-base between parent and child is made more stressful by inappropriate guidance to the child. That difference and hindrance tends to become greater in adolescence when emerging young adults spent more time in the community than at home.

It is important not to overgeneralize, but as a means to begin the discussion, Hispanic American parents, with their collectivist culture, admire parents who are authoritarian. In the DMM, this parenting style will create eA3-4 Compulsively Caregiving/Compliant children. These children tend to thrive and fair well within the Hispanic American system yet are burdened by the pressures of the U.S.’s individualistic culture. The other outcome is less accepted in the Hispanic American culture, which is use of a C3-4 Aggressive/Feigned Helpless strategy. Hispanic American children react aggressively, they tend to be shamed and become the ‘identified patient’ in the Hispanic system. Those that lean more toward feigned helplessness and seeking others to care for them tend to be protected by a matriarchal figure; in the long-term, this hampers their adaptation in America’s culture of independence. To work with Hispanic American parents, suggesting that they move towards a more authoritative style of parenting can feel to them as though one were asking them to be permissive. The challenge is to help parent to think about the ways in which a less authoritarian and more authoritative style will be benefit their children.

#### Objectives:

1. Discuss the differences between representations of culture versus maladaptive responses as it pertains to working with Hispanic American parents.
2. Address white American professionals’ implicit biases toward white privilege and American values as it affects working the Hispanic American community and how it affects the relationship and power differential between practitioner and parent.
3. Address Hispanic American professionals’ implicit biases toward a primarily collectivist Hispanic American culture and how it can limit the professionals’ ability to bridge the gap between the cultures in the USA.

4. Consider ways that culturally balanced professionals, whether Hispanic or white American, can express respect for both cultures and guide parents of troubled children to fit in both family and school.
5. Discuss the biases in research that overlook cultural diversity (in favor of American-European individualism).
6. Discuss how the DMM addresses the development of bi-cultural Hispanic American children in the United States.

## **Parenting after Family and Community Loss from HIV/AIDS**

Mwenda Molongwane, Botswana

Culture reflects the sum of personal experiences and successful behavioural strategies in a group of people over many generations (Crittenden, 2000). As such, culture tends to be conservative, thus changing very slowly. On the other hand, individuals' adaptive behaviour continually changes in response to the unique personal circumstances that they encounter (Fraley, 2002). Circumstances indicative of experienced or expected danger are particularly powerful in changing behaviour, including culturally normative behaviour when it no longer fits current circumstances (Crittenden, 1999, 2015). Of the experiences that can change individuals' behaviour and, collectively, cultural norms, death is the most powerful, with death of a parent or child being the most disruptive type of loss (Bowlby, 1980).

Families in Botswana are currently facing two sorts of transformative change. One is the rapid modernization of the country, with concomitant shift of the population from rural areas to urbanized centres. This both destabilizes cultural traditions and also increases education and wealth. For example, research conducted among the !Kung, a hunter and gatherer tribe in Botswana, reported that parents/carers in Botswana generally do not use toys to interact with infants (Bakeman, Adamson, Konner & Barr, 1990). The application of this to urban children is not known, but we are undertaking research using the CARE-Index. The other transformative change is loss of a high proportion of the young adult generation to HIV/AIDS. Because young adults are the parents of the next generation, high loss of life in this age group is particularly threatening to the culture as a whole.

Cultural continuity. In Botswana, we have a tradition of confinement following birth where mother and child spend the first 3 months together being supported by the grandparents or other adult(s) supportive of the mother. In one of our CARE-Index videos of a 3-month-old baby, there is an aunt fussing around the baby and mother; this helps the mother recuperate and also transfers parenting skills from the older generation to the new mother. Often, this includes sharing a bed with the infant. Of course, new mothers can choose what they want to take from the old principles.

After 3 months, when the mother goes back to work (our maternity leave is very short and that's literally how long it lasts hence the intensity of helping mother/child bond and insistence on the mother getting as much rest as possible), parents of young children employ a child-minder/house-assistant whose main purpose is to care for the child when the parents are at work. In the

videos I have gathered, there is a pair of days with the same baby, first with the mother, then with the childminder. For some, the grandmother maybe be living in the same household and oversee the whole child care/parenting even in the presence of the childminder. There is a dyad to evidence this too in the videos that I gathered.

In a nutshell, there are many possibilities that still exist to ensure the continuation of cultural parenting practices. The only one that seems to be dying away is carrying children on the back, particularly in the urban areas. This is a shame really considering the bonding benefits associated with such carrying.

HIV/AIDS. The majority of the population in Botswana has suffered direct or indirect loss due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Such loss at a large scale, combined with the transfer of young adults to urban areas, has eroded structures that traditionally played a critical role in the continuation and maintenance of cultural ways of caring for infants. Through the loss of access to grandparents and the wider family network of people who are the cultural torch bearers, generational gaps in family units have been created that have negatively impacted on social customs and continuity of cultural practices necessary to maintain parenting styles (Karim & Karim, 2005; Burman, 1996).

Although working models are updated over time, childhood experiences remain powerful and unchanged and continue to shape individuals' behaviour (Bowlby, 1980; Bretherton, 1985). Parenting behaviour is particularly important because it is the basic for protective and comforting one's progeny (Crittenden, 2008). Indeed, Stern said that the primary responsibility of parents is to keep the baby alive (Stern, 1985). Actually, the requirement is to keep the baby alive until it reaches reproductive maturity (Crittenden, 2008). Once that happens, parents' attention turns to the survival of their grandchildren (Crittenden, 2008). Given the loss suffered by the people in Botswana though the HIV/AIDS scourge and the separation of young families from the often rural grandparent generation, grandparents become enormously important. But grandparents may bring parenting strategies from the culture of their own childhood. Promoting both the remnants of cultural specific parenting styles in Botswana and changes in parenting tied to urbanization becomes essential to mediate between traditional ways and new of raising children. This talk will address this issue, particularly as it affects infants and young children.

### **Cultural aspect of parenting and current dangers in Japan**

Motoko Okamitsu

Tokyo Medical and Dental University

The situation surrounding Japanese parents and their children has been changing over the last decades. Having the world's oldest population without enough young people threatens to impoverish the Japanese economy and way of life. Other changes have occurred as well. Mothers have changed: more work outside the home and many are older women who have had treatment for infertility. The number of infants of working mothers on waiting lists for admission to daycare centers has increased. Furthermore, the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 affected children's and their families' mental health.

It seems that so many things in Japan bring parenting difficulties. The Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry reported that Child Guidance Centers dealt with twice as many abused children as 5 years ago. In recent years, the rate of child poverty reached worst on record (16.3%) in 2012. These current dangers affect parenting. However, human baby has adaptability and ability to survive in every culture.

In the past, Japanese mothers and children valued peacefulness, orderliness and silence. Japanese historical and cultural situations influenced mothers to raise their children alone and bear the responsibility patiently. In Japanese culture, parents have slept with their baby to respond to baby's need through the night. Nevertheless, changes in mothers' roles in modern Japan require new forms of adaptation. The current situation of valuing the old virtues while living with new women's roles has led to difficulties in the parental responsibility. Because parenting risk might hamper the children's development and adaptation, Japanese society needs to develop new strategies for parenting support to build partnership with parents and help them to draw on their own strengths. Although these problems are specific to Japan and Japanese history, they are similar to the problems of many developed countries. This panel will address the cultural aspect of parenting in Japan, threats that Japanese parents face, and how to intervene with at-risk family in Japan. It might be important to discuss both similarities and differences among cultures, to develop new approaches to parenting programs.

### **Parenting: Cultural and Familial Aspects in Spain**

Inés Valero Rivas

In the last century, Spain has suffered two military dictatorships, six coups, a civil war and a long post-war period. With the exception of a five year interval in the 1930s (which was not exempt of its own problems), Spanish citizens have enjoyed democracy and civil rights as we now know them only since 1977.

As a result, the childhood of many Spaniards born before 1970 was lived under unwavering conditions of oppression, fear, death, exile, stays at refugee camps, child labour and hunger. In addition, families were divided between two sides (fascist and anti-fascist) with all intermediate combinations being possible.

The situation for Spanish families changed with the arrival of democracy and the economic benefits that came with the entrance into the European Union: there was hope, freedom and financial prosperity. However, some of those improvements have been lost in the recession that Spain has suffered since 2008. The fear of unemployment, homelessness and poverty is back.

This presentation will address the types of parenting that have been promoted and those that have been considered risky in Spanish culture both historically and now, highlighting the possible familial differences between class and those who were on the winners or the losers' side.

In relation to the professional strategies that might be most effective in Spain, parenting is quite a new field, not even recognised as such by the Spanish Psychological Association. Instead, risk parenting is mainly addressed by Social Workers and charities that can be quite disconnected from psychological intervention.

#### Objectives

1. To examine the history of dangers and current dangers in Spain.
2. To tie the history of exposure to danger to the different parenting strategies that are valued by Spanish society.
3. To describe the different ways that Spanish professionals (psychologists and social workers mainly) promote adaptive childrearing in Spain.