

Intervention Strategy for Deviant Adolescents and Emotional Status of their Parents

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Abstract

The emotionally deviant adolescents are more prone to develop antisocial behavior, delinquency and drug abuse. Such adolescents often show emotional insensitivity and become highly susceptible for developing risky behaviors causing concern to their parents. This study focuses on the relationship between parental emotional status and the management of deviant behaviour of the adolescents through psychological intervention. In case of deviant adolescents, parental emotional status plays a significant role in shaping their behaviour. In the present study, Familial pathology was assessed to find out emotionally deviant adolescent's interactive patterns with the family members and their overall interpersonal relationship. Further, adolescent's behaviour is healthier in a joint family compared to that of a nuclear family. Moreover, in a joint family, most of the elderly persons keep an eye on the child with the result the adolescent behaviour remains under control. Present study is based on 300 student samples (both males & females) of 9th and 12th graders enrolled in various schools of Varanasi. Parent child relationship scale was administered to students and behavior deviance was rated by the class teachers. A total of 20 subjects were finally chosen for study out of which 10 belonged to emotionally deviant groups and remaining 10 were from non deviant group. Parents from emotionally deviant and non-deviant groups were included in the study. Parents of emotionally disturbed teenagers were reported to exhibit family pathology. Information feedback, self-instruction training, cross-interaction and self-moderation were all part of the four-session intervention used on emotionally deviant adolescents and their parents. Following intervention, parents of emotionally deviant teenagers showed a significant reduction in family pathology. Thus, timely intervention is envisaged to ameliorate deviant behavior of adolescents and their parents.

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Keywords: Emotional deviance, Risk-behavior, Family pathology, Parent child relationship, Intervention.

Introduction

The emotional status of parents plays a significant role in shaping the behavior and emotional well-being of their children. The effect of parental emotions on children's behavior manifests in diverse ways. Parents' emotional regulation strategies can influence their children's ability to regulate their own emotions. When parents show healthy emotional regulation, children are more likely to develop similar skills. Furthermore, the quality of attachment between parents and children can impact children's emotional development. Secure attachment is associated with better emotional regulation, social skills, and mental health outcomes. Further, parenting style can influence their emotional status. For example, parents who are anxious or depressed may be more likely to use authoritarian or permissive parenting styles, which can impact children's emotional development (Cote & Bornstein, 2014). Likewise, a friendly behaviour of parents on regular basis will continue to reassure the children. This seemingly insignificant attribute of parents play a significant role in shaping the psyche, psychology and overall personality development of the children. This helps a child to learn and acknowledge the importance of his own existence.

The emotional deviance expressed behaviorally, on the psycho-clinical frame, may be taken as a byproduct of faulty childhood experiences. This may be due to deprivations of security and support from the parents, and inability of exhibition feelings and emotions to the children resulting in inadequacy and lack of affection. Eventually, this leads to an avoidable aggression amongst the children. Thus, parents should develop adequate understanding about the nuances of parenting and children's behavioral response. This in turn would ensure healthy interpersonal relationship between parents and children.

Emotional deviance refers to behavior that differs in quality or degree from what is expected in a given situation (Thoits, 1985). New ways have been suggested to understand the concept of emotional disturbances or mental illness. When Children exceed the limits of deviancy, they

become prone to develop risky and antisocial behavior, delinquency sets in, and drug use becomes attractive for them.

An emotionally deviant adolescent lacks the ability to take initiative, lacks control over the expression of his/her feelings and emotion, and has no realization of one's own duties and responsibilities. He does not bother to speak, laugh, cry, or to be angry. He remains calm because his personality is severely affected emotionally and he shows psychopathic attributes and wavering temper.

Factors Influencing Parental Emotional Status

Parental stress can impact emotional status and parenting behavior. Financial pressures, work-life balance, relationship conflicts, and childcare responsibilities can contribute to parental stress. Chronic stress can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and burnout, affecting parents' emotional well-being and parenting behavior.

A study on Chinese preschool children found that parents with high stress were less likely to exercise authoritative parenting, hindering preschoolers' learning approaches (Li, Li, Draper, Hu, Gong, Sun, Yin, Hua, & Huang, 2021). Parents with pre-existing mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are more vulnerable to emotional difficulties that will influence their parenting outcome. Parental depression causes stress that may lead to child maltreatment, resulting in risk of child internalizing and externalizing problems. Early maternal rejection was found to be the most consistent predictor of preschool externalizing (Shaw, Winslow, Owens, Vondra, Cohn, & Bell, 1998).

The quality of attachment between parents and children significantly impacts parents' emotional status. A nurturing and warm family environment promote healthy parent-child relationships and positive development among young children. Interactions between parents and their child influence the child's opinions, behaviors and emotions, family relationship and parenting. Kendziora and O'Leary (1993) opined that, dysfunctional parenting is anything the parent does, or fails to do that may adversely affect the child.

Furthermore, different parenting styles, such as authoritative parenting, can affect children's emotional development and parents' emotional status both. For instance, authoritarian parenting has been linked to negative effects on children's peer interactions and emotion management skills. Harsh, disruptive and inconsistent discipline practices are characteristics of families with conduct disorder children. Positive relationships within the family, parental support, a consistent and constructive parental disciplined life style, and adult supervision tend to be related negatively to adolescent's deviant behaviors and their association with deviant peers (Fergusson & Horwood, 1999; O'Keefe, Carr & McQuaid, 1998; Patterson, 1982; Patterson, DeBaryshe & Ramsey, 1989; Patterson, Dishion & Bank, 1984; Warr, 1993).

Lack of parental monitoring is a strong predictor for early onset of drug use and delinquency (Chilcoat, Breslau, & Anthony, 1996). An antisocial youth tend to associate with similar antisocial peers (Poulin & Boivin, 2000). Boys who engage in higher levels of deviant behavior may be more effective in avoiding parental monitoring, for example, by spending time in setting in which no adults are present or avoid disclosing accurate information about their plans, activities or whereabouts (Stoolmiller, 1994).

Children's behavioral problems pose challenges to families, schools and society. The behavioral problems such as quarrelling, using abusive language, creating scene in the class, delinquent behaviors, truancy, are visible in schools in general. Ferdinand, Stijnen, Verhust and Van Der Reijden (1999) reported specific behavioral and emotional problems during adolescence to be connected with psychopathology and maladjustment during young adulthood. Thus, it is envisaged that assessment of behavioral problems of adolescents may help preventing them from developing future personality disorder.

Strategies for Supporting Parents' Emotional Status

Some effective strategies include interventions focusing on emotional regulation, attachment, and modulation of parenting style. This can help parents to develop healthy emotional status resulting in positive child outcomes. Likewise, development of mental health will support parents to manage stress, anxiety, and depression, and maintain healthy emotional status.

Moreover, building social support network for parents can help them feel connected and

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supported, reducing stress and promoting healthy emotional status. Thus, parents' understanding, warmth, and effective communication help adolescents to develop positive behaviors and emotional well-being. A study by Angeline Kate Seejo and Vigraanth Bapu (2023) explores the relationship between perceived parenting styles and psychological well-being among adolescents, finding that maternal parenting styles significantly impact adolescents' psychological well-being. Thus, by practicing the above-mentioned intervention strategies in daily life, parents' can manage deviant behavior in adolescents.

Intervention helps to overcome the possibility of alteration of one's course of action by encouraging and guiding parents to increase their positive interactions with their children. They are encouraged to reinforce their children's suitable behavior maintaining harmony, monitor their children effectively, and to engage in effective conflict resolution strategies with them. Parents who are supportive and involved in their children's lives can help prevent deviant behavior. In the present study, self-moderation through intervention planned to help individuals manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Overall, through psychological intervention strategies, both parents and adolescents can identify and modify their negative thought patterns and behaviors.

Rationale of the Study

After exploring the factors of family disruption, the faulty and strained relationships between adolescents and their parents, self-moderation through intervention was the target to be achieved. Therefore, both parents as well as children were supposed to practice self-moderation. Hence, to modify behavior of those adolescents who are "at-risk" to develop aberrant behavior, family and individual interventions were introduced to ascertain the consequence. Family pathology has been chosen in the current study to measure the familial pattern and disruptive parental practice.

Objectives of the Study

Following objectives have been framed for the present investigation.

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- (i) To find out the specific behavioral pattern of adolescents who may be defined as emotionally deviant and their comparison with the non-deviant adolescents.
- (ii) To find out the distinctive familial factors and interactive patterns with the family members of the emotionally deviant adolescents.
- (iii) To modify the family interaction pattern of adolescent as well as their parents with their growing children through intervention.

Methodology

Hypothesis

1. Emotionally deviant adolescents would score high than their normal counterparts on negative dimensions of parent-child relationship scale i.e. symbolic punishment, rejecting, object –punishment, demanding, indifferent, neglecting and score low on positive dimensions i.e. protecting, loving, object reward, and symbolic reward.
2. The parents of emotionally deviant adolescents would score higher in the family pathology scale than their comparative control counterparts.
3. Post-intervention scores of emotionally deviant adolescents would report low on negative dimensions of parent-child relationship scale and high on positive dimensions as compared to their pre-intervention scores.
4. Family pathology score of the parents of emotionally deviant adolescents would decrease after intervention as compared to their pre intervention family pathology scores.

Tools

1. Behavior Deviance Scale (Chauhan & Aurora, 1989).

The scale measures three categories of behavioral deviance e.g. Withdrawing deviance (W.D), Expectation Evasion Deviance (E.E.D), and Rebellion Deviance (R.D). With 10-items each for the subscales, the scale contains 30 items and is scored on a six-point rating scale, ranging from 0 to 5 defined as 'No behavior pattern' to 'Very high' behavior pattern. It's a screening tool.

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2. Parent- Child Relationship Scale (Rao, 2001).

It contains 100-items categorized into ten dimensions, namely, protecting, symbolic-reward, loving, object-reward, symbolic-punishment, rejection, object-punishment, demanding, indifference and negligence. Each respondent is to rate the statements as to their own perception of their relationship for both father and mother separately. It's a five-point rating scale, response pattern ranging from 'Always' to 'Very rarely' weighted 5,4,3,2, &1 on the scale point.

3. Family Pathology Scale (Veeraraghvan & Dogra, 2000).

It contains 42-items which are responded by the subjects under three response alternatives i.e. 'Most-often,' 'Occasionally' and 'Never'.

Sample

The initial sample included 300 students (both males & females) of 9th and 12th graders studying in various schools of Varanasi. The age -ranges were 15-19 years. Parent-child relationship scale administered on students and behavior deviance scale was rated by class-teachers of the same group. A total of 20 samples were finally chosen for the study out of which 10-belonged to emotionally deviant group and 10-belonged to emotionally non-deviant group. Parents of the emotionally deviant (N=10) and emotionally non-deviant (N=10) groups were included in the sample.

Procedure

Initially, parent-child relationship scale administered on the school students of 9th and 12th graders and behavior deviance scale was rated by class-teachers of the same group. On the basis of the scores the administrator identified such emotionally deviant adolescents with the help of the ratings done by the class-teachers, who spotted the possibility of potential drop-outs, low achievers, suspicious, tense or guilt prone personality components and extracted the sample of investigation for the final study. Thereafter, family pathology scale was administered on the parents of the selected sample.

Four intervention sessions were followed the clinical sample and their parents who volunteered for the sessions. Each session was of 1 hour duration.

- (i) Rapport established in this session with parents and their children. Aim of the study described to the parents and they were persuaded and invited to participate actively during intervention sessions. After this the deviance scores of the respective child were discussed to justify the requirement of intervention session.
- (ii) In this session, information feedback of the scores attained in PCRS was given to the adolescents and low scores were explored. They were then trained to develop self-instruction training.
- (iii) Cross-interaction completed in this session. They were encouraged to develop positive outlook and insight.
- (iv) Self-moderation was done and family pathology scale re-administered as a follow-up on parents of emotionally deviant adolescents.

Results

Means and standard deviations for both emotionally deviant adolescents and emotionally non-deviant adolescents on behavior deviance scale are presented in Table-1.

Table 1. This table shows shows Means and SD's on the basis of Behavior Deviance Scale (BDS) For Both Emotionally Deviant and Non-Deviant Adolescents

Subscales	E.D (Adolescent)		E.N.D (Adolescent)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
WD	28.2	7.25	8.7	4.21
RD	25.4	9.95	10.8	7.52
EED	24.0	6.73	8.2	6.07

E. D stands for Emotionally Deviant

E.N.D stands for Emotionally Non-Deviant

The descriptive data of the screened sample of emotionally deviant and emotionally non-deviant adolescents have been registered in Table 1. The means and SD's of the two groups for all the subareas of behavioral deviance scale i.e. withdrawing deviance (WD), rebellion deviance (RD) and expectation evasion deviance (EED) have been tabled.

Table 2. This table shows Means, SD's and t-scores of the mothers and fathers of emotionally deviant and non-deviant adolescents on the basis of Parent-child relationship scale (PCRS)

P C R S	E. D		E. N. D		T- S C O R E S	E. D		E.N.D		T- S C O R E S
	Mothers		Mothers			Fathers		Fathers		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
PRO	36.8	4.87	36.6	5.2	0.08	34.6	3.74	39.1	4.30	*2.36
SP	29.2	4.98	33.1	9.12	1.13	28.4	9.25	27.3	5.71	0.30
REJ	19.7	3.41	24.9	9.62	1.53	22.2	7.26	22.3	6.62	0.03
OP	20.0	4.56	19.9	7.79	0.03	24.2	8.98	17.1	6.09	1.97
DEM	29.6	5.10	28.2	8.83	0.42	28.5	7.45	24.9	5.73	1.16
IND	27.3	5.53	22.5	5.66	1.85	26.4	5.00	22.2	3.74	*2.10
SR	33.4	5.31	30.7	8.03	0.84	31.0	5.00	34.4	8.53	1.06
LOV	34.8	4.62	33.8	10.41	0.27	32.5	4.01	35.9	8.98	1.06
OR	26.8	1.83	27.2	7.92	0.15	26.7	5.31	30.7	7.36	1.33
NEG	23.3	5.66	24.3	8.20	0.30	23.9	7.20	21.1	5.52	0.93

*-significant at 0.05 level

E. D stands for Emotionally Deviant

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E.N.D stands for Emotionally Non-Deviant

In Table 2, significant results have been reported on protecting and indifferent dimensions of PCRS for fathers of emotionally deviant adolescents. Hypothesis 1 thus showing a meager support.

Table 3. This table shows Means, SD's and t-scores of Parent-child relationship scale (PCRS) of the emotionally deviant adolescents during pre and post intervention sessions

P C R S	Pre-intervention scores		Post-intervention scores		T- S C O R E S	Pre-intervention scores		Post-intervention scores		T- S C O R E S
	Mothers		Mothers			Fathers		Fathers		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
PRO	36.8	4.87	35.6	6.52	0.44	34.6	3.74	34.7	3.84	0.06
SP	29.2	4.98	23.7	5.48	*2.23	28.4	9.25	27.3	5.06	1.66
REJ	19.7	3.41	17.7	5.14	0.98	22.2	7.26	22.3	4.54	1.65
OP	20.0	4.56	17.8	5.45	0.93	24.2	8.98	17.1	7.78	1.46
DEM	29.6	5.10	22.7	5.44	*2.76	28.5	7.45	24.9	5.62	1.87
IND	27.3	5.53	21.1	4.46	*2.62	26.4	5.00	22.2	4.45	*2.74

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SR	33.4	5.31	31.7	7.11	0.58	31.0	5.00	34.4	6.91	0.04
LOV	34.8	4.62	34.0	5.92	0.32	32.5	4.01	35.9	4.04	0.37
OR	26.8	1.83	27.7	6.09	0.42	26.7	5.31	30.7	5.93	0.68
NEG	23.3	5.66	17.8	5.58	*2.12	23.9	7.20	21.1	6.33	1.25

*-significant at 0.05 level

The pre and post intervention scores when compared of the parents especially mothers of the emotionally deviant adolescents, significant improvement have been reported on four dimensions of PCRS. A significant decrease in the mean scores has been observed on symbolic punishment, demanding, indifference and negligence dimensions of PCRS. Thus, a bold support has been achieved for the hypothesis.

Table 4. This table shows Means, SD's and t-scores of Mothers and Fathers of Emotionally Deviant and Non-Deviant Adolescents on the basis of Family Pathology Scale using 10 samples each (FPS)

	E.D (Mothers)	E.N.D (Mothers)	E.D (Fathers)	E.N.D (Fathers)
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Mean	77.6	60.0	63.8	58.7
SD	10.6	1.61	6.14	1.42
t-scores	4.93**		2.30*	

*- significant at 0.05 level

** - significant at 0.01 level

E. D stands for Emotionally Deviant

E.N.D stands for Emotionally Non-Deviant

In table 4, the mean differences are showing significant results between the two groups at both 0.05 level and 0.01 level. The hypothesis thus stands in full support as both the parents of emotionally deviant adolescents were found with higher family pathology than the parents of emotionally non deviant adolescents.

Table 5. This table shows Means, SD's and t-scores of the Family Pathology Scale (FPS) of parents of emotionally deviant adolescents during pre-intervention and post-intervention sessions

FPS	Pre-scores	Post-scores
Mean	75.6	66.4
SD	9.34	8.96
t-scores	2.14*	

*- significant at 0.05 level

In table 5, significant improvements have been reported as family pathology scores of the parents of emotionally deviant adolescents decrease after intervention as compared to their pre intervention family pathology scores.

Discussion

We screened emotionally sensitive and deviant adolescents and thereafter, provided them and their family an appropriate intervention so that the behavioral deviance may not linger and a balanced mental health is restored.

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The emotional status of parents refers to their emotional well-being and stability, which significantly influences their parenting style and relationship with their children. Parental emotional support is a crucial aspect encompassing the emotional care, understanding, and validation that parents provide to their children. Parental emotional support plays a vital role in shaping children's emotional development, academic performance, and overall well-being. Research suggests that parents' emotional status and support can have a lasting impact on children's lives, making it essential for parents to prioritize emotional nurturing and support. Furthermore, greater parental emotional support is linked to better subjective well-being OECD (2019).

In the present study, pre and post –intervention scores when compared showed significant improvements. This was based on emotionally deviant adolescents on four dimensions of PCRS which include symbolic punishment, demanding, indifference and negligence. This indicates that the parents became more conscious and insightful of the sensitivity of their children after intervention and modified their behavior towards their ward. Hence, psychological interventions proved to help individuals identify and manage their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and change negative thought patterns and behaviors.

Deviant behavior in adolescents is a complex issue that can manifest in various forms, including aggression, substance abuse, delinquency and antisocial behavior. Research suggests that multiple factors contribute to deviant behavior in adolescents, which can be broadly categorized into individual, family, school and peer factors. Above all, poor relationship with parents, lack of emotional support and inconsistent discipline leads to deviant behavior. A study by Barnes and Hoffman (2006) showed that parental monitoring and peer deviance significantly impact substance use and delinquency in adolescents. Thus, effective parental monitoring can reduce the likelihood of deviant behavior.

Parents of emotionally deviant adolescents reported significantly higher family pathology than the parents of emotionally non deviant adolescents. Significant improvements in family pathology score are obtained of the parents of emotionally deviant adolescents after intervention. This clearly reflects that after intervention parents became more cautious of their own pathological feelings and behavior regarding their child and so tried well to change such unhealthy practice.

Our findings are in support of what Barnes and Farrell (1992) found in their study which highlighted that parental support and control are crucial predictors of adolescent behavior. Parental support is the largest influence on creating preferable behavior in adolescents.

The study of emotional status of parents and management of deviant adolescents through intervention has shown promising results, but more studies are needed to understand the long-term effects of interventions on adolescent behavior and parental emotional status. Furthermore, different interventions may have varying levels of effectiveness, and more research is needed to determine the most effective approaches. Finally, it may be noted that besides parents and family members, children's mental makeup and behaviour are also affected by the overall environment they live, the people they come in contact with and the overall circumstances they grow. Since every single child has a unique environment to grow and unique way to perceive the world, his/her overall personality would be shaped accordingly. On the part of parents, children should be provided a healthy, happy, safe, secure and fulfilling environment so that they become a good citizen and later an asset to the family, society and the country.

Conclusion

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Research suggests that parental emotional status plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behavior, and interventions targeting parental emotional support and parenting style can be effective in managing deviant behavior. Present study has shown that parents of emotionally deviant adolescents were assessed with significantly higher pathology than the parents of emotionally non deviant adolescents. Significant improvements have been reported on four negative dimensions of PCRS i.e., symbolic punishment, demanding, indifference and negligence after intervention. The family pathology of the parents of emotionally deviant adolescents significantly gone down after the practice of intervention.

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