

# Barriers and Strategies for Effective Communication between Parents and Children in the Family

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**Abstract**—This article deals with the issue of effective communication between parents and children and its impact on the family in general and on the child in particular. The aim of this article is to provide information to parents, students, anyone interested in family communication between parents and children, and to provide them with tools to deal with barriers to communication in the family unit. The article presented a literature review of the importance of effective communication in the family, the definition of the concept of communication, and was a reference to factors and barriers in communication between parents and children leading to conflict destructive to the extent that barriers to effective communication in the family unit. At the end of the article, strategies were introduced to motivate children to behave appropriately, and to equip parents best to foster the healthy development of their children when they can create an atmosphere of effective communication. From the literature review, it's found that effective communication between parents and children prevents problematic behavior and helps children understand how to communicate effectively with others. Communication between parents and children is the cornerstone of a happy family life and is the basis for positive interactions between parents and children and increases self-esteem in children.

**Keywords**—Children, communication, conflict, family.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**P**OSITIVE communication and healthy relationships among family members are one of the secrets to a happy family life. Parents are the most significant figure in children's lives, so they are the first people to communicate with them after birth, and are responsible for shaping the child's personality in the early years of life. Parents provide social support, show affection, understand their life experiences, deal with conflict, manage private information and create a family communication environment.

Despite the enormous importance of effective communication between parents and children, we are witness to constant changes that are facing families in the 21st century—including more diverse family structures, such as divorcees, spouses, adoptive families, LGBTQ, and military families.

In addition to changes in society, there is the issue of technological progress, the aging population, and the various parenting practices that change the parent-child relationship.

In the 1970s, early studies developed on the subject of the child's social behavior and interaction with the environment. These studies explain that mothers must understand that the baby is an active creature in early childhood, who can understand and communicate. Therefore, already in these stages a relationship is created between the mother and infant that

affects and leaves a deep stamp on the baby's personality throughout his life [1].

If we are talking about family communication, it is important to define the concept of interpersonal communication that is the way two or more people share information or ideas.

The media is an important means of establishing an authentic connection between people. Is a necessary and fundamental condition for cooperation because it is an essential tool for problem solving and an expression of caring and closeness. Accordingly, interpersonal communication influences one's ability to connect with other people in society. Interpersonal communication is part of a person's social development. It is learned by the infant from infancy because of the need for care by those around.

Communication in the family allows us to look at its structure. In the form of settlement of the members of the family, patterns of communication can be identified, and the facial expression also hides a communicative message [2]. A number of researchers define the family based on the relationships and interactions between its members and add: "The family is a group of people who unite on the basis of marriage, blood, and care, and have a common place of residence and function according to defined roles such as father, mother and children. In addition," the interaction and communication between the family members creates a common culture "known as Arnest Bourgis, defines the family as" the unit of active people". From these two definitions it can be concluded that the communication between family members is positive and important for its existence and its existence in the universe [3].

According to Ramsay Grebe, the family is considered the first social circle in which the child experiences and practices his social skills. The parents provide protection and support for the child until his unique personality is built and his cognitive growth is formed according to the existing human relations in the family [4].

Communication is the main factor determining the kind of relationship that a person ties with others, and with the world around. The way he ties relationships and develops relationships depends on his communication skills. Our communication abilities are learned, and therefore we can change them [5].

Communication is not just verbal communication that contains words. The baby's crying is a communication message that the baby passes on to his mother. Through these messages the baby expresses his wishes, needs and even suffering.

Moreover, the facial expressions, movements, and signs that a person uses when conveying an idea or topic are considered essential parts of communication between people [6].

Communication between people contains many elements:

- Body: movements figure and shape.
- Values: based on the concepts of "need" and "necessity", our efforts to be "good people".
- Expectations: fueled by past experiences.
- Senses: hearing evidence, etc. - the ability to touch and be touchable.
- Speech ability: words and voice.
- Brain and knowledge: to learn from past experience, from books and from others.

For Styr, the family is a system that works to achieve and maintain its stability. When there is abnormal behavior, it actually reflects family grief that is experienced by all members of the family. Styr believes that problems arise in the context of marriage when both spouses have low self-esteem, high expectations and a lack of confidence in their ability to succeed.

If messages transmitted between parents and children are contradictory, the child learns to communicate in a similar way. Parents who display an indirect communication style also send a message to their children that harms their self-image. This contributes to the abnormal development of communication patterns in the child.

In this way, a circle is created in which a parent with a low self-image is improperly connected and "produces" children with low self-esteem who also communicate improperly [7].

Factors that hinder effective communication:

- Parents forget to invest in family relationships because they are busy trying to regain their authority. As soon as there is a close relationship between the family members, the chances of cooperation from the children increase. Modern parenting is characterized by two styles that, instead of creating closeness and cooperation, achieve the opposite.
- Strict parenting style: characterized by aggressive language saturated with orders, without intimacy - eat, shower, brush, read, sleep, go, learn, bring, be careful, stop, etc. Sometimes it achieves obedience and ostensibly works. But in the long term, children will learn that the world is divided into strong and weak, or that they will be submissive, lacking a backbone, or will be aggressive toward the weaker ones. Sometimes it leads to power struggles so that the parent wants the child to do what the parent asked the child to do and more of the child's own free will. The parent will deal with insult, anger and frustration instead of being busy with education and responding from an adult and responsible place. In response to the parent's outburst, the child feels frustrated and hurt and bursts back. Here a circle is created that is not built on close communication.
- Permissive parenting style: Parents avoid overprotection, overprotection, compensation, placing a child at the center and providing unnecessary services. The language that characterizes this parenting style is a language full of question marks and outbreaks – 'you eat lunch, do you

come? What you want? Is it either that or that? Please stop talking to me like that!' The children do not tend to cooperate because they have learned to do everything for them. Communication with them is far from being effective and approaching because they are more preoccupied with themselves than in their environment [8].

- Family size is considered an element that influences the quality of parent-child relationships. The larger the family, the lower the chances of deep parent-child relationships. In such situations, the parent adopts educational trends based on control and power, in order to control the integrity of the family system and control the conflicts among its members. Especially when the socioeconomic status of the family is lower than the average.
- With the development of the media there is a marked decrease in communication between family members. The media and technological advances have taken the time devoted to family and family discussions. Dr. Bahiga Azi stresses that "the reason for the failure of the talks and discussions between the members of the family is the children's addiction to the Internet and multimedia of all kinds" [9].
- Parental and child conflicts: Conflicts can occur for many reasons. When a confrontation occurs, the entire family can be thrown into an emotional storm. Resolving the conflict between parents and children requires the participation of all those involved. Communication is a very useful tool in conflict resolution. "As parents, we need to listen to our children to consider their input," says psychologist Dr. Long Hurst. "Understanding a parent-child conflict and how to solve it can help bring harmony back to the whole family. As parents, people are accused of the enormous responsibility of helping their children understand the difference between good and evil, right and wrong, and what it means to be respectful to others [10].

There are three common types of conflict:

1. **An inevitable conflict:** This is the kind of periodic confrontation we experience in all our closest relationships. This type of conflict is inevitable because we cannot always be attentive, aware and sensitive to those we are closest to. There will be times when we are busy, miss verbal or nonverbal cues, show impatience, overreaction, etc. When children feel disconnected in such situations, they have an increased need to understand.
2. **Boundary conflict:** This happens when parents try to set boundaries with their children. Boundaries are an important part of creating a structure for children. But, setting boundaries can create tension between parent and child, resulting in emotional detachment in the relationship. The key to staying in touch during these interactions is to limit the border and align with the child's primary emotional state. Parents can identify and ponder back to the child the essence of her passion without fulfilling her will. For example: "I know you want to go outside to play, but it's important that you finish your homework before dinner, and then you can play outside for

a while." It's much better than just saying, "No, you cannot go outside."

3. **Intense conflict:** This type of conflict involves intense emotional distress and a significant separation between parent and child. It happens when a parent loses control over his feelings, he shouts, threatening the child. These are the most disruptive types of detachments for children because there is often a sense of shame. These types of conflicts often occur because parents have unresolved problems from their backgrounds. There is often a sense of shame between the parent and the child. The parent feels a deep sense of incompatibility, which may have been caused by helplessness or incapacity. The child feels ashamed of criticism, humiliation or mockery. For example: when one is in a store with one's child, and the child insists on something, instead one tries to understand the meaning of the child's behavior and feels humiliated in front of others. One unconsciously react to an inability to control the child [10].

Conflict patterns in a family setting: Family conflict is the disagreement between family members about a particular event in their lives, when family members experience differences in perceptions between them. Confucian situations generate destructive patterns of behavior seen in families that produce an atmosphere of tension, rather than in families that create a safe and encouraging atmosphere [11].

Conflict will develop when a gap is found between family members in the search for closeness and high reliance on it, and individuals seeking high levels of autonomy and independence. The latter will try to fulfill their desire for privacy [12].

If the conflict does not lead to emotional drift and to breaching behavioral and emotional boundaries, positive communication will be created among the family members. Dealing with conflict in a sympathetic atmosphere helps develop and strengthen interpersonal relationships, boundaries, hierarchical structure and a safe place for emotional expression of discomfort. A sympathetic atmosphere that encourages additional solutions, helps develop relationships and openness to open and direct communication [13]. Conversely, unresolved conflict situations in a family can become a battlefield, with a lack of heart failure, love, respect and autonomy, openness and flexibility [14].

There are three basic behavioral patterns for family response during conflict:

1. They can ignore the conflict. 2. They can fight each other at the same time. 3. Cooperation.
1. Ignoring a conflict that becomes a repetitive behavioral pattern may increase tensions and lead to high levels, because painful subjects are not consistently resolved. Ignoring a conflict that turns into a pattern of behavior among family members will lead to deterioration and distress among family members rather than a solution [15].
2. Wrestling each other: Was designed to prove to all members of the family the needs of the individual struggling. These needs are considered above all other significant needs of his life. This communication style may develop a sense of empowerment of the conflict among

family members by suppressing the perceptions and wishes of other members of the family, with the hidden goal of the struggling individual being that all members of the family will give up [16].

3. Compromising a particular member of the family means a solution that is not exhaustive but acceptable. Individual compromise does not raise creative ways, so it is not exhaustive. On the other hand, cooperation opens the door to working together and finding a solution acceptable to all members of the family and creating a situation in which everyone will feel victorious [17].

#### Strategies for effective communication

Healthy communication is appropriate communication and emotions are expressed in a biased and nonjudgmental way. In such a family, rules exist as needed and are eliminated when appropriate. A functional family is one that presents a relationship in which members can ask for what they need, and are supported by their movement toward individuality and self-esteem. In a process that allows healthy families to have acceptance of diversity and assistance towards growth and development [18].

- Parents will adopt an authoritative parenting style. When the word authority does not represent rigidity, rigidity, aggressiveness and lack of intimacy. There must be clear rules and boundaries in the house that are intended to provide children with a framework and a sense of security, but they mediate the children through effective and close communication. Accompanied by a lot of empathic listening and encouraging, sharing, consulting and asking for help.
- Sharing and consultation: When the child participates in conversations with the parents and they consult with the child. They tell the child that he is important to them, and they trust the child. Sharing empowers the child, promotes sensitivity, consideration and reciprocity. Of course, the child must be included in his level of understanding and feeling. Not to burden the child emotionally and choose a suitable timing as to what to share. Avoid sharing things that might frighten, stress, and upset the child. The more the parent becomes familiar with the subjective world of the child, the better the knowledge of how to approach the child, when and how to share and consult [19].

Active hearing is a persuasive communication strategy consisting of a verbal response that contains no actual message from a parent, but a reflection of the child's previous expression. Basically, the parent listens, paraphrases, and feeds the child's previous message, but the feedback is not just recording real words that bounce back. Instead, the parent listens and reflects back (in the parent's own words) the child's feelings, as well as the content of the child's message that the parent thinks is expressed. It takes practice and commitment to be able to effectively use the skill of active listening.

In order to actively listen to a child, a parent must listen carefully (actively) to the words the child is speaking while relating to the child's tone of voice and body language. For example, a child might burst into the room, with tears in his eyes, and read, "I hate my teacher!" Although the child's verbal

statement, in this example, does not indicate that he is troubled or what has happened with the teacher, the child's voice, body language and tears undoubtedly express both emotions and content.

To develop active listening skills, it is important that parents become aware of communication barriers and avoid using them when the child tries to communicate with a problem. Using a communication barrier by a parent makes the child feel as if the parent has not heard, does not want to hear, or does not care about the child's feelings. Even when the parent avoids any communication barrier and provides accurate verbal feedback related to the child's feelings and message content, the child may not hear if the parent's facial expression, body posture, and loud tone do not create the warmth of understanding [20].

**Listening:** the cornerstone of close communication in general and in the family in particular. The feeling that we are being listened to with the utmost attention is achieved through the encouragement of listening, such as - nodding, smiling, eye contact, empathy, understanding ... Listening gives our children a sense of trust and closeness [21].

Messages I: According to Gordon when the parent uses the message to express his feelings about the child's behavior. I do not blame posts; So they are not messages. This is the main goal of the strategy, not to blame the child for the feelings that the parent has about a particular action of the child or his lack of action. The messages have three parts: (a) the sender's feelings, (b) the unacceptable behavior of the recipient, and (c) the concrete effect of the recipient's behavior on the sender. Example of an effective three-part message I go something like this: "Kelly, I have a problem I want to discuss with you." "When I went into the kitchen and saw the peanut butter and the jars with the caps, and the bread and the milk were not returned to their place (unacceptable behavior of the recipient).

Notice that the parent in this case did not send an accusing message such as: "Kelly, always clean up after you, go into the kitchen and clean up the mess you did." Children and adolescents tend to respond better to an unclear message delivered to a child in a warm way than to a loud, shocking message. When children feel that parents are criticizing their personalities, they may respond defensively. The purpose of the messages is to express dissatisfaction with the child's behavior, rather than to attack the child. Behavior that affects the parent may sound like the parent tells the child what the child should know. People in relationships often believe that others should be more considerate without being told, need to know how behavior will affect them, and so on.

Preventive messages: Gordon has formulated the message strategy to provide parents with an effective way to address parent-child problems. Because these problems are often challenging for the parents and their treatment is sometimes done in an abusive manner both for the parents and for the child. These messages are also useful for preventing difficulties in the relationship. Parents can use messages to communicate their positive feelings about good behaviors to be valued in the child.

As a final point, when parents use I messages to address or prevent problems, it is important that they have a friendly expression, warm sound and a non-threatening body language.

Moreover, it is essential that the message be specific about the specific behavior [20].

In conclusion, Effective communication and openness between parents and children is very important because the family is the child's initial starting point. It strengthens the individual's confidence in communicating with others. A family is a social unit composed of several people living in the same space, they share different social functions. The family is one of the most prominent social institutions in education and it shapes its character, it is a source of protection and care, which is the first place where children receive affection and love, it plays a significant role in shaping behavior from childhood.

In order to ensure a peaceful and stable life, dialogue and communication between family members should be developed in order to express their thoughts, fears and feelings freely and honestly, so that the family will be able to cope with various conflict situations and difficulties.

Only thus can happiness and a sense of emotional peace be achieved, and the primary goal and purpose of human life fulfilled.

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