

10.

POSITIVE PARENTING AMIDST COVID-19

Sabah Singh* and Dr. Aradhana Sharma**

*Research Scholar, DAV College, Sector 10, Chandigarh

**Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, DAV College, Sector 10, Chandigarh, India

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic is an acute respiratory syndrome. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has increased the need to guide people. The outbreak has led to upheaval in the day-to-day life and has gravely affected the familial situations worldwide (Cluver et al.; Coyne et al.; Prime et al.) Parents are neither certain nor clear regarding the duration of the present situation and, for the same engaging children and ensuring safety amidst of this leads to a discouraging prospect. Children have not been going to school and their previous extracurricular activities have been hindered. They are unable to participate in group activities, team sports or visit the play ground (Cluver et al.). Despite these important measures, there seemed to be worry regarding school closure and home restriction as it may lead to negative effects on children's physical and mental health (Wang et al.) It is important to not neglect the psychological impact of the outbreak on children and adolescents as with the acceleration there seems to be fear of infection, frustration, boredom, inadequate information, no in person contact, dearth of personal space and stress (Wang et al.; Leung et al.). The parent-child relationship greatly impacts the child's psychological, physical, social and economic well being (Sanders et al.). It is essential for parents to incapacitate self regulatory practices to ensure positive, nurturing and non abusive parenting practices in order to maintain developmental and healthy outcomes in children (Sanders and Mazzucchelli).

On the front of parental stress and parent child relationship during COVID-19 pandemic, a Singapore study collected online surveys from 258 parents and the results showcased parental stress as a significant mediator between perceived impact of coronavirus and parent-child relationship and harsh parenting. This indicated that the pandemic along with stay at home orders have led to an acceleration of stress for parents, which has impacted the parent-child relationship and use of harsh parenting (Chung et al.).

Therefore, in the present scenario parents have to ensure work life balance in lieu of government ordered stay at home phase along with honing skills for their children's emotional and physical well-being (Szabo et al.).

The pioneer of Positive Psychology, Seligman enunciated a model of parenting effectiveness on the forefront of the principles and pillars of the upcoming scientific branch of Psychology. Under the umbrella term of positive psychology parenting there were two terms: positive discipline and positive parenting. Both the terms explained non-punitive parenting practices (Kyriazos and Stalikas, "Positive Parenting or Positive Psychology Parenting?") The important conditions for positive psychology parenting entail sustainability, secure environment, surveillance, stimulation, support, structure and satisfactory marital relationship (Seligman; Kyriazos and Stalikas, "Positive Parenting or Positive Psychology Parenting?"). Positive parenting focuses on prevention and treatment, special and general

population, no mental disease, low conflict family environment and non-punitive parenting practices (Sanders)

In the challenging time it is not easy for parents to cope up as well. It is important to see to the parents' long-term resilience through psychological flexibility and self care (Coyne et al.). The former term denotes the ability to recognize and adapt to situational demands, being aware so that one can perceive and imbibe behaviour strategies along with taking action in line with ones values (Hayes et al.). The latter term is about practicing action taking with respect to improving health especially during adversities (World Health Organization). It is essential for the parents to be self compassionate in order to maintain their own and familial psychological well-being (Coyne et al.). According to Neff et al., a self compassionate mindset is to maintain balance between uncompassionate and over compassionate self when one feels personally inadequate or in situations of difficulties such as increased self kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, reduced self judgement, isolation and over identification. The present literature by Coyne et al. encompasses evidence based parenting tools for practitioners in order to assist parents in promoting family nurturance and support children's prosocial behaviour during COVID 19 and future.

Sanders et al. provided evidence regarding promotion of parenting competence through Triple P- Positive Parenting Program. The program is a multi-disciplinary, preventive and parents can be reached through various modes such as online, telephone assisted and self-directed programs. It works on the principles of ensuring a safe and engaging environment, keeping realistic expectations, assertive discipline and self-care for parents. It has proved to be helpful in empowering, self-regulation, mood management, coping partner support and communication skills.

COVID-19 has gravely impacted individual's day-to-day life. Parents are faced with challenges of taking care of the household, protecting their jobs and children at the same time. There may be difficulties in maintaining a work-life balance in this obscure time. It is possible that in this pressure of balance they may not take care of themselves and face burnout. The present research aims to study positive parenting and self-compassion of parents during COVID-19 lockdown.

METHOD

The present study aimed at studying positive parenting along with self-compassion in the time of COVID-19 lockdown.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants were working and non-working parents undergoing a government ordered lockdown due to coronavirus pandemic outbreak. Due to the present state the data was collected through snowball sampling technique. The informed consent was procured from the participants along and anonymity was ensured.

Inclusion criteria. The participants had to be parents of children between 3-18 years.

Exclusion criteria. Single parents.

MEASURES

Nicomachus- Positive Parenting (NPP) scale. The scale consisted of 20 items and 4 factors namely nurturing values, strength identification and boosting, parenting context and involvement. The participants were to answer items based on the likert scale wherein 1 was absolutely untrue and 5 was absolutely true. There was no reverse scoring. The cronbach alpha of the scale is 0.93 and factor wise it is as follows: nurturing values; 0.92, strength identification and boosting; 0.85, parenting context; 0.80 and involvement; 0.75. The scale has proved to be reliable and valid (Kyriazos and Stalikas, “Nicomachus-Positive Parenting (NPP)”).

Self Compassion Scale (Short form). The scale consisted of 12 items and 6 factors namely self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and over-identification. The participants answered items based on the likert scale wherein 1 was never and 5 was always. Reverse scoring was present. The cronbach alpha of the scale was (0.86) and factor wise it was as follows: self-kindness; 0.54, self-judgment; 0.63, common humanity; 0.62, isolation; 0.77, mindfulness; 0.64 and over-identification; 0.75. SCS-SF is in fact an effective and efficient tool (Raes et al.).

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data was collected through google forms. The participants had assented to the same. The demographic details and responses to items of the two scales were collected. The spreadsheet was exported to excel wherein the responses were scored on the basis of factors. The relationship between positive parenting and self-compassion of parents in a state of lockdown amidst COVID-19 pandemic was calculated statistically through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

RESULTS

Demographic Details

Table 1

Demographic details of parents

Variable		Freque ncy	Perce ntage	Mean	Standa rd Deviation
Age				37.67	5.14
Sex	Females	21	70%		
	Males	9	30%		
Profession	Student	1	3.3%		
	Business	5	16.7%		
	Teaching	16	53.3%		
	Home Maker	3	10%		

	Manager	2	6.7%		
	Advocate	2	6.7%		
	Doctor	3	3.3%		
Number of Children	1	17	56.7%		
	2	11	36.7%		
	3	2	6.7%		

Table 1 showcases the mean age of parents that participated in the study was 37 (± 5.14). Most of the participants were females (70% N=21). Most of the respondents belonged to teaching profession (53.3%, N=16) and the non working respondents were 10%, N=3. Maximum respondents had one child (56.7%, N=17).

Statistical Analysis

Table 2

Correlations of Positive Parenting Factors and Self-Compassion Factors

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Nurturing Values (1)		.534*					.515*	
Strengths Identification and Booster (2)	.534**							
Self Kindness (3)					.365*		.602**	
Self Judgement (4)						.372*		.371*
Common Humanity (5)			.365*					
Isolation (6)				.372*				.581**
Mindfulness (7)	.515**		.602**					
Over Identification (8)				.371*		.581**		

** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$

Table 2 indicates results of the correlations among positive parenting factors and self-compassion factors showcased that nurturing values is positively correlated using Pearson Correlation with strengths identification and boosters and mindfulness. Self-Kindness is positively correlated with common humanity and mindfulness. Self-Judgement is positively correlated with isolation and over-identification. Isolation is positively correlated with self-judgement and over- identification.

DISCUSSION

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in China, the world population has been gravely impacted. It has caused an upheaval in the familial life as well. While the parents are trying to meet ends along with maintaining work life balance, they also face uncertainty regarding future (Cluver et al.; Szabo et al.). In such high-risk situations it is important to be resilient (Prime et al., 2020). The negative impact on a child’s emotional and mental well-being

amidst this COVID-19 lockdown cannot be ignored (Wang et al.). Alongside, the huge change in their routine along with lack of team and group activities can be detrimental for the child (Cluver et al.) Parents too are undoing a stressful time, which leads to harsh parenting and a rift in the parent-child relationship (Chung et al.). Positive psychology has paved way in explaining a positive parenting model (Seligman) and it has further been constructed as a statistical tool (Kyriazos and Stalikas, "Nicomachus-Positive Parenting (NPP)"). Similarly, Coyne et al. pointed out the importance of psychological flexibility and self-care for parents. Therefore, parents must be self-compassionate and follow positive parenting principles during these unpredictable and difficult times. Through the research carried out on 30 parents (21 females and 9 males) it was established that factors such as nurturing values is present then the parent tends to boost and identify the children's strengths and are mindful for the same. If the parent is kind to self then he/she is mindful and inclined towards common humanity. In situations wherein the parent feels isolated then he/she will also be self judgmental and over identifies self. Therefore, there is an urgent need for Positive Parenting in such scenarios as it is a self regulatory practice. This would also prove to be helpful for the parents to improve their interaction with children and provide an enriching environment for them. For the same, Triple P- Positive Parenting Program is suggested which would focus on promoting positive parenting skills and competence. Parents should be reached out through online services and resources through social media to provide tips to help parents build positive relationships and monitor bad behaviour and stress.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a possibility of socially desirable responses and to increase the generalizability of the research equal number of mothers and fathers should be taken into account. In this uncertain situation more research has to be done on parenting in other aspects and online interventions for the same.

WORKS CITED

- Chung, Siew Keong Gerard, et al. "Mediating Effects of Parental Stress on Harsh Parenting And Parent-Child Relationship During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic in Singapore." *OSF Preprints*, June 2020. *osf.io*, doi:10.31219/osf.io/vnf4j.
- Cluver, Lucie, et al. *Parenting in a Time of COVID-19*. 2020. *scholar.sun.ac.za*, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30736-4.
- Coyne, Lisa W., et al. "First Things First: Parent Psychological Flexibility and Self-Compassion During COVID-19." *Association for Behavior Analysis International*, 2020.
- Hayes, Steven C., et al. *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Second Edition: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change*. Guilford Press, 2011.
- Kyriazos, Theodoros A., and Anastassios Stalikas. "Nicomachus-Positive Parenting (NPP): Development and Initial Validation of a Parenting Questionnaire within the Positive Psychology Framework." *Psychology*, vol. 10, no. 15, Dec. 2019, p. 2115. *www.scirp.org*, doi:10.4236/psych.2019.1015136.
- ---. "Positive Parenting or Positive Psychology Parenting? Towards a Conceptual Framework of Positive Psychology Parenting." *Psychology*, vol. 9, no. 7, July 2018, p. 1761. *www.scirp.org*, doi:10.4236/psych.2018.97104.

- Leung, Chi Chiu, et al. “Mass Masking in the COVID-19 Epidemic: People Need Guidance.” *Lancet (London, England)*, vol. 395, no. 10228, 2020, p. 945. *PubMed Central*, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30520-1.
- Neff, Kristin D., et al. “Development and Validation of the Self-Compassion Scale for Youth.” *Journal of Personality Assessment*, vol. 0, no. 0, Mar. 2020, pp. 1–14. *Taylor and Francis+NEJM*, doi:10.1080/00223891.2020.1729774.
- Prime, Heather, et al. “Risk and Resilience in Family Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *American Psychologist*, 20200521. *psycnet.apa.org*, doi:10.1037/amp0000660.
- Raes, Filip, et al. “Construction and Factorial Validation of a Short Form of the Self-Compassion Scale.” *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, vol. 18, no. 3, May 2011, pp. 250–55. *onlinelibrary.wiley.com (Atypon)*, doi:10.1002/cpp.702.
- Sanders, Matthew R. “Development, Evaluation, and Multinational Dissemination of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program.” *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 345–79. *Annual Reviews*, doi:10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032511-143104.
- ---. *Theoretical, Scientific and Clinical Foundations of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program: A Population Approach to the Promotion of Parenting Competence*. The Parenting and Family Support Centre, 2003.
- Sanders, Matthew R., and Trevor G. Mazzucchelli. “The Promotion of Self-Regulation Through Parenting Interventions.” *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, Mar. 2013, pp. 1–17. *link.springer.com*, doi:10.1007/s10567-013-0129-z.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. Simon and Schuster, 2004.
- Szabo, Thomas G., et al. “From Helpless to Hero: Promoting Values-Based Behavior and Positive Family Interaction in the Midst of COVID-19.” *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, Apr. 2020, pp. 1–9. *PubMed Central*, doi:10.1007/s40617-020-00431-0.
- Wang, Guanghai, et al. “Mitigate the Effects of Home Confinement on Children during the COVID-19 Outbreak.” *The Lancet*, vol. 395, no. 10228, Mar. 2020, pp. 945–47. *www.thelancet.com*, doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X.
- World Health Organization. *Self Care for Health*. 2014, <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/205887>