

# Chapter 8

## Parents and Families and Child Maltreatment

# Characteristics of Strong Families

- Adult resilience
- Involvement and supervision
- Parent knowledge
- Communication, appreciation and guidance
- Beliefs
- Family nurturance and support
- Social support

# Family-Centered Care

- Provides services and care that focuses not just on the child but on the family
- Empowers the family to manage its own care
- The child is best understood, treated and cared for in the context of family

# Principles of family centered care

- Collaboration with families is key to working with the child
- Each family has strengths that can be built upon
- Parents are involved in decision making
- Parents are provided with extra services
- Families are respected for differences and uniqueness
- Communication is critical

# Barriers to Parent-Professional Partnerships

- Communication
- Culture
- What other barriers are there?

# Effective Communication

- Facial expression
- Body language
- Tone of voice
- Two-way speaking and listening
- Positive expression and nonthreatening words
- Simple, nontechnical language
- No barriers

# Active Listening

- Lean forward and act interested
- Concentrate on speaker. Don't plan what you will say next.
- Meet their eyes (but don't stare and don't continue eye contact if the person seems uncomfortable—some cultures consider eye contact rude)
- Assume an open posture with your arms and legs
- Acknowledge what you hear often with short, simple sentences such as, “Uhhh, uh, uh, oh, yes, I see.”
- Rephrase what is said, “you are saying....?” This way you are sure you understand.
- Reflect feelings that you hear. “You seem to be very worried, (or angry) about....”

# Written Communication with Families

- Clear, simple language
- Print on colored paper when possible as it is more likely to be read
- Include a graphic if appropriate, but not too much—a picture often helps communication
- Keep fonts simple and large enough to easily read
- Translate into the parent's language



# Skilled Dialogue

- Respect
- Reciprocity
- Responsiveness

# Working with culturally diverse families

- Learn to appreciate other beliefs and value systems
- Stop making judgments of individuals and families based on biases and general ideas
- Learn about the family's hopes, dreams and plans for the future
- Recognize differences between yourself and a family as complimentary rather than contradictory

# Communication Strategies

- Listens to parents, rephrase every so often their comments and reflect the feelings you perceive!
- Use appropriate tone and body language to show you are concerned, interested and calm.
- Ask questions that indicate your interest.
- Write down information for parents.
- Review periodically what has been said with parents.
- Use clear, simple terminology.
- Arrange for a parent to have the support of another parent or support group.
- Schedule an appointment at least once or twice a year with parents.
- During conflict, remain calm, put yourself in the parent's shoes.

# Family Life Education

- includes knowledge about how families work
- the inter-relationship of the family and society
- human growth and development throughout the life span
- both the physiological and psychological aspects of human sexuality
- the impact of money and time management on daily life
- the importance and value of education for parenting; the effects of policy and legislation on families
- ethical considerations in professional conduct
- understanding and knowledge of how to teach and/or develop curriculum for what are often sensitive and personal issues.

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# Family Life Education

- Websites
- Books
- Pamphlets
- Video/DVD
- Radio/Television
- Newspapers and magazines
- Newsletters

# Working with at-risk or abusive parents

- Some at-risk populations
  - Teen parents
  - Families with children with special needs
  - Parents involved in drug abuse
  - Families in poverty
  - Parents with physical or mental disabilities
  - Families with nonparents in the home

# Parents whose children have been abused by others

- Children need
  - Therapy
  - Listening without judgment
  - Their feelings reflected
  - Sometimes academic and social support
  - Additional therapy or understanding as they enter new stages of development or changes in family
  - Occasional questioning as to whether they have concerns

# Dealing with angry and uninvolved parents

- Identify parent concerns
- Remain calm
- Use active listening
- Diffuse the situation
- Compromise and involve parent in problem solution
- Follow-up



# Parents and Discipline

- 90% of parents of toddlers indicate they have spanked their child
- Parents encouraged by family, culture or religion to spank
- More likely to use spanking if they perceive professionals encourage it