Family Emotional Processes and Adolescents’ Adjustment

ABSTRACT

This study examined associations between parents’ emotion coaching and emotional expressiveness, and adolescents’ internalizing and externalizing symptoms. The sample included 131 16-year-olds and their mothers and fathers. Adolescents completed an open-ended interview about their parents’ emotion coaching. Adolescents rated parents’ negative emotional expressiveness, and parents and adolescents reported on adolescents’ adjustment. Results indicated that mothers were more accepting and supportive of their children’s expression of negative emotions than were fathers. Parents’ coaching of emotions was associated with fewer adolescents’ internalizing symptoms and was unrelated to their externalizing symptoms. Parents’ negative emotional expressiveness was positively linked to adolescents’ internalizing and externalizing symptoms. Parents’ emotion coaching and negative emotional expressiveness explained unique variance in adolescents’ internalizing symptoms. Results highlight the importance of the family’s emotional climate for adolescents’ well-being.