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## **SELF – DISCLOSURE AND PARENTS – CHILDREN RELATIONSHIPS DEPENDING ON PARENTAL STYLES**

**Iulia Mihaela MIHAI**

**“Petre Andrei University” of Iasi  
Faculty of Psychology and Sciences of Education**

### **Argument**

The present paper brings to attention an aspect of the relationship between parents and children, focusing on the dynamics of the relationship in accordance with the phenomenon of self-disclosure and the corresponding parental style.

It deals with the role of self-disclosure and parental styles in keeping open communication between children and parents, children and his guardian.

Considering that in this epoch of technologies, of virtual communications, expressiveness of the face and the body is no longer necessary, an epoch when everything is robotized, it is important to debate the phenomenon of communication, of disclosure and self-disclosure in the light of parental styles, because the styles adopted by parents in educating and guiding children towards developing their personality and character influence the child's capacity, to develop, and here we have in mind introversion versus extraversion, the spirit of socialization, the ability of assertive, non-violent communication, but also the fear of being judged and criticized, therefore of expressing one's opinion.

Key Words: *relationship, education, communication, self-disclosure, parental styles*

### **1. SELF-DISCLOSURE IN THE RELATIONSHIP PARENTS – CHILDREN**

As psychosocial phenomenon belonging to the sphere of the behavioral comportment of the social self-disclosure plays an important role in the manifestation of the adolescent's real self.

The concept of self-disclosure was introduced in to the specialty literature by Sidney M. Jourard in 1958, in “A study of self-disclosure”.

□tefan Boncu, in his book “Interpersonal Processes”, defines self-disclosure as a process by which the individual communicates information about him self (□t. Boncu, 1999, p. 10). A. Gavriiliuc (2002, p. 67) underlines

that “The social actor, generally after initiating a relationship transmits conscious information about his own identity self-disclosure being a more advanced stage of communication with “The other”, situated at the level of confluence between the intrapersonal and the interpersonal levels, naturally following after self-perception and self-presentation”.

The spheres of the concepts of self-disclosure and impression management intersect, but do not overlap, the intersection areas being practically coincidences with those where, the self-disclosure sphere intersects that of self-presentation.

Self-presentation represents the control over information about one's own person through the communication of certain aspects that pertain to “public strata” of personality.



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Self-disclosure symbolized communication of private, sensitive confidential information, with a view to social integration by opening up to others, without particularly aiming at influencing the others.

The social Self (the interpersonal Self) is the dimension of personality we are willing to show the world; it is the persons "window". Some of us have a social Self of the "cactus" type (I feel safe only when I am warlike and on the offensive), others of the "mimosa" type (the defensive attitude gives me protection) or a plant that blooms or wither according to the environment in which it lives (I react in accordance with the surrounding world). The greater the gap between the social and the emotional Self, the lower the person's degree of maturity. An immature person will generally behave one way at home and among friends and another way (that will make him/her safe) in social interactions.

There are four levels communication usually passes through: the level of clichés, of actions, of opinions and of feelings.

In other words, when to persons meet they use clichés such as "Good morning, How are you?" etc., as a sign of greeting, but without symbolizing a desire of initiating conversation, information exchange, and for this to happen the two persons start talking about actions, daily events, things that can make the conversation go on, and when the two have got closer they talk about their opinions on various things, politics, social events, money, love, jobs, etc., subjects that give information about our interlocutor's personality.

Finely after the stage of opinions their came the feelings, which offer further information about the interlocutor, his/her personality and manner of reacting.

Mariana Caluschi (2001) considers that self-disclosure is essential in the process of the social communication of emotions and suggests to educators (teachers, parents) they teach children instructive ways of self –

presentation and self-disclosure. According to the child's temper, his/her extrovert or introvert orientation or the openness given by the parental style, the social communication of emotions through self-disclosure can be beneficial for the children's development of personality and social and school integration.

Developing students self – knowledge in one of the fundamental objectives of education. Knowledge and self – acceptance are fundamental variable in then optimum functioning and adjustment to the social environment, in maintaining mental and emotional sanity. Family and school are the key institutions that create the background in which children and adolescent can develop harmoniously according to their own interests and abilities. In these institutions the student starts discovering himself/herself, creating an image of his/her own person, developing self-confidence. Developing students self-knowledge is one of the fundamental objectives of education.

## **2. PARENTAL STYLES**

Parental styles are closely connected to self-disclosure, because children who have developed a spirit of conversation and communication, children who have been listened to and guided by their parents have confidence in themselves, in what they want to communicate, therefore it will be easier for them to disclose themselves.

On the other hand, parents who do not listen to their children and do not understand them who do not spend time with them or do not trust them, rise in them the fear of being examined, criticized, exposed, of putting themselves forward, of expressing themselves, of communicating and disclosing themselves.

In this problem, in the social communication of ideas as well as in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, the family, through the family educational climate



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and the parental styles, has a first class role and places.

Diana Baumrind (ap. Nicoleta Turliuc, 2004) delimits and discusses, on the one hand, parental styles and, on the other hand, their consequences upon children's development. According to the author quoted above, there are four parental styles: the permissive parental style, in which the relationship between children and parents is very good, with seldom any conflicts; the authoritative style, in which there are often conflicts between the parents do not show their affection for their children and are often aggressive; the authorized style, in which warm, affectionate parents teach their children to respect their authority and the negligent style, in which the parents – children communication is almost absent. This style is to be found in families in which the children are of no interest to their parents, in families where the parents do anything else but, or where the parents, thinking they act in the children's best interest, only cause them traumas, confusion, feelings of abandon etc.

The parental styles are presented below, according to the Diana Baumrind.

**The permissive style**, in which the family, though greatly expressing their affection for the children is not traditionalist, they allow the children to decide for themselves, with full knowledge of responsibilities and duties. The permissive family will give their children a higher degree of freedom.

Generally the impact of the permissive styles leads to positive consequences in the development of the parents – children relationship, like a high level of self esteem, of social abilities, creativity or autonomy, a low level of depression, but these children tend to troublesome behavior.

**The authoritative style** is the style in which the parents are very authoritative to their children, do not allow the children to disobey, are always ready to use verbal or

physical punishments when the children do not respect their orders or the instructions for performing a task, through they feel affection for their children. These parents are hardly open to information or influences from the children, believing they alone are right. The consequences of this style are a growing hostility, low self esteem, high level of depression and the child social anxiety.

**The authorized style** is practiced by warm, affectionate parents, who communicate their children. Such parents have authority in front of the children, can control their conduct and expect from them a mature attitude, according to their age, at the same time respecting their independence.

The authorized parental style comprises two other versions: the overprotective style and the authorized style proper or authoritative objective style.

The overprotected style is characteristic of parents who manipulate their children in order to obtain their subordination. The parents using this style practice excessive control and tend to smother their children with their love. Consequently, the children suffer from depression, make suicide attempts, have alimentary disorders and difficulties of attaining autonomy when adults, etc.

The parents practicing authorized style proper or the authoritative objective style try to channel their children's activities, resorting to restrictions, explaining to the children, even at an early stage, the reasons underlying the parents' conceptions recording firm control. The consequences of this style are to a large extent positive, the children being eager to assert themselves being sociality responsibly, cooperative, capable of adjusting to new rules and situations.

**The negligent parental** style is the style in which the parents focus on their own problems interests; it is the case of parents who avoid any parental responsibilities. It is characteristic of parents who do not get involved in a relation with their children, in



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their education, who do not offer affection and have very little control over their children. The children of these parents will have poor results in all spheres, a low level of self esteem and socialization, and will not have a clear idea of family rules.

We can resort to the theory of groups in order substantiate a vision of family in terms of organization – crises – disorganization – reorganization. A “well organized” group is characterized by a high degree of unity and a mutual functioning of its members and by well defined function as against the larger community it belongs to. The family functioning may be described, especially, in terms of its members’ roles. In the well organized families the members have accepted, well defined roles that are complementary and through which contribute to family life, to achieving the objectives and goals of the family. A well organized family conceives of itself as having a certain status in front of their relatives, friends, and community. The concepts are useful only in order to define a result of the factors interacting in the process of family life, none of this concepts can explain why a family is organized or integrated, while another is disorganized and unintegrated.

The crisis produces disorganization both at the individual and the social level: criminality, psychic disorders, suicide, family dissolution, unemployment, reduction of consumption. The external effects of the crisis are well – known. The reduction of real income determines families to change their life plans – current or long term; to cut down expenses, to move into cheaper places, to give up the phone, to ask help from their acquaintances or institutional networks. But the most destructive effects are not only diminished incomes, but rather diminished social status; not only giving up “luxury” expenses, but rather limiting their ambitions and aspirations.

The deficiencies intervening in the structure and functionality of the family couple have a negative influence on the affective relationships between parents and young people, characterized – in most cases investigated – by lack of affection and indifference or even occasional conflicts, with effects leading to imperfect or even negative socialization of young adolescents.

The education process is the main means of formatting, especially for the young generations, under all aspects. The quality of the teaching process is measured by the student’s results in and outside school, these results depending on every teacher’s capacity, every school’s capacity of combining the whole range of necessary activities in order to achieve their objectives and improve them. From the perspective of the things mentioned above, the unitary efficient unfolding of the instruction – education process, the creation of a real, lasting self-regulating partnership between teacher – family – student are decisive. The family is an equal partner, alongside the teacher, in forming the child’s personality. It can offer the child many resources or, on the contrary, can deprive him/her of them. No matter how perfect a system of education, it remains insufficient of it friends, opposition or indifference from the parents. As the child spends most of his/her time in the family, the educational effect will be diverted or even annihilated when it meets the parents’ opposition.

Possessing the characteristics of a real community integrated into the larger society, the family directly contributes to shaping and developing the personality.

The parents’ care, love and cultural behavioral models ensure the child’s healthy psychic development attitude particularly in disorganized families – results in various psychic anomalies.

The families’ adjustment is psychic and social at the same time. Obviously, anxiety, excessive worrying, nervous disorders,



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suicidal thoughts will increase, as well as changes in level of living, in the structure of the roles in families, in personal and family objectives.

### **3. RESEARCH INTO THE PARENTAL STYLES THAT INFLUENCE SELF-DISCLOSURE**

**The aim of the research:** The present study proposes an investigation of the way in which parental styles facilitate the phenomenon of self-disclosure and conditions an efficient communication in the relation parent – child.

**Objective:** Working out a study of the way in which different parental styles influence self-disclosure and the challenge to the children's self-disclosure.

**General hypothesis:** There are significant differences in the frequency of self-disclosure, depending on the parental style by which the parents are guided in education.

**Methodology:** The first questionnaire used is **the self-disclosure questionnaire** used by Prof. dr. Marian Caluschi, measuring the degree of self-disclosure to various persons, questionnaire made up of 14 items, in two parts, as follows:

The first part comprises 10 items referring to various themes of self-disclosure, with six versions of answers (mother, father, friend of same sex, friend of the opposite sex, another person, nobody).

The second part comprises four questions, generally connected to confessions, with five versions of answers (very frequently, frequently, sometimes, seldom, never).

The second questionnaire used in this investigation is **Parental Authority Questionnaire**, created by John R. Buri from the Psychology Department at the St. Thomas University; it is made up of 30 items with answer versions from 1 to 5 and is conceived in order to measure parental authority or disciplinary methods from the child's

viewpoint (any age). PAQ has three subscales: permissive, authoritative and authority.

#### **The investigated population and groups:**

In conducting this research we administered the two questionnaires presented above to a class of 25 pupils at the "Gheorghe Asachi" Technical College, Iași, their ages being between 15 and 18.

The subjects participating in the research expressed their free consent and were informed on the confidentiality of the data offered, as well as on the fact that the results will be used solely for research purposes.

#### **The analyses of the data and psychological interpretation. Checking the hypothesis.**

Correlating and interpreting the results to the administered questionnaires, we found out that, through the parents practicing an authoritative style are hardly open to information or influences to their children, those who are oriented to a status and value the children's obedience, who expect their orders to be carried out and do not hesitate using force when the child's actions or ideas contradict their own, who favour the growth of hostility, reduce self esteem and prevent the child's developing social competence, the children belonging to parents who are adepts of this style disclose themselves more frequently than those whose parents are guided by other styles in education.

#### **Conclusions**

The lack of self-disclosure has a negative impact, mainly on the adolescent because of its possible repercussions. During adolescents, this factor can induce isolation, errors caused by a lack of knowledge, blocking of communication, etc.

The concepts of organized – disorganized, integrated, adjustable – unadjustable families are, more or less, intuitive, taking into account a number of family life characteristics. None of these concepts can explain why a family is



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organized and integrated, while another is disorganized and unintegrated. The deficiencies intervening in structure and functionality of the family couple have a negative impact on the affective relation between parents and characterized, in most cases investigated, by lack of affectivity and indifference, or even by occasional conflicts, with effects leading to an imperfect and even negative socialization of adolescents.

The educational process is the main means of human's formation, especially for the young generations, under all aspects. The quality of this process is measured by the students' results in an outside school, results depending on the capacity of each teacher and each school of combining the whole scale of necessary activities in order to achieve and improve their objectives. From the viewpoint of the ideas above, the unitary efficient unfolding of the instruction – education process, the ensurance of a real, lasting partnership, with a self regulating role, between teacher – family – student, are decisive. The family is an equal partner in forming the child's personality, through with the teacher. The family can offer the child numerous resources or, on the contrary, can deprive him/her of them. No matter how perfect a system of education it remains insufficient if it finds opposition or indifference from the parents. Since the child spends most of him/her time in the family, the educational effect will be diverted, deformed or even annihilated when it meets parents

opposition. Having the characteristics of a real community integrated into the larger society the family directly contributes to shaping and developing personality.

Parental care, love and cultural behavioral models ensure the child's healthy physic development. On the contrary the parents negligent attitude – especially in broken-up families – results an various physic anomalies.

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