Chapter 1

Human Intimacy in the Brave New World of Family Diversity
Chapter Outline

• Building Successful Relationships
• Qualities of Strong and Resilient Families: An Overview
• Can We Study Intimacy?
Chapter Outline

• Making Decisions That Lead to a Fulfilling Life
• Theoretical Approaches to Family Study
• Methods of Study
• Strengthening the Family
Defining Intimate Relationships

• Being **intimate** means experiencing intense intellectual, emotional, and physical communion with another human being.

• Intimate relationships give meaning to life, and give us a sense of identity, well-being, security and of being needed.
Family as the Origin of Intimacy

- It is within families that all of us learn the most about intimate relationships.
- Our **family of origin**, the family in which we were born and grew up, is the first seat of all of our learning, and human relationships are the essence of the family.
8 Qualities Shared by Strong, Healthy Families

1. Commitment

- Family members are deeply committed to promoting each other’s happiness and welfare.
- Members are committed to the family and invest much of their time and energy to it.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

2. Appreciation

- Family members appreciate each other and make each other feel good about themselves.
- Appreciation increases a person’s good behavior by rewarding it, thus making it more common, which leads to greater appreciation from others.
3. Good communication patterns.

§ Talking - Rumor, assumption, guesswork, and innuendo are poor communication techniques, while direct discussion is a good one.

§ Listening - By good listening, family members show respect for each other.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

3. Good Communication Patterns

- Fighting fairly means getting conflict out into the open, discussing the problem, and selecting solutions that are best for everybody.

- Empathy may be defined as the ability to put oneself in the other’s place.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

4. Desire to spend time together.
   § Families actively structure their lifestyles so that they can spend time together.
   § Rituals and routines maintain a sense of continuity over time, linking past, present, and future through shared traditions and expectations.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

5. A strong value system.
   • A value system allows individuals to have a wider vision of life than personal success alone and enables them to reach beyond themselves.
   • Families that share a strong value system experience spiritual wellness.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

6. Ability to deal with crises and stress in a positive manner.

- In a crisis, families may rely to a greater extent on each other and the trust they have developed in each other.
- Confronted by a crisis, they unite to deal with it instead of being fragmented by it.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

7. Resilience:

§ The capacity to rebound from adversity, having become strengthened and more resourceful.

§ An active process of endurance, self-righting, and growth in response to challenge and crisis.
8 Qualities Shared by All Strong, Healthy Families

8. Self-efficacy

- Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave.
- A strong sense of self-efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being.
The Study of Intimacy: Family Science

Family Science is the study of marriage and family combining all disciplines that can shed light on marriage and family functioning.
Family Science

- Psychology
- Social psychology
- Psychiatry
- Sociology
- Anthropology
- Other disciplines*
- Economics
- Home economics
- Law
- History
- Theology
- Communications
- Education
- Educational psychology

*Architecture
Literature
Medicine
Nursing
Political science
Social work
Marital Status, by Race and Hispanic Origin

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Decision-Making Steps

1. Define what you need or want.
2. Look carefully at your resources.
3. Gather information on all your choices.
Decision-Making Steps

1. Identify, evaluate, and compare your choices.
2. Make your decision, develop a plan, and get started.
3. As time passes, evaluate your decision and readjust it if necessary.
Key Terms in Decision-Making

- **Intuition**: the immediate understanding of something without conscious reasoning or thinking about it.
- **Common sense**: practical intelligence, or ordinary good sense.
- **Connotative**: The personal or emotional meaning of a word.
Theoretical Approaches

1. **Exchange theory** focuses on the individual level.

2. **Symbolic interaction theory** tends to see the relationships between people as the ultimate determinant of behavior.
Theoretical Approaches

1. **Family development theory** focuses on the family rather than the individual.

2. **Systems theory** focuses on interconnectedness.
Theoretical Approaches

1. **Conflict theory** finds the normal state of the family, and of general society, to be one of conflict and change rather than harmony and status quo.

2. **Ecological theory** places emphasis on adaptation and considers pressures from within and without the family.
Methods of Study

• The Experiment
• The Survey
• The Clinical Method
• Natural or Field Observation
• Group versus Individual Data
Experimental Method

Population | Groups | Pre-test | Experimental Treatment | Post-test | Differences
---|---|---|---|---|---
College students | Experimental group | Learn material A | Caffeine | Learn material B | Change
 | Control group | Learn material A | Placebo | Learn material B | Change
Proposals to Strengthen the Family

- A return to the structure of the traditional nuclear family characteristic of the 1950s.
- The development of extensive government policies (welfare).
- Reinvigorate the cultural ideals of family, parents, and children within the changed circumstances of our time.
Quick Quiz
1. The capacity to rebound from adversity is:

a) Empathy
b) Intuition
c) Self-Efficacy
d) Resilience
Answer: d

- **Resilience** is the capacity to rebound from adversity.
2. Which theory focuses on interconnectedness?

a) Systems Theory
b) Conflict Theory
c) Exchange Theory
d) Ecological Theory
Answer: a

- **Systems theory** focuses on interconnectedness.
3. The immediate understanding of something without conscious reasoning or thinking about it is

a) Empathy
b) Intuition
c) Self-Efficacy
d) Resilience
Answer: b

- **Intuition** is the immediate understanding of something without conscious reasoning or thinking about it.