

MODULE 1 FUNCTIONS AND LIFESTYLE OF THE FAMILY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The family plays an important role in the life of an individual and the society at large. It is the first training institution where a child learns about basic issues of life such as values, human and social relations, communication and other basic skills that will be required for relating with the larger society. Therefore, the experiences that a child has at the family level-whether positive or negative may affect the child's personal development throughout life. For example, a child who grows in a family full of strife and violence may find it difficult to show true love and care, except he/she encounters other experiences outside the family that provide learning about love and happy family life. Family patterns are likely to influence a child's ability to trust others, express love or anger appropriately, being successful at school and so on and so forth. Obviously, the family plays a big role in nurturing emotionally healthy (or disturbed) children. This unit discusses basic concepts of the family and the changes that have occurred in the family structure over time in traditional and postmodern societies. Some of the effects of these changes especially on children's care and education are also extensively discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define family;
- mention and explain examples of traditional and modern/postmodern family structures;
- list the characteristics of traditional and modern/postmodern family structures;
- describe types of family on the basis of marriage, residence, descent and nature of relation;
- discuss factors responsible for changes in family structure; and
- examine impact of changes in family structure.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

Read through this unit with care.

Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Matrilineal Family: This refers to kinship traced to the mother's family.

Patrilineal Family: This refers to kinship traced to the father's family.

The Conjugal Family: This consist of family who share relationship

Consanguine Family: It consist of the blood relationship such as brother, sister, father, son etc.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Definition of the Family

Many experts have had difficulty defining what a family is; this is because of the complex nature of the concept. The word 'family' means different things to different people. Therefore, it may not be easy to suggest a standard definition for the concept. Moreover, the form and structure of the family has changed overtime, making it difficult to come up with a specific definition that covers the range of existing family structures. To this end, several definitions of the family have been propounded to reflect some of these changes. While some of these definitions are conservative, others are regarded as too broad and sometimes, almost unacceptable. Nevertheless, each definition helps to shed more light on the concept of family. Some of these definitions are cited herewith:

- According to Murdock (1949), "a family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It contains adults

of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, owned or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.”

- Burgess and Lock (2006) define family as “a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting with each other in their respective social role of husband and wife, mother and father, brother and sister creating a common culture.”
- Carrington (1999) defines family as consisting of people who love and care for one another.”
- Weston (1991) defines the family from two perspectives: families of affinity or families of choice. Meaning, people with or without legal or blood ties who feel they belong together and wish to define themselves as a family.”

From these definitions, it is clear that the word, ‘family’, cannot be given one single definition. The family as an institution has different connotations in different places. Therefore, in simple terms, the family can be regarded as a group of people (two or more) usually related by blood (and sometimes not related, perhaps by adoption) living together wherein the adults care for the young.

5.2 Types of Family

Some experts have classified the family on the basis of marriage, residence, descent or ancestry, and on the nature of relations. This is discussed in details below:

1. Types of Family on the Basis of Marriage:

A family can be classified into three major types on the basis of marriage. These are:

- **Monogamous family:** Monogamous family is made up one man and a woman. The Christian religion and court marriages encourage this type of family.
- **Polygamous family:** This consists of a man with multiple partners. The Islamic and African traditional religion approve of a man marrying more than one wife. However, in the Islamic religion, the man can marry only four wives if he is able to meet certain conditions stipulated in the Quran.
- **Polyandrous family:** In this type of family, a woman is allowed to marry more than one man at a time. Examples of such families are found in few families in South Asia (usually allowed in poor societies with shortage of women.) For instance, the Toda people of India practiced this when a man marries a woman and she becomes a wife to all his brothers. It was also used as a strategy to keep the birthrate down in cases of extreme poverty.

2. **Types of Family on the Basis of Residence:**

Based on the nature of residence, a family may be classified into five forms, namely:

- **Family of Matrilocal Residence:** This is a situation where in some societies the couple is expected to live with or near the wife's parents.
- **Family of Patrilocal Residence:** This is a situation whereby the society expects the couple to live with or near the husband's parents.
- **Family of Bilocal Residence:** A situation whereby newly married couple is allowed to choose whether they will live with or near the husband or wife's parents.
- **Family of Neolocal Residence:** The newly married couple is free to set up their residence apart from both parents.

3. **Types of Family on the Basis of Ancestry or Descent:**

Another way a family can be described is through descent or ancestry. In this regard, a family can be classified into two main types:

- **Matrilineal Family:** In some societies, kinship (that is, a network of people who are related by marriage, birth, or adoption) is traced through the mother's family. In this set-up, property is passed from mother to daughter. This type of family is common in some Ghanaian communities.
- **Patrilineal Family:** In some societies, kinship is traced through the father's family. In this type of family, property is passed from father to son.
- **Bilateral Descent:** In this case, kinship is traced through both parents and property can be inherited from both sides of the family.

4. **On the Basis of Nature of Relations:**

Based on the nature of relations among the family members, a family can be classified into two main types:

- **The Conjugal Family:** This type of family consists of adult who share sexual relationship.
- **Consanguine Family:** This type of family consists of members with blood relationship such as brother and sister, father and son, etc.

5. **On the Basis of Size or Structure**

On the basis of size or structure, a family may be classified into two main types:

- **Nuclear or Single Unit Family:** The term 'nuclear family' refers to a household consisting of a father, mother and their children.

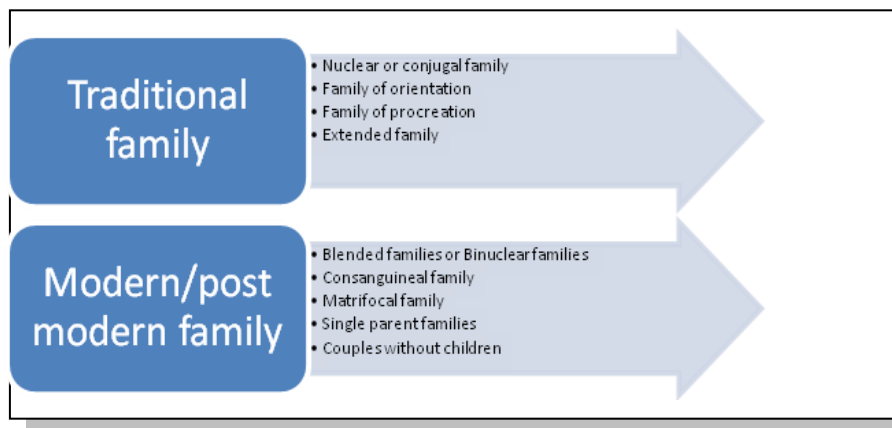
- **The Extended Family:** The nuclear family is usually embedded in a larger family group. The extended family is made up of three or more generations of a family sharing the same residence.

5.3 Changing Family Structure

5.3.1 Traditional Family Structures

In all societies, the family remains the basic social unit. The form that the family takes however varies from society to society. The family has changed in formation and structure over several decades. What used to be defined as a typical family in the Victorian Age may no longer hold in the millennium era. Many experts have tried to describe types of family formations to reflect past and current trends. According to some sociologists, “the nuclear family seems to be inadequate to cover the wide diversity of household arrangements we see today.” (Edwards 1991; Stacey 1996). A new term has thus been introduced, the **postmodern family**, which is to describe the great variability in family forms, such as single-parent families and child-free couples.” Therefore, some families have been classified under **traditional** and **modern/post modern types of family**.

Traditional and Modern/Postmodern Family Structures



Characteristics of the Traditional Family

The traditional family structure has a father as the sole breadwinner and the mother as the stay-at-home caretaker of the children. Other characteristics of the traditional family structure are:

- Most marriages were arranged by parents, and extended family members.
- Sexual freedom of men and women was restricted.
- Polygamy was allowed.
- Children experienced rites of passage to adulthood. (That is, children had to undertake certain ceremonies and rituals especially when they become

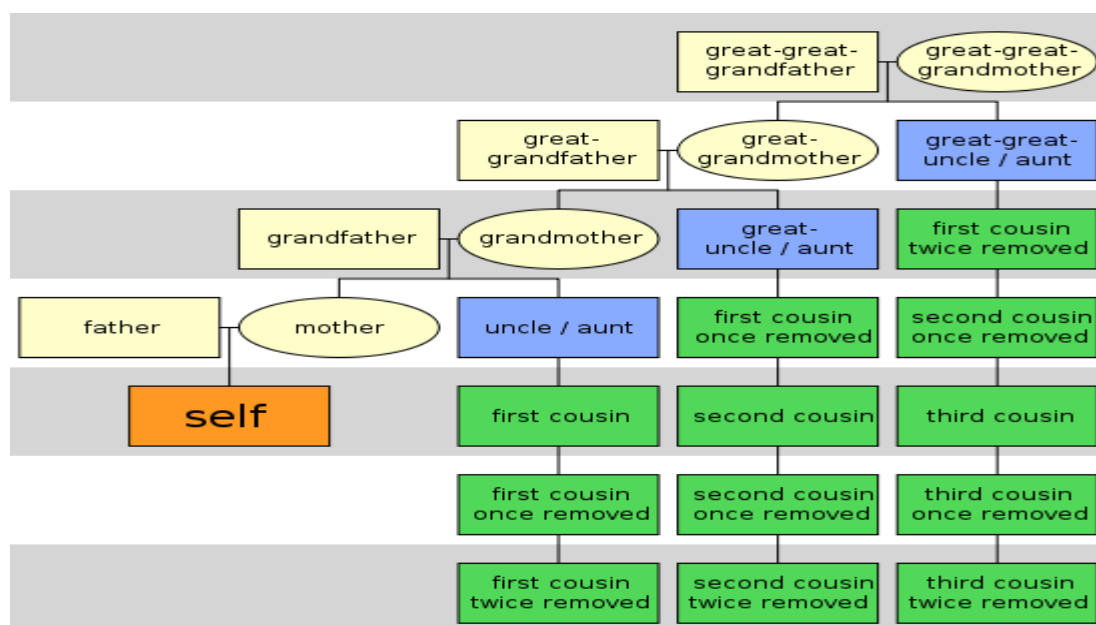
- adolescents, before they could qualify to be addressed and regarded as an adult.)
- Family norms and social interactions were based on traditions and customs of the community or family clan. (For instance, in some communities, it was a taboo for the head of the family to eat the head of a fish, because it was not traditionally acceptable).
 - There were larger families with more children living under the same roof.

Examples of Traditional Families

All over the world, there are certain types of family which existed from the past and are still found in many societies. These types of family are referred to as **traditional types of families**. Some of the examples include:

- **The Family of Orientation**
In a lifetime, an individual is likely to belong to at least two different overlapping nuclear families: the family of orientation and the family of procreation. The family of orientation is the nuclear family into which the person is born. This type of family is made up of the individual and his/her siblings (brother(s) and or sister(s) and the parents).
- **The Family of Procreation**
When an individual get married, a new nuclear family is formed. This type of family is called the family of procreation which consists of the individual, his or her spouse, and their children.
- **The Extended Family**
The nuclear family is usually embedded in a larger family group called the extended family. The extended family is made up of three or more generations of a family sharing the same residence. This type of family system is common in northern Nigeria and in the Chinese society, where the grandparents, parents and their children, uncles, nephews and other relations live together under the same roof. Sometimes, the extended family structure has the advantage of supporting one another in performing such roles as parenting tasks and responsibilities. They may also help provide support for sick family member or help with financial problems. The child is not likely to lack any form of parental care because there will be someone in the family to stand in the gap. However, in the face of the new global economic crisis, such large families may be unable to meet the economic and financial demands of the extended family. The cost of maintaining such families, especially children and the elderly may become a burden on a few members of the family who are within the workforce.

Relationships Describing Extended Family Members



Source: [Wikipedia On-line encyclopedia](#)

The Nuclear family

A nuclear family consists of a father, mother and their children who live together. Nuclear families constituted the basic unit of the family before becoming an extended family. However, such families were common type traditional types of families in the European countries. It became popular in Africa and other colonized regions during the colonial era. Nuclear families can be of any size, as long as there are only children and two parents (father and mother). Most of the time, nuclear families are able to take proper care of their children and support their educational needs because resources are provided for only a few individuals. Children in return, enjoy the support of both parents in terms of care and education. Parents are able to speak in one voice to discipline an erring child and also put resources together to meet basic needs when required. However, in some cases, both parents get carried away by their jobs and devote little or no time to the emotional needs of their children.

5.3.2 Modern/Post Modern Family Structures

As with every other aspect of life, industrialisation and globalisation has also influenced in family formations and structures. This has led to the formation of different family structures, which hardly exist in the past. Some of the examples of the family structures within the modern and postmodern context are:

Single-Parent Family

One of the common changes that have occurred in family structure over the years is the increase of single-parent families. In such families, only one parent is responsible

for raising the child or children. Single-parent families arise either from the death of one parent, divorce or separation of couples or when an adult chooses not to marry but decides to have and raise a child. Women, most times, are the head of most single families.

In most single-parent families, childcare is difficult to achieve because the meager income being earned will have to be shared among house rent, utility bills (power and water), feeding, clothing expenses, etc. If there is more than one child, the situation becomes more critical, except in a few cases where the single-parent (either man or woman) is a high income earner, or from a wealthy family which provides additional support, or if the single-parent is lucky to have the support of the estranged spouse. Therefore, one of the disadvantages of this type of family may be the inability of the single parent to cope with the social and economic demands of parenting, and the children are usually the ones who suffer for it. However, some family tensions present in other forms of family may be reduced in a single family. This enables the parent to concentrate more on the child's needs; parent and children also cooperate with one another and resolve family issues amiably than other types of families.

Reconstructed, Blended, or Step-Family

These terms refer to a family in which at least one of the adults has children from a previous marriage or relationship.

Binuclear or Step-Family

Binuclear family means that two households, which are formed after a divorce, still comprise one family system where there are children involved.

Complex Family (Extended/consanguineal/Joint Family):

- The complex family is used to describe any family structure involving parents, children and other people. Examples of complex families are extended, consanguineous or joint families. All of these terms describe a family structure where many generations live together under the same roof, depending on the circumstances. Therefore, one can find multiple generations in the family living together in the same house. Usually, the house has a large reception area (or sitting room) and a common kitchen, while each family member has his/her own bedroom. For example, in India, the sons' families live together in the same house with their parents.
- Within a complex family situation, catering for children's needs and education may be done unequally. Boys are likely to have more advantage than girls. Available money in such family structure is likely used to send boys to school, while the girls will be asked to stay behind, learn a trade or assist their mothers in the market. This is because the family shoulders more expenses and responsibilities in meeting the basic needs of the entire family and when such decisions as education has to be made, the culture is always in favour of the male child.

Matrilocal Family

A matrilocal family consists of a mother and her children. This is a type of single-parent family structure.

Couples without Children

Voluntary childless families are very common especially in Europe and in other foreign countries. Although, in some cases, couples wish to have children but are unable to do so due to medical reasons. In African countries, a high value is placed on children; hence, couples resolve their problems of childlessness, by adopting children of other family members or from orphanage homes.

Cohabitation or Unmarried Couples With children

This is a situation whereby a couple lives together in a sexual relationship without being married.

Characteristics of the Modern/Postmodern Family

- a. Change in maternal roles: Most married women are now engaged in labour force (working class mothers/women).
- b. Single-parent families are becoming common and there is an increasing number of households headed by women.
- c. There is an increasing rate of marital instability and dissolution and step families are emerging.
- d. There is a changing pattern of mate selection and family relations and little or no influence or control of clans and kinship group over the family.
- e. Free selection of spouse.
- f. Rights of women are becoming largely recognised.
- g. Higher levels of sexual freedom for men and women.
- h. Children's rights are recognised.
- i. Emergence of same sex relationships (homosexuals and lesbians).
- j. Increase of age at marriage- unlike in the past when young girls were encouraged to marry after their primary or secondary school education, most girls now delay marriage till an older age when they have graduated from a higher institution and have started working.
- k. Decline in fertility and few children in the family.

5.4 Factors Responsible for Family Structure

As part of the processes of urbanisation and modernisation, patterns of family formation and family life are experiencing significant changes resulting in the altering of the composition and structure of families in all societies. In Africa, these changes occurred as a result of certain factors which are explained below:

- **Religious Influence:** African families have undergone significant transformation caused by the influence of indigenous and modern religions (Christianity and Islam) adopted by the ancestors during the colonial era.

- **Modernisation and Urbanisation:** Another factor responsible for changes in the family structures is modernisation, urbanisation and migration of families across the continent. (People were taken away as slaves and those who migrated to other cities or countries to trade began to imbibe the family patterns of other people.)

5.5 Impact of Changes on Family Structures

- **Reduced care and attention for children:** Since both parents now have to work to meet the needs of family members, quality time is not spent with children as it was in the past. Mothers are compelled to combine their traditional roles - childrearing and household chores with earning money to supplement the household income and the extended family system that bridged this gap in the past has equally collapsed, many children are therefore left in the care of house helps and other care givers.
- **Neglect of child welfare:** Many children are living on the streets today because they ran away from home or their parents have rejected or neglected them. As such, there are child street beggars, child hawkers, and child bus conductors and so on. Furthermore, the spread of HIV/AIDS has led to child-headed families. Children who lost both parents to AIDS become orphans; hence, the oldest child takes on the responsibility of taking care of his/her siblings.
- **Hindering of physical growth and development:** Mothers no longer have the time to stay at home to breastfeed their babies. Such children depend on baby milk while the mother is away at work. This has led to the stunted growth, developmental problems, ill health and sometimes death of such children.

6.0 ACTIVITIES

1. List and discuss four examples of family structures that have been formed in the modern and postmodern era.
2. Discuss briefly each of three family types:
 - a. Monogamous family
 - b. Polygamous family
 - c. Conjugal family

7.0 SUMMARY

The basic unit of any society is the family. Families play an important role in raising children in a healthy, happy and stable environment in order for them to become responsible adults. Since the experiences the child has while growing within the family determines what society becomes in future (whether peaceful or aggressive), it is important to pay attention to the different formations and structures of the family that are emerging with the view of identifying the impact of these developments in

future societies and to address necessary areas where changes are needed to bring about improvements in family living and consequently, the larger society.

8.0 ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss factors responsible for changes in family structure.
2. Examine the impact of the changes that have occurred in the family structure.

9.0 REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 ROLES OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Defining roles of individual brings about in the family peace and orderliness in the home and society at large. Parents have duty of bringing up their children in love, provide for their physical and spiritual needs; and to teach them be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the functions of a family; and
- identify the roles and responsibilities of members of the family.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

Read through this unit with care.

Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Socializations: This refers to the process of training, educating and up bring of an individual from birth to death. It is the learning process of one's life.

Reproduction: This consists of the ability to give birth and replenish the society in terms of population.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Functions of the Family

Management of sexual activity, reproduction, socialisation, provision of economic and emotional security are the major functions of the family.

- **Reproduction:** The family ensures that the society's population is maintained through child bearing and rearing. This is essential to replace members of the society who have died or moved to another location.
- **Socialisation:** The family is the first place a child learns how to socialise. Family ensures that children learn the societal values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills. Families also teach children gender and social roles such socially accepted behaviour and behaviour society frowns at.
- **Economic support:** This is an important role performed by the family. The family provides shelter, food, protection, health, education and other basic requirements of children.
- **Emotional security:** The family provides the child's first experience in social interaction, which is intimate, nurturing and enduring, thus, providing emotional security for the child. They family cares for its members even when they get into trouble and suffer from other people's rejection.
- **Regulation of sexual activity:** One of the functions that the family performs is regulation of sexual activity. Every society regulates sexual activity in one way or the other. One common example is incest taboo. In most cultures, close relatives in a family are prohibited from engaging in sexual activities with each other. When this occurs, there are sanctions or punishment meted out on the offenders.

5.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have an important duty in bringing up their children in healthy and responsible way; this is important to the children's life-time development. Parents, therefore, should have a goal and set a standard for their family.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Father

A father is considered as the head of the family and is responsible for providing emotional, social, spiritual protection and support for his family. Other roles performed by the father in a family are listed below.

- He provides the basic needs for the family (such as food, clothing, and shelter).

- He lovingly corrects family members whenever they go wrong.
- He acts as the role model in the house.
- He protects family members.
- He teaches his family members the culture of the society.
- He teaches the children to respect people.
- He has authority over all the family's affairs and decisions.
- He is also responsible for maintaining discipline in the family.
- He guides, counsels and directs family affairs.
- He cooperates with the mother in training the children and other family members.
- He provides the means for proper education for the children by paying their school fees.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Mother

Mothers have the responsibility to nurture children to maximise their potential. The mother, though under the authority of the father, is the overseer of the home. Other roles include:

- she takes care of the family members.
- she may also work to assist the family income.
- she acts as role model to her daughters.
- she also helps to teach the culture of the society.
- she teaches the children to respect people.
- she should spend quality and quantity time with the children.
- she is a homemaker; she plans, cooks and serves meals for the family members.
- she keeps the house clean and in order.
- she is responsible for the bearing and rearing of children.
- she ensures that the family is well clothed.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Other Members of the Family

a. Roles and Responsibilities of Children

Children also have their roles and responsibilities within the family, these are:

- children should assist their parents in household chores.
- they should love, respect and obey their parents.
- they study and do their homework.
- they should learn the culture of the society.
- they should protect the name of the family.
- they are to learn and observe family values, societal norms, and religious beliefs.

b. Roles of the Extended Family Members

Members of the extended family who live together also have their roles and responsibilities depending on their age, sex, ability, and health conditions. For example, cousins, nephews, and nieces should join the children in carrying out domestic chores and running errands for the parents. Grandparents can also assist in raising the children and providing guidance and counsel from their wealth of experience.

6.0 ACTIVITY

1. Examine the main functions of the family.
2. Identify four major responsibilities of members of the family.

7.0 SUMMARY

Showing genuine interest in your children's daily experiences, asking questions about what they do each day, attending parent- teacher meetings and school events, spending time with and listening to children, and providing opportunities for children to express themselves are positive roles parents can play in their children's lives. Children also have the duty to respect their parents, be obedient to them and to be responsible in the society.

8.0 ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss three responsibilities each of the members of the family under:
 - a. The father
 - b. The mother
 - c. The children

9.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you learnt about the various definitions of family, the different family structures that existed in the traditional era and those currently existing in the modern and post-modern era, changes that have occurred in the family as well as the factors responsible for the changes. In this unit, you will learn about marriage and family life.

Marriage is one of the natural experiences of human beings which arise from the need to find a companion to spend the rest of one's life with. In most societies, people are expected to get married when they reach a certain adult age, although, not everyone eventually gets married. This unit will help you understand the important role marriages play in the family and the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept 'marriage';
- discuss different types of marriage;
- identify different challenges couples face in marriage and its impact on family life;
- examine factors that can lead to marriage failure; and
- discuss different forms of violence and its impact on family life.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

Read through this unit with care.

Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Infertility: - Inability to procreate. This can result in childlessness, or barrenness.

Ordinance marriage: -this refers to court marriage; it is a legal union between a man and a woman. It is expected that none of the couple should violate the law binding them.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Definition of Marriage

Marriage refers to a socially approved sexual union between two or more individuals that is undertaken with some idea of permanence. Marriage may also be defined as a union between a man and a woman of different family background in which the partners share many things in common and which may lead to procreation.

5.2 Types of Marriage

There are different types of marriage observed in different societies of the world. However, we shall focus on the types of marriage in Nigeria. Some of these types of marriage also exist in other countries.

Marriage under Native Law and Custom (Traditional marriage)

Marriages conducted under native law and custom allows a man to marry as many wives as he wishes (that is, polygamous marriage). However, some men who marry this way do not take on other wives even though they are not obligated to marry one wife. This decision may be because they love the woman or for economic reasons (the man may not be able to afford more than a wife) or the man may have been raised in a polygamous family and learnt from experience that monogamous families have more advantages over polygamous families.

Traditional marriages are usually conducted in elaborate ceremonies that involve the extended families of the bride and groom. The groom usually pays a bride price (and in some cultures, dowry) and present gifts to the bride and her family. Civilisation has

also contributed to many changes in traditional marriage. Therefore, there is usually parental consent and family approval.

Non-traditional Marriage

This type of marriage is conducted by a religious group, either Islamic or Christian.

Church Marriage

According to the marriage ordinance of 1914, Church or Christian marriage means a marriage that is organised by the law of the place where it is contracted as the voluntary union for life of only one man and one woman except one of them dies. This means, it is a monogamous marriage. This type of marriage is contracted in the church where the couples are joined together by the priest. Biblical injunction relating to marriage is read to the couples. In this type of marriage, the couple is not permitted to re-marry except one of them dies. Couples exchange marriage vows and obtain certificate of marriage from the church as authorised by the State to conduct such marriage. The bride and groom also exchange rings (or bible) as a symbol of their vow to remain faithful to each other till death.

Islamic Marriage

The Islamic marriage permits the union of one man to as many as four wives provided he is able to meet certain conditions stipulated in the Quran. He is not allowed to have more than four wives. The wedding ceremony is usually conducted in the mosque in the presence of family members and friends. Bridal price is not accepted in Islamic marriage but the groom is expected to give his bride a specified and valuable gift which sometimes consists of the Quran, praying mat and other items.

Marriage under Ordinance (Court Marriage)

This type of marriage takes place in the court under the guidance of the registrar.

Before the wedding day, the couple is expected to file a 21-day notice of their marriage for everyone to see, so that anyone that has any objection to the marriage can notify the court before the wedding. At the expiration of the notice, if there is no objection, a day is fixed by the court for the couple to present themselves for the marriage ceremony. The ceremony is usually attended by close relatives and friends and wedding rings and vows are exchanged. Since it is a legal marriage, neither the groom nor bride is expected to re-marry unless a legal consent is sought for a divorce or either of the party dies. Anyone who violates this law can be arrested for committing bigamy.

5.3 Reasons for Marriage

- a. To procreate (have children).
- b. To fulfill societal and religious obligations.
- c. For companionship and sexual pleasure.
- d. For financial and emotional security.

- e. To gain prestige and respect from the society.

5.4 Steps to Be Taken Before Marriage

All societies have some forms of regulation before marriage can take place. In many societies, two people are not allowed to just marry each other without fulfilling certain obligation. In Nigeria, this varies according to culture. However, there are some basic steps that are generally taken before marriage. Some of these include:

- **Mate selection:** Most families want their son or daughter to marry a good spouse. In some cases, what may be defined as “good” may vary. In the past, families choose a bride for their son after thorough investigation into the family. However, this is no longer the case as people select their spouses on the basis of love, attraction, wealth, and reproductive ability.
- **Planning for marriage:** Once the couple is sure they want to marry and the families have given their approval, the planning of the wedding ceremony commences. A date is fixed, usually by the bride’s family, initial formal meetings are conducted between both families and agreements are reached regarding bride price and gifts to be presented to the family.
- **New place of residence:** In the past, a groom was entitled to an apartment in his father’s family compound and that will be his residence, sometimes, permanently. However, things are changing, nowadays; the man is expected to get a new apartment where he and his bride will live after the wedding.
- **Financial plans:** Again in the past, only the groom was expected to be gainfully employed in order to take care of his new family. However, in modern times, both couple work and earn a living in order to jointly meet the needs of the family. This is largely due to the societal economic situation that makes it impossible for the income of only the man to be adequate for the up-keep of the family.

5.5 Family Challenges and Crisis

Alcoholism and the family: Family is faced with different crisis and challenges. Some fathers are addicted to alcohol and this has led to serious physical and emotional problems within the family. The family members of alcoholics, many times, suffer in silence. Children of alcoholic parents are usually faced with a family life full of disruption and distrust. Such children avoid bringing their friends home because of the fear of embarrassment. Worst still, these children themselves, many times, become alcoholics when they grow into an adult. So, it becomes a vicious cycle that runs in the family.

Family violence: Males tend to believe that they are powerful than females. Therefore, men who believe that females are weaker may abuse their power which can result in violence. Some examples of forms of violence are listed in the table below:

Table1: FORMS OF VIOLENCE

Forms of violence	Definition /explanation	Examples of each
Physical	Inflicting pain on someone’s physical body through direct contact or through the use of a weapon or instrument.	Beating, punching, kicking, stabbing, slapping, choking, shooting, burning etc.
Emotional	Hurting someone emotionally. Usually constant verbal abuse.	Threats, accusations, neglect, humiliation, using derogatory words, shouting, insults, etc.
Economic	Preventing someone from obtaining what should be their rights such as to education, health or assets that he/she has the right to possess.	Depriving family of money or income; making a person work without giving him/her any income; refusing to allow a girl to attend school, etc.
Sexual	An unwanted, repeated sexual advance, sexual attention, or demand for sex in return for favours.	Inappropriate sexual statements, touching, rape, forced prostitution, forced sexual intercourse etc.
Harmful traditional practices	Forced cultural or traditional practices.	Forced marriages, forced sexual experience, sexual cleansing, forced virginity test, female genital mutilation, girls’ denial of education and being forced to work or care for family members instead of going to school

Divorce: The number of couples who are separating from spouses or suing for a divorce appears to be on the increase. Unfortunately, divorce affects not only adults but also the children. Many children who experience their parent’s marriage break-up go through a lot of psychological trauma and pain. They also have to be forced to stay with one parent and may be exposed to abuse by step-parents if any of the parents re-marries.

Death of a family member: The death of a family member especially the breadwinner can cause a lot of challenges for the family, particularly if the mother is not working. The children will be faced with emotional and financial needs that may be too much for the mother to meet.

5.6 Factors Responsible For Marriage Failure

There are certain factors that can lead to the eventual collapse of a marriage. Some marriages have lasted a life time, while others broke-up barely a few months after the wedding. Reflecting on some of these factors may assist intending couples to prevent the pitfalls in order to have longer and lasting union. This will greatly help in maintaining a stable, peaceful and productive society. Some of these factors are:

Wrong choice of mate: sometimes, people rush into marriage without studying each other to know their interests, passion, likes and dislikes and to know whether they are compatible. It is only when they are a few weeks old in the marriage that they begin to see the true picture of the person they married and then, it is almost too late to opt out. This is likely to lead to a lot of conflicts and quarrels that may eventually end the marriage.

Infertility: After marriage, families and the society generally begin to look forward to the arrival of children in the family. Failure of the bride to conceive within a year of marriage can attract interference from extended families members who are anxious to have grand-children. If this situation is not properly managed, the marriage may collapse as the man may be under pressure to marry another woman who will be able to bear him a child, preferably, a son. Sometimes, the problem may not be childlessness but failure to have a male child which is regarded as very important in the African society because of the existing patrilineal descent that ensures inheritance through the lineage of the male.

Financial crisis: This is one of the strongest reasons for family breakdown in our society. Lot of wives quarrel with their husbands because they believe their husbands are not giving them enough money to take care of the family. This is why it is recommended for couples to be an income earner so as to support each other and provide for the needs of the family. This is however, unacceptable in some families especially in Northern Nigeria, where the man is strictly the head of the house and the breadwinner.

Interference and control from extended family members: This is another common cause of conflicts in many marriages. Many women accuse their husbands of being tied to their mother's apron and not being able to make decisions about their families. Some mothers-in-law also take pleasure in visiting their son's family and make a lot of unreasonable demands on the bride. This can lead to serious problems if the man is not able to properly manage the situation.

4.0 ACTIVITY

1. Identify and discuss three types of marriages in Nigeria.
2. List four reasons why people marry.
3. Identify four steps that should be taken before a marriage is contracted.

7.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about marriage, including types of marriage, factors to consider before marriage, challenges that occur in marriage and factors that can cause marriage failures.

8.0 ASSIGNMENT

1. Identify four factors that can lead to marriage failure.
2. Mention four forms of marital violence in our society

9.0 REFERENCES

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UNIT 4 PARENTING STYLES AND PATTERNS

CONTENTS

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 - 5.3 Parental Duties and Responsibilities
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 - 5.7 Parenting Styles That Foster Responsible Behaviour
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Parents play a critical role in the lives of their children. This is why the parents must be mature and be ready to deal with the issues and challenges associated with marriage before venturing into it. In the last unit, you learnt about marriage. In this unit, you will learn about parenting patterns and skills.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning and types of parenting;
- explain parenting throughout the life span;
- identify different patterns of negative parenting;
- discuss tips for good parenting; and
- enumerate challenges associated with parents and children with disabilities.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

Read through this unit with care.

Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Foster parent: - Person who nurtures or provides parental care to a child who is not related to him/her by blood or legal ties.

Toddlers: - This refers to children who are infants between the ages of two and three years old. At this stage the child has started walking.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Definition of Parenting

- Parenting is how a father or mother takes care of his/her child/children and others in the household (AHI, 2001).
- Parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood (Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia).
- Parenting also refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship (that is, parental care from non-parent, blood or non-blood relations, who raise a child which is orphaned or belonging to a relation). Some children are also raised in foster care or placed in orphanage homes.

Parenting normally involves two people (the father and the mother) or either one of them.

5.2 Types of Parents

- **Biological parents:** Biological parent who has a direct genetic relationship to a child.
- **Adoptive parents:** One who through legal means takes voluntary responsibility for another person's child/children as his/her own.
- **Foster parents:** Person who nurtures or provides parental care to a child who is not related to him/her by blood or legal ties.
- **Single parent:** Single parent who might be the biological father, biological mother or adoptive) is one who takes the sole responsibility of nurturing a child.
- **Step parents:** This refers to a father or mother that has remarried.

5.3 Parental Duties and Responsibilities

Parental duties and responsibilities include:

- Providing the basic necessities of the child including food, shelter, clothing and other basic rights of the child.

- Providing proper nutrition, health care and safe environment to safeguard the child’s physical health.
- Providing love, guidance and acceptance for healthy emotional development.
- Providing supervision, protection and shelter for the child’s safety.
- Impart cultural values and skills.
- Promote opportunities for education and recreation for intellectual and social development.
- Setting rules and regulations as a guide for the child to follow.
- Teaching children moral and religious values.
- Motivating children to be imaginative, creative, reliable, hopeful and encourage them when their spirits are low.
- Parents and children must share, communicate and confide in each other.

Table 2: Children’s Needs and Parental Tasks

Children’s needs	Parental tasks
Physical security – The safety of a child's body and life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide physical safety: shelter, clothes, nourishment. • To protect a child from danger, physical care. • To care for a child's health.
Physical development – appropriate conditions for a healthy growth of a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a child with the means of developing physically. • To train the body of a child, through exercise. • To develop healthy habits.
Intellectual security – the conditions necessary for the child's mind to develop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an atmosphere of peace, justice and respect to one's dignity. • To provide an environment free of fear, threat, and abuse.
Intellectual development- providing opportunity to a child to learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support and/or provide school related activities • To teach social skills and etiquette • To provide moral and spiritual development, as well as creating an ethics and value systems with social norms that contribute to the child's beliefs, culture and customs.
Emotional security – to help protect a child's psyche.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a safe loving environment. • To give a child a sense of being loved, being needed and accepted. • To provide emotional support, encouragement (adding caressing, hugging, touching, etc).
Emotional development – developing the child's ability to love, care, help, etc.-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show empathy and compassion to younger and older, weaker and sicker and other.

Source: *Wikipedia on-line Encyclopedia*

5.4 Parenting across the Child’s Lifespan

Planning and pre-pregnancy: Parents should agree on the number of children they want to have. Family planning is therefore essential in order to ensure that they have only the number of children they can carter for.

Family Planning Methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Male Condoms	Easy to buy. Easy to use, easy to carry. Latex condoms are best protection against STIs and HIV.	Must be put on during sex. Some men say it reduces sexual pleasure.
Female Condoms	Made of polyurethane, stronger than latex, and conducts heat better. Some men find it more comfortable than male condoms, as it does not constrict penis. Can be used with any kind of lubricant, Can be inserted up to eight hours before sex. Female condoms are very effective against STIs/HIV.	More expensive and less available than male condoms. Difficult to insert Some reports of excessive noise associated with use, but this can be overcome by using more lubricant and early insertion. Outer ring highly visible.
Diaphragm, Cervical Cap	Can be inserted before sex.	Must practice insertion to learn how to use it correctly. Some diaphragms need to be fitted by a doctor or nurse. No protection against STIs/HIV (though some argue that there is less chance of HIV infection if cervix is not exposed).
Injectibles	Does not interfere with sex. Lasts two to three months.	May cause absence of periods, irregular bleeding, weight gain and headaches. May cause delay in getting pregnant.
Implants	It works for three to five years. Does not require before sexual intercourse. Fertility returns soon after	A trained health care provider must insert and remove it. Does not protect against STIs. May feel some discomfort when the implant is fixed and

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
	removal.	removed.
Spermicides	Easy to buy. Easy to use, easy to carry. May help protect against some STIs.	Must be put in shortly before sex, can be messy. May irritate vagina and penis; no protection against HIV/ STIs.
IUCD (Intrauterine Contraceptive Device)	Always in place. Does not interfere with sex. Is effective for long duration.	May cause more bleeding and pain during period or spotting between periods. No protection against HIV/ STIs.
Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs)	Simple and easy to use. Doesn't interfere with sex. Less bleeding and cramping during period. Protects against Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, ovarian and endometrial cancers.	May cause weight changes, moodiness, spotting and many more vaginal infections. Must be taken every day. No protection against HIV/STIs.
Emergency Contraceptives	Easy to buy, use and carry	May cause nausea and vomiting. May cause early or longer period. No protection against STIs.
Sterilization	No other method will ever be needed to protect against pregnancies. No physical effect on sexual desire or ability.	Permanent (one cannot change one's mind later). No protection against HIV/ STIs.
Traditional methods Natural family Planning (nfp)	Fertility awareness methods or withdrawal may be only options for some adolescents. no chemicals required, but must use beads, charts and basal thermometers Withdrawal is a back-up contraceptive that is always available, though risky.	Fertility awareness methods and withdrawal much less effective than other methods and not recommended for adolescents. No protection against HIV/STIs. Cannot be used with irregular periods or temperature patterns as calculating the fertile day is difficult.

Pregnancy: The health and diet decisions of the mother can have either a positive or negative impact on the child during prenatal parenting. So, during pregnancy, the mother needs to make healthy decisions about the choice of food and lifestyle that will make her child healthy.

Newborns and Infants: Parents have the obligation to provide basic necessities of a baby before its arrival. Afterwards, the newborn's basic needs such as food and comfort have to be taken care of by the parents. Each time a baby cries, his/her needs have to be attended to. Also, the mother has the responsibility of breastfeeding her baby for at least six months.

Toddlers: At this stage, parents are concerned with showing the child how to do things rather than doing it for them, and the child will often mimic the parents. Toddlers need help to build their vocabulary, increase their communications skills, and manage their emotions. Toddlers will also start learning toilet training; understand social etiquette such as being polite.

Early Childhood and Pre-adolescent: Learning in the early years comes from being involved in activities and household duties. Parents who join their children in play have the opportunity to experience their children's world, learn to communicate more effectively with them and also have the opportunity to offer guidance. Parents teach their children healthy, hygienic and eating habits through instruction and by example. Parents are expected to make decisions about their child's education.

Adolescence: Although adolescents look up to peers and outsiders for guidance and models. Adolescence can be a challenging period for children, a time where newly found freedoms can result in decisions that significantly affect their life opportunities. Parental issues at this stage of parenting include dealing with "rebellious" teenagers.

Adults: As children grow into young adults, their personalities show the result of successful or unsuccessful parenting, especially when young adults make their independent life decisions about their education, work and choosing mates for friendship or marriage.

Middle-age and Old Age: Parenting does not end when children grow up and advance in age. Parents always remain parents to old children. Their relationship continues as parenting issues may include the relationship with grandchildren and stepchildren. Traditionally, young mothers receive advice from their own parents, and exchange advice with other young mothers.

5.5 Characteristics of Negative Parenting Styles

There are certain characteristics that describe the type of parent an individual is. Each of this has either a negative or positive impact on the child. Examples of these characteristics are:

- **The busy parent:** Parents do not spend enough time with the children; he/she hardly stay at home even on public holidays when families should be together. Such parent does not provide an opportunity to discuss the problems or challenges being faced by the child.

- **The strict or autocratic parent:** Some people believe that, the best way to raise a child is to be a strict parent. Such parents do not allow their children to express their opinion freely, their words are final, they instill fear in a child and they give out order without considering the feelings of the child.
- **The frustrated parent:** This type of parent feels frustrated by the behaviour of the child. The parent feels that the child is always disobedient, feels upset about differences of opinion and interests between him/her and the child. Such parent, therefore, indulges in bad habits such as drinking and smoking as a way of coping with the situation.
- **Selfish and over protective parent:** These parents do not always consider the best interest of the child. Rather, the parent wants to be heard always without listening to the child, likes to win arguments, and displays ignorance of the child's needs. The parent does not give the child some degree of freedom to explore.
- **The impatient parent:** Such parents do not give the child the opportunity to prove himself or herself, gets angry, yells, blames and criticises the child when he/she makes a mistake, does not correct the child lovingly, calls the child names. These lower the child's self-esteem.

5.6 Family Relationship Patterns

The strict family pattern: In this type of family, parents do not allow the children to have freedom. They insist on having things done their own way and the child is expected to always listen to them and obey their instructions. In this situation, children have no other option than to give in to their parent's wishes. Children, sometimes, rebel and this leads to conflicts between parents and children.

The overprotective family pattern: In this kind of family, parents show a level of concern and try to give their children all sorts of protection and well-being. However, overprotection does not allow children to develop healthy emotional and social growth. Such children are likely to become defenseless, incompetent and insecure.

The amalgamated family pattern: This kind of family does things together and there is no respect for privacy. This may not be a very ideal situation for the family because children, especially adolescents need some independence and privacy.

The conflict-evading family pattern: This family has little tolerance for conflicts therefore, there is little self-criticism and as a result, people tend to avoid conflicts and confrontation. This type of situation has its disadvantages because children will not be able to learn how to deal with or negotiate difficult situations. Sometimes, children raised in this type family pattern explode when they are no longer able to bear the repressed feelings, thus leading to a surprising family crisis

The family focused on children pattern: In this kind of family pattern, parents are incapable of facing conflicts as a couple and divert attention toward their children.

Therefore, the couple's stability and family satisfaction are also focused on the children. In this situation, children cannot grow, and therefore, continue to be dependent as the reverse would alter the apparent family balance.

The single mother/father family pattern: In this case, one of the children substitutes for the missing parent by performing a role not corresponding to him/her. Children cannot perform such roles, and if they do, they are likely to grow older.

The pseudo-democratic family pattern: In this kind of family, parents are incapable of imposing discipline on their children. Under the pretence of being flexible, they do not set the necessary limits, this allows the children do whatever they like. The symbol of authority is confusing and the children show a disproportionate, destructive and unlimited degree of competitiveness.

The unstable family pattern: In this family, goals are uncertain and vague, there is no planning; instead, there is much improvisation. The child is insecure, distrustful, and fearful and experiences difficulty in developing his/her identity.

The best parenting approach is not a dictatorship or "authoritative parenting," but a relationship where parents seek input from the children. Good parenting is characterised by love, good teaching, clear and consistent expectations, and avoidance of severe or harsh discipline. Numerous studies show that this kind of parenting has the most positive benefits for children.

5.7 Parenting Styles That Foster Responsible Behaviour

According to Baumrind (1970), the following types of parenting style foster the development of socially responsible and independent behaviour in children:

- a. Parents who lead by example.
- b. Parents who set firm standards of behaviour in which socially accepted behaviour is rewarded and unacceptable behaviour is punished.
- c. Parents who are committed to the child in such a way that, they are neither overprotective nor rejecting.
- d. Parents who provide security for children and an enabling environment for them to showcase their creative talents, skills and rational thinking.
- e. Parents who have high demands for achievement and are receptive to a child's rational demands.

5.8 Tips for Good Parenting

According to the *Teacher's Training Manual on Sexuality Education* (AHI, 2001), parents need to acquire good parenting skills in order to ensure proper training of the child. Some tips for good parenting are:

- Parents should take interests in their children by asking questions about their concerns, worries, schooling, relationships etc.
- Parents should listen to their children's feelings.

- Parents should let their children know that they love them and have their best interest at heart.
- Discuss the rules they set with their children. (For instance the time to come back home from an outing etc.)
- Parents should not feel shy or uncomfortable to discuss sensitive issues with their children such as sexuality issues.
- Recognise the fact that, sometimes, children need to be independent and therefore give them a little bit of freedom and trust them to make good decisions and judgments.
- Help children find interests and hobbies.
- Praise and encourage children when they do positive things.
- Correct them lovingly when they make mistakes.

5.9 Parenting Children with Disabilities

While families with children with disabilities experience challenges, it is important for such parents to provide the necessary support that will make the child live a happy healthy life. Some tips for coping with such situations include:

- **Maintaining a strong marital relationship:** Acknowledging the special need of the disabled child can be traumatic, hence, keeping their relationship strong and healthy will increase their ability to adapt to the new situation.
- **Stay positive and have realistic expectations:** Researchers say that families which cope well with special child have a positive attitude, realistic expectations of their child, and are less preoccupied with negative thoughts (Yau & Li-Tsang, 1999).
- **Recognise that the child cannot help the situation:** Remind yourself that the problem the child is experiencing comes from a special need he/she cannot control.
- **Avoid being anxious:** It is normal to be concerned about the future of the child, but excessive anxiety can get in the way of making good decisions.
- **Let the child grow up at his/her own pace:** Parents should not compare the child with another or subject the child to pressure of keeping up with his/her peers. He/she should be allowed to grow and learn at his/her own pace.
- **Help the child to maintain self-confidence:** Accept the child as he/she is. Allow him/her to feel unconditionally loved irrespective of whom he/she is, not by what he/she achieves.
- **Turn to religious faith for strength:** Religious faith and beliefs provide many families with strength, support, and hope during times of difficulty. Believe in a divine plan allows many fathers and mothers find meaning in their situation and to rise above discouragement. Many parents see their special child as a divine gift from God and often consider it as a blessing to be entrusted with this special spirit in their home.

- **Actively seek support:** Joining a parent support group where parents can share experiences and worries with others in a similar situation can be helpful. Educate relatives, friends, or neighbours about the child's disability and communicate the child's needs and feelings. Also, actively seeking support can greatly decrease stress and anxiety for you and your family. Begin by talking with doctors, schools counsellors and religious leaders.

6.0 ACTIVITY

1. State the concept – parenting.
2. Identify different patterns of negative parenting.
3. Discuss tips for good parenting

7.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about parenting, different roles and responsibilities of a parent, tips for good parenting and characteristics of negative parenting styles. In Module two, you will learn more about functions and responsibilities of each member of the family.

8.0 ASSIGNMENT

1. What does it take to be a good parent?
2. Discuss four tips for parenting a child with special needs?

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UNIT 5 COMMUNICATION AND THE FAMILY

CONTENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Effective communication between parents and children lead to variety of positive outcomes. Some of these include higher self-esteem, greater adherence to moral standards, compliance with parents' wishes, less aggression and other problem behaviour. Father's supportive messages foster cognitive development, masculine sex-role identification and academic achievement of sons; mother's supportive messages foster the cognitive development and feminine sex-role identification of daughters. Other communication-related factors contributing to positive child outcomes include a mother's responsiveness, discussion and acceptance of feelings and the reinforcement and modelling of positive social behaviour.

Negative control messages such as physical punishment lead to greater aggression in children, coercion, which weakens a child's adherence to moral standards, rejection, which leads to greater dependency. Positive control messages such as giving reasons and explanations to situation help children develop the social competence they need to be successful. Since effective communication is vital to successful parent-child relationship, it is therefore, important to learn the necessary communication skills for proper behavioural attitudes.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define effective communication;
- explain the elements of the communication process;
- describe various forms of communication; and
- identify barriers to effective communication.

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

Read through this unit with care.

Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK. THIS APPLIES TO EVERY OTHER UNIT IN THIS BOOK.

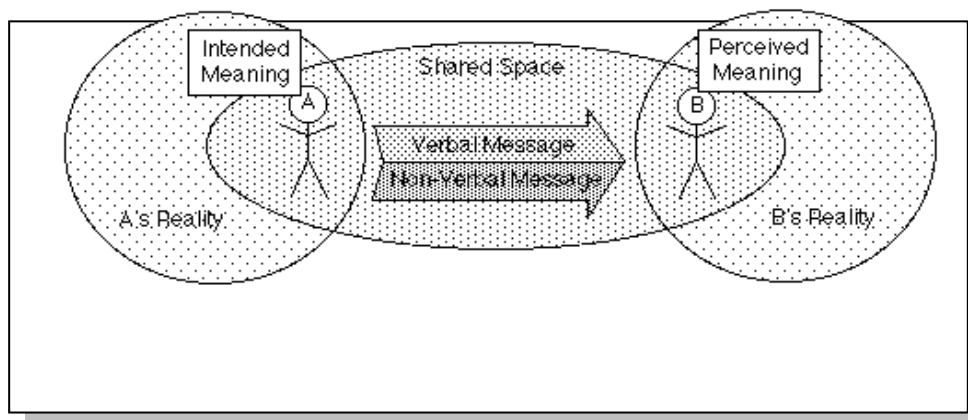
4.0 WORD STUDY

Communication: This refers to the process of conveying thoughts, feelings or ideas to other people in our family and in the society. Communication is the centre of human interactions.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Definition of Communication

Communication is a process through which we convey thoughts, feelings or ideas to other people in our family and in society and having those ideas, thoughts, and feelings understood by the people we are communicating with.



5.2 Importance of Communication

Communication is the centre of human interaction. Without communication, people cannot relate with each other or one another. If we can understand the communication process better and improve it, we will become more effective and successful communicators.

5.3 Forms of Communication

People communicate in different ways. Some forms/types of communication include:

1. **Verbal Communication:** Involves expressing ideas, thoughts or feelings through spoken words (or messages). It entails speaking clearly and using terms that can be easily understood.
2. **Non-verbal Communication:** Involves expressing oneself using body language, facial expressions, gestures, nods, smiles, etc without speaking.
3. **Intra-personal Communication:** This is talking within oneself. It is the thought going on within a person. This form of communication takes place before any other form of communication. Before anybody communicates with another person or takes any action, he/she must have thought about it.
4. **Inter-personal Communication:** This involves face-to-face verbal and non-verbal exchange of information, ideas, or feelings between individuals or groups. It is used in all areas of human endeavour.
5. **The Mass Media:** This involves communicating with a large group of people through specialised media such as electronic (television, radio, etc) and print (newspaper, magazines, posters, etc.) media.

5.4 Factors that Hinder Communication

Barriers keep us from understanding other's ideas and thoughts. Barriers can appear at any point of the communication process. There are two types of barriers—internal and external. Examples of internal barriers are poor listening skills, lack of interest in the message, mistrust, etc. Examples of external barriers include noise, distractions, server (internet) problem, bad phone signal; use of technical words by the sender.

5.5 Reasons for Communication between Parents and Children

- Parents often have the most influence over their children. Communication with children affords the parents the opportunity to pass family values and useful information that will help the children make good decisions. Other reasons are:
 - to satisfy their curiosity and inquisitiveness.
 - to form and strengthen bonds that last a life-time and are beneficial to both the parents and children.
 - to build up children's trust and confidence in their parents.
 - to forestall being wrongly informed from outsiders.

5.6 Tips for Effective Listening

- Be attentive and maintain eye contact to show that you are paying keen attention.
- Demonstrate that you are listening by nodding and show encouragement.

- Do not interrupt.
- Be mindful of your facial expression and body language, for example, do not smile at a sad story or experience

5.7 Importance of Sex Education

In many cultures, it is a taboo to discuss sexuality in public. Many parents do not talk to their children about sexuality because they feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or fear that letting children know about sexuality may encourage the experiment with sex. However, because children are curious by nature, they get to learn wrong things about sexuality from the media and their friends. Some reasons why parents should discuss sexuality with their children include the following.

- Research has shown that more children are engaging in sexual activity at increasing younger ages. The result of this is the increase in teenage pregnancy, committing unsafe abortions, and contacting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS.
- By not talking about sexuality, parents are indirectly telling children it is wrong, evil and dirty, this can give them problems in their sexual relationships when they become adults.
- By not preparing children to handle sexuality issues, parents might be exposing their children to dangers that will make them victims of sexual abuse, harassment, and rape.

For these and other reasons, it is clear that children need to be informed about their sexuality early enough by their parents.

5.8 Basic Sexuality Education Tips for Parents

Parents need to know exactly what areas to address when opening discussions about sexuality. Some critical areas include:

- **Boosting the child's self esteem:** Self esteem means that the child feels good about himself/herself and thus, will develop self-confidence. Children who feel good about themselves and their bodies, whether they are short or tall, fat or slim, light or dark, see themselves as people of worth and are not easily influenced by their peers. They will not allow themselves to be used, abused or taken advantage of. During adolescence, teenagers tend to be shy and unsure about themselves, particularly when their bodies begin to change rapidly and their emotions become unsteady. They begin to wonder if the experiences they are having are normal or if there is something strange happening to them. It is important at this stage for parents to reassure them that all teenagers are going through the same growing process, but that each teenager has his/her own pace of growth and that whatever the case, they are unique and special. This will

help them feel good about good about themselves and develop high self-esteem.

- **Set a good example:** Parents should be role models for their children; they should lead by example. For instance, parents should show genuine love, affection and respect for each other in the presence of their children, they should also avoid social vices such as alcoholism, smoking and extra marital affairs. These will make their children learn to do the same as they become adults.
- **Create time for open communication:** Many parents stop their children from asking questions about sexuality. Some even abuse them for wanting to know about such “dirty” subject. However, if a parent does not educate his or her child, the child will turn to someone else. The danger in this is that children may be misled and wrongly informed by other people. If parents take time to speak with their children and keep the lines of communication open, the children will be guided aright and is likely to make fewer mistakes and take appropriate decisions.
- **Prepare children well ahead of time:** It is important to prepare girls for menstruation and boys for erection and wet dreams before it happens. This is because when a child experiences menstruation or erection and wet dreams for the first time, they may become scared and uncertain. But if they have been properly educated before then, it will not take them by surprise.
- **Focus on responsibility:** It is important for parents to let teenagers know they can become a father or mother if they engage in unprotected sexual activity. Encourage them to abstain from sexual activity until they are older.
- **Emphasise values, norms and attitudes:** Parents need to emphasise on values such as self control, letting them know they cannot do everything they feel like doing unless they are ready to face the consequences. Also, values such as responsibility and accountability can be achieved when they insist on appropriate behaviour. Also, children should be taught to demonstrate values of love, respect, commitment, patience and tolerance in relationships.
- **Teach children to prevent sexual abuse:** Parents should teach their children from tender age that, no one is allowed to touch their bodies or do anything to them that makes them feel uncomfortable. They should be taught how to say no and be assertive and how to find help in problematic situation. Children should be made aware of dangerous situations and how to avoid them such as being alone in a dark place with someone of the opposite sex, taking free ride, walking alone in isolated or dark places and so on.

6.0 ACTIVITY

- i. Define effective communication.
- ii. Identify various types of communication.
- iii. What are the barriers responsible for effective communication.

7.0 SUMMARY

This unit addressed important information about a man's capacity for communication within the family. You learnt to understand the messages sent by different members of the family which gives them the tool and confidence to interact with larger members of the society.

8.0 ASSIGNMENT

1. List four reasons why parents should communicate their children
2. Mention three tips for effective listening

9.0 REFERENCES

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