RESEARCH UPDATE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Discussion Questions: What’s New With Teens and Their Families?

Throughout these presentations we offer discussion questions for you to consider in your role as a professional working with parents, and to use to facilitate conversations with your colleagues. This document summarizes these questions.

ADOLESCENT AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

- Think about the families you work with. Where do they fit in the parenting style typology?
- Think of a “good enough” parent that you work with. What parenting practices would you suggest they work on and why?
- If a parent has been neglectful, how might you work with that parent on a specific parenting practice?
- Many parents still view adolescence as a time of storm and stress. With the parents you work with, how can you help to change that image into something more positive?

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE FAMILY AS A SYSTEM?

- How does the ecological model apply to the different families that you work with?
- What other institutions or groups would you add to the ecological model for the families you work with?
- How would you consider culture, economics, social class, race, ethnicity, and religion in family systems theory?

BI-DIRECTIONALITY IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

- In your experience, how do parents view bi-directionality in the family system?
  - In what ways would they say their children influence them?
  - Have you incorporated this perspective into your work? How?
- Think about how you see parents being influenced by their kids. How do you approach parenting? As an action, a reaction, or both?
- How could you incorporate bi-directionality more into your work?

The What's New with Teens and Their Families? Research Update for Professionals online course originally was presented in 2006 by Colleen Gengler, Extension Educator, and Jodi Dworkin, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Family Social Science University of Minnesota. These discussion questions have been reviewed November 2012 by Jodi Dworkin.