Social-Emotional Development in Middle and Late Childhood

SPCL 7804: Human Development
Session 9
Erikson’s Stage 4: Industry vs. Inferiority

- Erikson believed that if industrious children can be successful in their endeavors, they will get a sense of confidence for future challenges.
- If not, a sense of inferiority ensues during middle and late childhood

(Lally & Valentine-French, p. 182)
Development of Self-Concept

• Multidimensional construct: **What is self-concept?**

• Cognitively constructed, constrained by cognitive development

• Changes throughout development – **How so?**
  • Preschool age: begin to describe themselves, but have difficulty coordinating the different aspects of themselves
  • Middle childhood/early adolescence: begin to form more abstract trait-like concepts of self

• Self-Esteem vs. Self-Efficacy
Structure of Self-Concept

- Divided into 2 main domains: **What are they?**
  1. Academic self-concept
     Subdivided by subject areas, math, science, etc.
  2. Nonacademic self-concept
     Subdivided into social, emotional, physical

- Self-concept and self-esteem are separate but intertwined – **How?**

**Team Discussion:** How do the academic and nonacademic self-concepts apply to you?
Diagram of the Self-Concept Model

General self-concept

Academic self-concept
- English
- History
- Math
- Science
- Peers
- Significant others

Nonacademic self-concept
- Social self-concept
- Emotional self-concept
- Physical self-concept
- Emotional states
- Physical ability
- Physical appearance

Evaluation of behavior in specific situations

Source: Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton (1976).
Influences on the Development of Self-Concept

- Global self-esteem dependent on competence in areas of personal importance
- Influenced by social processes
  - Internalizing the assessments of others
  - Social comparison – downward social comparison
  - Tend to be motivated by a self-enhancing bias
The Moral Self

• **What does it mean to be moral?**
  - a capacity to make judgments about what is right versus what is wrong;
  - and preferring to act in ways that are judged to be “right”

• Morality requires 3 elements to be present:
  1. Emotions
  2. Cognitions
  3. Behaviors
Classic Theories of Moral Development

- Freud’s psychoanalytic theory
  - Inborn impulses of the id are entirely self-serving
  - Superego emerges in preschool is the source of moral emotions (pride, shame, guilt)
  - Moral emotions drive moral functioning

- Piaget & Kohlberg argued that…

  moral development is influenced by developmental changes in logical thinking and emerges in a series of stages
Piaget: Moral Development

• Preschoolers are premoral: seem unconcerned about established rules or standards

• At about age 5, children regard rules as immutable, existing outside the self, and requiring strict adherence (heteronomous, or external)

• As children get older, with experience they come to understand that they have to take into account intent → autonomous morality.
### Piaget’s Moral Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story 1</th>
<th>Story 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A little boy called John is in his room. He is called to dinner. He goes into the dining room. But behind the door there was a chair, and on the chair there was a tray with 15 cups on it. John couldn’t have known that there was all this behind the door. He goes in, the door knocks against the tray, “bang” to the 15 cups and they all get broken!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• One day when Henry’s mother was out, he tried to get some jam out of the cupboard. He climbed up on a chair and stretched out his arm. But the jam was too high up and he couldn’t reach it and have any. But while he was trying to get it, he knocked over a cup. The cup fell down and broke.</td>
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Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development

• Used stories that were outside of ordinary experiences and raised broad philosophical issues
  • Focused on the reasons participants gave for their judgments

• 3 levels of moral reasoning, each characterized by 2 stages

• **What was the Heinz Dilemma?**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Moral Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| Young children—usually prior to age 9 | Pre-Conventional Morality | **Stage 1:** Focus is on self-interest and punishment is avoided. The man shouldn’t steal the drug, as he may get caught and go to jail.  
**Stage 2:** Rewards are sought. A person at this level will argue that the man should steal the drug because he does not want to lose his wife who takes care of him. |
| Older children, adolescents and most adults | Conventional Morality | **Stage 3:** Focus is on how situational outcomes impact others and wanting to please and be accepted. The man should steal the drug because that is what good husbands do.  
**Stage 4:** People make decisions based on laws or formalized rules. The man should obey the law because stealing is a crime. |
| Rare with adolescents and few adults | Post-Conventional Morality | **Stage 5:** Individuals employ abstract reasoning to justify behaviors. The man should steal the drug because laws can be unjust and you have to consider the whole situation.  
**Stage 6:** Moral behavior is based on self-chosen ethical principles. The man should steal the drug because life is more important than property. |
Gilligan: Moral Development

- Argued that males are more likely to use a justice focus (morality of justice), whereas females are more likely to use a caring focus (morality of caring)

- Major finding: both men and women are concerned about both justice and caring; together these concerns contribute to mature moral reasoning
Children’s Prosocial Behavior

• Prosocial behavior or altruism is to act in ways that seem intended to benefit someone else
  • Tends to increase with age
  • Individual differences stable across age

• Multiple factors contribute to prosocial behavior
  • Emotion: Empathy ("feeling with" another), sympathy ("feeling for" another) needs against those of others
  • Cognition: Needs-based reasoning, weighing own needs against those of others
  • Temperament and personality: Social competence, behavioral inhibition
  • Parenting practices and peer relationships
Children’s Antisocial Behavior

• Antisocial behavior distinguished by intent to harm or injure another or disregard for the harm

• Includes physical, verbal, or social aggression
  • Instrumental aggression: Using force or threat to obtain possession
  • Person-directed, social, or relational aggression: Behavior aimed at damaging peer relationships

• Social information-processing plays a key role
  • Hostile attribution bias characterizes aggressive individuals
Children’s Conceptualization of Friendship (Bigelow & LaGaipa)

- Stage 1: Reward cost
- Stage 2: Normative expectation
- Stage 3: Empathy and understanding
Selman’s Stages of Friendship

- Stage 0: Momentary physical interaction
- Stage 1: One-way assistance
- Stage 2: Fair-weather cooperation
- Stage 3: Intimate and mutual sharing
- Stage 4: Autonomous interdependence
Peer Status
• Popular
• Rejected
• Neglected
• Average
• Controversial

Sociometric Status
Where were you in middle childhood?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popular</td>
<td>Frequently nominated as a best friend; rarely disliked by peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Receive average number of positive and negative nominations from peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglected</td>
<td>Infrequently nominated as a best friend but not disliked by peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>Infrequently nominated as a best friend; actively disliked by peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controversial</td>
<td>Frequently nominated as someone’s best friend and as being disliked</td>
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