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## Stress, coping and parenting behaviors in families of elementary school children

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# Summary

- Stress in family relationships
- Parental stress
  - Economic stress
  - Job stress
  - Technostress
  - Stress during COVID pandemic and parent-child relationships
- Coping
  - Individual coping
  - Dyadic coping
  - Social support
- Implications for teachers

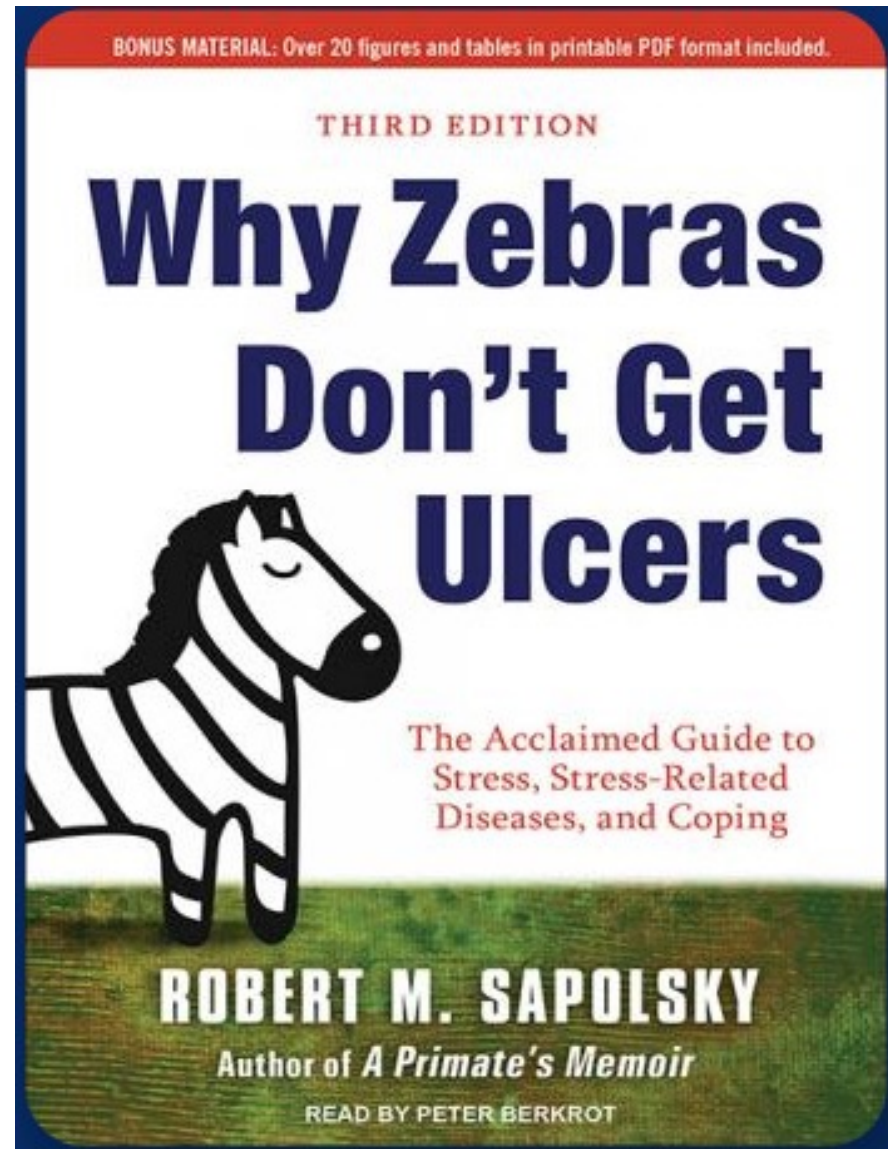


# Stress

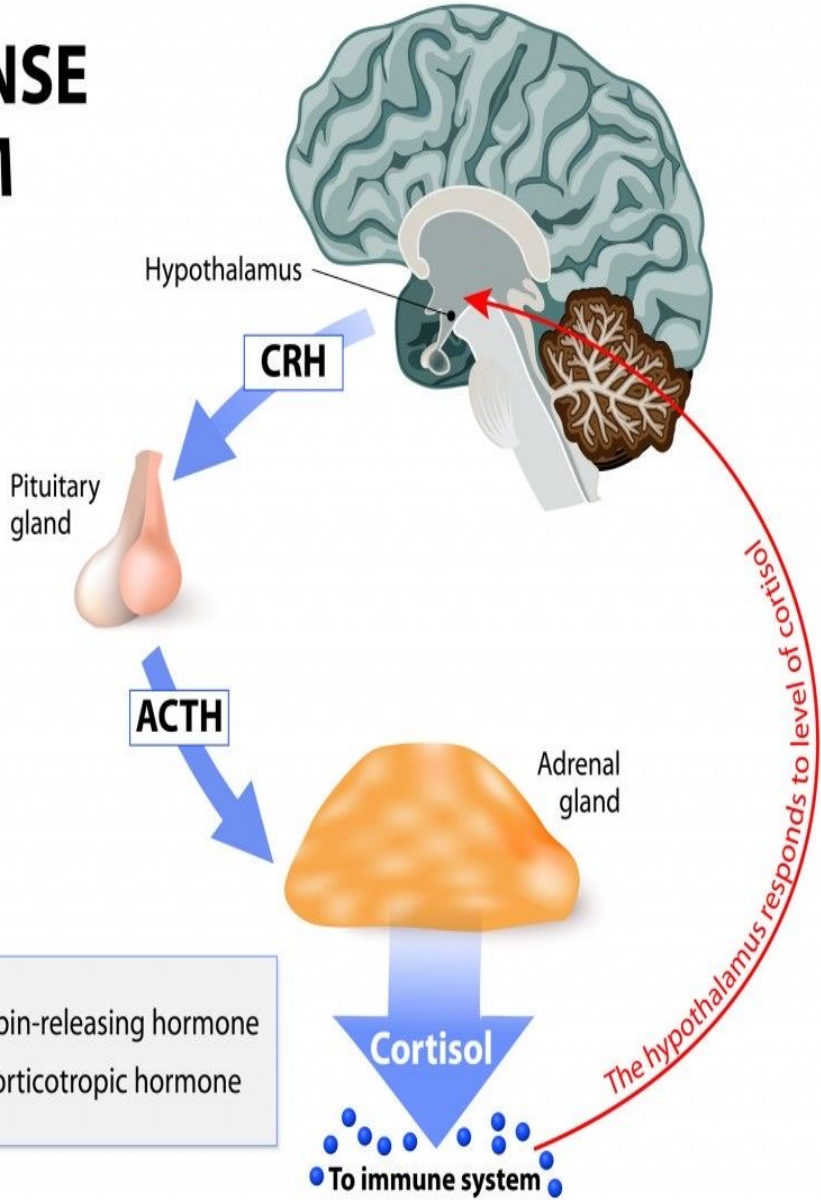
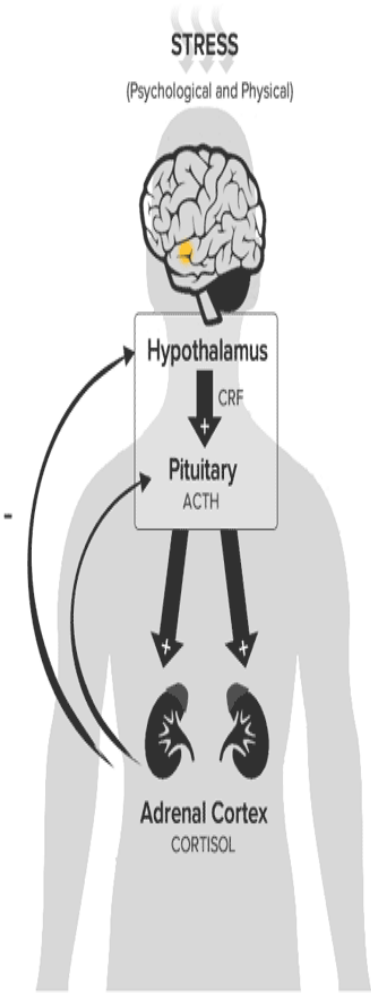
- Research on stress and coping has significantly increased in family psychology in the last two decades.
- Stress has negative consequences not only at the individual level, but also at the couple and family level, affecting couple relationship quality (Randall & Bodenmann, 2017; Rusu, 2016; Rusu et al., 2020) and parenting behaviors (Taraban & Shaw, 2018).



Episodic  
vs.  
chronic stress



# STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM



**CRH** - Corticotropin-releasing hormone  
**ACTH** - Adrenocorticotrop hormone




## Stress spillover

- Stressors originating outside the family (external stressors such as work stress, economic stress) may affect the way people interact within the family.
- ***Stress spillover*** (i.e., the transmission of stress from one domain of a person's life to another domain) in couple and family relationships was associated with decreases in relationship satisfaction and lower levels of psychological and physical well-being (Randall & Bodenmann, 2009).



## Stress cross- over

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- Stress is not only transferred from one area to another but is also transmitted inter-individually from one person to another (i.e., ***stress crossover***).

# Parental stress

Parental stress (e.g. work stress, economic stress, relationship stress) has been negatively associated with parenting functioning and children's well-being (Taraban & Shaw, 2018).

Stressful life events have been found to determine more parenting stress, dysfunctional parent-child interaction, and child anxiety (Platt, Williams, & Ginsburg, 2016).



# Stress and well-being

- The findings of our research studies conducted on Romanian population showed that general stress and parental stress affected parents' well-being and communication between parents and children.
- We also found that women experience higher levels of long-term stress than men.



# Family dysfunction and children well-being

- A longitudinal study conducted on Chinese children found that family dysfunction was related to lower self-esteem and higher anxiety in children (Guo et al. 2018).

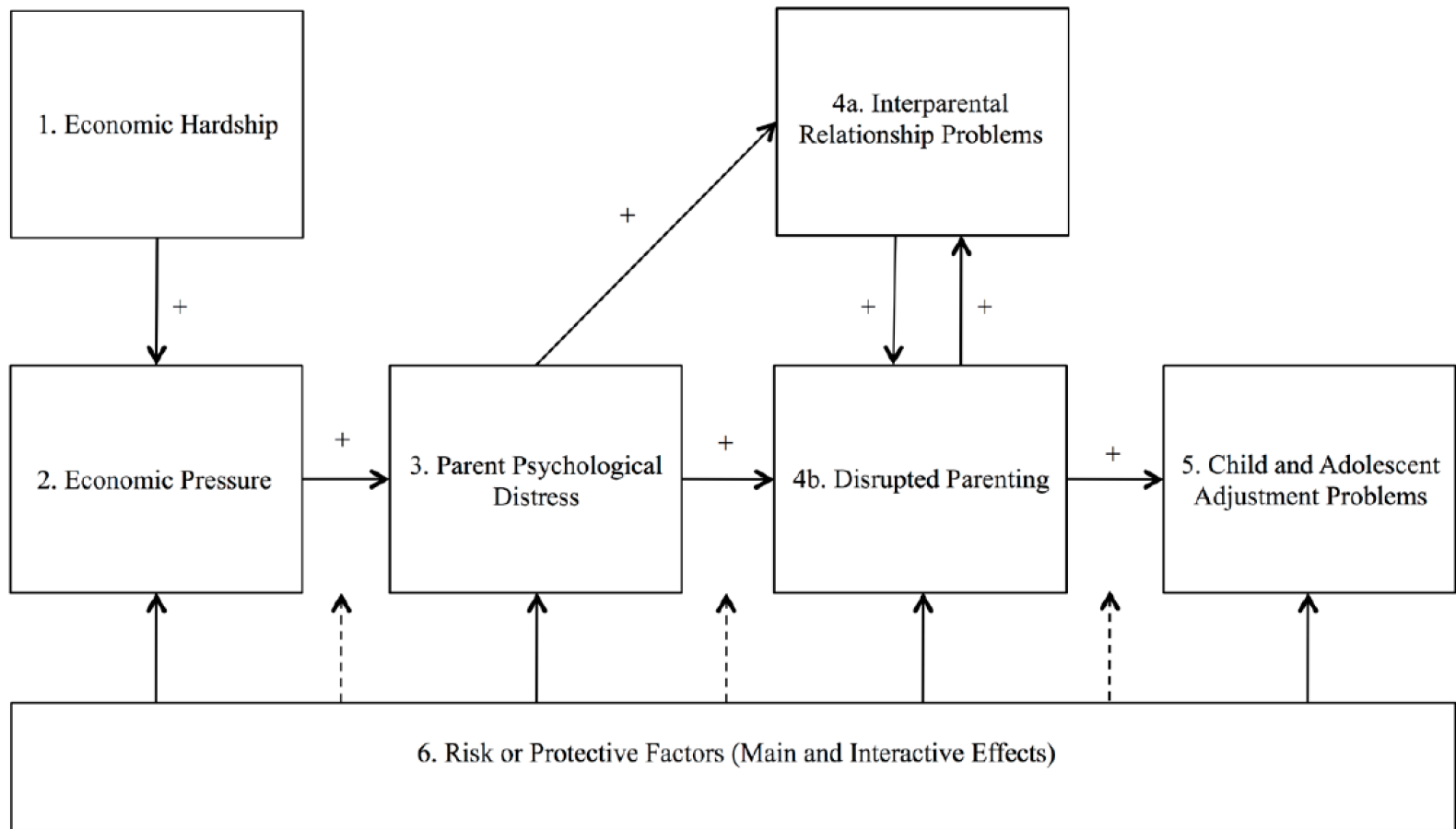


# Economic stress in family

- One type of stressors, which seem to be especially linked to parenting quality is economic stress.
- The Family Stress Model (Masarik & Conger, 2017) posits that economic pressure influences child outcomes through determining more interparental relationship problems, parental distress and disrupted parenting.



# • Masarik & Conger, 2016



## Economic stress

- Existing studies showed that low socio-economic status of parents was associated with more chronic stress, lower levels of parents' well-being and less sensitive and warm parenting (see for review Taraban and Shaw, [2018](#)).



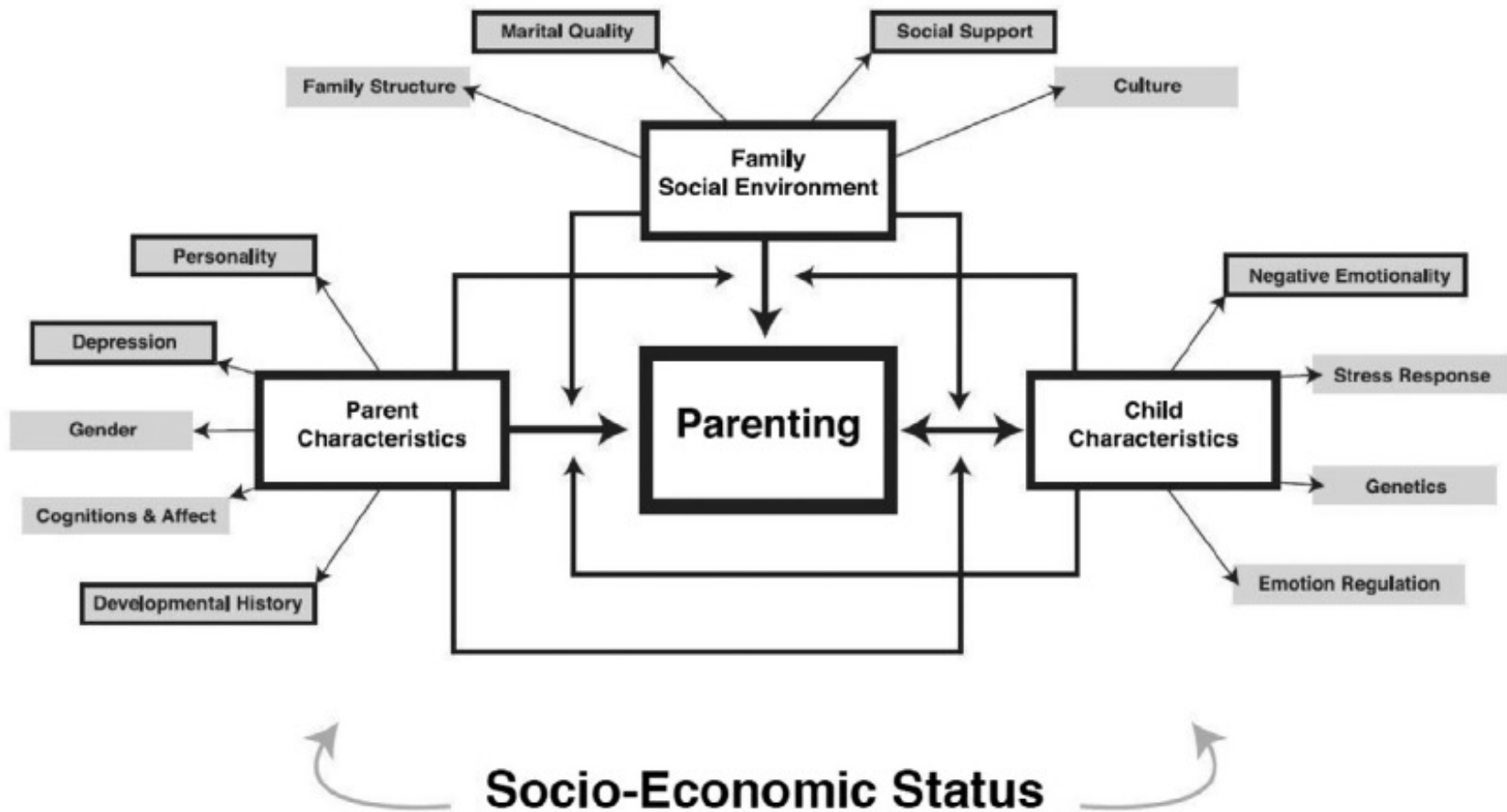


Fig. 2. Updated process of parenting model.

# Economic strain and support in couple: The mediating role of positive emotions

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## Abstract

This study examined positive emotions as mediating mechanisms in the association between economic strain and spouses' supportive behaviour. Data were collected from 295 married couples living in Romania. Results from the Actor–Partner Mediator Model indicated that economic strain had a negative indirect effect on spouses' supportive dyadic coping due to its negative association with partners' positive emotions (joy, contentment, and pride). For both partners, positive emotions decreased when they experienced economic strain, which in turn reduced supportive dyadic coping in couples. These findings have theoretical implications in explaining the association of economic strain with partners' positive emotions and behaviours and also clinical implications for practitioners working with couples experiencing economic strain.

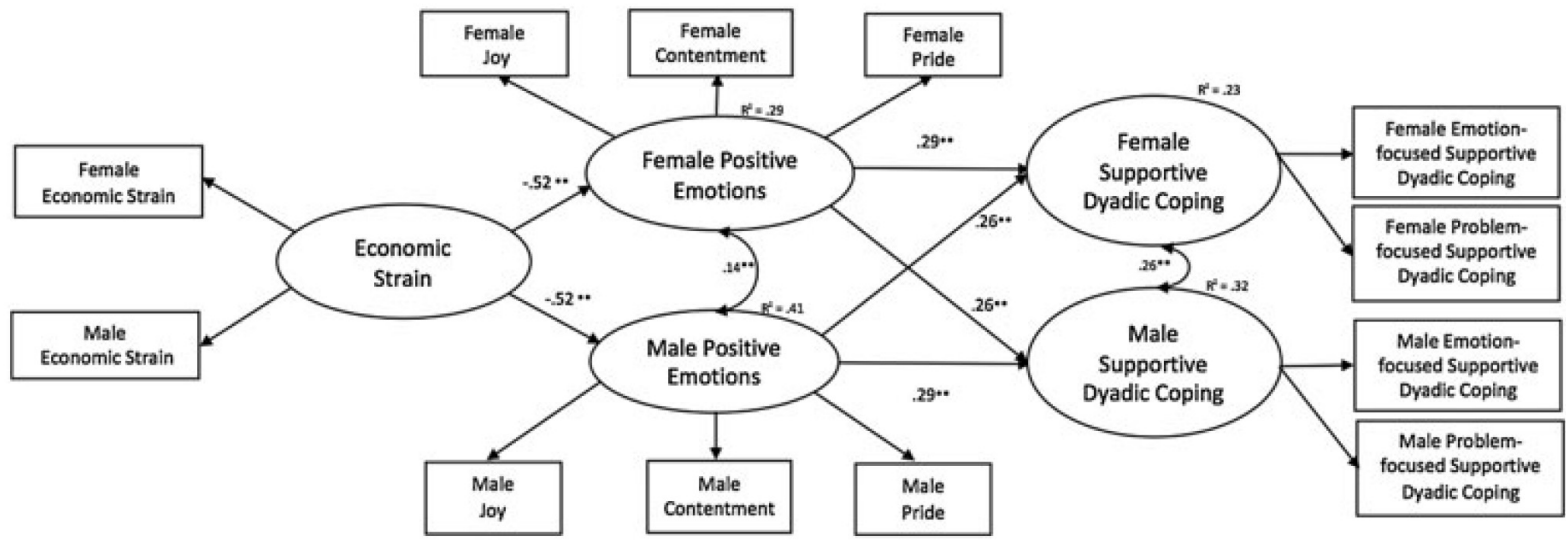
## KEYWORDS

dyadic coping, economic strain, married couples, positive emotions, support

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Economic strain has been found to negatively affect both individual

Home, & Galovan, 2016). Moreover, there is longitudinal research indicating that lack of employment was more strongly related to a decrease in positive emotions than to an increase in negative emotions

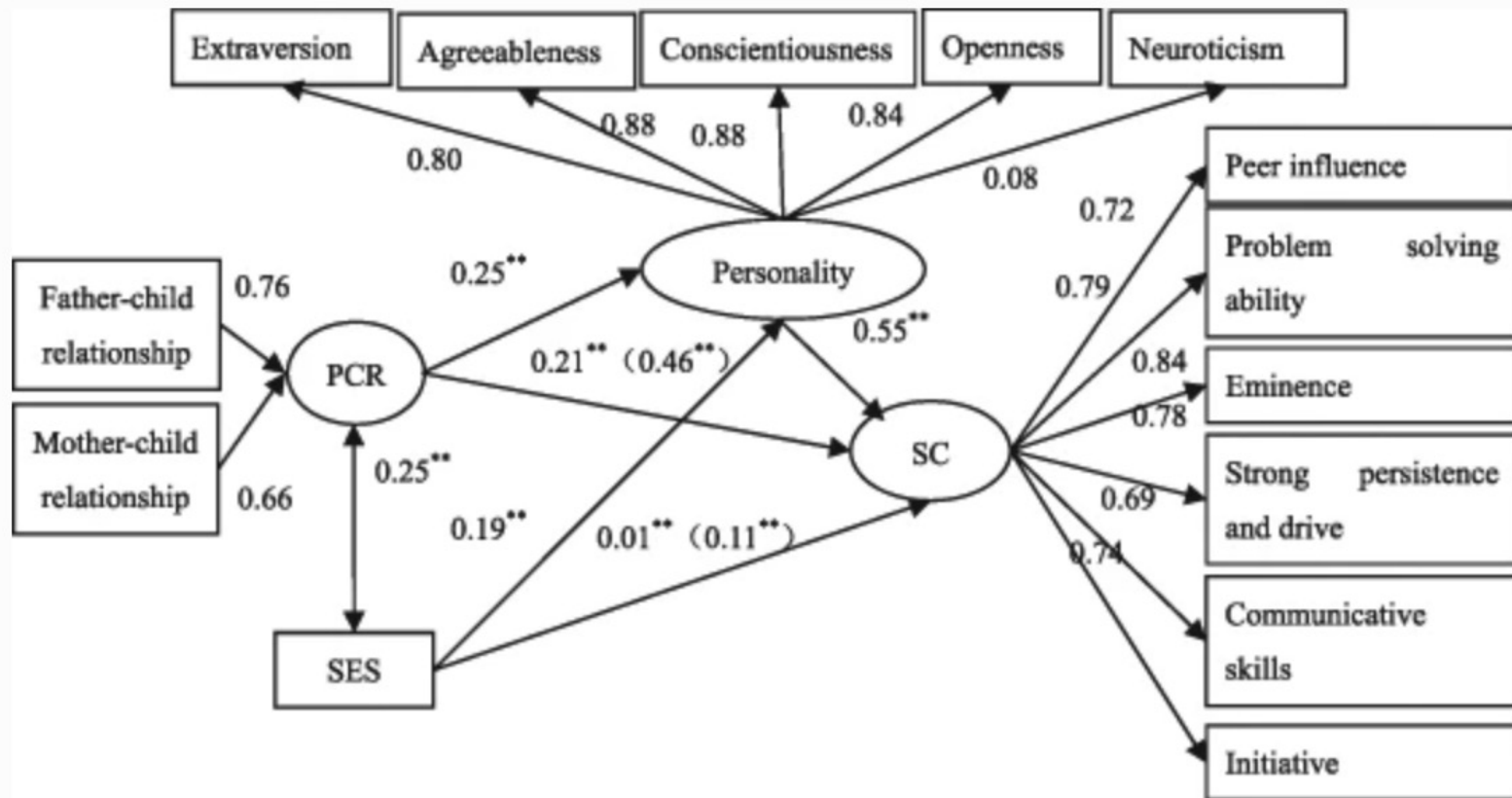




## Economic status and children's creativity

- Social creativity - creativity in social situations, the ability to solve social problems or enhance social activities in a novel and effective way (Gu et al. 2016).
- A research study conducted on a sample of 955 elementary school children (8-13 years old) showed positive associations of socio-economic status and social creativity, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness (Zhang, 2018).

# Economic status and children's creativity



# Job stress

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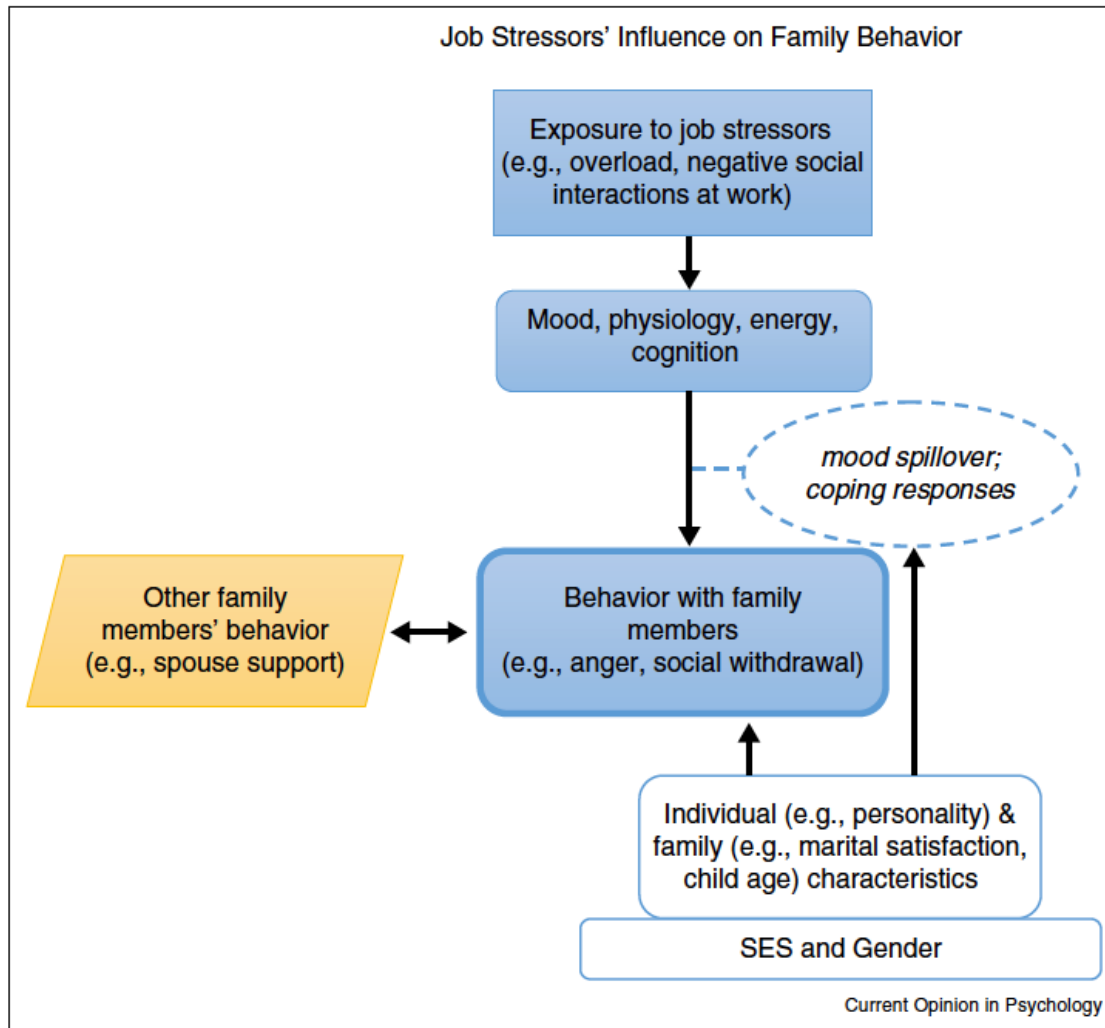
- Research in the work-family area showed that job stressors (high demands, work overload, unsupportive work environment) decrease parental engagement and positive involvement in the family, by depleting parents' energy and cognitive resources (Repetti & Wang, 2017).



# Work-family interaction

- Research in the work-family area showed that job stressors (high demands, work overload, unsupportive work environment) decrease parental engagement and positive involvement in the family, by depleting parents' energy and cognitive resources (Repetti & Wang, 2017).





Job stressors' influence on family behavior.

Repetti & Wang, 2017

# Technostress – always connected

- Technostress – stress due to the use of technology (computers, smartphones, tablets); information excess;
- Technostress was associated with family-work conflict (Riglea, 2021)



# Family technoference and behavior problems in children

- Technoference refers to incidents in which technology use interferes with interpersonal exchanges (e.g., conversations, playing).
- Technology based interruptions affect parent-child interactions; maternal technoference predicted internalizing and externalizing behaviors in children (McDaniel & Radesky, 2017)
- Technoference was associated with decreased ratings by mothers regarding their child's social-emotional functioning (Zayia, 2021).

## **Technology** Addiction



## Phubbing

“Phubbing” a person’s use of or being distracted by a mobile phone while in the presence of others or others’ company, has become a common phenomenon in family life.

Parental phubbing was positively associated with adolescent mobile phone addiction (Niu, 2020).





# NOMOPHOBIA

ON THE RISE

**66%**

of the population suffers from nomophobia

Just four years ago, only 53% of people said they were afraid of losing or being without their phones



**77%**

of people ages 18-24 are nomophobic, compared to only 68% of people ages 25-34



**70%**

of women have mobile phone separation anxiety, compared to 61% of men



**47%**

of men are likely to have two mobile phones, compared to 36% of women



**66%**

of people sleep next to their smartphones and 20% would rather go shoeless for a week than temporarily release their phones



**no-mo(bile) phone-phobia**

1. The fear of being out of cell phone signal range. 2. The anxiety relating to the sudden loss of a cellular connection.

**5ft.**

**72%** of people report being within five feet of their smartphones the majority of the time



# Parenting stress during the COVID pandemic

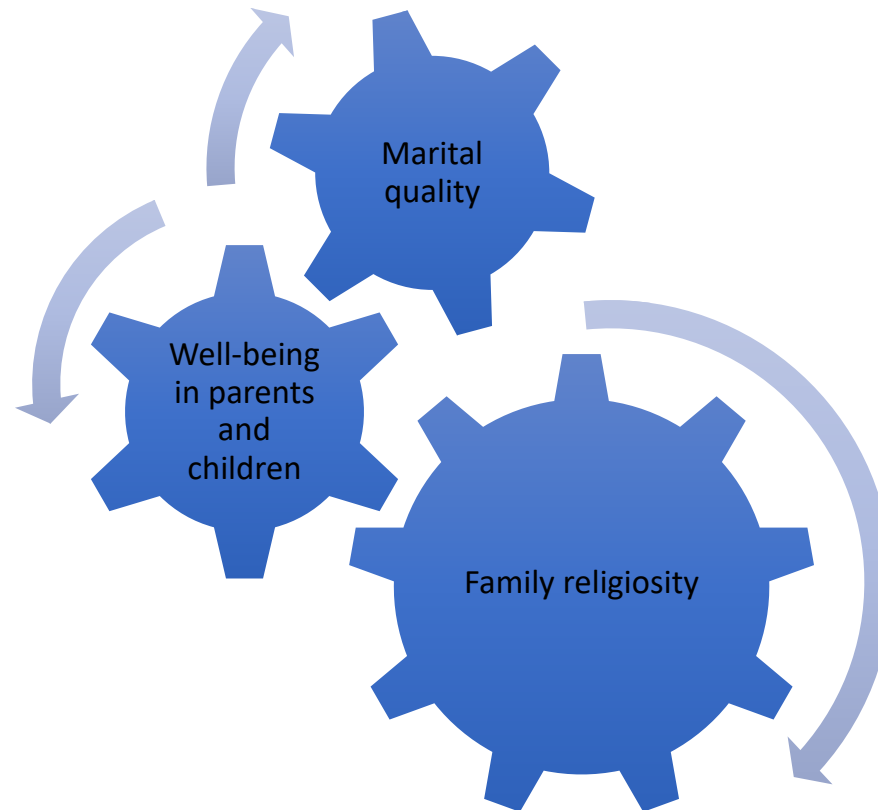
- Parenting stress was a strong predictor of parental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic and social support was positively associated with parental well-being (Chen et al., 2022).
- High levels of parent stress were associated with significantly more hours of media screen time in children compared to low/moderate levels of parent stress (Seguin et al., 2021).



## Post COVID stress

- In a study conducted in 27 countries during COVID pandemic, we found that Romanians and Indonesians did not report higher post-COVID-19 psychological distress (depression, stress, anxiety) (Randall et al., 2022).

# Religiosity and family relationships



# Parental coping

- Within the studies on stress and parenting, dyadic coping and marital quality have been found to be important resources in buffering the effect of stress on dysfunctional parenting (Le, McDaniel, Leavitt, & Feinberg, 2016; Zemp, Bodenmann, et al., 2016).





# Coping

We found that women reported lower levels of support received from the partner than men.

In terms of individual coping, our results indicated positive associations of adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies and dyadic coping with family functioning.

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# Coping

- The impact of stress on well-being is lower when parents have higher levels of **self-esteem** and **social support**
- Coping strategies might be negatively affected by chronic stress



# Systemic Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (STM, Bodenmann, 2005)

- According to STM, stress is communicated and appraised between partners in the family, one partner's stress becomes the other partner's stress and in consequence partners cope with stress together (*dyadic coping*).



# Dyadic coping

- Dyadic coping includes (a) stress communication between partners; (b) support or assistance provided to and received from the partner in coping with stress (Supportive Dyadic Coping,) and (c) conjoint efforts to cope with stress (Common Dyadic Coping, e.g. finding solutions together or sharing feelings).
- Dyadic coping was found to be positively associated with relationship functioning and well-being for couples experiencing different types of stressors (see for review Falconier, Jackson, Hilpert, & Bodenmann, 2015).



# Dyadic coping

- Parents' dyadic coping was associated to coparenting quality (i.e., how parents interact and support each other in the parenting process) and children's psychological well-being (Zemp et al., 2017).



# Individual coping, dyadic coping and family relationships

cognitive emotion regulation strategies were positively related to positive dyadic coping (supportive, common, and delegated dyadic coping), relationship satisfaction and individual well-being of both partners.

JSPR

Article

## Cognitive emotion regulation and positive dyadic outcomes in married couples

Journal of Social and  
Personal Relationships  
1–18  
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DOI: 10.1177/0265407517751664  
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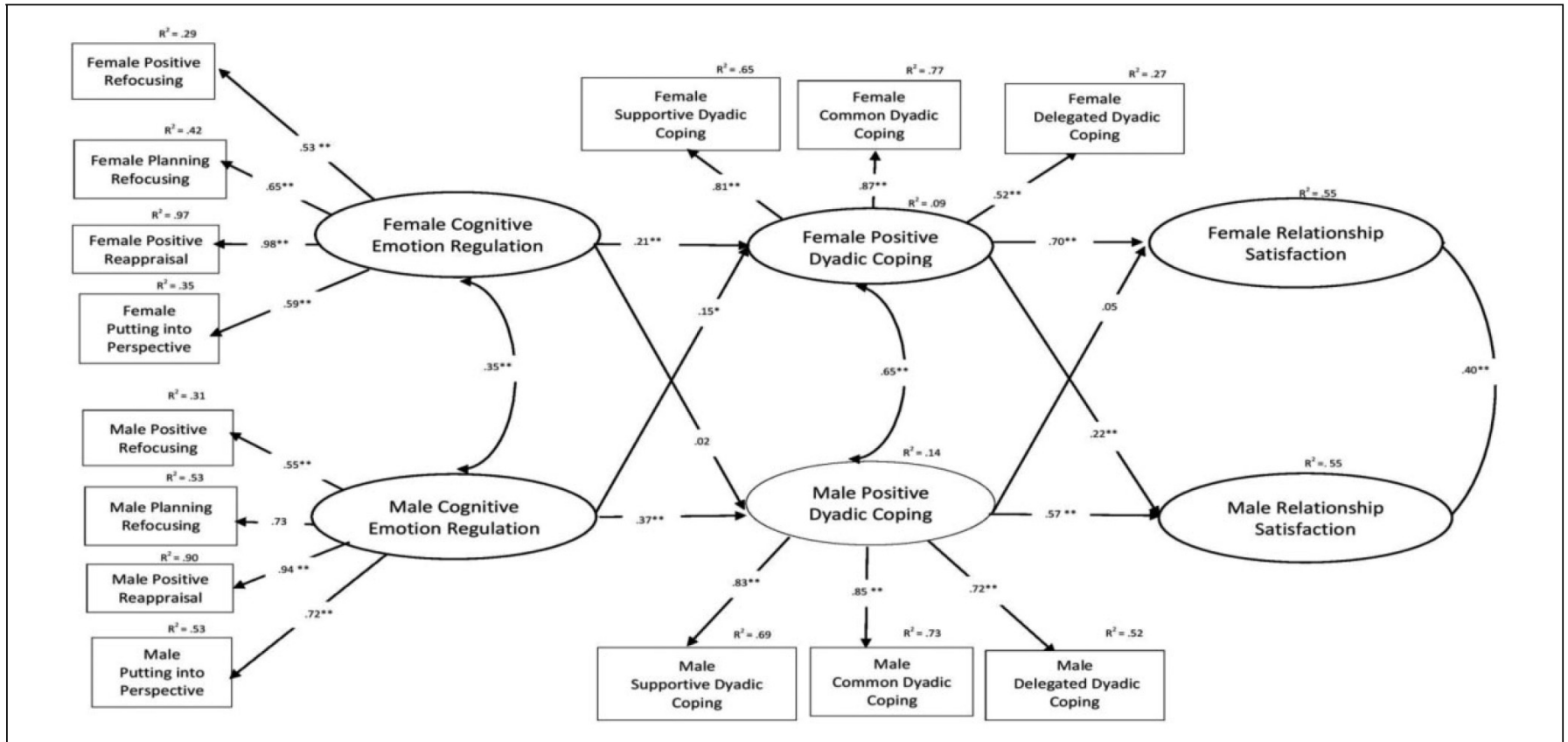
### Abstract

The aim of the present research was to investigate the association between spouses' individual cognitive emotion regulation (CER) strategies, dyadic coping behaviors, and relationship satisfaction. Using a sample of 295 couples (590 individuals), we found that adaptive CER strategies (putting into perspective, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, and planning refocusing) were related to positive dyadic coping (supportive, common, and delegated coping in couples), which in turn increased both partners' relationship satisfaction. Analyses using actor-partner interdependence modeling indicated that dyadic coping mediated the association between spouses' CER and their own relationship satisfaction. These findings support the importance of addressing both cognitive coping strategies and dyadic coping in prevention and intervention in couples.

### Keywords

Cognitive emotion regulation, couple relationships, dyadic coping, relationship satisfaction

Emotion regulation has been positively related not only with intrapersonal outcomes, such as higher levels of well-being, less depression, and anxiety (Cicchetti, Ackerman, & Izard, 1995; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2001; Martin & Dahlen, 2005) but also



**Figure 1.** APMeM testing positive dyadic coping as a mediating variable in the relationship between adaptive CER and marital satisfaction. The correlations between male and female CER strategies (positive refocusing, planning refocusing, positive reappraisal, and putting into perspective) and between male and female positive dyadic coping (SDC by oneself and CDC and DDC by oneself) were computed in the model but were not depicted for clarity. APMeM: actor-partner mediation model; CER: cognitive emotion regulation; SDC: supportive dyadic coping; CDC: common dyadic coping; DDC: delegated dyadic coping.

# Coping enhancement training

Enhancing dyadic coping skills and constructive communication in couple-focused interventions (i.e. Couples Coping Enhancement Training, CCET, Bodenmann & Shantinath, 2004) was found to not only increase marital quality, but also to decrease dysfunctional parenting (Zemp et al., 2016).

Therefore, strengthening dyadic coping skills may be an important part of the intervention for distressed couples in order to increase both marital quality and parenting functioning.

# Support for parents

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- Parents of school-age children need multiple layers of support, including targeted support addressing stressors related to school



## What can teachers do in order to support parents coping with stress?

- Design and implement programs for parental education and group counselling
- Sending parents different educational resources in order to help them cope with school related stress
- Having a section with resources for parents on the school website









Informing  
parents about  
the objectives  
of classes

## DEAR PARENTS

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dear Parents,**

My name is Ms. Jenkins. I am pleased to have your child in my Social Studies class this term. I wanted to share some information about the course requirements, goals, and expectations...

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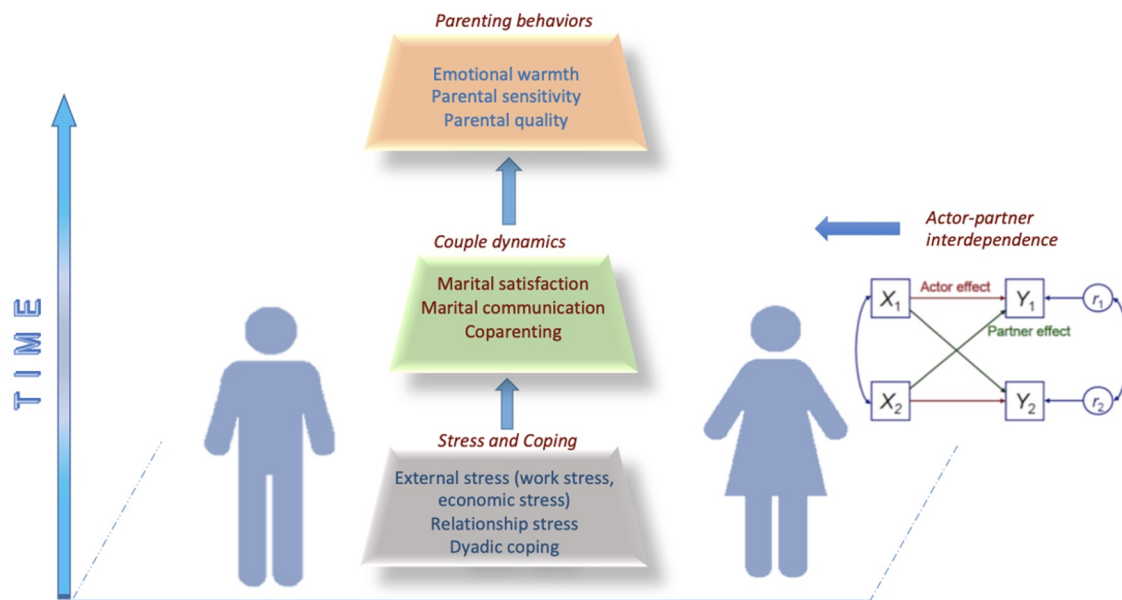
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# Send positive, encouraging messages to parents



Research project  
**Stress and Coping in Family  
Relationships: Longitudinal  
Effects on Couple Dynamics and  
Parenting Behaviors**





# Stress and Coping in Family Relationships

- The second goal of the project will focus on designing a mobile version of the Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET, Bodenmann & Shantinath, 2004) for Romanian couples (**e-Romanian Couples Coping Enhancement Training: e-RoCCET, Study 2**).
- CCET is a relationship education program for preventing distress in couples based on the STM of stress and coping in couples (Bodenmann, 2005), and cognitive behavioral therapy for couples.

# Units of the CCET

| Unit  | Content  | Materials  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Awareness of the role of stress on close relationships. Improving understanding of stress and coping | Theoretical information on stress, subjective evaluation of stress, the influence of stress on couple interaction, spill-over and cross-over of stress.  | Videos, questionnaires for assessing different types of stress, short quizzes, exercises   |
| 2. Individual coping with stress  | Information about individual coping skills, learning individual coping strategies (e.g. stress-balancing activities, avoiding unnecessary stress, calming strategies, dealing with stress).  | Illustrations, video examples, exercises   |
| 3. Dyadic coping with stress  | Information about dyadic coping skills forms of dyadic coping, developing stress communication, supportive dyadic coping, common dyadic coping.  | Exercises with the partners, video examples, illustrations, stories  |
| 4. Communication and negative behaviors in couples  | Forms of communication and the influence of conflicts on relationships, resolving conflicts, recognizing negative behaviors.<br>Problem solving strategies at individual and dyadic level, the role of support provided by the partner in problem solving, discussing problem-focused supportive common dyadic coping. | Exercises with the partners on communication styles, active listening<br>Illustrations, video examples of problem solving, individual and couple exercises |
| 5. Problem- solving strategies  |  |  |

# Conclusions

Social programs for families at risk, with low socio-economic status;

Stress prevention programs for parents and children;

Counselling programs for parents;

Intervention programs for couples and families.

