

Introduction

Destructive Interparental Conflict (DIC)

- Parental conflict hallmarked by physical aggression, threat, hostility, pursuit, withdrawal, and submission
- Those observing DIC during childhood may experience romantic relationship challenges, in part through impairment of child-parent bond.

Awareness

- Emotion regulation, including awareness of negative emotions, is typically beneficial in fostering overall wellbeing.
- However, following DIC exposure, some degree of nonawareness may protect against internalizing the conflict.

Hypotheses:

- Frequency and intensity of DIC will predict maternal and paternal attachment anxiety which will, in turn, predict romantic attachment anxiety.
- Indirect paths will be buffered by nonawareness of emotions; under high nonawareness, DIC will not reduce parental or partner attachment.

Method

Sample

- $N = 807$ male and female undergraduates.

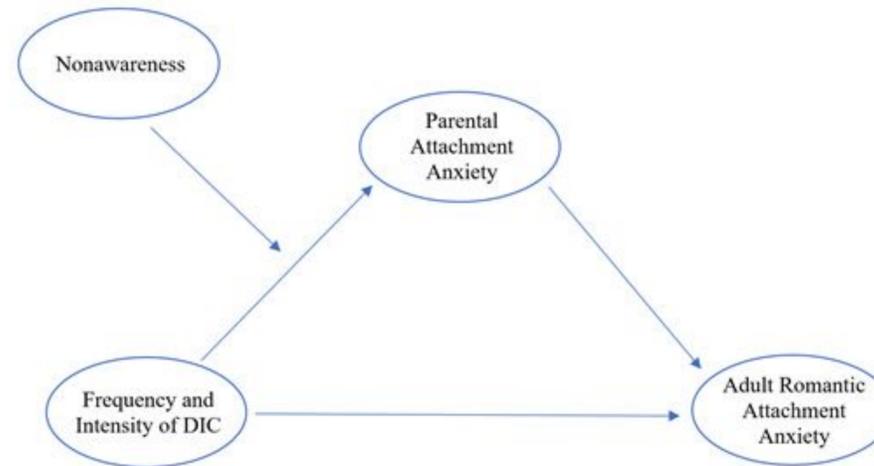
Measures

- Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPICS)
- Experiences in Close Relationships Scale - Revised (ECR-R)
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)

Statistical Analyses

- PROCESS macro for SPSS tested moderated parallel mediation models.

Results



Higher DIC frequency -> MAA -> ARAA

- At low NA: $b = .96$, $SE = .19$, $CI = 1.37, .62$
- At moderate NA: $b = .63$, $SE = .14$, $CI = .92, .36$
- At high NA: $b = .30$, $SE = .22$, $CI = .74, .13$

Higher DIC frequency -> PAA -> ARAA

- At low NA: $b = 1.10$, $SE = .20$, $CI = 1.52, .74$
- At moderate NA: $b = .78$, $SE = .15$, $CI = 1.01, .48$
- At high NA: $b = .45$, $SE = .24$, $CI = .94, .00$

Higher DIC intensity -> MAA -> ARAA

- At low NA: $b = 1.12$, $SE = .20$, $CI = 1.53, .73$
- At moderate NA: $b = .81$, $SE = .15$, $CI = 1.12, .52$
- At high NA: $b = .51$, $SE = .20$, $CI = .91, .13$

Higher DIC intensity -> PAA -> ARAA

- At low NA: $b = 1.21$, $SE = .20$, $CI = 1.61, .84$
- At moderate NA: $b = .95$, $SE = .15$, $CI = 1.27, .66$
- At high NA: $b = .69$, $SE = .22$, $CI = 1.15, .27$

Note: Blue paths denote significant indirect effects at specific levels of the moderator (nonawareness).

Discussion

DIC and Awareness

- DIC can negatively impact adult romantic attachment via impaired child-parent attachment.
- This relation may be strongest for those who are more acutely aware of their emotions.
 - Possibility that negative emotions experienced during DIC are not internalized and do not impact a child's ability to form strong bonds with parents and later partners.

Clinical Implications

- It may be beneficial to help children find an optimal degree of awareness of emotions during DIC or to dedicate focused attention to the regulation domains for those with higher emotional awareness.

References

- Shimkowski, J., Schrodt, P., & Willer, E. (2017). Difficulties in regulating emotions as moderators of interparental conflict and young adult children's mental well-being. *Communication Reports*, 30(2), 116-128.
- Simon, V. & Wyndol, F. (2010). Interparental conflict and adolescents' romantic relationship conflict. *J Res Adolesc*, 20(1), 188-209.
- Steinberg, S., Davila, J., & Fincham, F. (2006). Adolescent marital expectations and romantic experiences: Associations with perceptions about parental conflict and adolescent attachment security. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 333-348.