

CHAPTER 19

Family Life

Sections

1. The Nature of the Family
2. Getting Along with Others
3. Families with Problems
4. Society's Support of Families



Chapter Preview

What is your family like? **Family** is a group of people who are related by adoption, blood, or marriage, and are committed to each other. Do you have any **siblings**, two or more people with one or more parents in common? Do both your parents live with you? Grandparents? Stepparents? **Stepparents** are people who marry into a family after a biological parent departs through death or divorce. What activities do your family members share? What values are important to your family? All of these things and more define the nature of your own unique family.

This chapter begins by describing types of families and the ways in which they meet their members' needs as they change with time. It discusses issues of respect, trust, and communication, which serve as the foundation stones of a healthy family life. The chapter also includes issues that some families may face such as divorce, addiction, codependency, or abuse. The last section covers society's support of the family through changing times.

Fact or Fiction?

What Do You Think?

Is each statement true or false? If you think it's false, explain what's true.

1. A person's values are most powerfully influenced by the values of his or her family.
2. It's natural for parents to distrust their teenage children.
3. People who abuse their own children are most likely to have been abused themselves during childhood.



Writing Think about the word *family*. Write a paragraph to explain what a family means to you. Make additions and changes to your paragraph as you learn more about families.

(Answers on page 541)



Visit glencoe.com and complete the Life Choice Inventory for Chapter 19.

The Nature of the Family

When people say the word *family*, what exactly do they mean? After all, families come in all shapes and sizes. **Figure 19.2** on page 517 describes only some of the many possibilities. Wherever people live together, they form some type of family. Families form the building blocks from which each society is made. Without families, societies could not exist.

Vocabulary

family
siblings
stepparents
family identity

Family and Development

MAIN IDEA ► Families have far-reaching effects upon their members.

Families help to mold the personalities of their members. The influence of a child's family reaches far into the future, affecting the rest of that person's life story. Parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and even babysitters are a child's first teachers. They teach the child about being human, about their values, and about whether or not others are to be loved and trusted. Years later, in adulthood, early family experiences still affect most people's outlooks on themselves and on the world. A child with a supportive, trusting, loving family often grows up secure with a sense of belonging and acceptance.

■ **Figure 19.1** A family's identity is developed through rituals, such as eating meals together. *What are some daily rituals you enjoy with your family?*



Lifelong Influences

A person who remembers childhood as a painful time may experience lifelong difficulties, but may never fully understand why. An adult who grew up with an addicted or abusive parent, for example, may choose a series of unsupportive or abusive mates, repeating a familiar but destructive pattern learned during childhood. With the help of therapy or counselors, such a person may come to recognize these choices as part of a destructive pattern. With help, these patterns can be changed.

Triumph over Tragedy

Of course, many children from unsupportive families have overcome difficult childhoods to grow strong and stable, to excel, and to emerge as dependable adults. An important difference between those who overcome an unsupportive childhood and those who do not is a strong belief in their own ability to succeed. They have self-efficacy. This quality lies at the heart of personal change, and seems to be basic to most forms of success in life.

The Benefits of Family

MAIN IDEA ► Families provide for many physical and emotional needs of their members.

Why do we need our families? What benefits do they bring us? Our families meet needs that are basic to our existence. Our families provide us with our cultural heritage and traditions. They teach values to the younger generation. In addition, most families meet their members' needs for:

- Affection.
- Food.
- Clothing.
- Safety.
- Security.
- Shelter.

Families also meet the human need for belonging. We need our families, and our families need us.

Meeting the Need for Belonging

People everywhere share a common need to feel as if they are part of a group. Being part of a family creates this feeling. Each family develops a **family identity**, a unique sense of belonging together as a unit. Family members participate in the family's ways of doing things.

Figure 19.2

A Glossary of Types of Families

Stepfamily: A family created by remarriage after the death or divorce of a spouse; stepfamilies include a biological or adoptive parent and a stepparent, along with the children of one or both of them; also called *blended* or *combined families*.

Extended family: A family of parents, children, and other relatives, such as grandparents or aunts and uncles. The relatives may live in one household, or they may live close by and share responsibilities, such as childraising.

Foster family: A family formed when a government agency places a child in the temporary care of an adult or couple. The child's own parents may have died or for some reason cannot care for the child.

Married couple: A family consisting of two married adults.

Nontraditional family: A group of people who live together and offer support to one another.

Nuclear family: A mother and father and their natural or adopted children.

Single-parent family: One parent and his or her natural or adopted children.



Did You Know?

Families that encourage and foster high self-esteem are:

- Able to accept some failure as normal, and not let it keep them from trying again.
- Able to cope with the day-to-day challenges or problems that come their way.
- Able to look toward their future with excitement and confidence, while working toward fulfilling their goals.
- Not likely to let others make their decisions for them or to influence them to do things they do not want to do.

A family identity is maintained by:

- Keeping rituals, such as wishing each other a good night before sleeping, joining together at mealtimes, or hugging when members greet each other.
- Celebrating special occasions and cultural traditions together in the family's chosen ways.
- Learning to compromise and realizing that a family member's attitudes and behaviors affect the nature of the whole family, just as the family affects the individual member.
- Spending time together, and sharing activities and experiences.

Belonging extends beyond our families. Most of us join groups to help meet the need to belong. Circles of friends and social or hobby groups exist for this reason.

Teaching Values

Sometimes, parents formally teach values to their children. They sit them down and talk about the rules. More often, however, older people teach values to young people by the examples they set. Parents who attend religious services with their children convey the value of organized religion. Parents who work to protect the environment offer lessons in valuing the world we live in.

A serious mistake that some adults make is to underestimate the importance of their examples to young people. For example, if an adult tells a child that it is important to be honest, and the adult is caught cheating on his or her taxes, the young person gets the message that cheating is okay. Whether or not the child continues to cheat depends on many factors, of course, including her own tendencies and the values demonstrated by other important adults.

Children learn values from many sources other than their families. Schools, peers, magazines, television, and Internet websites may each convey a set of values, and any of these values may conflict with another. Children and teens who receive information of conflicting values may become confused and wonder which set of values is best for them. In this regard, the most powerful voice is still within the family. Parents and other adult family members can help eliminate confusion.

In addition to meeting the basic needs discussed in this section, many families emphasize spiritual and intellectual schooling. They give instruction in social skills. They may also make sure that everyone has some fun along the way. A healthy family also acts as a refuge from the outside world, a protected place to rest and relax, where members can just be themselves.

Figure 19.3**The Stages and Goals of a Family**

Stage	Main Goal
1. Couple without children; creating a family	Develop trust in each other.
2. Family bearing children and rearing newborns, toddlers, and preschoolers.	Develop independence and self-direction in children.
3. Family with schoolchildren.	Develop in children a sense of industry, to allow them to work with steady effort.
4. Family with adolescent children.	Guide adolescent role development, assist identity development in teens.
5. Family with young adults at home or leaving home.	Maintain relationships with children who leave; renew the couple's relationship.
6. Couple without children, moving toward retirement; grandparenting.	Share talents and resources with others; take pride in accomplishments.
7. Aging couple; widows and widowers; grandparenting.	Maintain satisfaction with life; enjoy fulfillment and serenity.

Source: Adapted from E. Janosik and E. Green, *Family Life: Process and Practice* (Boston: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1992), p. 29.

The Life Stages of a Family

MAIN IDEA ► Families move through predictable stages.

Few families stay the same from year to year. Instead, they change and evolve in stages with passing time. As children grow, parents must adjust the amount of independence their children receive.

Forming a Family

Most new families form when a couple meets and falls in love. Their story often continues with a lifelong commitment and unfolds as children arrive, grow up, and finally leave home. No one can predict what twists and turns the plot of the family story will take. However, family stories are always interesting. **Figure 19.3** traces a family's progress through some typical stages.

Does your own family fit neatly into one of the stages in **Figure 19.3**? It may or may not. Because you are a teen, your family qualifies for Stage 4. However, you may have brothers or sisters who qualify your family for Stage 2, 3, or 5.

Family Goals

Through the years, a family must constantly seek new ways of meeting the changing needs of its members. Parents of a toddler must provide constant supervision to ensure the child's safety. As the child grows, however, they must loosen



Did You Know?

Sharing family stories is a great way to learn more about you and your family's past. Invite grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents, and others to share a special family story.

their control in order to help the child develop independence and make healthy decisions. The child, in turn, helps to meet the parents' needs for affection and loyalty. Each choice made by a family member contributes to or detracts from how well the family meets the needs of its members.

Family members must also attend to their own needs. For example, adults may save for their retirement (financial goals), teens may volunteer for good causes (spiritual and service goals), and grandparents may make time to be physically active each day (physical fitness goals). Families may have many goals, but meeting the basic ones listed in **Figure 19.3** goes a long way toward supporting the emotional well-being of the family members.

SECTION **1** **Review**

Reviewing the Vocabulary

Review the vocabulary on page 516. Then answer these questions.

1. Brothers and sisters are _____.
2. A _____ is maintained by families spending time together and celebrating special occasions in the family's chosen way.
3. A group of people who are related by adoption, blood, or marriage, and are committed to each other is called a _____.

Reviewing the Facts

4. **List.** List three influences a family has on individuals.
5. **Explain.** What are two main functions of families?
6. **Describe.** Through what sources do values enter the lives of children?
7. **Identify.** Identify the seven stages of family life.

Writing Critically

8. **Expository.** People sometimes join religious groups, clubs, or other social groups to meet needs that are not being met by their families. What needs might be met by these groups? How would the groups meet these needs? Are there other ways these needs might be met? If so, what are they?



For more vocabulary practice, play the eFlashcards game at glencoe.com.

Getting Along with Others

SECTION

2

Being part of a family isn't always easy. Conflicts are almost certain to arise among people who live close to one another. Common questions may arise such as: Which needs should be given highest priority? Is everyone being honest? Do we trust one another?

Interactions among family members can be more important than you might think. Handling a conflict with a family member can prepare you to handle conflicts with people in the larger world. In a family, you learn to give and take, to communicate your own needs while respecting those of others. These are skills that, once developed, prove invaluable through life—at work, at school, with friends, and eventually, with a future spouse or partner and family. Interactions affect the present too. Each kind word or supportive action by one member uplifts the whole family group. Each negative word or action brings the family down.

Vocabulary

sibling rivalry

Issues of Trust and Honesty

MAIN IDEA ► Being completely honest is the way to gain people's trust. Effective communication is essential to trust.

There may have been a time when you thought, "How can I get my parents to trust me? They're always checking up on me!" This question may seem unanswerable. In truth, most parents *want* to trust teens. Parents want to think of their children as honest and trustworthy.

Those interested in gaining trust must learn this principle: trust grows in direct proportion to a person's honesty. This principle also operates in reverse: people who are not entirely honest quickly lose the trust of others.

It's difficult to know how to react to someone who hasn't always been honest in the past. When a teen has a history of dishonesty, a parent has no choice but to doubt the teen. How could a parent know whether or not the teen is telling the truth on any one occasion? Dishonesty—that is, intentionally hiding or changing the truth—creates doubt that grow and damages the parent-child relationship.

For example, your brother or sister has agreed to play softball with your team to fill in for an absent player. Game time rolls around, but your sibling doesn't show up. Your teammates are furious, and you must forfeit the game. On your way home, you see your sibling talking and laughing with other friends.

Did You Know?

Four tips for being honest:

1. Never promise more than you can deliver.
2. Allow for emergencies.
3. Let others know what's going on.
4. Plan ahead.

Later, when you ask why your sibling missed the game, he or she replies, "Oh, I felt sick." Would you feel angry? Betrayed? Would you ever fully trust the person again?

Family members will likely forgive one another for such a slip in honesty, especially when the person apologizes and shows regret. Also, family members, or anyone who knows you well, is less likely to judge you for one lapse in judgment. You will be judged by your behavior over a period of time. With time, and with demonstrations of honesty, trust may eventually be restored. This healing of trust requires an honest discussion on the part of everyone.

To establish that you are honest and reliable, never promise more than you can reasonably deliver. If someone asks something unreasonable, don't agree to do it. Instead, explain why it isn't possible. Three other tips to being reliable: make allowances for emergencies, let others know what's going on, and plan ahead.

Consumer

SKILLS ACTIVITY

The Marketing of the Family

At some point, you may have seen signs or advertisements that include phrases such as "family restaurant," "Shoes for your family!" or "A toothpaste for the whole family!" Today, advertisers use the word *family* to sell many products. Manufacturers know that just adding the word *family* to advertising slogans attracts consumer attention.

How does mentioning the family increase sales of toothpaste and other products? Most people associate the word *family* with childhood memories. When they read the word on a label, they may subconsciously link the product with love, the freedom of childhood, parental care, and support.

In truth, most people respond to family-based advertising because most have positive mental images about what it means

to be part of a family. However, the needs of families are not easily met by simply buying products, even "family" products. Family members need love, communication, and respect.



Writing

1. What do you think of when you hear or see the word "family?"
2. Would seeing the word "family" on a package affect whether or not you would buy the product? Why or why not?



■ **Figure 19.4** *A discussion of TV shows can turn television viewing time into quality time. What are some other ways a family can spend quality time together?*

Spending Time Together

MAIN IDEA ▶ Quality time shared among family members benefits their relationships and must be planned ahead of time.

Satisfying family relationships do not “just happen.” They take time, commitment, and energy to develop and maintain. Some people hope to meet family members’ needs without much effort. However, family relationships do take time and effort. People who make it a point to share time with parents, brothers, sisters, and others in their families find that the results are well worth their efforts.

Why Do Family Members Need to Spend Time Together?

Relationships depend upon time spent together. To know someone well you must share ideas together, enjoy activities together, seek each other’s counsel when life gets tough, and share the joys life has to offer. For many people, pressures at work, obligations at school, and social activities take a lot of their time. Finding a good balance between obligations outside of the family and scheduling family time will strengthen family relationships.

TV Time Is Not Family Time

Although watching television may seem like an easy family activity, in reality, it does not generally benefit family relationships. If a television program addresses an important issue, the family may discuss the issue. When the focus is directed to the television, television viewing is a solitary activity.

What is lacking in most families today is quality time, time spent with one another, of sufficient duration to allow a meaningful exchange of ideas. Quality time is the kind of time that bonds family members together and enhances their relationships.

Did You Know?

Here are a few activities that family members enjoy:

- Cooking
- Going to the beach
- Having a picnic
- Hiking in the woods
- Riding bikes
- Visiting relatives

Make your own list. Invite family members to join you in them.

How Can My Family Find Quality Time?

Quality time is planned. A way to do this is to get everyone together and plan a whole-family event, such as a weekday meal or a Saturday morning walk to the park. The plan can include a special meal that everyone helps to prepare. It can include learning a new game, or making presents for others.

Sharing hobbies with family members is another way to plan quality time. Some families enjoy participating in athletic activities together. Others may enjoy less active pursuits such as cooking, working on cars, and even gardening. Sharing time with family members allows each member to share his or her thoughts. The activities are limited only by imagination.



Did You Know?

A good way to develop respect within a family is to always knock before opening a closed door. By knocking first, you are respecting the other person's space and privacy.

Spending Time Apart

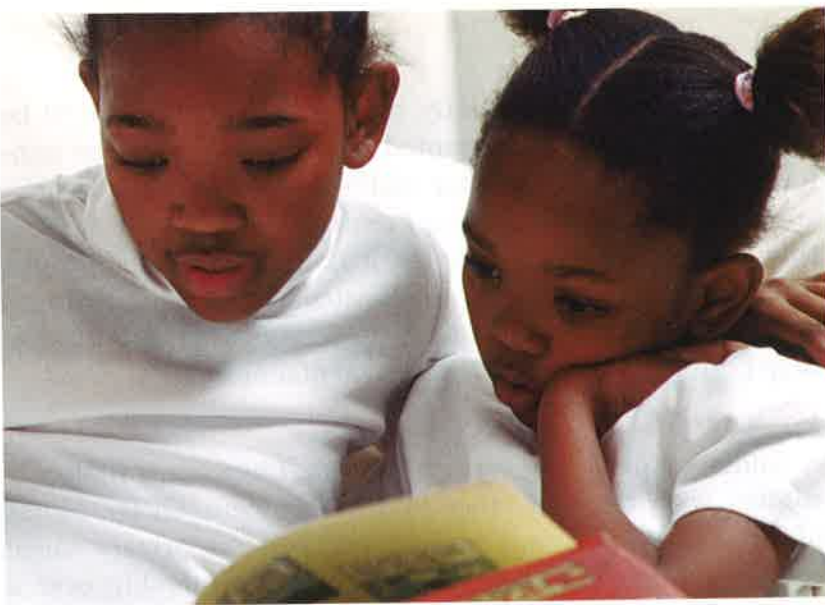
MAIN IDEA ▶ Everyone needs time alone to reflect on life and make sense of it.

As important as time spent with family members is time spent alone. Teens, especially, need some time alone to think, to reflect on who they are, and to imagine who they might become. Alone time can be a sort of quality time in which you get to know yourself. Learn to respect others' need for solitude too.

Teens who spend excessive amounts of time alone, however, may be experiencing depression. A healthy balance among four areas seems ideal for good emotional health: time spent with family, time spent with peers, time spent at school and work, and time spent in solitude. Strive for balance.

■ **Figure 19.5** *It's sometimes surprising to discover how many activities family members can enjoy together. What are some of your favorite family activities?*





■ **Figure 19.6** *Siblings can learn much from each other—especially about communicating with others. Why are relationships with siblings important?*

Getting Along with Siblings

MAIN IDEA ► Conflict-resolution techniques can help siblings resolve problems.

Have you noticed that some people argue more with their brothers and sisters than with their friends or even strangers? Psychologists who study conflicts between siblings say that friction is normal between sisters and brothers. These conflicts are called **sibling rivalry**, *competition among sisters and brothers, often for the attention or affection of parents*.

Sibling Rivalry

Siblings often quarrel because they feel they must compete for the attention of their parents. Even fair and loving parents find it almost impossible to give affection and attention in exactly equal portions. Brothers and sisters should expect that their parents will show different levels of affection to each of their children at times. However, it is important to remember that this does not mean parents favor one child over another. Concentrate on the loving actions and words shown to you. These are yours to keep, and are not lessened by love shown to others.

A family's communication style is the heartbeat of the emotional peace of its members. It drives how and whether family members cooperate with each other. When minor conflicts turn into battles, life can become difficult for everyone.

Acceptance of New Arrivals

The relationship between siblings begins with the entrance of a new child into the family. Acceptance of a new brother or sister can be difficult for the child or other children. Most children have mixed emotions about the newcomer. They may feel excited and proud to become an older brother or sister, but also worry that they might be displaced from the favored position in the family.



Did You Know?

Resolving conflicts with family members will help to develop communication skills that are valuable throughout your life.



Health Skills

The Essence of Conflict Resolution

1. Identify the problem.
2. If it is a conflict, then both people must:
 - Desire a resolution.
 - Strive for a solution in which both parties win.
 - Be flexible in how to meet needs.
 - Be *firm* in meeting their own needs.
 - Apologize when appropriate.
3. Brainstorm and keep an open mind.
4. Decide on a solution.
5. Carry out the solution.
6. Evaluate the results, and revise the solution as needed.

Young children, especially, may even fear that they'll be given away, or no longer wanted. Small children can be comforted by parents and older siblings who establish rituals, such as bathing, storytelling, and playing favorite games, that can be continued after the arrival of a new baby. Such attention raises the child's self-esteem and can help with acceptance of new family members. Many good books exist to help families prepare for the arrival of a new baby.

Struggles Among Teens

Older children, and especially teens, have needs that may conflict with those of other family members. Often, issues of control over personal space, privileges, and privacy cause conflicts. Most people develop a sense of ownership over a physical space they consider as theirs. Their sense of ownership also includes their privacy and privileges.

As mentioned, a territory is not always physical space. It may also include rights or possessions, or access to a favorite amusement. For example, two sisters who wear the same size clothing might borrow clothing from one another frequently. Suppose, however, one sister has recently started a part-time job. She now uses some of her earnings to buy clothes for herself and does not want to share the clothes she purchased.

The other sister does not have a job, and often borrows her sister's new clothing without asking. This causes conflicts over personal space and property. A starting point to resolve the conflict might be to discuss the conflict from each person's point of view and then brainstorm as many solutions as possible.

Solving the Conflict

The sisters need only to come up with one solution to which they both agree. For example, the sisters may decide it is okay to borrow clothing if it is returned promptly and cleaned. Or, the other sister may choose to get a part-time job to pay for her own clothes. Many different solutions might work, as long as both agree to abide by it.

Communicating Effectively

MAIN IDEA ► Assertive communication helps family members to negotiate with one another.

The secret to communicating effectively is to use an assertive communication style. Teens and their parents often disagree about house rules, chores, and curfews. It's normal for them to discuss the details of their agreements to make these arrangements fit changing circumstances. The more skilled family members become at communicating their wishes, the more likely that differences can be settled to meet everyone's needs.

Figure 19.7**Assertive vs. Nonassertive Responses****Situation 1**

Devon's father works hard at his construction company all day. He also struggles to keep their home clean and tidy. Devon is sloppy. Today his father comes home to find an all-too-familiar messy trail of newspapers and dirty dishes.

Passive Response	<i>Devon's dad:</i> Says nothing; cleans up the mess, making noise in hopes of being heard, but steams inwardly.
Aggressive response	<i>Devon's dad (yelling):</i> "What a slob you are, Devon! You always mess up this house! Why can't you be more like your brother?"
Assertive response	<i>Devon's dad:</i> "You left a newspaper on the couch and dishes in the sink. Please toss out the papers and wash your dishes." Devon's father watches to make sure that Devon does the chores.

Situation 2

Angela has shared private information with her mother in a conversation that she believed was confidential. Angela is horrified when her mother's friend approaches her and offers unwanted tips on how to handle it.

Passive Response	<i>Angela:</i> Vows to keep her secrets from her mother, but still wishes she could tell her some things. This makes Angela feel sad and lonely.
Aggressive response	<i>Angela (yelling):</i> "How could you do that to me? You were so mean to tell everyone about my problem. I'll never trust you again!"
Assertive response	<i>Angela (calmly, but firmly):</i> "Mom, Mrs. X talked to me about the private conversation I had with you the other day. Please don't repeat our secrets."

Situation 3

Spencer's younger sister, Yvette, eavesdrops on a private phone conversation. She then taunts Spencer with sarcastic jokes about what she heard.

Passive Response	<i>Spencer:</i> Ignores the comments; tries to spend as little time as possible in the house with Yvette; misses out on family fun.
Aggressive response	<i>Spencer (screaming):</i> "Yvette, you're so annoying! You make me want to hit you!" He listens in on Yvette's telephone conversations to "give her a taste of her own medicine."
Assertive response	<i>Spencer (forcing himself to stay calm):</i> "Mom and Dad, please tell Yvette to stop listening in on my phone conversations. I've asked her to stop, but she won't." Then, if it continues, he sticks up for himself by telling his parents again whenever it occurs, until they effectively stop the eavesdropping.

The more you try to meet the needs of the other person, the more that person is likely to try to meet your needs. When daily life becomes hectic, or when family members must deal with their own issues, small differences can explode into big problems. The situations and possible responses in **Figure 19.7** help to clarify how different communication styles can alter a family's interaction.



Did You Know?

Practicing assertive behavior can prepare you for future relationships, jobs, and other situations in life.

In each of the situations described in **Figure 19.7** on page 527, the responder can choose to be passive, aggressive, or assertive with family members. As you can see from these examples, it is unlikely that a passive reaction will get any response at all. Chances are that the other person won't even know that a problem exists. Aggressive responses are also unlikely to obtain a desired outcome, but are highly likely to provoke a conflict. In each case, the effective response is the assertive one. Assertiveness expresses your needs in a way that doesn't threaten others. Take a deep breath, think about what you are going to say, and discuss the situation clearly and calmly.

SECTION 2 Review

Reviewing the Vocabulary

Review the vocabulary on page 521. Then answer these questions.

1. Competition among sisters and brothers, often for the attention of their parents, is called ____.

Reviewing the Facts

2. **Explain.** For what do family squabbles act as a dress rehearsal?
3. **List.** What two things does quality time do for a family?
4. **Describe.** Why do teens need time alone?
5. **Identify.** What is often the cause of arguments that occur among siblings?
6. **Describe.** What are some things that teens can do to help adults build trust in them?

Writing Critically

7. **Personal.** Reread the Health Skills sidebar, "The Essence of Conflict Resolution" on page 526. Think about the arguments you might have had in the past. How does your behavior during arguments compare to the ground rules given here? What improvements can you make in the way you argue?



For more information on health careers, visit Career Corner at glencoe.com.

Families with Problems

SECTION

3

Sometimes, families experience difficulties beyond those that they can solve themselves. Family members need to seek help for difficult problems. School counselors, mental health counselors, religious leaders, and others can help families in need.

Living Through Divorce

MAIN IDEA ► Marriages sometimes end in divorce, causing families to change.

If current trends continue, a little less than half of the marriages formed today will eventually end in divorce. Among children who live with parents, approximately one-fourth live in one-parent families. **Figure 19.8** on page 530 describes some conditions that tend to make divorce likely. Of course, the presence of these factors in a marriage does not mean it will definitely lead to divorce.

In cases where conflict between parents causes extreme anxiety and pain to family members, divorce may prevent further injury. Regardless of the circumstances, however, divorce requires everyone to adjust. Most children eventually adapt to the changes and live normally. Some, however, do not adjust quickly and can experience depression.

Dealing with Hurt Feelings

Both parents and children can feel hurt, lonely, or angry over a divorce, even if the previously intact family unit was destructive. Some children and teens may feel that one or both parents do not love them. Parents are still parents to their children regardless of what else happens or whom else they marry.

In advance of a divorce, parents should tell their children where they will live and with whom. Children need to prepare for changes that affect them including new schools and new friends. Most of all, children need to know that they will be safe and loved.

Parents can help children get through a difficult time by reminding them they are not at fault. Children may find it easier to cope with divorce by discussing their feelings with parents or with other trusted adults.

In some cases, they may want to join a support group for children of divorce. Being part of a group will help a child to know he is not alone.

Vocabulary

grieve
dysfunctional family
active abuse
passive abuse
child abuse
spouse/partner abuse
elder abuse

“My balance comes from my family. I have reality around me, and they tell me when I need to calm down, take it down a couple notches. Then they tell me when I do something good.”

—Beyoncé Knowles
(1981–)
Singer, songwriter

Figure 19.8**Factors That Often Surround Divorce**

These factors are often seen in couples who divorce.
The more factors that apply, the greater the risk of divorce.

Limited income	When money is short, frustration and conflict may grow.
Less commitment to religion	Religious teachings often hold marriage as sacred, and condemn divorce.
Great differences in values and backgrounds	People who have grown up in different social settings possess different values and may think and act in unharmonious ways.
Young age at marriage	Young people may not have matured sufficiently to weather the storms expected in a marriage.
Come from divorced families	People whose parents divorced may be afraid to trust a relationship, and may be quick to discard it. Divorce may also seem familiar and "acceptable" to them.
Short time being married	As time passes, people learn how to better overcome small obstacles and compromise with each other.
Early childbearing	Partners need time to become partners before they become parents.

Source: Adapted from L. Beeghley. *What Does Your Wife Do? Gender and the Transformation of Family Life*. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

Allowing Time to Heal

Most children accept divorce eventually. Children of all ages **grieve**, *to feel keen emotional pain and suffering over a loss*, over a parent who has left the family. It is normal to grieve for the family that is gone too.

It takes time to build new families, especially with step-parents. Most of the time, however, new balances of power can be worked out. Teens with good assertiveness skills can express their views. No family is perfect. All families require effort and cooperation to succeed.

Dysfunctional Families

MAIN IDEA ► Dysfunctional families fail to provide a solid foundation for normal childhood development.

A family that does not cope effectively with its problems weakens its children by failing to support them. A **dysfunctional family** is *a family with abnormal or impaired ways of coping that injure the self-esteem and emotional health of family members*. Teens who live in dysfunctional families should seek help outside the immediate family. Talking to a trusted adult may help.

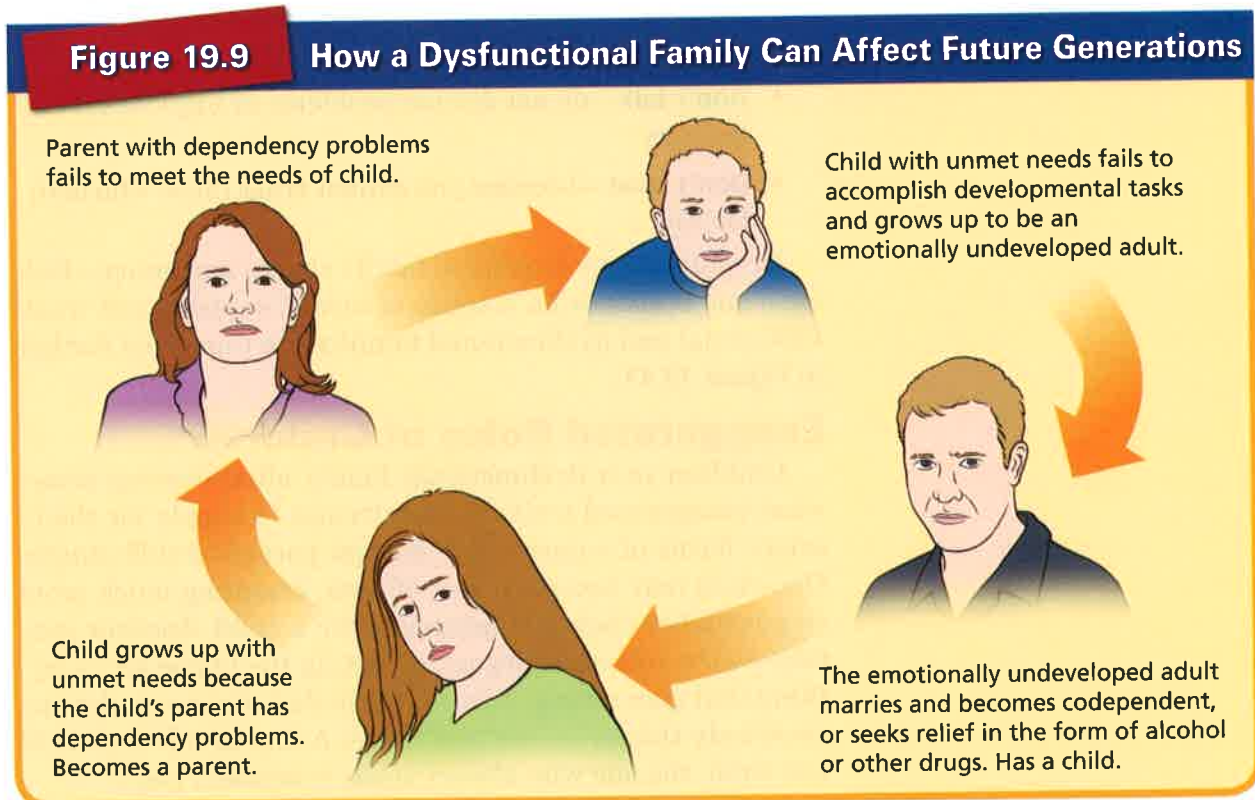
Dysfunctional Family Traits

All families face problems sometimes. Families are neither perfectly healthy nor totally unhealthy. Healthy families may behave in unhealthy ways during hard times. However, healthy families do not remain upset. They return to a normal healthy state. Dysfunctional families tend to grow worse. The unhealthy ways of coping grow more frequent and more severe. Dysfunctional families often have members who:

- Have alcoholism or other drug addictions, or long-term mental or physical illnesses.
- Fail to abide by society's laws and values.
- Lack parenting skills or social skills.
- Fail to engage in productive work.
- Engage in **active abuse**—*abuse involving one person's aggression against another.*
- Engage in **passive abuse**—*abuse involving not taking needed actions, such as neglecting to provide food or shelter to a dependent victim.*

With these unhealthy coping methods, families cannot meet their children's emotional needs. This has lasting effects that may stretch into future generations (see **Figure 19.9**).

Parenting in a dysfunctional family may be unpredictable—sometimes loving, warm, caring, interested, and involved, and at other times cold, unavailable, and distant. The more severe the family problem, the greater the potential for emotional damage to the children.



■ **Figure 19.10** *Divorce requires adjustments on everyone's part. What are some healthy ways to deal with a divorce?*



Dysfunctional families usually have rigid rules such as those listed below:

- **Don't feel**—do not admit to unpleasant feelings such as sadness and anger.
- **Don't talk**—do not discuss problems or unpleasant feelings.
- **Don't trust**—because you cannot trust those who care for you.

In contrast, the functional family shares and accepts feelings, and it strives for a sense of caring, support, and trust. Functional and dysfunctional families are compared further in **Figure 19.11**.

Exaggerated Roles of Children

Children in a dysfunctional family often develop somewhat exaggerated traits in the attempt to supply for themselves forms of support that normal parents would supply. One child may become a sort of hero, accepting much more responsibility than is appropriate for a child. Another may take on the role of scapegoat, accepting the blame for everything that goes wrong. A third role is that of mascot, the one everybody thinks is cute and funny. A fourth role is that of lost child, the one who always needs everyone's help.

In families where people have to play roles, it is difficult for family members to change, grow, or adapt. People who adopt these roles as children often find it helpful during adulthood to discover the causes, work through their difficulties, and no longer take on the role. Others may need more help in the form of therapy to recover completely.

Codependency

MAIN IDEA ▶ Codependent people focus all their energy on helping addicted loved ones and others around them.

Sometimes, a person lives with another person who is addicted to a substance or is dependent in some way. The person may become codependent. Codependency diminishes both the addicted person and the codependent person, so that neither is appreciated, loved, or supported.

People with codependency want to help, but they become so focused on the addicted loved one that they forget to tend to their own needs. If asked “How do you feel?” people with codependency will often respond by saying how other people feel or by saying what they think the asker wants to hear.



Did You Know?

Codependency is the characteristic of being focused on the needs of others to the point of neglecting one's own needs.

Figure 19.11 Traits of a Functional vs. a Dysfunctional Family

Functional Family	Dysfunctional Family
Establishes rules that are appropriate, consistent, and flexible.	Establishes rules for the sake of control; rules are rigid and irrational.
Encourages its members to develop well-rounded personalities.	Assigns rigid roles to each member, such as the hero, the scapegoat, the mascot, and the lost child.
Accepts its problems and strives to solve them.	Has deep, dark secrets that no one may admit to or work on.
Welcomes outsiders into the system.	Resists allowing outsiders to enter the system.
Values and exercises its members' sense of humor. Keeps humor positive.	Expects members to be serious, or uses humor to belittle them.
Honors personal privacy, so members can develop a sense of self.	Permits no personal privacy, so that members have difficulty defining themselves as individuals.
Fosters a “sense of family” so that members may leave and re-enter the system at will.	Enforces loyalty to the family; members may not leave the system.
Allows and resolves conflict between members.	Denies and ignores conflict between members.
Welcomes beneficial changes.	Fights against changes.
Enjoys loyalty and a sense of wholeness.	Has no real unity, is fragmented.

A codependent person suffers deeply, and focuses all attention on the seeming cause of their problems—the addicted partner. A person with codependency issues can change by recognizing the problem and seeking help from a professional.

Family Violence and Abuse

MAIN IDEA ► The cycle of abuse can be broken with commitment and effort.

More than three million child abuse cases are reported to the authorities each year. Almost 1,500 children die each year at the hands of their abusers. **Child abuse** is *verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual assault on a child*. Aside from physical abuse, many more children suffer repeated sexual assaults and the constant emotional abuse of unreasonable expectations, humiliation, and unmet needs.

People who abuse children are emotionally unhealthy. They have low self-esteem and little power among adults. Such people may bully those who are weaker. However, it's not just children who suffer from abuse. **Spouse/Partner abuse** is *verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual assault on a spouse or partner*. Spouse and partner violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It affects people of all backgrounds and education levels whether married, living together, or even during dating. Abuse can occur in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together, or dating. Another type of abuse is called elder abuse. **Elder abuse** is *verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual assault on an older adult*. An estimated one to two million older adults are physically abused each year.

Family violence most often occurs when other problems worsen an existing emotional problem. Very young parents, single parents, those who are unemployed, those who do not manage stress well, and those who have few social contacts are especially likely to abuse their children. Alcohol and other drugs are also strongly linked with child abuse.

The Cycle of Abuse

Most importantly, the cycle of abuse is likely to repeat. People who abuse their own children are most likely to have been abused themselves during their childhoods. Abuse can be passed on from each generation to the next until someone seeks help. A child who is rescued from an abusive situation and who is supported in working through the resulting emotional injuries can recover completely, and can achieve high-level emotional health.

Breaking the Cycle of Abuse

Abuse is a learned behavior and abusers must first recognize that abusing others is wrong. Counseling can help abusers cope with their emotions in healthier ways. Asking for help is a courageous act. Without courage, the violent behavior may increase until it destroys relationships or harms someone. There are government agencies and support groups that exist to protect children and adults from abuse, as well as providing help to abusers. Help can also be provided by contacting a medical professional in your area. All forms of abuse are illegal. Reporting the incident to authorities can help prevent future abuse.

SECTION 3 Review

Reviewing the Vocabulary

Review the vocabulary on page 529. Then answer these questions.

1. Abuse involving one person's aggression against another is called ____.
2. ____ is verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual assault on a spouse or partner.
3. Verbal, psychological, physical, or sexual assault on an older adult is called ____.

Reviewing the Facts

4. **Describe.** When might divorce prevent some injury to a family?
5. **Explain.** How does a dysfunctional family weaken its children?
6. **List.** List four roles that children in a dysfunctional family are likely to take on.

Writing Critically

7. **Personal.** Your friend has shared with you that when her father is drunk, he hits her and her brother. She is afraid to say anything to anyone for fear her father will hit her more. What advice would you give your friend?



For health and fitness tips, visit the Fitness Zone at glencoe.com.

SECTION 4

Society's Support of Families

How can our society best meet the changing needs of its families? For the family to thrive, our nation must commit wholeheartedly to meeting the needs of the family as times and needs change.

Vocabulary

day care



Did You Know?

In 2008, the cost of sending a child to licensed day care for a year exceeded the cost of a year's tuition at many state universities.

■ **Figure 19.12** *Day care facilities offer solutions to families who need care for children and older adults. How has the role of the family changed in the last 50 years?*

The Changing Family

MAIN IDEA ► Society has changed in the last 50 years and this has affected the role of the family.

Society has changed dramatically in the last 50 years. In most families today, both parents must work to earn enough money to support the family. Many teens today work, too, and contribute financially to the family.

In the past, the nation depended upon women to perform much of the work involved in keeping a home and rearing children. Today, many women are in the workplace during the day, and many struggle to balance the traditional roles as well.

Today's Problems

Families across society face many common problems. For example, quality day care for very young and very old family members is expensive. **Day care** is supervision, usually at a facility, for preschool children or older adults who must be supervised during daytime working hours. This poses real problems for working families. Another related child-care problem is what to do about after-school care for school-aged children while parents are at work.

