FOSTERING CONFIDENCE:
Foster Caregivers’ Relationship Efficacy & Associations with Couple & Coparenting Relationship Quality

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Overview

- Background
- Current Study
- Results
- Discussion & Implications
BACKGROUND

- Nationally, 415,129 children & youth in foster care
  - 29% Relative vs. 46% Non-Relative

- Unique challenges

- Foster caregiver recruitment & retention
COUPLE & COPARENTING RELATIONSHIPS

- High-quality foster home (Buehler et al., 2006)
- Healthy relationships as a buffer & model
- Positive coparenting → Positive parent-child outcomes (Linares et al., 2010)
RELATIONSHIP EFFICACY

• “Individuals who believe that their behaviors will effectively maintain relationship satisfaction and positivity.” (Riggo et al., 2013)

• Positive attribution

• Greater marital satisfaction

• Positive expectations
FOSTER PARENTING SUPPORT

• **Formal Support**
  • Child welfare system
  • Clergy
  • School faculty & staff

• **Informal Support**
  • Family
  • Friends
  • Neighbors
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Figure 3.1. The Contextual Model of Family Stress

(Boss, 2002)
CURRENT STUDY

• **AIM 1:** Explore different subgroups of foster caregivers’ relationship efficacy.

• **AIM 2:** Understand individual and family characteristics that covary with these subgroups.

• **AIM 3:** Does membership in a certain relationship efficacy group impact couple and coparenting relationship quality?
PROCEDURE & SAMPLE

• 2 samples of active foster parent couples
  • Sample 1: Statewide random sample (n = 100)
  • Sample 2: Pilot Training (n = 32)

• Final sample = 125 individuals (56 males, 69 females)

• Caucasian (68.8%), non-Hispanic (97.6%)

• Age 23 – 70 years ($M = 43.88; SD = 9.71$)
MEASURES & ANALYTIC PLAN

- Information on measures provided on handout
- 3-step latent profile analysis (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2013)
  - **Step 1:** Identify typologies in relationship efficacy patterns
  - **Step 2:** Examine potential covariates
  - **Step 3:** Examine between-group differences in couple and coparenting relationship quality
RESULTS & DISCUSSION
Focusing on Relationship Needs
Moderate Efficacy

High Efficacy

Devoting Effort
Moderate Efficacy

High Efficacy

Devoting Energy
**Individual Characteristics**
- Sex
- Race
- Age of Parent
- Employment Status
- Income
- Education

**Family Characteristics**
- First Marriage
- Partner’s First Marriage
- Length of Relationship
- Bio or Adopted Children with Partner
- Num of Ch. from Previous Rel
- Num of Ch. from Partner’s Previous Rel
- Num of Foster Children Past 12 months
- Currently Fostering
- Length of Time as a Foster Parent

**Support**
- Formal
- Family
- Friend

**Couple Relationship Quality**
- Intentionality
- Friendship
- Intimate Knowledge
- Affection
- Conflict Management

**Coparenting Relationship Quality**
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Relationship Efficacy

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**Coparenting Relationship Quality**
DISCUSSION

• Relatively high relationship efficacy

• Relationship Efficacy ➔ Couple & Coparenting

• Limitations
  • Generalizability
  • Cross-sectional
IMPLICATIONS

• Adapt HMRE materials

• Support relationship needs (e.g., policy and training changes)

• Training for child welfare professionals

• Expand & support informal networks