

## **Family dynamics - Lesson 11: Family Life Education**

### **Objective:**

- To understand the Concept, objectives, importance, Content of family Life Education

### **Module 1: Concept and Definition**

Preparing individuals and families for the roles and responsibilities of family living is nothing new. Because knowledge about human development, interpersonal relationships, and family living is not innate, societies have needed to develop ways through which they may transmit the wisdom and the experience of family living from one generation to succeeding ones. Some societies transmit this knowledge through formal means such as puberty or initiation rites. For the most part, however, individuals learn about family living in the family setting itself as they observe and participate in family activities and interactions in their own and other families.

As societies change and become more complex, this pattern of informal learning about living in families becomes inadequate. The development of new knowledge, advances in technology, and changing social and economic conditions create situations where the teachings of previous generations are no longer appropriate or sufficient. In these circumstances, societies must find or create new ways to prepare individuals for their family roles and responsibilities. One of these new ways is family life education.

It is a multi-professional area of study which developed its philosophy, content, and methodology from direct experience with families and the collaboration of disciplines such as home economics, biology, physiology, religion, anthropology, philosophy and medicine. According to National Commission on Family Life Education (1968), the main purpose of family life education is to help individuals and families learn what is known about human growth, development, and behavior

throughout the life cycle.

Learning experiences are provided to develop the potentials of individuals in their present and future family roles. The central concept is that of relationships through which personality develops; about which individuals make decisions; to which they are committed; and in which they develop self-esteem. Family life education focuses on healthy family functioning within a family systems perspective and provides a primarily preventive approach.

The skills and knowledge needed for healthy functioning are widely known: strong communication skills, knowledge of typical human development, good decision-making skills, positive self-esteem, and healthy interpersonal relationships. The goal of family life education is to teach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable individuals and families to function optimally.

Family life education professionals consider societal issues economics, education, work-family issues, parenting, gender and more within the context of the family. They believe that societal problems like substance abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, debt, and child abuse can be more effectively addressed from a perspective that considers the individual and family as part of larger systems. Knowledge about healthy family functioning can be applied to prevent or minimize many of these problems. Family life education provides information to families through an educational approach, often in a classroom-type setting or through educational materials.

### **Module 2: Need of family life education**

The education given to the individual by the family and family members to fulfill the needs is called family education. Family life education is an essential educational process within the family. It provides education regarding the way of living, management and preparation for successive future life to the adolescence. Besides this, the education knowledge and skills regarding the accepted age of marriage causes of delayed marriage, way of maternal-child, healthcare, planning of family, right and responsibilities as future parents, methods of developing and maintaining the healthy

relation among the family members, planning for old age etc. are transmitted to the adolescence and the growing individual.

Thus, the family education provides the base and ability to learn, choose and take creative and responsible decisions independently regarding himself or herself and to the society. In this context the family is the very foundation upon which society is built and of all social institutions exerts the greatest influence. Fundamental behavior patterns such as eating, sleeping, elimination as well as much emotional reaction to people and to situation are laid in the family. In fact the family provides an environment where a child can develop physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Thus, we may say that the family education is the process of education which helps the child and individual to gain their physical, social, moral, ethical, emotional and other essential qualities to adjust in the dynamic society and to participate actively in the developmental task of society and nation. The family education is the base of life. So it must be started from the very beginning of life, or we may say that family education must be given from the early childhood. In this process, education should be based on the need, interest, attitude, physical changes, developmental stage and their circumstance.

### **Importance of family life education:**

#### **Why do we need family life education?**

Families face unprecedented challenges. Stresses come from many directions and impose great burdens on all families. There was a time when most young people got family life training from their parents.

However, today, with greater challenges than ever, we provide less training and preparation for family roles than in the past. It is no wonder that families feel flooded by the challenges they face. Many people feel that they know a lot about families because they grew up in one. Yet there are big surprises in recent discoveries in family life education. Many of the processes that people assume to be helpful in families are not. Research continues to show new and better ways to strengthen couple relationships and to raise healthy, balanced children.

Let us consider few Examples:

Kindness may be more important in family relationships than communication skills.

- Children's character and moral development may depend more on the cultivation of empathy than anything else.
- One characteristic of resilient children those who flourish in spite of challenges is that they have someone in their lives who is crazy about them.
- The healthiest people are not the most realistic. Research shows that the healthiest people tend to be unrealistically optimistic.
- Emphasis on self-esteem may have created more problems than it solved.
- People systematically distort information. Those who focus on problems often create greater problems. Those who focus on strengths tend to transcend many problems.
- Controlling stress is not done by avoiding it as much as using the resources we have and managing the way we think about it.

### **Module 3: Objectives**

The wholesome objective of family life education is to enrich and improve the quality of individual and family life. To develop knowledge, regarding the concept of family, its roles and functions. Every individual both young and old should have proper knowledge and understanding of the concept of family, its roles and function. The knowledge will help in individual to recognize the various tasks that need to be undertaken for the well-being and maintenance of the family.

2. Family life education aims at developing the ability to deal with family relationship and responsibility. Family life education helps in establishing and maintaining satisfying relationships with members of the family, with friends and with others whom they come into contact with in the context of family life.

3. Family life education aims at developing life skills to cope with different situations. Family life education develops the knowledge, values and skills, necessary for adult life, marriage, parenthood, participation in the social life of the community. It also helps in

communicating effectively with others and in making wise decisions about all matters related to family life, personal relationships and various memberships of the community.

4. Family life education aims at helping in understanding and coping with changes in one's own life and changes in the society. It helps an individual to understand and cope with changes in the adolescent life and with the society in which they live;

For example, the breaking down of traditional social structures, the changing roles of men and women, marriage practices etc.

5. Family life education aims at developing knowledge about physiological processes of one's own body. It also creates an awareness regarding proper age of marriage, and proper time for reproduction, the consequences to adolescent pregnancies and parenting and of alternatives to pregnancies and contraception.

6. Family life education seeks to create responsible and useful young citizens.

7. It develops realization of the role of family in promotion of civil society and duties towards the community, nation and humanity.

#### **Module 4: Importance of Family Life Education**

In modern complex and changing societies, emergence of new knowledge, advances in technology, and changes in social conditions all create circumstances in which the teachings of previous-generations may not be appropriate or sufficient. In such circumstances, families must be supported in their educational efforts by the activities of other institutions and agencies and by the actions of individuals on their own behalf.

Changes occurring in the broader society may create strains or tensions in individuals and families that may disrupt family living. Certain family difficulties (e.g., an increased divorce rate, increased shifts in marital and familial roles) commonly occur in societies as they become industrialized and urbanized and that these give rise to attempts to strengthen the family through the efforts of outside

agencies. Over time, these efforts have become increasingly formalized and have led to the establishment of the movement called "family life education".

### **Importance of family life education:**

The importance of family life education is summed up as family life education helps the young people to solve family problems.

It helps the youth in their growing stage to know about the social, emotional and physical changes that take place in this stage. It develops the knowledge about different roles, function and maintenance of family. It provides knowledge about maintaining good relationship among the members of the family and other people of the society. It helps to make the family happy and prosperous.

It develops the knowledge, values and the skills, which are necessary for adulthood, marriage and parenthood as well as for participation in community life. It helps to deal with the changes in the adolescents' lives in their society. It helps them to make wise decision and communicate effectively with others about all matters concerning the social behaviour. It makes people aware that they are becoming sexually mature and leads them to understand the sex attitudes and behaviours.

### **Module 5: Content of Family Life Education**

Unlike [Family Therapy](#), Family Life Education works on a [prevention](#) model teaching families to enrich family life and to prevent problems before they occur. The content areas within Family Life Education as provided by National Council on Family Relations are listed below:

**Families and Individuals in Societal Contexts** - An understanding of families and their relationships to other institutions, such as the educational, governmental, religious, and occupational institutions in society. For example, Structures and functions, Cultural variations like family heritage, social class, geography, ethnicity, race and religion);

Changing Gender Roles (role expectations & behaviours of courtship partners, marital partners, parents & children, siblings, and extended kin) etc.

**Internal Dynamics of Families** - An understanding of family strengths and weaknesses and how family members relate to each other. For example, internal social processes like including cooperation and conflict. The communication (patterns and problems in husband-wife relationships and in parent-child relationships, including stress & conflict management); Conflict Management etc.

**Human Growth and Development Over the Life Span** - An understanding of the developmental changes of individuals in families throughout the life span. Based on the knowledge of physical, emotional, cognitive, social, moral, and personality aspects; for example, Prenatal, infancy, early and middle childhood, adolescence; adulthood, aging.

**Interpersonal Relationships:** An understanding of the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships, e.g., Self and Others; Communication skills (listening, empathy, self-disclosure, decision making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution); intimacy, love, romance, relating to others with respect, Sincerity and responsibility.

**Family Resource Management** - An understanding of the decisions individuals and families make about developing and allocating resources including time, money, material assets, energy, friends, neighbours, and space, to meet their goals. e.g. Goal Setting and Decision-Making; Development and Allocation of Resources; Social Environment Influences; Life Cycle and Family Structure Influences; Consumer Issues and Decisions.

**Parent Education and Guidance** - An understanding of how parents teach, guide and influence children and adolescents, e.g. Parenting Rights and Responsibilities; Parenting Practices or Processes; Parent or Child Relationships; Variation in Parenting Solutions; Changing Parenting Roles over the Life Cycle.

**Family Law and Public Policy** - An understanding of the legal definition of the family and laws which affect the status of the family. E.g., Family and the Law (relating to marriage, divorce, family support, child custody, child protection & rights, & family planning); Family and Social Services; Family and Education; Family and Religion; Policy and the Family (public policy as it affects the family, including tax, civil rights, social security, economic support laws, & regulations.)

**Professional Ethics and Practice** - An understanding of the character and quality of human social conduct, and the ability to critically examine ethical questions and issues, e.g. Formation of Social Attitudes and Values; Recognizing and Respecting the Diversity of Values and the Complexity of Value Choice in a Pluralistic Society; Examining Value Systems and Ideologies systematically and objectively; Social Consequences of Value Choices.

**Family Life Education Methodology** - An understanding of the general philosophy and broad principles of family life education in conjunction with the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate such educational programs, e.g., Planning and Implementing; Evaluation (materials, student progress, & program effectiveness); Education Techniques; Sensitivity to Others (to enhance educational effectiveness); Sensitivity to Community Concerns and Values (understanding of the public relations process).

## **Summary**

Family life education is a form of community education, both preventive and developmental in nature, intended to educate the public on the importance of family life and how it can be sustained.

Family life education is provided to meet the following three major objectives : (a) to enhance family functioning - by helping the families to fulfil the developmental tasks at different stages of the family life cycle, to adjust to changes, and to cope with stress; (b) to strengthen family relationship - by enhancing family members' self-understanding, fostering harmonious relationships among family members, and facilitating them to fulfil



their roles and responsibilities; (c) to prevent family breakdowns - by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills in coping with changing roles and demands in life, and developing a positive attitude towards their responsibilities in family.

Family life education is targeted to impart proper knowledge, skills and attitude to the public concerning the developmental paths of the individual and his/her family. It covers the following content: (a) basic human needs, growth and behaviour, e.g. Physical, social and psychological characteristics of different developmental stages; (b) human roles and relationships, e.g. Marital relationship, parent-child relationship, parenthood and friendship; Family care and health, e.g. Home management, family budgeting, home safety and mental health, etc.

Qualified educators are central to the success of family life education, as it is these individuals who bear major responsibility for shaping the educational experience and interacting with participants. Despite their importance, however, few guidelines are available to help prepare family educators.

The Internet and the World Wide Web present new challenges for family life education. Information technologies make it possible to provide family-related information twenty-four hours a day, every day, although it is likely that these technologies will enhance rather than replace more traditional family life education approaches, important issues that will require attention include the reliability and validity of the information available and the effectiveness of this form of family education

Underlying the practice of family life education is a basic belief in the importance of family living and a basic respect for persons that recognizes their ability to take charge of their own lives in satisfying ways. Through educational programs, family life education makes an important contribution toward strengthening families to fulfill their significant role as the basic unit of society.

## References

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**Arcus, M.E.; Schvaneveldt, J.D. and Moss, J.J. 1993.** Handbook of Family Life Education: Foundations of Family Life Education. Sage Publications, Inc. USA.

## Web references

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family\\_life\\_education](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_life_education)

<https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/what-family-life-education>

## Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPmGYkfatMI>

[www.powershow.com/.../Family\\_Life\\_Education\\_powerpoint\\_ppt](http://www.powershow.com/.../Family_Life_Education_powerpoint_ppt) .

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IHFILiz\\_aM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IHFILiz_aM)

## Glossary

**Empathy:** the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

**Resilient children:** Resilience is the ability to take control of self during difficult situations, failures, challenges, and setbacks.

**Family life education:** is to teach and foster this knowledge and these skills to enable individuals and *families* to function optimally.

**Conflict Management:** Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of **conflict** while increasing the positive aspects of **conflict**

## QUIZ

1. Family life education is a \_\_\_\_\_ area of study and multi-professional in its practice.

- a. Uni-disciplinary    b. Multidisciplinary    c. Co disciplinary    d. Trans disciplinary

**Ans. b**

2. The agencies of Family Life Education includes

- a. Family                      b. School                      c. Community                      d. all the above

**Ans. D**

3. Family Life Education works on a \_\_\_\_\_ model, teaching families to enrich family life and to prevent problems before they occur

- a. Prevention model  
b. Therapy model  
c. Counseling model  
d. None

**Ans a**

4. Family life education aims at developing the ability to deal with -----

- a. Relationships  
b. Family members  
c. Family health  
d. Family economics

**Ans a**

## Assignment

Importance of family life education power point presentation

**Faq : N/a**

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