

Chapter 12 - Moral Development

- Morality as Rooted in Human Nature

- Genetic root
 - Share moral behaviors with other species
- Areas in prefrontal cortex are vital for emotional responsiveness to suffering of others
 - Ventromedial and orbitofrontal areas
 - Functioning improves over first two years
- Mature expression of moral emotions requires caregiving support and cognitive attainments

- Morality as the Adoption of Societal Norms

- **Internalization: adopting societal standards for right action as one's own; psychoanalytic and social learning theory focus on how morality moves from society to the individual**
 - Psychoanalytic: Freud believes morality emerges between 3-6 y/o when Oedipus and Electra conflicts are resolved with the formation of the superego; child adopts the moral standards of the same-sex parent and redirects impulses towards the self in the form of guilt
 - Contrary to Freud's view, discipline that promotes fear of punishment and loss of parent love does not foster conscience development
 - Contrary to Freud's view, moral development proceeds gradually and is not complete by the end of early childhood
 - **Inductions: adult helps child notice other's feelings by pointing out the effects of child's misbehaviors on others, especially for noting their distress and making clear that the child caused it**
 - More induction usage = stronger moral identity: endorsement of moral values (fairness, kindness, generosity) as central to self concept
 - Social Learning Perspective: focuses on how moral behavior is learned through reinforcement and modeling
 - Effective Models = warm, responsive, competent, powerful, consistent with words & deeds
 - Internalized prosocial rules by middle childhood
 - Frequent harsh punishments = weak moral internalization, adjustment problems, aggressive behavior; does not promote lasting behavior changes
 - Alternatives to harsh punishments; allows parents to avoid using harsh techniques that can turn into violence
 - Effective as long as used consistently while a warm relationship is maintained and parents offer explanations for punishments
 - Withdrawal of privileges
 - **Time out: removing children from immediate setting until they are ready to act appropriately**
 - Positive Parenting encourages good conduct by building a mutually respectful bond with child; provide reasons for rules, encourage mature behavior, be sensitive to children, reduce opportunities for misbehaviors, etc.
- Cognitive-developmental approach: neither identification with parents nor teaching, modeling, and reinforcement are the major means through which children become moral; believe that individuals develop morally through **construction: actively thinking about situations in which social conflicts arise and attaining new moral understandings**

- Morality as Social Understanding

- Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

- **Heteronomous Morality: children view rules handed down by authorities as having a permanent existence and resultantly requiring strict obedience (5-8 y/o)**
 - Moral understanding can be limited by adult power and cognitive immaturity, specifically **realism: the tendency to view mental phenomena as fixed external features of reality**
- **Morality of Cooperation: no longer view rules as fixed but see them as flexible; socially agreed-on principles that can be revised to suit the will of the majority (9-10 y/o)**
- Accurately describes general direction of moral development, but underestimates young children's moral capacities (they actually consider intentions when making moral judgements and have differentiated notions about the legitimacy of authority figures)
- Kohlberg's Extension of Piaget's Theory
 - Viewed moral development as a gradual process extending into adolescence and adulthood; used clinical interviewing to construct a sequence of moral reasoning based on responses
 - Concluded that moral reasoning gradually advances through three levels
 - **Pre conventional Level: morality is externally controlled; children accept rules of authority figures and judge actions by consequences**
 - Stage 1: punishment and obedience orientation: find it hard to see two POV in moral dilemma; focus of fear of authority and avoidance of punishments
 - Stage 2: instrumental purpose orientation: view right action as flowing from self interest and understanding equal exchange of favors
 - **Conventional Level: individuals continue to regard conforming to social rules as important, but not for self-interest; believe that actively maintaining current social system ensures positive human relations and societal order**
 - Stage 3: good boy good girl orientation/morality of interpersonal cooperation: desire to obey rules that promote social harmony; capacity to view two person relationship from outside POV
 - Stage 4: social order maintaining orientation: laws should be obeyed because vital for cooperation and societal order
 - **Post conventional Levels: define morality in terms of abstract principles and values that apply to all situations and societies**
 - Stage 5: social-contract orientation: imagine alternatives to own social order; rules/laws = flexible
 - Stage 6: universal ethical principle orientation: right action define by self-chosen ethics
 - Challenges to Kohlberg's theory:
 - Doesn't address whole range of strategies used to resolve real-life moral problems
 - Revised conception: moral maturity achieved at stages 3/4, when young people grasp ideal reciprocity (attainments that require profound moral constructions)
- Factors contribution to moral maturity include a flexible, openminded personality; warm, rational parenting; education level; peer discussions of moral issues
 - In village societies where moral cooperation is based on direct relations between people, development rarely moves past Kohlberg's 3rd stage
 - Maturity of moral reasoning modestly related to moral behavior
 - Moral action influenced by individual's emotions, temperament, history of experiences, and moral identity
 - Despite declines in formal religious involvement, most religiously affiliated teens are advantaged in moral values and behaviors
- Domain approach to moral understanding: children construct systems of social knowledge out of experiences with
 - **Moral imperatives: which protect people's rights and welfare**
 - **Social conventions: customs determined solely by consensus (table manners/saying hello)**
 - **Matters of personal choice: friends, hairstyle, leisure activities that do not violate rights and are up to the individual**

- Children conclude that moral (but not social conventional) transgressions are wrong in any contexts
- School age children gradually clarify and link moral imperatives and social conventions, taking into account the purpose of the rule
- Conviction that certain matters are up to the individual strengthens with age, especially during adolescence; fosters moral understanding of individual rights
- Development of Morally Relevant Self-Control
 - Self-control emerges in second year of life in the form of **compliance**: toddlers show clear awareness of caregivers' wishes and expectations; can obey simple requests/commands
 - **Delay of self gratification**: waiting for appropriate time and place to engage in tempting act; increases between 1.5-3 y/o
 - Individual differences in delay predict diverse cognitive and social competencies, such as effective social problem solving and + peer relations
 - Influenced by temperament and quality of caregiving
 - School age children become better at devising own strategies for resisting temptations, which leads to a capacity for **moral self regulation**: ability to monitor one's own conduct, constantly adjusting it as circumstances present opportunities to violate inner standards
- The Other Side of Self Control: Development of Aggression
 - Aggression first appears by the second year
 - Initially, most common is **proactive (instrumental) aggression**: children act to fulfill need/desire and unemotionally attack a person to achieve goal
 - Declines over early and middle childhood
 - **Reactive (hostile) aggression**: angry, defensive response to a blocked goal; meant to hurt another
 - Increases during early and middle childhood
 - These types of aggression come in three forms:
 - **Physical aggression**: harms others through physical injury
 - **Verbal aggression**: harms others through threats of physical aggression, name calling, hostile teasing
 - **Relational aggression**: damages another's per relationships through social exclusion, malicious gossip, or friendship manipulation
 - Early childhood: physical decreases, verbal increases
 - By 17 months, boys are more physically aggressive than girls
 - Adolescence: teacher and peer reported aggression declines, but delinquent acts increase (especially for males)
 - Children high in physical/relational aggression remain high over time
 - Irritable, fearless, impulsive, overactive children = at risk for aggression
 - Whether or not they become aggressive depends on child-rearing conditions
 - Children who are from strife-ridden families with harsh, inconsistent discipline develop social cognitive deficits and distortions that contribute to long term aggression
 - Poverty, harsh living conditions, inadequate schools = increased antisocial acts
 - Training parents in effective child-rearing techniques and teach children alternative conflict resolution help to reduce aggression
 - Address multiple factors that sustain antisocial behaviors (most effective)
 - Social-cognitive interventions aimed at improving social info processing and perspective taking