

# Chapter 8

## Ecology of the Peer Group

*Without friends no one would  
choose to live, though he had all  
other goods.*

Aristotle

# Peer Group Influences

- As a Socializing Agent
- Psychological Development: Emotions
- Social Development: Social Competence and Conformity
- Cognitive Development: Social Cognition
- Peer Group Socializing Mechanisms

# The Peer Group as a Socializing Agent

- Peer Groups serve as socializing agents when:
  - They satisfy certain belonging needs
  - They are often preferred to other socializing agents.
  - They influence not only social development, but cognitive development as well.

# Peer Interactions

<b>Developmental Stage</b>	<b>Belonging Needs and Socialization</b>	<b>Sense of Self</b>
Infancy/Toddlerhood	Awareness of peers	Relationships become more reciprocal
Early Childhood	Parents facilitate	Children play alone and together in groups
Middle Childhood	Opportunities for social interaction increase	Peers become important source of self-confirmation
Adolescence	Growth of relationships and closeness	Peer activities escalate

# The Peer Group's Influence on Psychological Development: Emotions

- In terms of psychological development, peer groups serve as a child's barometer for measuring how well they are accepted or rejected within the group.

# The Peer Group's Influence on Social Development: Social Competence and Conformity

- Social competence involves behavior informed by an understanding of other's feelings and intentions.
- Social competence depends on:
  - Age
  - Situation
  - Personal Values

# Peer Group's Influence on Cognitive Development: Social Cognition

- Social cognition refers to the connection between social and cognitive development.
- Social Cognition differs in the
  - Preoperational Stage
  - Concrete Operational Stage
  - Formal Operational Stage



# Peer Group Socializing Mechanisms

- Reinforcement
- Modeling
- Punishment
- Apprenticeship

# Macrosystem Influences

# Macrosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Developmental Tasks

- Getting along with others
- Developing morals and values
- Types of morality
- Learning appropriate sociocultural roles
- Achieving personal independence and identity

# Types of Morality

- **Morality of Constraint**
  - Behavior based on respect for persons in authority
- **Morality of Cooperation**
  - Behavior based on mutual understanding between equals

# Chronosystem Influences

# Chronosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Play/Activities

- The significance and development of play
- Infant/Toddler Peer Activities
- Early childhood peer activities
- Middle childhood/Preadolescent peer activities
- Adolescent peer activities

# Play: Parten

<b>Play Category</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Solitary	Child plays alone and independently
Onlooker	Child watches other children play
Parallel	Child plays alone, but with toys like those other children are using
Associative	Social interaction and communication with little or no organization
Cooperative	Social interaction in a group

# Play: Sutton-Smith

<b>Play Category</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Imitative	Baby imitates parent; Children imitate roles
Exploratory	Exploring- taste, touch, manipulation
Testing	Testing abilities and emotions
Model-Building	Building- putting elements together in new ways



# Peer Group Interaction

- Development of friendship
  - “Just friends”
  - “Good friends”
  - “Best/close friends”

# Selman & Selman

<b>Developmental Stage</b>	<b>Friendship</b>
Early Childhood	Momentary playmateship
Early to Middle Childhood	One-way assistance
Middle Childhood	Two-way, fair-weather cooperation
Middle Childhood-Adolescence	Intimate, mutually shared relationships
Adolescence	Autonomous interdependent friendships

# Peer Group Acceptance/Neglect/Rejection

- Acceptance
- Neglected
- Rejected

# Peer Sociotherapy

- **Sociometry**

- Techniques used to measure patterns of acceptance, neglect, and rejection among members of a group

- **Sociotherapy**

- An intervention to help children who have trouble making and keeping friends learn to relate to others

# Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

- Clique inclusion and exclusion
- Bullies and victims

# Peer Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

- **Clique Inclusion and Exclusion**
  - Inclusion (recruitment of new members, treatment of wannabes friendship realignment, ingratiation)
  - Exclusion (out-group subjugation, in-group subjugation, compliance, stigmatization, expulsion)

# Peer Group Dynamics and Social Hierarchies

- **Bullies and Victims**

- Bullying is aggressive behavior intended to cause harm or distress.
- Victimization is being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions, or harassment.

# Antisocial Behavior: Gangs

- A group of people who form an alliance for a common purpose and engage in unlawful or criminal activity
- Gangs give members companionship, guidance, excitement, and identity.
- Gang members have significantly lower levels of self-esteem than their non-gang peers.
- Gang members can name fewer adult role models in their families and communities.



# Prosocial Behavior: Peer Collaboration, Tutoring, and Counseling

- Collaborate
- Tutor
- Counsel

# Mesosystem Influences

# Mesosystem Influences on the Peer Group: Adult-Child Interaction

- Adult-structured peer groups
- Adult-mediated group interaction
- Adult leadership styles
- Team Sports

# Adult Mediation

- How adults mediate, or structure, groups influences children's behavior
  - Frustration and competition lead to hostility between groups.
  - Competition *between* groups fosters cohesiveness *within* groups.
  - Intergroup hostility can be reduced by setting up a superordinate, or common, goal.

# Adult Leadership Styles

- Authoritarian
- Democratic (Authoritative)
- Laissez-faire (Permissive)

# Team Sports

- Team sports are a form of recreation.
- Team sports are a means of achieving physical health.
- Team sports are a way to learn leadership skills, loyalty, and other desirable traits.
- Team sports are a vehicle for promoting the development of talent.