



# Strategies for Prevention of Possible Mental Health Problems At-Risk Family Groups

Firafan Shuma\*

Department of Psychiatry, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland

## ABOUT THE STUDY

According to studies, 21% to 23% of kids have a parent who has a mental illness. Numerous research have looked into the increased risk of mental health issues for Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI), and they have estimated that up to 70% of them will have some internalising or externalising symptoms and 32% will acquire a major mental illness. The factors that affect the transmission of mental diseases from parents to children have been investigated by certain authors. The transmission of depression from mothers to children was explained by four main factors: heredity, inherent neuroregulatory dysfunction, exposure to negative maternal affect, cognitions, and behaviours, and increased family stress.

Regardless of the genetic component, a number of psychosocial risk factors have been connected to this heightened susceptibility; for example, higher rates of parental conflict, divorce, and economic hardship are some of the stresses that can have a significant effect on these kids and teenagers. Additionally, study has been done on parenting in these households, which is defined as the collection of values, routines, and expectations that parents have for and place on their kids. In this regard, it has been noted that these families may exhibit a more strict or, conversely, a more lenient parenting style, and there may be challenges in the interactions between parents and children, which may have an impact on attachment. The characteristics that support a child's high self-esteem and resilience, however, have been found as high levels of affect expression, involvement, and supportive guidance.

In addition to parenting abilities, there is a higher chance that children may experience mental health issues because of the stigma attached to these families and how lonely they are seen to be. Additionally, it is believed that the ability to classify people and groups into "good" and "bad" categories begins to develop around the age of 5, and that actions and attitudes that may indicate stigma associated with mental illness first appear

between the ages of 7-8. Therefore, it is important to have open and explicit conversations about mental health before these attitudes are formed, as doing so will increase resilience.

Lack of knowledge regarding their parent's condition frequently leads to false assumptions and major anxieties, such as feeling responsible for their parents' suffering, thinking they would have the same symptoms, or even becoming frightened by the idea that their parents might pass away. Therefore, it has been emphasised that it is crucial to give these kids information about what is occurring to their parents in a straightforward and age-appropriate manner. By doing so, they will be better able to comprehend their parents' struggles, lessen their guilt and shame, and develop resilience. As a result, a significant psychoeducational component is present in the majority of psychological interventions aimed at fostering resilience in these kids.

England organised KidsTime workshops. These workshops are a multi-family community intervention that allows adults with mental health issues, their spouses, and their minor children to take part in order to better understand the requirements and challenges of the entire family. Promoting protective elements while reducing risk factors, this programme operates under the resilience and prevention paradigm. As a result, the program's primary goal is to encourage resilient attitudes in families, especially in kids. Additionally, working with the family fosters parental abilities, encourages children's protective characteristics, and, by working in a multi-family format, increases effectiveness in lowering self-stigma and social isolation.

Children's prosocial behaviour is improved, stigma associated with patients is decreased, and parents' emotional support for their children is increased thanks to the Kidstime programme. It is thought that this kind of interdisciplinary, psycho-educational, playful intervention, which concentrates on parenting skills, can help children whose parents have mental illnesses become more resilient.

**Correspondence to:** Firafan Shuma, Department of Psychiatry, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland, E-mail: firafanhum@hotmial.com

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