

Mindful parenting and adolescents' well-being in early and middle/late adolescence: The mediating role of adolescents' attachment, self-compassion and mindfulness

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Background and objectives: mindful parenting is a particular way of parenting that has been shown to foster a positive and secure parent-child relationship and to contribute to the adolescents' well-being. Despite the increasing research on mindful parenting, little is known about the factors that can help explain why this parenting approach has an important role in the adolescents' well-being and psychosocial functioning. The present study aimed to explore whether the association between mindful parenting and adolescents' well-being could be explained by adolescents' attachment to their parents and by their self-compassion and mindfulness skills. The invariance of the path model across stages of adolescence was also examined.

Methods: the sample comprised 563 parent-child dyads from several middle and secondary Portuguese schools. Adolescents (61.5% girls) were in the early ($n = 337$) or middle/late stages ($n = 226$) of adolescence ($M = 14.26$ years ($SD = 1.66$, range = 12 – 20)). Parents completed a measure of mindful parenting (IM-P), and adolescents completed measures of attachment (PIML), self-compassion (SCS-SF), mindfulness (CAMM), and well-being (KIDSCREEN-10 index).

Results: path analyses showed that higher levels of mindful parenting were indirectly associated with higher levels of adolescents' self-compassion and mindfulness through a more secure perception of the relationship with the parents, and that higher levels of mindful parenting were indirectly associated with higher levels of adolescents' well-being through higher levels of perceived attachment security, self-compassion and mindfulness. Although adolescents in early adolescence had higher levels of mindfulness and well-being than adolescents in middle/late stages, the path model was invariant across age groups. Discussion and conclusion: these results suggest that self-compassion and mindfulness may develop within a secure parent-child relationship characterized by warmth and affection, self-regulation, and mindful awareness. Our findings also underscore the important role of mindful parenting, a secure parent-child relationship, and adolescents' self-compassion and mindfulness to their well-being.