



Meanings of family under the perspective of parents of adolescent students

Significados de família sob o olhar de pais de adolescentes escolares

Significados de familia bajo la mirada de padres de adolescentes escolares

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This study aimed to understand the meanings of family according to parents of adolescent students. A qualitative research conducted with nine parents of adolescents from a public school, Maranhão, Brazil. Data collection occurred through unstructured interview from February to April 2011, and were submitted to thematic content analysis. Eight themes emerged: Structure, values and meanings of family; Roles and functions of family members; Family and school; Family dynamics and the health-disease process in the family; Affective bonds and family relationships; Strategies for family functioning; Feelings and support network; Adolescence and the adolescent in the family. The meanings of family overtook consanguinity, extending to friendship, solidarity and affection in a dynamic relationship that involves dialogue, affection, love and responsibility.

Descriptors: Pediatric Nursing; Family Relations; Adolescent.

Objetivou-se compreender os significados de família revelados por pais de adolescentes escolares. Pesquisa qualitativa realizada com nove pais de adolescentes de escola pública, Maranhão, Brasil. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevista não estruturada no período de fevereiro a abril de 2011 e submetidos à análise de conteúdo, modalidade temática. Foram construídos oito temas: Estrutura, valores e significados de família; Papéis/função dos membros da família; Família e escola; Dinâmica familiar e o processo saúde-doença na família; Laços afetivos e relações familiares; Estratégias para funcionalidade familiar; Sentimentos e rede de apoio; Adolescência e o adolescente na família. Os significados de família ultrapassaram a consanguinidade ampliando-se para laços de amizade, solidariedade e afeto numa dinâmica revelada pelo vínculo, diálogo, afetividade, amor e responsabilidade.

Descritores: Enfermagem Pediátrica; Relações Familiares; Adolescente.

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Descritores: Enfermería Pediátrica; Relaciones Familiares; Adolescente.

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Introduction

The family, as the primary social group in which someone is inserted, is characterized as an essential space for the survival, protection and provision of basic and emotional needs of its members⁽¹⁻²⁾. For this reason, the family influences the socialization and development process of the individual, especially the adolescents, as it represents a universe of possibilities for the construction and affirmation of interpersonal relationships within and outside it⁽³⁻⁵⁾.

These relationships make the family an independent and creative unit in which people share their own values and experiences, constituting a support network, structural axis, or cornerstone for its members⁽²⁾. In this sense, the family has a unique importance for individuals in adolescence.

This period of life is characterized by multiple processes involving growth, development, socialization and the discovery of new values, usually with conflicts between parents and children, filled with different interests and motivations⁽⁵⁾. In this context, it is necessary to establish strategies that contribute to healthy relationships and for maintaining bonds.

Thus, life stages such as adolescence and events such as illness and loss affect the family, and may even alter the meanings that members have about this social group. From these assertions, this research had the following guiding question: What meanings the parents of adolescent students attribute to the family?

Understanding that families have an important role to remain a space of protection and safety of adolescents, the meanings parents attribute to this social group can support the reflection of nurses on the family context in which adolescents are inserted and reveal prospects for professional intervention in the care process of individuals in this stage of life and in school context, through a care plan that prioritizes both dynamic as the family processes.

This research aimed to understand the meaning of family for parents of adolescent students.

Method

Article originated from the research project entitled "Structure, dynamics and meanings of families in the view of parents and adolescent students: learn to act" linked to the Department of Nursing of the Universidade Federal do Maranhão and the Study and Research Group in Family, Child and Adolescent Health funded by the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development. A descriptive qualitative study conducted in a public school linked to the Universidade Federal do Maranhão, which offers primary, secondary and technical education to the young community and is a research and intervention field for teachers, students and researchers from this institution.

The parents of adolescents regularly enrolled in this school participated in this stage of research. The selection of participants occurred after the initial contact with them in a parent-teacher meeting held at the school. At that time, 27 parents were identified as potential participants, but 12 resided in the interior of the state, five were absent from the city (two to accompany a relative due to health issues and three were on work mission) and two mothers, after partner's interference, did not agree to participate. Thus, the research participants were eight parents of adolescent students enrolled in this school, seven mothers and one father divided into three age groups: 30-34 years (02); 35-39 years (03) and 40-43 years (03). Of these, seven were married or were in a stable relationship and one mother was divorced. As for education, two (02) parents had high school education, one (01) complete primary education, four (04) completed high school, two (02) had higher education and one of these (01) concluded graduation (specialization).

Open and circular questions were used to conduct the interview. The open question aimed to understand the meanings attributed to family by the parents of adolescents: What meanings does the family have

to you? Talk to me about these meanings. Circular questions aimed to deepen the understanding of the research object and allow the continuation of the interview: What does family represent to you? How do you feel about your family? Tell us more about it.

Data collection took place at their homes (except one that occurred in the workplace of the participant) from February to April 2011, through unstructured interview, which was recorded and later fully transcribed. After typing and printing, the interviews were given to the subjects of the research in order to be validated. For this moment, the parents were instructed to make changes to the original text and add what they still deem necessary. Therefore, two meetings occurred with each research subject, with an average duration of 57 minutes, the longest lasting an hour and 49 minutes.

Data were submitted to thematic content analysis, following the pre-established steps that included pre-analysis, material exploration and data processing⁽⁶⁾. In pre-analysis, the organization, transcription and separation of the empirical material occurred, followed by brief reading of the data set, identifying relevant aspects based on the study objective. In the material exploration, the classification and aggregation of data took place from a thorough reading process, identifying the common and specific aspects, originating the prior categories. Finally, in the data processing, there was the deepening of categories through articulation of the empirical data with the theoretical material, considering the objectives of the research and emerging themes. In total, there were 1,128 units of meaning and eight themes constructed.

The Research Ethics Committee of the Universidade Federal do Maranhão approved the study under protocol No. 23115-006943/2009-99. All participants signed the Free and Informed Consent Form in two copies and, to ensure anonymity, they were identified by flower names (Sunflower, Hydrangea, Jasmine, Lily, Magnolia, Daisy, Orchid, and Rose).

Results

During the interviews, the parents revealed situations, emotions, family contexts and values from their experiences, enabling us to understand that the construction of meanings happened retrospectively, in other words, parents gave meaning to the facts occurred. For this purpose, they revisited their families of origin and those they established.

From the analysis, eight themes emerged: Structure, values and meanings of family; Roles and functions of family members; Family and school; Family dynamics and the health-disease process in the family; Affective bonds and family relationships; Strategies for family functioning; Feelings and support network; Adolescence and the adolescent in the family.

First theme: Structure, values and meanings of family

Represented by 219 units of meaning, it revealed the family as the foundation and structure that supports the adolescent children to build a safe life and take a professional career: *Family is unity and love, where every day you practice the conversation and dialogue so you can help the other someday in their difficulties and needs. It is exchanging aid and conversation that keeps the family alive* (Sunflower); *Family for me is foundation. The true meaning of family is structure, offering support for everyone, it is affection, friendship and attention* (Orchid); *Family is the foundation for us to have the strength to take a career, to build a safe life. Family means coming home and receive those looks, those hugs. Family is a look, a warmth that you notice. Knowing that I am responsible for it all, for the people, the coexistence, and their future. Then, this is very strong* (Magnolia); *Family is the foundation of everything. A pillar that sustains people from the beginning to the end of their lives* (Hydrangea); *Family for me is the combination of respect, understanding, affection and mutual aid. Family is knowing how to talk to your children, brother, father, or relative* (Jasmine). Love, friendship, bond, exchange, help, support and responsibility were the units of meaning that gave conceptual density to the theme and that strengthen

the family structure with positive contributions to the emotional health of its members.

In defining the families, parents overtook the biological dimension of blood to the significant relationships between people: *Family is those who want to be family. They are people who get together because they love each other and want to be family* (Jasmine); *Family is much more than father, mother and child, is love and unity, that is why a neighbor, a work colleague, a compadre, a comadre may be my family* (Sunflower). These meanings reveal the family from its narrower form, with regard to basic nuclear family present in everyday life, to the most extensive, where there is consideration among people who perceive and accept themselves as members of the family nucleus.

These meanings alter the family structure and direct us to understand it by the bonds formed from the marriage, extending to the family of origin and relations of coexistence among relatives and neighbors: *First of all, come the parents, our father and mother. Then, the wife, husband and children compose the family. It all starts with the parents, then with couples until the arrival of children, and later grandchildren* (Sunflower). *My neighbors are also part of my family. Not only my close and distant relatives are part of my family, I consider my neighbors as part of my family without being blood related. If I get sick, a neighbor comes and brings me a broth, some milk, some medicine; then my neighbors are also part of my family* (Daisy). Some respondents considered friends and neighbors as their family members, because they represent significant people, with whom they establish bonds of trust, support and solidarity. Thus, those who are willing to take responsibility, regardless of consanguinity, define the sense of belonging to the family group.

In the speeches, family was mentioned as a priceless heritage: *Family is the foundation of everything. A pillar that sustains people from the beginning to the end of their lives. Even when someone becomes independent, they always turn to the family. Family is the foundation, it is present in the stages of human life* (Hydrangea); *The values that I find in the family are respect, care and solidarity* (Orchid); *My family is the greatest wealth I have, is my greatest heritage. My greatest wealth is my family, it is worth more*

than gold, more than anything (Daisy); *With my family, I learned values such as honesty, faith and always working hard. I try to pass on all these values* (Magnolia). Thus, the family is defined as a “basis of support for the adolescents’ experiences”^(7:756) and as context for constructing values, relationships and interactive processes.

Second theme: Roles and functions of family members

This theme consists of 240 units of meaning that identified the roles and functions of the family as a context for training, socialization, development of personality, culture and lifestyle, maintenance of social standards, growth and development of adolescent children. For this purpose, the family practices fellowship and understanding with their adolescent kids, in order to understand and support them in all moments of life.

When parents talked about the role and function each one plays in the family, despite some responsibility differences mentioned, the mother presented a dual role: responsible for maintaining home and training the members and professional activities: *In my family, I am both the father and the mother. Then, all functions are mine: supporting the family, monitoring, going to school meetings* (Jasmine); *The mother’s function is to educate. First, the mother is the one who always takes the lead, despite being a bit absent in family life due to work, but the mother always takes the lead of the family. The father is a bit more reserved, he is a bit more absent in the daily lives of children, but help financially. I work all day, I cannot follow-up daily at school, but I am always present at the meetings. I always manage to leave work early. Whenever I can, I go to school to know how things are going. It is on the weekend that we follow more closely at home, because it is complicated during the week* (Orchid). Mothers take child rearing and are expected to “play significant roles in dealing with the emotional stresses of family, inserted into the socio-emotional field”^(3:41), with skills to promote solidarity and release emotional tensions from the family system.

Third theme: Family and school

Organized by grouping six units of meaning, where the parents understand that: *The school is the first home after the family, thus the importance in teaching not only the subjects, disciplines, but also for life, how to behave, how to grow. Schools are there to help our children and families* (Rose). The school revealed itself as the second home for adolescents, in order to expand knowledge, develop behaviors and collaborate on training for adult life, standing out as a supporter for families and as a link for adolescents and families, adolescents and society.

As the first social institution, the family, along with others such as the school, seeks to ensure the continuity and the comfort of its members and the community, including the protection and wellbeing: *I have always participated in the life of my children. I never missed a meeting. As for teaching the exercises, if they have any questions that I can help with, I help them doing the homework. When I am not able to, I seek someone who can help. Even today, it takes something more serious for me not to participate in the school life. However, I never let them feel unwatched. They will never charge me that* (Hydrangea); *I show that they (children) must commit, take the studies with responsibility. At school, you have to be interested, not only depend on the teachers or the school coordination, but on themselves. Because they have to take that responsibility, that commitment and purpose. That is my role* (Rose). These statements present the school as the scenario for the coexistence of children and adolescents, involving family members, teachers and the community⁽⁸⁻⁹⁾. Study participants established this point through the complementarity and negotiation process, in which they articulate commitments and responsibilities.

Fourth theme: Family dynamics and the health-disease process in the family

Comprised of 81 units of meaning, it reported how the family faces health problems and its organization to live such experiences: *My husband became ill and we went through many difficulties, mainly financial. He had to take a very expensive drug to prevent transplant rejection and*

he went back to dialysis treatment. It was something we did not want to, because he had already suffered a lot. Therefore, we came together to take care of him and everyone in the family helped in every way (Lily). We must understand that the effects of the disease on family members are not unidirectional, rather multifaceted, affecting individual members and the family as a system, and the way each one experiences the disease and illness is crucial to the family dynamics: *Each family member is different, singular. Each must be treated the way they present themselves. And we see a lot of this during the disease. I think this is the complication, the biggest difficulty. We can live well; live in harmony, peace, tolerance in the family. I hope we can always have more tolerance. This is important to keep the family balance* (Jasmine); *The family has both the good side, good things, as the bad. There are moments of joys and others of weeping. We do not have to go through just the good side* (Daisy). For this reason, experiencing the process of illness, the difficulties that arise, and the way the family overcome moments of crisis constituted situations that interfere in family dynamics, the quality of relationships and the being/acting of each family member.

Fifth theme: Affective bonds and family relationships

A theme composed of 207 units of meaning, in which parents gave meaning to family relationships, besides the importance attributed to the affective connections built in the family environment.

The quality of the relationship between family members occurs through the importance they give to daily events: *The good moments with my family is being with them, sleep and wake up next to them. The best moment of my family is when we gather* (Daisy); *I like to share with them my problems, my difficulties, my joys, my sorrows. You come home, you have someone to talk to, to share all that day that passed* (Rosa); *A united family, with harmony, becomes wonderful in every way, both in the professional field as in the personal* (Sunflower). For the parents interviewed, the union between the members promotes an important emotional bond and becomes an important strategy for family relationships.

On the other hand, difficulties arise in family

relationships from the moment there is different opinions, causing misunderstandings among individuals: *When someone in the family decides to take a different decision from the others, they end up creating problems, a broken home. It is hard to make decisions together and with those we live with, because it will not prevail the opinion of only one. The most important is trying to understand the other and the reasons for that option* (Rosa). Since the family is comprised of individuals with different personalities, tastes and opinions, internal relationships are sometimes complex. This characteristic reaffirms the family as a dynamic, interactive and retroactive system, because while it builds, it also deconstructs and reconstructs the individuality of its members.

Sixth theme: Strategies for family functioning

Comprised of 222 units of meaning, it revealed, while thematic concept, the strategies used to strengthen and help in family relationships. Parents considered that follow-up their children, help the other, set limits, and give support are strategies for family functionality determined by patterns of relationships and interactive processes: *I like to follow-up, to be close, to see, because for me companionship is very important in family* (Rosa). Having communication and dialogue as instruments to promote family functionality: *I openly talk to them, even about sex. One of his colleagues said: I wish my mom were like yours, would you like to trade mothers with me? Then, he said: dude, you are crazy? I will not give you my mother. But he spoke so spontaneous, that suddenly my eyes filled with tears* (Hydrangea); *First we have to talk, explain, give them space to talk to us, so they will be our friends too* (Rosa). Communication brings people together and dialogue appeared in the speeches of respondents as a structuring element of family relationships⁽¹⁰⁾. For these participants, the way the dialogue happens directly affects the quality of relationships and solving problems, since to overcome difficulties the youth needs partners to help them in the resolution and in

the appropriate coping with problems.

Seventh theme: Feelings and support network

126 units of meaning composed this theme, in which the feelings of love, affection, and respect were built throughout coexistence and considered indispensable to family relationships: *Throughout coexistence are shown feelings of love, affection, respect and companionship; and sometimes a bit of dissatisfaction caused by some situations makes us grow within the family* (Orchid). Parents listed the exchange of experiences among family members as important tools for strengthening the safety net: *I teach my daughters that we should always help the other, it is a responsibility in our guidance* (Orchid); *I try, at least, to learn a little more with them... There are things I ask her to explain to me, because I really know almost nothing more* (Sunflower).

As a support network, parents revealed that being present in family life is to dream with their kids and believe in their abilities, encouraging them, supporting them in what they believe to be worth, as described in the speeches: *She (the daughter) is in love with astronomy. She even takes the astronomy course and wants to go to NASA. Thus, if it is her dream, it is mine too. We see ourselves in them; we accomplish our dreams through our kids. Then I see them growing, graduating, being happy people, fulfilled and consequently so are we. Father and mother become fulfilled with their children's dreams* (Orchid).

Parents of school adolescents were concerned with preparing their children for the future and revealed desires and expectations, giving their children important attention to positive feelings, especially bonding: *This family bond should never cease to exist, nor should we ever separate. I know that this love, this fidelity that we have for each other will never end, it will always be among us, wherever they (children) are* (Rosa). These feelings reveal the family as an important support network and bonding as the organizing principle of family relationships.

Eighth theme: Adolescence and the adolescent in the family

This topic was formed by 27 units of meaning, in which parents experienced their children's adolescence as a confusing process, especially for decision making: *Adolescence is a phase that requires a lot from parents who sometimes have doubts of what to do and how to do it. On the one hand, we do not want to upset our children, but on the other, we do not want them to suffer, to make wrong decisions... it is very difficult for parents* (Orchid). Otherwise, the parents considered adolescence an important period of growth for their children, requiring articulation of strategies to enable the security, development and wellbeing of those involved.

Discussion

The meanings of family learned in this research suggest a closer relationship with the feelings that permeate the family context as cyclical and dynamic situations constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed, continuously feeding back this family nucleus. This condition characterizes it as an open⁽¹¹⁾ and complex system⁽¹²⁾, in other words, it influences and is influenced by factors, movements, happenings and events of everyday family life or outside it, which means living with and relating to the other. These contexts imply experiencing moments of joy and sorrow, and engage with each other, using solidarity, complementarity and love as instruments.

Understanding the family setting means overcoming biological ties, because feelings are involved in this definition. Therefore, the family structure encompasses huge conceptual elasticity, in which individuals are bound together by blood, legal or affective bonds and constitute support and kinship networks where the functions are performed by those who care and protect. Even in the families that do not go through disruptions in the conjugal ties, elasticity is a characteristic of the family, considering that this social group does not stay the same over the time,

since "it changes, alters and recomposes itself"^(3:8), even by the change in the life cycle of its members, such as the processes of birth, growth and death⁽³⁾.

When defining family, it is important to remember that it is a system in which people recognize themselves as part of this group and live in revealing contexts of individual differences and that is more than consanguinity, reaching the willingness of people to live together and coexist⁽¹²⁾ because they are significant to the family unit. In this sense, the family is formed from the desire of people in living together and interacting, thus contributing to create a palpable and dynamic structural axis, with responsibilities for maintaining the balance and rebalance of the system and for the growth and development of its members⁽¹²⁾.

The parents interviewed reported that respect, honesty, solidarity, perseverance and dignity are essential to the family and constitute a structural axis in shaping the character of its members, especially adolescents. These values are essential to the relational dynamics of the family system, influencing the way its members are and act, as to be characterized as a structural base able to support and promote the necessary balance to their lives^(3,5).

The family environment represented the space for the first life experiences, which will help members in building their values. With regard to adolescence, as a period in which the individual seeks to give meaning to life and understand the facts and context that surrounds them, it is important that parents encourage their children and that the family nucleus provides the basis for the adolescents' experiences⁽⁷⁾. The way these values are shared and the importance members give to them can influence the way of living in family.

From this perspective, the parents' support, involvement and ability to respond to the demands of their kids and the support needed for solving issues are defined as positive parenting practices⁽¹³⁾. This way, the family consists a space of experiences and relationships in a complex network of interactions, the construction of meaning and expression of feelings, essential to the family and adolescent development.

The issue concerning the role and function of the family members revealed that usually the wife/mother struggles to conciliate the professional activities with the role of caring for children and the home and worry about the consequences of their absence in the household. In the statements, survey participants specified that the father plays the role of provider to meet the financial demands of the family, while the mother assumes the roles of nurturer and caregiver.

Nevertheless, in some families, the woman also stands out with the role of financial provider, a role reinforced by the new family arrangements, such as divorces, separations and single mothers, which alter the setting and increase the number of families headed by women and homes without the father presence. This new family dynamics led to an increase in maternal authority and, consequently, a decrease in paternal, sharing responsibilities both financial as the care for their children and redefining the roles of each family member, restructuring and redefining their places and the functions to perform⁽²⁾.

These situations enable us to understand that the definition of the family roles is complex because there are changes due to social and economic advancement of humanity. That is, the models of behavior and family roles are created and recreated by its members from social and economic contexts and situations. This condition requires that family relationships are negotiated and reinvented daily⁽¹⁴⁾.

In the family context, women occupy prominent place in providing, sometimes sharing it with the partner through supplementary income, or assuming the role of primary or only provider of the family. Although assuming various roles in the family, the mother remains the main caregiver, responsible for building and maintaining emotional bonds and the emotional component that gives structure and meaning to interactive processes of the family system.

Guidance and school support were commitments that mothers incorporated to the care of adolescents, because they see, in school,

assistance in their formation and education. At the same time, they understand that investing in the children education expresses a desire to secure their offspring, a better social position than theirs. The family plays a fundamental role in protecting and ensuring appropriate conditions to foster the growth and development of its members, especially children and adolescents.

The school and family represented critical contexts to the development and trajectory of the lives of adolescents. Therefore, it is important that there is synchronism between these social units to better socialize children and adolescents. In this investigation, school represented a space where the teaching-learning process takes place and that, through the mediation of relationships with family, assists in training, guides the behavior and contributes to the socialization and development of adolescents.

It is also in the family that people experience all life processes, among which the illness. The disease disrupts the family unit, producing imbalance in their functioning ability, generating conflict and changes in family life, because each individual, though of the same family, has different characteristics that should be respected⁽¹⁵⁾. With these arguments, it can be inferred that the better the family dynamics, as regards the relationships and interactions, the greater the possibility of overcoming the differences and difficulties of the family system, with positive repercussions in facing the situation, reducing tensions and making the members more cooperative.

In this sense, the parents revealed that tolerance, respect for differences and consideration with the other are mediators for intra-family relationships. These situations, when well conducted, promote the development and establishment of negotiations, besides providing the growth of members and family adjustment. Therefore, parents adopt affection as a way to establish a closer and more intimate relationship with their adolescent kids and other family members, expressing the sense of relationships, giving way to confidence, affection and intimacy.

Among the strategies for family functionality, parents use the dialogue to guide and enlighten their children, reducing the possibility of conflict, where communication between family members plays a critical role to enhance and assist the establishment of the more satisfying and healthier relationships.

The respondents characterized the family as social core surrounded by feelings of love, care, affection, understanding and respect, free from coercion, which transforms and recreates itself from an atmosphere of mutual tolerance⁽¹⁰⁾. Thus, the aid relationships are defined as internal support network, composed by knowledge and experience that somehow influence the family, since in this exchange, new information, knowledge, values and beliefs are modified or perpetuated⁽¹⁵⁾. The dependence of this support network, centered on relationships and interactions, defines the family as a complex and dynamic system subject to various events and different levels of bonds and support. For this reason, the family is both singular and plural.

Grounded in these feelings and supported in bonds, interactional dynamics and life projects, the family life is designed as a true support network for its members. As the core of the family, parents considered themselves responsible for their children and their future, creating expectations regarding their academic and professional lives. They put their dreams in their children, but leave them free to make their own choices; they also revealed that worrying about the others, care and emotional bonds are organizational principles of the family system that maintain its normal levels and protects the adolescents.

In the theme adolescence and the adolescent in the family, parents characterized adolescence as the stage of concerns arising from intense transformations, doubts, questions, discoveries, choices of children and current social demands. They recognized adolescence as a period of changes, in which arise factors and issues that impact on the youth and their family and that suggest the need for relationships between parents and children guided by feelings and values capable

of producing strong ties and positive communication. It seems that understanding the phenomenon of adolescence under this perspective helps overcoming the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Final Considerations

Each parents' statement revealed meanings that define the family as the foundation for adolescents, committed to their growth and development. They determined as strategies for positive family dynamics with adolescents: coexistence, bonding and dialogue through which they build and maintain ties of affection, love, responsibility and solidarity. These feelings structure the family and bring values for moral, psychological, professional and spiritual growth of adolescents.

Parents saw the family as a structure that goes beyond the nuclear and blood barrier, where close people (such as neighbors and friends) inserted on daily life, under certain criteria (friendship, appreciation, sympathy, affection, etc.), are recognized and deemed as family members.

As for the dynamics, following the lives of adolescent children, the family represents an active agent, where privacy and intimacy enable exchanging values, developing feelings and bonding, which together with the school, allows and influences in the socialization process and development of adolescents and the family itself as an interactional system. It is understood that the meanings, values and feelings about family are manipulated and modified by a dynamic process that can alter periods of order, disorder and reorganization, revealing the family as a dynamic system, open, complex and susceptible to change. It is worth highlighting that the moments of disorganization and reorganization of the family system occur from everyday processes, and especially the appreciation of feelings such as affection, attention, care, listening and dialogue, which facilitate interactive processes and negotiation among its members. The statements seem to reveal the link between the way

the family understands and develops solutions for a particular event and the quality of relationships, which are defined by the ability to dialogue, negotiate and respect the differences.

It is worth mentioning that the nursing care to adolescents, focusing on the family, means to understand that this social unit is constituted and renewed from their conditions, dynamics, expectations, structures and parental, affective and social relations. Thus, nurses should propose strategies for providing specific and comprehensive care to adolescents, with the family and the school as intervention units, besides enhance bonds and develop skills to welcome and listen to the adolescent and family.

In this study, the family consisted of a relations and interactions system and the importance of their experiences and situational demands. There is need of exploring in future research the contextual factors of adolescence and their influence on the structure, dynamics and relationships in order to assess the association between adolescence, cohesion and family adjustment.

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Sousa FGM and Castro LB contributed in the design, data analysis and interpretation and in critical reviews on the various moments of the construction of the article. Nogueira ALA, Silva DCM and Silva IR contributed in research data collection, organization and analysis. Amorim NMA contributed in the drafting of the article.

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