

# Mindfulness-based interventions for parents as a prevention approach in families

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Mindfulness practice (10min)

**What is Mindfulness?**

# What it's NOT:

Relaxation



Altered state



Breathing exercise



# What is Mindfulness?

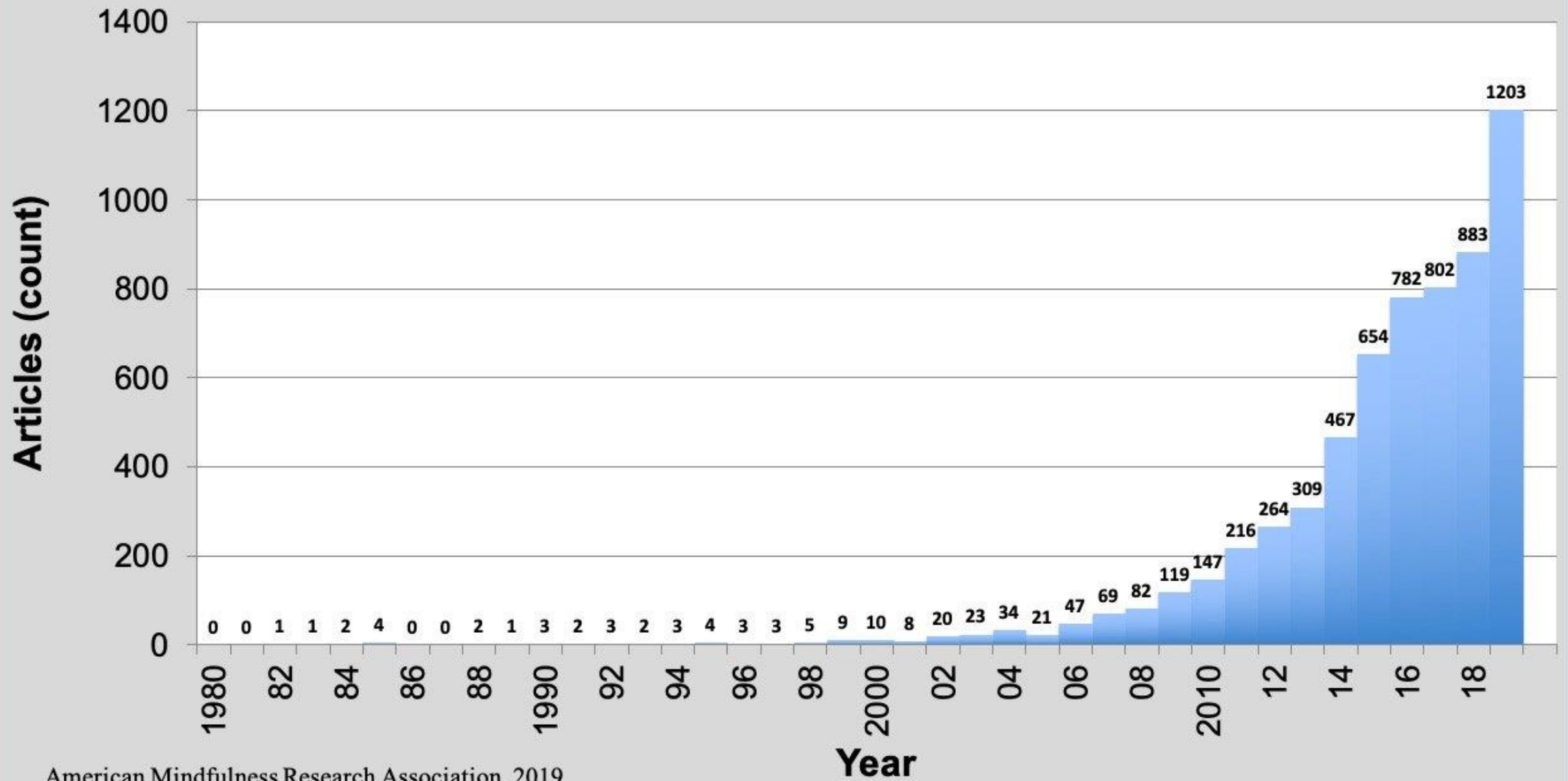
- Mindfulness means paying attention:
  - on purpose (= consciously)
  - in the present moment
  - non judgmentally
- Moment-by-moment **awareness** of our attitude of the mind, thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and the surrounding environment.
- Attitudes:  
**compassion**  
pausing before responding to a stimulus  
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<https://youtu.be/55sHAKS3hLY>

## "Mindfulness" journal articles published by year: 1980-2019



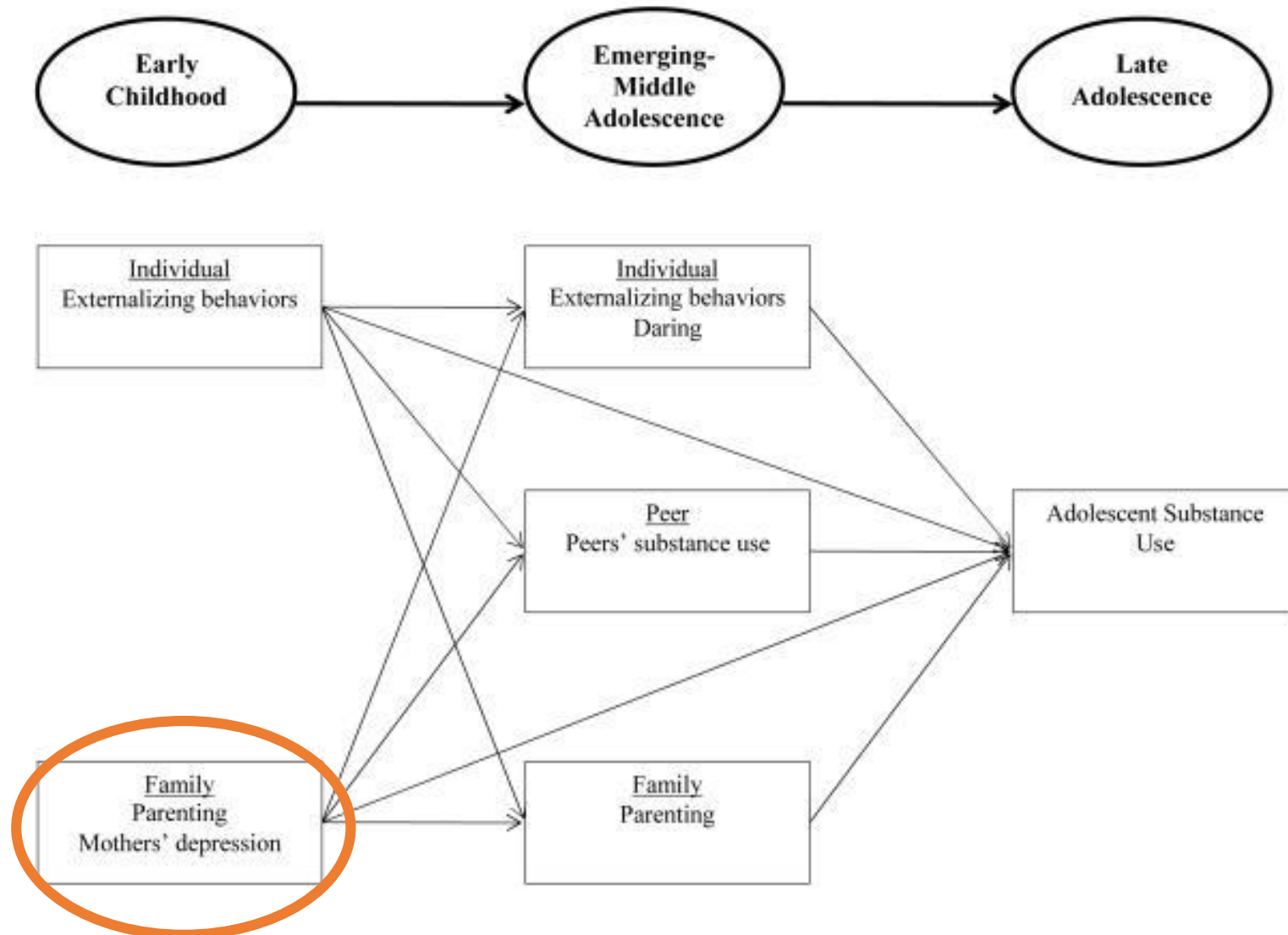
M offered to parents and families

**Why shall we care about parents?**





# Model of Developmental Risk Factors for Adolescent Substance Use – by Sitnick et al.



Sitnick, S., Shaw, D. S., & Hyde, L. (2014). Precursors of adolescent substance use from early childhood and early adolescence: Testing a developmental cascade model. *Development and psychopathology*, 26(1), 125.

# Parents during the 1st year postpartum

- Vulnerable period
- Postpartum depression and anxiety are highly prevalent - 1 in 5 women  
(Hahn-Holbrook 2018, Rados 2018)
- Challenges:
  - Taboo
  - Only minority of parents receive support
  - Hesitancy to use psychiatric medication (pregnancy, breastfeeding)



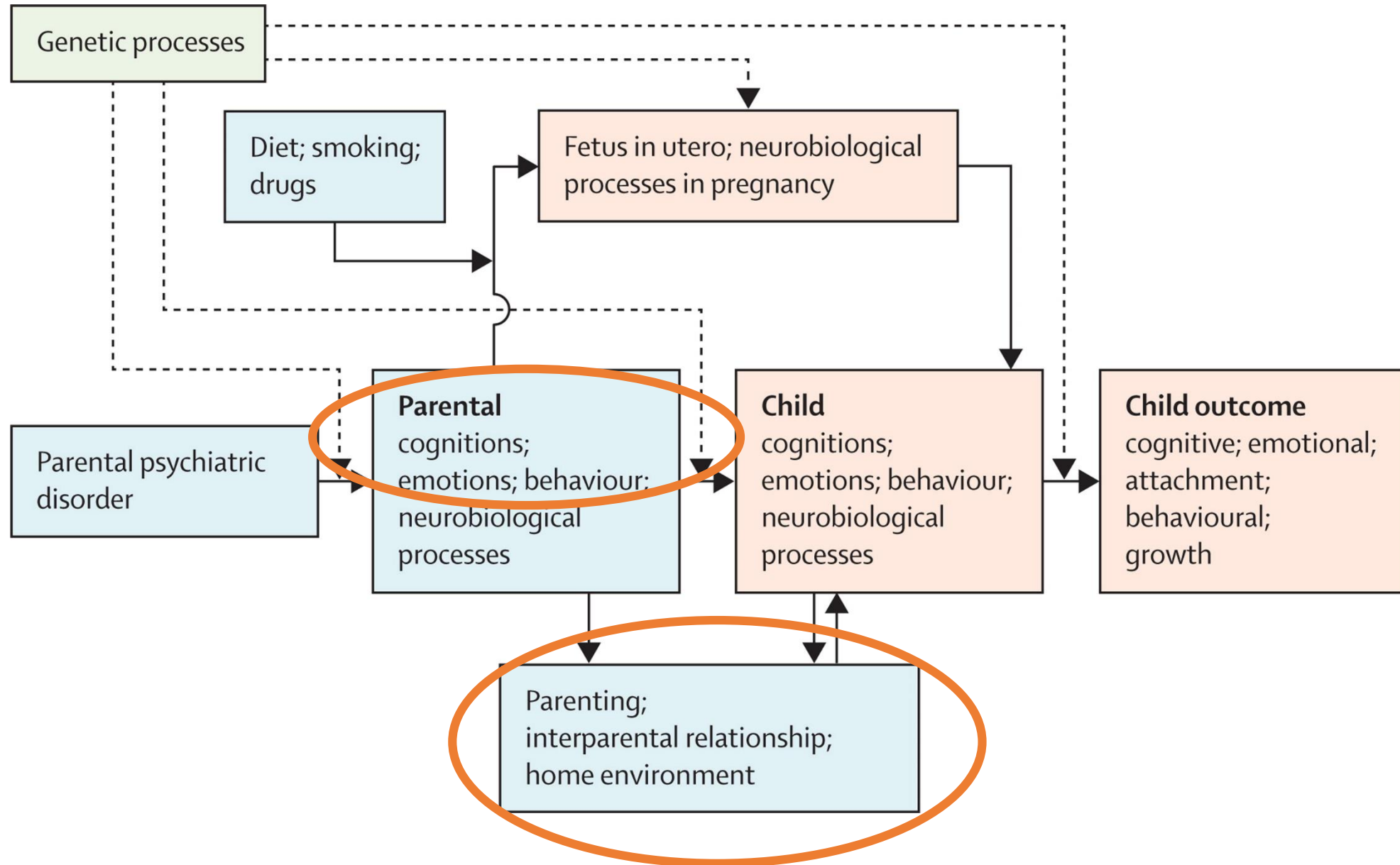
# Impact on the child

Untreated postpartum depression and anxiety in parent(s) interferes with some of the most important factors affecting the child's development

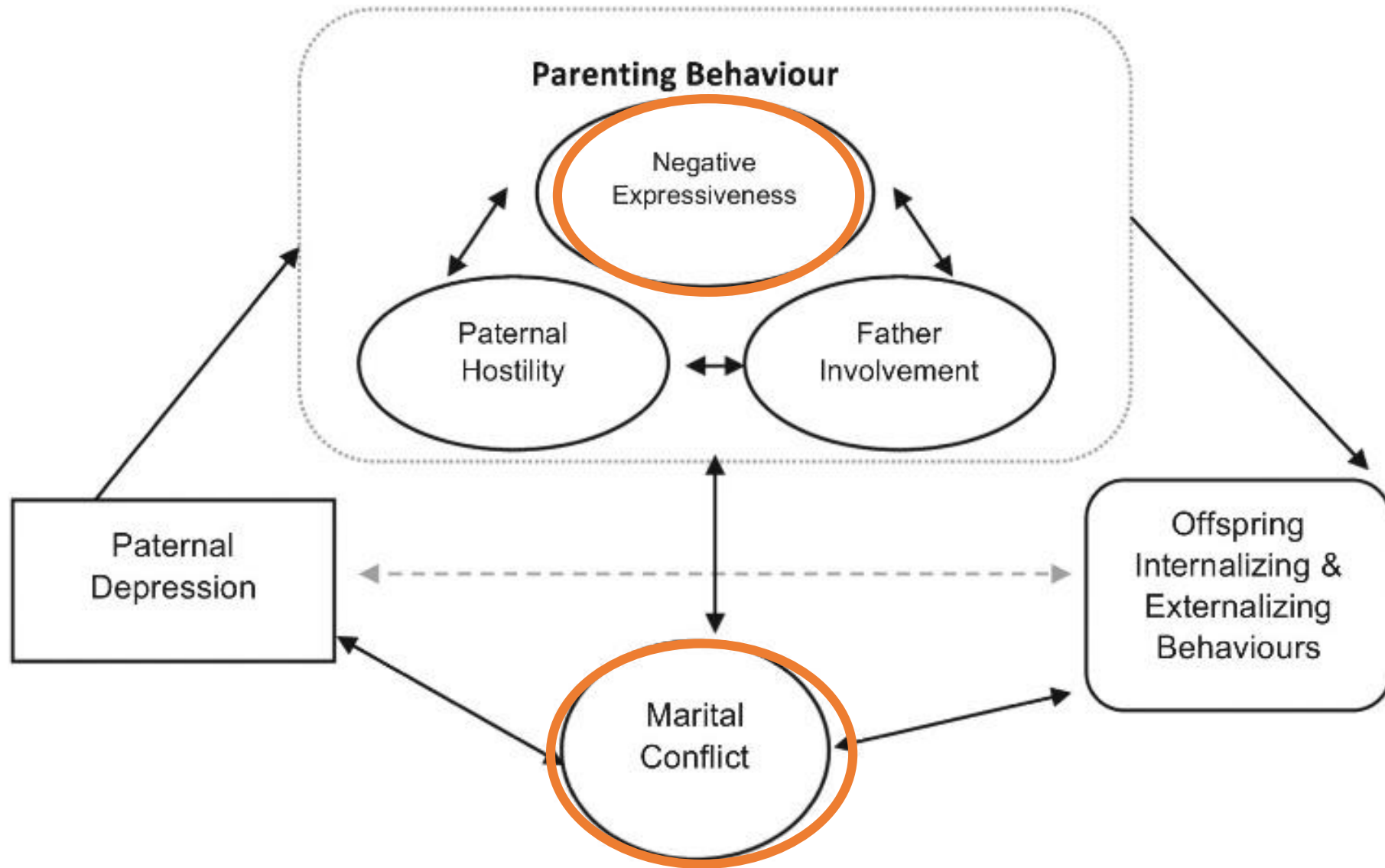
(Hoffman 2017, Brand 2009, Nicol-Harper 2007, Nonacs 2017):

- parent-infant interactions
- secure attachment
- the parent's responsiveness to the child's needs
- the quality of the home environment





Herba, C. M., Glover, V., Ramchandani, P. G., & Rondon, M. B. (2016). Maternal depression and mental health in early childhood. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 3(10), 983-992.



Sweeney, S., & MacBeth, A. (2016). The effects of paternal depression on child and adolescent outcomes: a systematic review. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 205, 44-59.

Effective & accessible non-pharmacological interventions for this population are needed

# Mindfulness & parents during postpartum (1y)

Emerging evidence (Perez-Blasco 2013, Tabi 2019, Miklowitz 2015) suggests changes in:

- ↑ maternal self-efficacy
  - ↑ mindfulness – specific dimensions (observing, acting with awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity)
  - ↑ self-compassion
  - ↓ depression
  - ↓ anxiety, stress, and psych. distress
- } improved **mental health** outcomes
- Improved marital **relationship and interactions** between parents

# Mindfulness for parents

Other efforts currently in progress at the BCCH Centre for Mindfulness:

- Mindfulness for parents – development of online resources, in collaboration with Kelty Mental Health
- Mindfulness for the parents/caregivers of teens (MARS-PC)
  - Following successful mindfulness program for teens MARS-A, developed by Dr. Vo and Dr. Locke





# Future implications

- Studies: prospective, RCTs, longitudinal (following the developing child)
- KT and ↑ accessibility:  
Once we have enough evidence from our clinical population -  
knowledge translation into:
  - community programs
  - e-health tools

# References

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