

Discussion

Name of Student

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## 6-1 Discussion

Reflecting on child and adolescent development through recent historical events reveals profound insights into behavior and growth. Two critical concepts from this course are attachment theory and the outcomes of risk-taking behaviors. Applying these concepts to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic provides valuable perspectives.

Attachment theory, discussed by Davila and Levy (2006), emphasizes the importance of early relationships between children and primary caregivers. Secure attachment forms a foundation for healthy emotional and social development, promoting resilience and well-being throughout life. Children with secure attachments exhibit better emotional regulation, social competence, and stress management skills.

Adolescent risk-taking behavior, highlighted by Feldman (2022), underscores the increased propensity for experimenting with new experiences due to the ongoing maturation of the prefrontal cortex and heightened sensitivity of the limbic system. This stage often leads to behaviors that pose health risks, such as early sexual activity or substance use.

Understanding attachment theory is invaluable for parents and professionals. It underscores the need for fostering secure attachments through consistent, responsive, and sensitive caregiving. The knowledge can guide parents to prioritize creating a stable and supportive home environment, which is crucial during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Professionals can use this understanding to support families in building strong emotional bonds, enhancing the child's capacity to cope with stress and uncertainty.

Knowledge of risk-taking behaviors informs strategies for mitigating potential negative outcomes. Parents can be vigilant and proactive in communicating with adolescents about the dangers of risky behaviors, particularly in contexts heightened by stress or peer influence. During the pandemic, the disruption of normal routines and increased isolation may have led to greater susceptibility to risky behaviors. Professionals can develop targeted

interventions, providing adolescents with the support and resources needed to make safer choices.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted developmental trajectories. Prolonged lockdowns and social distancing measures disrupted regular social interactions, schooling, and recreational activities. Increased time at home could have strengthened family bonds for some, providing an opportunity to reinforce secure attachments. However, less stable home environments may have exacerbated stress and insecurity, leading to attachment-related issues.

From personal experience, the pandemic underscored the importance of open communication with children about their emotional well-being and challenges. It reinforced the necessity of creating a home environment where they felt safe to express their fears and anxieties, strengthening attachment bonds. Additionally, awareness of heightened potential for risk-taking behaviors led to proactive discussions about safety and responsible decision-making.

## References

Davila, J., & Levy, K. N. (2006). Introduction to the special section on attachment theory and psychotherapy. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 74*(6), 989–993.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.74.6.989>

Feldman, R. S. (2022). *Child development* (9th ed.). Pearson.

### Peer Reply

Hello Chandler,

Your analysis aligns with broader findings, such as those discussed by Miljkovitch et al. (2021), which emphasize the importance of secure attachments in developing resilience among adolescents. The research highlights how adolescents with secure attachments exhibit better emotional regulation and adaptability in times of stress, which has been crucial during the disruptions caused by the pandemic. The perspective resonates with my observations during the pandemic, where the importance of a supportive family environment became more evident, providing young people with the emotional anchorage necessary to navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic.

In addition, your discussion on risk-taking behaviors echoes the findings of Norrington (2021), who explored how environmental changes during adolescence could significantly impact behavior. The pandemic led to a shift in how adolescents engage in risk-taking, with a notable increase in online behaviors as social interactions moved to digital platforms. The transition has necessitated a reevaluation of parental and educational strategies to address new risks associated with increased screen time and online engagement.

Your insights provide a valuable framework for understanding the complex dynamics of adolescent development in challenging times. They underscore the necessity for parents and educators to adapt strategies that support healthy emotional and psychological development.

## References

- Miljkovitch, R., Mallet, P., Moss, E., Sirparanta, A., Pascuzzo, K., & Zdebik, M. A. (2021). Adolescents' attachment to parents and peers: Links to young adulthood friendship quality. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 30(5), 1441–1452. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-01962-y>
- Norrington, J. (2021). Adolescent peer victimization, self-concept, and psychological distress in emerging adulthood. *Youth and Society*, 53(2), 273–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X20910938>