

## **FAMILIES IN CHANGE!**

*Family life is not a computer program that runs on its own; it needs continual input from everyone...Neil Kurshan*

### **WHAT TO KNOW!**

- ❖ During the past several decades, the traditional Western family unit has changed dramatically in many ways
- ❖ Historically, the roles of a family have been to procreate and socialize children and to establish an economically productive household
- ❖ Today many people don't believe they need to be married or even be a couple to procreate or to be economically self-sufficient
- ❖ The U.S. family today is very different from generations ago with fewer children, both parents (if present) are working, and with mothers birthing at later ages.
- ❖ More adults than ever before live alone or with unmarried companions and more children are being born to unwed or single parents
- ❖ Children growing up with one parent, children being born to unmarried parents, and children being raised by same sex parents have been on the increase
- ❖ In today's economy, single parent families tend to be more prone to financial hardships and poverty and thus become more dependent on government support
- ❖ More older people live alone due to declining mortality rates, retirement benefits, and being generally healthier
- ❖ Family has also been traditionally seen as a safety zone from the stressful, challenging, and aggressive world where love, trust, and confidence is developed
- ❖ The family is now more compensatory rather than protective; it supplies what an individual needs which often leads to overindulgence of the child
- ❖ Regarding family values, generations ago, a family's values were determined by parents, school and religion
- ❖ Today the entertainment, social, and advertising media have greater impact on what people believe and value
- ❖ The norms for role models, beliefs, language, and goals seem to be all determined by what the media says is "normal"
- ❖ Our sense of success and our self esteem depends not upon our own intrinsic values but upon what the talking heads and commercials define as success
- ❖ People are exposed to 3 to 8 hours of advertising daily including television, product placement in movies, websites, videogames, video billboards, and clothing logos
- ❖ Advertising creates the message that self-esteem depends on whether you buy their product, idolize their chosen sports, music, or movie star, or look like they want you to
- ❖ The media, including television, movies, youtube, and music, normalizes and sets role expectations for what at other times seemed atypical and extreme

### **WHAT TO DO:**

- ❖ Whatever the family context, families function best with the following guidelines:
  - ❖ Parental figures provide love, boundaries, and unconditional acceptance
  - ❖ Children accept rules and respect their parents
  - ❖ Role boundaries are clearly defined and maintained by all members
  - ❖ Everybody has a right to express thoughts and feelings respectfully
  - ❖ Families eat and participate in activities together
- ❖ Seek professional help if you feel your family is dysfunctional

## **WE CAN HELP!**

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at **DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com**

**Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates**  
**5551 N University Drive**  
**Coral Springs FL 33067**