

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING IN FAMILY LIFE



INTRODUCTION

Emotional and mental well-being are crucial aspects of family life in creating a harmonious environment and social stability. Healthy family relationships play a central role in shaping an individual's emotional stability and mental health in today's society. Effective emotional management within the family helps nurture understanding, mutual respect, love, and compassion, while poor emotional management can negatively affect all family members. Family relationships significantly influence emotional and mental development, from childhood into adulthood. Therefore, fostering emotional and mental well-being within the family is essential not only for family happiness but also impacting members in the society, as strong family foundations promote positive behaviour and healthy social relationships. The effective emotional and mental management grounded in Islamic teachings contributes to stronger family relationships and positive social behaviour. Ultimately, a healthy emotional environment within family life is essential, as it contributes to a more harmonious and resilient society.

Nurturing Emotional Well-being through Islamic Parenting

Parenting skills using emotions and feelings are very important in the process of educating and developing adolescents. Emotion is understood as a state of feelings which constitutes an important element for continuity of life, whereby it is a source of both pleasure and sadness capable of influencing the development of children's morals. To evoke positive and balanced emotions in adolescents, it is necessary to examine the elements for its formation in humans, namely through the element of al-Qalb (the heart). This is because improving the heart enables moving the emotion toward honour and an individual will become good. In contrast, a bad heart will lead to wickedness and self-destruction. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Meaning: Within Adam's son is a lump of flesh, if it is good, then the whole body becomes good, but if it is bad, then the whole body becomes bad, that is the heart" (Narrated by al-Bukhari) [i]. Therefore, children's emotions and feelings need to be guided by their parents using psychological skills to develop them to become high-minded and good-hearted to develop emotional intelligence and skills for time management.

One of the psychological skills is to treat children with full (unconditional) love and affection, warmth and tenderness, and always making time to do activities with them and other family members. Other than that, parents need to be fair in giving love and affection to all their children, in the aspects of education, basic needs, food, accommodation, and so on. Psychological skills are also applied through the methods of praising, showing frequent and sincere appreciation, reinforcing their positive behaviour, rewarding them for success in fulfilling required academic criteria and giving positive feedback when they comply with given instructions, rules and discipline. These methods serve to build positive emotions in children. Further, parents need to listen to children's moans and complaints, questions and doubts, ambitions and hopes. In this way, children will feel appreciated that their presence is felt by their parents.

In addition, parenting skills in the emotional aspect also requires emphasis on developing emotional intelligence of children. This is for the ability to recognize and understand one's own and others' feelings. It is a process of increasing the ability to sense and understand one's own and others' feelings in the context of facing and managing stress as well as environmental demands, such as having or feeling empathy (for someone), love, motivation and ability to respond appropriately to sadness or joy. Further, parents also need to be concerned about the aspect of spending quality time with their children so that they feel more loved and appreciated and thus become more receptive to words of advice and instructions from parents, even though parents are out busy working to meet the economic demands of present living. Islam highly recommends that husbands help their working wives with house chores so that parents may spend more time with children. Working parents may also use rest time, weekend or public holidays to spend time with their children to do chores together as tidying, cooking, cleaning toilets, sweeping, visiting sports and cultural places such as agricultural sites, national park and arts museum, besides visiting relatives.

Challenges Facing Emotional and Mental Well-being in Today's Families

Emotional and mental well-being in families has become a critical contemporary issue due to the complex challenges of modern life that affect family harmony. Recent research across various cultural contexts, including Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Italy, indicates that family well-being is no longer merely a private matter, but a systemic issue influenced by technological, economic, and psychological factors. These external pressures significantly shape emotional relationships and mental health outcomes within families.

In contemporary family life, work-life imbalance has emerged as a major challenge affecting emotional and mental well-being. Many parents are required to work long hours and remain constantly connected to their jobs through digital technology. This situation limits meaningful family interaction and reduces emotional closeness between parents and children. Research indicates that insufficient family time is associated with emotional neglect, behavioural problems among children, and increased stress levels among parents.

Besides that, parental stress and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, are increasingly prevalent in modern families due to financial pressures, work demands, and high parenting expectations. Studies show that parents experiencing mental health difficulties may struggle to provide consistent emotional support and practise positive parenting behaviours[i]. This can lead to emotional instability within the family and negatively affect children's emotional development. According to Repetti, Taylor, and Seeman[ii], chronic parental stress can create a tense home environment, thereby increasing the risk of emotional and psychological problems among children. Therefore, parental mental health plays a crucial role in shaping emotional and mental well-being in family life.

Lastly, effective emotional communication is essential for maintaining healthy family relationships; however, many contemporary families face difficulties in this area. Busy schedules and excessive use of digital devices reduce face-to-face interaction, making it harder for family members to express emotions and resolve conflicts constructively. Research suggests that poor emotional communication is closely linked to increased family conflict and reduced emotional intimacy.

Therefore, modern families face multiple challenges that affect emotional and mental well-being, including work-related pressures, technological influences, economic stress, and ongoing mental health stigma.

Nurturing Family Harmony: Islamic Solutions for Emotional Well-being

1. Halal sustenance reduces family emotional stress

In addressing emotional stress within the family, Islam offers a holistic approach through its concept of sustenance (*rizq*), which goes beyond mere financial provision. In Islam, sustenance includes spiritual, emotional, and social well-being that supports harmony within the household. As noted by Bunyamin Yusuf Surur, a scholar who wrote a thematic tafsir article “*Rezeki dalam Perspektif Al-Qur’an: Sebuah Kajian Tafsir Tematik*”, sustenance is understood in both external and internal forms and is closely linked to the distinction between halal and haram. This broader understanding highlights how the source and nature of income can directly affect emotional stability within the family. When a family's sustenance is earned through lawful means and in accordance with Shariah, it brings a sense of peace and reassurance to family members.

Knowing that one's income is halal reduces feelings of guilt, anxiety, and inner conflict that may arise from engaging in religiously prohibited practices. This peace of mind helps create emotional balance within the household and minimizes tensions that often stem from financial pressure or moral uncertainty. Therefore, ensuring halal sustenance should be seen as a practical and preventive step in reducing emotional stress within families. Beyond meeting physical needs, halal sustenance nurtures the spiritual and emotional well-being of family members, strengthening inner peace, mutual trust, and the family's ability to cope with life's challenges together.

2. Spiritual Empowerment

Another important approach in reducing emotional stress within families is through spiritual empowerment. Spiritual empowerment plays a vital role in strengthening family well-being and reducing emotional stress within the household. Islamic studies highlight that spiritual practices such as dhikr, prayer, patience (ṣabr), tawakkal, and istighfar serve as effective therapeutic tools for emotional and psychological recovery. When these practices are nurtured within the family environment, they help family members develop emotional resilience and a shared sense of calm in facing daily challenges. In the context of family life, these spiritual values are closely linked to the process of obtaining sustenance in a manner that complies with Shariah. Earning a livelihood through ethical and lawful means, while maintaining spiritual practices, creates a positive cycle between righteous actions, blessed sustenance (rizq), and emotional peace. This cycle contributes to a harmonious family atmosphere, as financial responsibilities are carried out with sincerity, trust in Allah, and moral consciousness. Moreover, values such as tawakkal and gratitude play a key role in helping families cope with stress and uncertainty. By placing reliance on Allah and appreciating what they have, family members are better able to manage pressures related to finances, responsibilities, and expectations. This spiritual grounding not only reduces feelings of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and emotional strain but also strengthens emotional bonds and mutual support within the family.

3. Integration of Maqasid Shariah

Finally, a practical solution for promoting harmony and reducing stress within the household lies in integrating the maqasid Shariah framework into daily family practices. Applying the principles of maqasid Shariah offers a holistic solution for reducing emotional stress within the family by protecting five essential aspects of life, religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*mal*). Ensuring that family sustenance and daily practices align with these values helps create a balanced and harmonious household. Faith is protected by earning from permissible sources, life and mental health are preserved through avoidance of stress linked to wrongdoing, intellect is strengthened via meaningful and ethical engagement, lineage is safeguarded by providing clean provisions for the family, and wealth is protected from harm caused by corruption or unethical practices. By integrating these principles into daily family life, parents and guardians can foster emotional stability, mutual respect, and spiritual growth, turning the pursuit of sustenance into a source of both psychological and emotional well-being for all family members.

Conclusion

Emotional and mental well-being in family life is highly emphasized in Islam, as it contributes to harmony, mercy, and stability within the household. Islam encourages families to build relationships based on *mawaddah* (love), *rahmah* (mercy), and mutual respect, as highlighted in the *Qur'an* and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). When family members practice patience, kindness, and empathy, they create a supportive environment that nurtures emotional balance and inner peace.

Moreover, Islam guides individuals to care for their mental and emotional health through strong faith (*iman*), remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), and reliance on Him (*tawakkul*). A family that upholds Islamic values such as good communication, justice, and compassion helps its members manage stress and emotional challenges effectively. Therefore, emotional and mental well-being in family life is not only a personal responsibility but also an act of worship that strengthens family bonds and contributes to a peaceful and righteous society.

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