

Abstract

This study investigated the cognitive model and its specificity issue by applying them to the context of mother-adolescent interactions. The aim was to examine how the cognitive model can help us to understand parent-child interaction and the individual psychopathology of adolescents and their mothers. A community sample of 521 adolescents and their mothers were each asked to interpret hypothetical mother-adolescent situations in which the behavioral cues of the character were depicted in an ambiguous manner. Results of multiple regression analyses indicated that (1) biased cognition in parent-child interaction plays a significant role in the etiology of maternal and adolescent psychopathology, (2) different forms of psychopathology are characterized by different cognitive profiles. Personalising was found to be specific to internalising / depressive symptoms, and catastrophising was specific to symptoms of aggression. Benign attribution and external attribution were the cognitive variables that could differentiate adaptive responses from more problematic ones in mother-adolescent interactions.