



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

**Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science**

of

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BA (University of Montana, 2004)

**“An Analysis of Mind-Mindedness, Parenting Stress, and Parenting Style in
Families with Multiple Children”**

Department of Psychology

Tuesday, September 27, 2016

12:30pm

Cornett Building

Room B032

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Ulrich Mueller, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)

Dr. Catherine Costigan, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)

Dr. Erica Woodin, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)

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Dr. Karen MacKinnon, School of Nursing, UVic

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Dr. Aleck Ostry, Department of Geography, UVic

Abstract

Mind-Mindedness, a parent's tendency to attribute thoughts and intentions to his or her child, is related to numerous child outcomes including infant attachment security and child social-cognitive development. Despite established research, the construct is still developing and current research continues to provide clarification. The present study seeks to contribute to the clarification of mind-mindedness in three main ways.

First, to examine within-parent consistency with respect to mind-mindedness, parenting stress, and parenting style. Findings of the current study suggest that parenting stress and parenting style tend to covary for two children in the same family, whereas mind-mindedness does not. Additionally, parents tended to experience different levels of parenting stress or utilize different parenting strategies between their two children. By contrast, significant differences for mind-mindedness were not found.

Second, to examine the relation between mind-mindedness and parenting stress. Results supported an inverse relationship between mind-mindedness and parenting stress for the older child. Results also revealed a *positive* relationship between mind-mindedness and parental distress for the younger child; this was specifically relevant for children age 30 months and younger. Multiple interpretations for this finding are explored.

Third, to examine the relations between parenting style, parenting stress, and mind-mindedness. Results indicated two general trends: For the younger children, when parents thought about their child in a more mind-minded manner, they also tended to utilize more authoritative parenting strategies; this parenting style was subsequently related to lower parenting stress. For the older children, when parents thought about their child in a more mind-minded manner, they also tended to utilize less authoritarian parenting strategies as well as experience less parenting stress as related to parent-child dysfunctional interactions.

The findings of this study support previous findings regarding mind-mindedness and parenting stress as well as contribute to an improved understanding of (1) the consistency of parenting constructs between two children in the same family and the relation between parenting stress and parenting style. These findings also raise questions for future research with respect to mind-mindedness in very young children. Additional future research areas and implications are discussed.