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## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND DROP-OUT FROM HIGH SCHOOL

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### Introduction

School dropout and subsequent youth unemployment are important risk factors for mental problems. It is important to understand which factors that may lead to youth dropping out of high school.

### Aims

The aims were to explore the subjective experiences of people who had not completed high school and who had problems getting work. To examine how the parents' involvement in the children's lives influenced their schooling experiences.

### Methods

Five Norwegian men and five women (aged 18-28) who had not completed high school and who had not been able to find work were interviewed qualitatively. The interviews were transcribed in full and analyzed drawing on Grounded Theory.

### Results

The informants had struggled with an accumulation of risk factors constantly challenging their resilience, eventually resulting in dropout. In these individual educational trajectories, one experience was shared by most: the lack of stable parental involvement. Moving between parents or losing contact with parental figures all together made the direct involvement from parents in the child's learning activities over time more complicated. Several had experienced intense levels of marital conflict often ending in divorce with periods of little or no contact with one parent, thus threatening the child's emotional security and resulting in withdrawal or aggressive behavior. The low-achieving boys gave the non-practical focus of the high school curricula as an explanation for dropout. The high-achieving boys reported shyness. The girls focused on social and family issues.

### Conclusions

This qualitative study suggests that parental involvement may be of importance to drop-out from school.