In their attempts to socialize their offspring, parents have at their disposal a wide range of disciplining practices. While some disciplining practices are associated with positive outcomes in youths, and have been placed under the conceptual umbrella of positive discipline (e.g., reasoning), other disciplining practices are associated with negative outcomes in youths, thus placed under the negative discipline or harsh parenting conceptual umbrella (e.g., physical punishment, strictness, psychological control). The latter have been the subject of much debate and research, but there are many questions that still need to be answered regarding the harsh parenting practices. First, having in mind that parenting is influenced by society, the question is whether the prevalence of certain types of harsh practices has changed over longer periods of time. Second, if some harsh discipline practices are less used today because they are seen as extreme, then how are the “milder”/non-physical types of harsh discipline related to youths’ adjustment? Third, how can we help parents reduce their use of harsh practices? In this dissertation, my research questions touch these broader issues presented above. The results showed that contemporary parents rely less on physical discipline compared to parents from previous generations. Parents’ use of non-physical harshness (e.g., coldness-rejection, angry outbursts, and bad reactions to disclosure) coupled with youths’ defiance lead to a pattern of mutual hostility that is transferred by youths to their interactions with peers at school and in free-time. Interventions are successful in reducing parental harshness, and the mechanism behind parents’ reductions in the use of harsh discipline following intervention was represented by parents’ sense of competence as caregivers. These findings have implications for both theory and practice.