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FAMILY DYNAMICS and EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH AFFECTING CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND FAMILIES

Children may present very difficult and challenging behavior that comes not from their own volition, learning issues (and disabilities), temperament, peer pressure, developmental challenges, and so forth, but from coming from and living in difficult family situations. This training borrows from family therapy theory for an overview of how family dynamics affect children, their parents, and the overall family.



FAMILY OF ORIGIN THEORY- Individuals bring prior experiences (usually from their families of origin) into their own nuclear families. These expectations if unacknowledged can act as "scripts" that can cause parents to enforce and repeat negative patterns of behavior.

STRUCTURAL THEORY- If a family has a logical consistent structure with appropriate roles for each member, appropriately permeable boundaries, healthy alignments within the family, and clear open communication channels, then the family will tend to be healthy.

STRATEGIC THEORY- Negative behavior within a family happens in a sequence of behaviors that cycle over and over. Positive behavior results when members of a family can choose to or be led to interrupt the toxic hierarchy of behaviors.

COMMUNICATION THEORY- Healthy families communicate to each other in ways that validate and build each others self-esteem. Poor communication leads to self-esteem loss and subsequent negative behaviors in attempts to compensate.



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INDICATORS for FAMILY of ORIGIN ISSUES

THE "X" FACTORS-

Making Sense out of Nonsense (Logic out of Illogic)

When it doesn't seem to make sense; illogical

"How could s/he think/do that?"

$1 + 1 + 1 = 8$!?

$1 + 1 + 1 + "X" = 8$

PSEUDO-MATURITY- Children taking on pseudo-adult roles

RIGIDITY OF ROLES- despite pain needed to maintain roles

ILLOGICAL VALUES

PREPONDERANCE OF IMPLICIT RULES

INCORRECT AND/OR ILLOGICAL PERCEPTION

When "Or else what?" is answered with "Because!"

INDICATORS for STRATEGIC FAMILY ISSUES

CYCLICAL BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

"STUCK" PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

STEREOTYPED PERCEPTION / LACK OF PERCEPTUAL FLEXIBILITY

PRESENCE OF UNACKNOWLEDGED IMPLICIT VALUES

AUTHORITARIAN/AUTHORITATIVE CULTURAL/SOCIAL TRADITIONS OR PATTERNS

Indicators For Paradoxical Interventions

EXTREMELY "STUCK" PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

LACK OF COGNITIVE INSIGHT

EXTREME CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR

AGE APPROPRIATENESS

INDICATORS for STRUCTURAL FAMILY ISSUES

INEFFECTIVE HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY

INAPPROPRIATE/INEFFECTIVE POWER

POORLY DEFINED ROLES

POOR CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

RIGID OR ENMESHED BOUNDARIES

INAPPROPRIATE COALITIONS

Triangulation, Detouring

AUTHORITARIAN/AUTHORITATIVE

CULTURAL/SOCIAL TRADITIONS OR PATTERNS

Family Situations Indicating Structural Therapy

- Physical, Emotional, & Sexual Abuse; Drug Abuse
- Blended Families, Step-families, Non-biological Adults or children in the household; Foster Homes
- Extended Family Homes-3 generation families; Aunts, Uncles, & Cousins in the household

INDICATORS for COMMUNICATION ISSUES

BLOCKED OR INAPPROPRIATE EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS

COVERT COMMUNICATION

CLOSED COMMUNICATION

DYSFUNCTIONAL RULES & RITUALS

SECRETS

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

GAMES:

Rescue, Coalition, Lethal

STANCES:

Victim, Blamer, Computer, Distractor, Scapegoat, Superior