

Structural family systems essay



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In this research paper, the reader will understand how to restructure a family through; setting subsystems and making new boundaries using the different techniques in this theory. Part I. Research Munich founded the Structural Family model and this model is to help a therapist be able to put structure back into a dysfunctional family. This Structure is placed back into the family by properly placing the family in their respected subsystems, by setting boundaries, and using different techniques to help the family become a functional successful family once again. What signs and symptoms does a family need to show to prove it is dysfunctional?

Salvador Munich may have come across the answers to this question when he created the structural family theory. Munich seen the need to create a “ more effective model for teens and their families because he believed what they were doing was not working and offered suggestions as how to help struggling families” (Munich S.

, Salvador Munich on Family Therapy). “ Munich's original family structure can be traced to the early sass when he as conducting therapy, training, and research with delinquent boys from poor families at the Willowy School in New York” (Corey, 2009, p. 416). He and a few of his “ colleagues from Wilt”. K School continued their study at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Center in Philadelphia where the structural family model was developed” (Goldenberg, 2013, p.

301). Goldenberg (2013) described it as a system based, structural family theory focused on the active, organized wholeness of the family unit and the ways in which the family organized itself through transaction patterns” (p.

301). Munich believed a Structural therapist's most effective way to "alter dysfunctional behavior and eliminate symptoms was to change the family's transactional patterns that maintain them" (Goldenberg 2013, p. 286).

During his time of study, Munich, "discovered that families are organized into subsystems with boundaries regulating the contact family members have with each other turned out to be one the defining insights of family therapy" (Nichols, 2001, p.

176) Subsystems What is the definition of a family and what does the family structure consist of? Merriam-Webster online dictionary (2014) defines family "as a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head" (Family, 2014). Gunman (2008) described family as a "system that is made up of subsystems, which arise in families as a result of differences" (p. 4). These family subsystems are; spousal, parental and sibling. Each family member has an assigned role in the subsystems in which they belong.

As each individual is unique and has specific needs that must be met. Munich and Ashman (1981) wrote that "families have differentiated subsystems. Each individual is a subsystem, as are dyads, like husband and wife. Larger us beginnings are formed by generations (the sibling subsystem), gender (grandfather, father, and son), or task (the parental subsystem)" (p.

16). Munich describes each subsystem and its responsibility.

He refers to the poppas subsystem as "boundaries that protect spouses, giving them an area for the satisfaction of their own psychological needs without the intrusion of in-laws, children, and others" (Munich, 1981, p. 17).

In the spousal system, each partner should be able to talk, adjust to their new life and still be supportive of each other without losing each's own individuality. The parental subsystem is “ the unit of the family that bears the main responsibility for guiding and nurturing the children” (Munich S. , 1974, p. 26).

Lastly the sibling subsystem “ is the first social laboratory in which children can experiment with peer relationships. Within this context, children support, isolate, scapegoat, and learn from each other. Munich (1974) continues to say that in this subsystem, children learn how to make friends, negotiate and learn how to achieve recognition of their skills” (p. 112-124) Family Dysfunction Family dysfunction can happen during any part of the family life cycle. It could be caused by the birth of a new baby, a child with an addiction, or the death of a loved one (FIND SOURCE).

Rosenberg (1983) suggests that “ when family runs into problems or difficulties that one can assume the family is operating at a dysfunctional level” (p. 160). In the process of his studies Munich discovered that dysfunctional families either experienced enmeshment or disengagement. Enmeshment is common in a dysfunctional family which makes the family life unhealthy for all parties.

In his theory, Munich, labeled over-involvement as enmeshment. He recognized that enmeshment was unhealthy for a relationship.

Barber and Bubbler (2001) suggests enmeshment is a family pattern that facilitates psychological and emotional fusion among family members, potential inhibiting the individuation process and the development and

maintenance of hospital maturity” (p. 433). Clinton described an “ enmeshed relationship as heartbreak and manipulation.

He says it robs someone of their sanity, peace, joy and true love Off healthy relationship” (Clinton, 2014). Munich found the opposite end of the spectrum of enmeshment to be family disengagement.

Disengaged individuals in a family may become isolated, however, Nichols and Schwartz (2004) believes there is a positive and negative side to this. “ On the positive side of this disengagement could foster autonomy.

However, disengagement also limits affection and assistance” (p. 180).

Boundaries Boundaries are a necessary means for a dysfunctional family. By setting these boundaries, communication should be more open within the family.

Rehashed, suggested “ making clear boundaries promote open communication between family members.

He says, clear boundaries are firm yet flexible and allows access across the subsystems to negotiate and accommodate external and development challenges” (Rehashed, 2011, p. 218). Newly married couples need to set boundaries so the family will be able to adapt to the new changes. Munich says that boundary problems will occur.

He described boundary robbers as “ a problem of negotiating appropriate rules for the formation of the new subsystem” (Munich S. , 1974, p. 23).

When children are born into the family the boundaries have to change.

Munich (1974) says “ the birth of a child marks a radical change in the family organization” (p. 332). The new parents have to put into place new boundaries. Goals and Techniques Munich found that becoming part of the family system worked with helping the families. He put himself in the role of a distant family member when in a counseling session. This he called joining the family and accommodating to its style” (p.

86). A technique Munich (1974) found to be helpful was Mimesis. He says, “ A therapist may use mimesis to accommodate to a families style and affective range.

He adopts the families tempo of communication, slowing his pace, for example, in a family at is accustomed to long pauses and slow responses. In a jovial family he becomes jovial and expansive.

In a family with a restricted style he becomes sparse” (p. 2302). This type of therapeutic technique helps the client’s understand that the therapist wants to help the family. Another technique Munich found helpful was to assess the family’s interactions y mapping. Family mapping is a great way to get into families lives. Munich (1974) says, “ As the therapist responds to events as they occur in the session, he makes observations and poses questions.

Then he begins to pinpoint transactional patterns and boundaries, and to make hypothesis about which patterns are functional and which are dysfunctional. It’s here that he has begun making a family map” (p. 1668). The next step would be to monitor family dysfunctions, which Munich (2013) calls this the “ crux of the structural intervention process” (p. 290).

Monitoring Family dysfunctions is where a therapist begins to look to see what areas in their lives that can be changed. Goldenberg (2013) said “ there are two techniques that can help change the family. They are; boundary making and unbalancing’ (p. 91). These two techniques are used to challenge the family structure.

Boundary making may be used by the therapist to help the family set healthy goal oriented boundaries. Therapist may take the family’s old rules and renegotiate making new rules. Rehash (2011) says the purpose of boundary making is to increase healthy us be seems interactions by assisting the family in setting new boundaries” (p. 233).

Unbalancing is another technique used by the therapist. The goal with this technique is to “ change the hierarchical relationship” (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 291).

Of course there are a few more techniques which Munich describes in his theory. These other techniques are; tracking and enactment.

Tracking is where the therapist tracks the family’s communication and behavior. Munich (1974) says, “ Tracking the content of communications can be useful in exploring the family structure” (2277). Enactment is where the therapist brings “ an outside family conflict into the session s family members can monster how they deal with it” (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 292). There are three phases to enactment. They are initiation, facilitation, and closing.

In the initiation and facilitation phase the therapist encourages the family to talk while removing themselves from the conversation. During the closing phase the therapist helps the family learn from that particular experience. From here the therapist can begin to help restructure the family system. Goldenberg (2013) said, " therapists set themselves the task of helping families rearrange their organization-? restructuring the system that governs its orientations-? so that the family functions more effectively and each family members' growth potential is maximized" (P. 294).

Munich has found that reframing the family works. Reframing is described as changing the meaning of an event or situation by placing it in a new context in which an equally plausible explanation is possible" (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 294). Normally reframing helps the family understand that " It is the structural therapist's job to make everyone aware that the problem belongs to the family, not an individual" (Goldenberg, 2013, p.

295). Overall, the ultimate goal " is to structure the family's transactional rules by developing more appropriate boundaries between subsystems and strengthening the family's hierarchical order" (Goldenberg, 2013, p. 01).

PART II: Integration Integrating faith into my counseling approach is my desire. As well as a desire to want to tell people about Jesus and how he can ultimately heal their brokenness and their family.

How I will go about integrating my faith into my counseling approach is something will have to figure out. Its obvious that people come to counseling for a reason. They are looking for answers and leaning which they cannot

find on their own. Clinton and Leaseholder wrote that people are searching for something beyond themselves” (Clinton T. 2002, p.

1).

As a counselor it will be my job to help my clients find those answers and healing. I plan to do this through integrating prayer and biblical scripture. Prayer One might ask how prayer can help a struggling person in their time of despair. I consider prayer to be an important part of a professing Christian’s life.

It strengthens their relationship with God the Father and gives them clarity. Prayer can help relieve anxieties and help reduce stress. A person who stop’s to pray can instantly calm down. McCain (1996) says that prayer helps enhance the therapeutic rapport” (p. 8).

From personal experience I find it hard to be angry, stressed or feel anxious when in prayer. Prayer could be considered a healing power. There are several types of prayer that can be integrated into counseling. The first is intercessory prayer, which is lifting up another person’s needs.

McCain (1996) says that although in- session prayer have received the most attention in the psychological literature, prayer can be integrated into counseling” (p 68). There is pray as oh go, this type of prayer can be used in session when the counselor feels led to stop and pray.

Another type of prayer is praying silently for my client during the session. These different types of prayers would be determined by what struggles my clients are facing. Miller (2003) says, a client who struggles with self-

centeredness may be engaged in petitioners prayer yet intercessory prayer may be more beneficial to the client in terms of his or her issues” (p.

I believe prayer can be issued as homework. I could send my client 192).

Home with a prayer journal and what to pray about daily. This way the client could be able to keep a prayer journal.

Keeping a prayer journal would help in the counseling sessions. Journaling is a fun way to watch and see how God worked in the life of my client.

We will have the pleasure to see where God was working in their life and how He changed/healed their life and family. My belief is that my clients would benefit from in-session pray. McCain (201 1) says, that prayer ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father” (p. 74). Scripture There is a therapeutic use for scripture in counseling.

According to Appleby and Leaseholder (2013), “ scripture is used to help reveal God’s leading movements, as lead by the Holy Spirit.

It is an anointed resource, a rich unique medium for God’s guidance and personal address of the client and therapist” (p. 130). Hebrews 2 tells us “ for the word of God is living and effective” (HASH). When integrating biblical passages into a counseling session, to be successful and affective, the counselor needs to conduct a thorough spiritual assessment of the counsel” and he continues to say the counselor “ needs to study the Bible passage carefully to discover the principles applicable to the counseling situation at hand” (Monotint, 2009). Deed to take into consideration my clients spiritual condition, maturity, and biblical knowledge.

Once I know this about my client then I could introduce scripture in the session. One way of unrolling scripture is to assign certain scripture as homework. Sending the client home to meditate on what he/she believes the scripture means and have them journal it to bring it back and discuss it. Giving homework such as Scripture memorization is a good way to help my client memorize specific biblical passages that pertain to him/her.

Some may ask what is the value of scripture memory.

In mopping Scripture increases our faith in God and gives us victory over sin. 1 Corinthians 15: 56-57 says, the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is law. But thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NJ).

Scripture can help get rid of unclean thoughts. James 4: 7 says to “ submit to God. Rests et devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (NJ).

Scripture can give us guidance and direction.

Psalms 32 says, “ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you would go; I Will counsel you with my eye upon you” (ESP.). Also in Proverbs 3: 56 test us to “ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make straight your paths” (ESP.). Lastly, Scripture can increase knowledge and wisdom. Proverbs 2: 6,

9-11 tells us “ the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Then you will understand what is right, just and fair every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you” (NIB).

Therefore by incorporating and memorizing Scripture allows the Holy Spirit to remind us of the Scripture which in turn will minister, strengthen and guide my client’s during their greatest time of need.

The Bible is a great source integrate into ensiling session. McCain says the Bible belongs in psychology and has suggested eight ways Scripture influences the counselor and counsel. ‘ first, the Bible plays an experiential role in our lives, voiding wisdom and personal maturity.

Second is the Bible is a foundational role, providing a starting point for understanding the basic assumptions and beliefs.

Third is contextual role, which allows us to understand human nature, meaning and purpose in life. Fourth is the axiological role which gives us standards for what should be. Fifth, is the anthropological role which gives us an awareness of historical narrative of human sin and divine redemption. Sixth is the canonical role, which is an unchangeable standard and truth.

Seventh, ideological role, provides resources for discussion and comparison between psychological knowledge and special revelation.