

# A couple inerview

Psychology



A COUPLE'S/FAMILY INTERVIEW A Couple's Interview The s of the couples are Joseph and Samantha, and their children are Joy, Tom and Bill who are 16 years-old, 12 years-old, and 10 years-old respectively. Joseph is 38 years-old while Samantha is 29 years-old. Joy is the first born, followed by Tom, and Bill is the last-born. Joseph is a professional accountant whereas his wife is an elementary school teacher. Joy is in high school while Tom is in junior high school, and Bill is in elementary school. Both Joseph and Samantha are university graduates. Joseph is the head of this family and is responsible for paying the mortgage, children's school fees, medical insurance, automobile fuel bill, and electricity, water, and gas bills. Samantha, on the other hand, caters for meals and children school and home attire. However, at one point or another, these roles interchange depending on the prevailing financial situation. Joy, being the eldest is responsible for her other siblings. Samantha spends most of her time while at home, in the kitchen preparing meals. Joseph spends most of his time at home playing basketball with Tom and Bill or watching football. Joy spends most of her time on her phone or computer in her bedroom, and sometimes helps her mother in the Kitchen. Tom, apart from playing basketball with Joseph, his dad; he is always in his room on his computer listening to music. Bill spends most of his time playing computer/video games in the living room. In this family or coupleship, most decisions are made by Joseph, however, more often; Joseph and Samantha consult before making decisions.

At this time, the couples, Joseph and Samantha are in the Parental Years family development stage, developing stage. Their children, Joy, Tom, and Bill, are in school; they manage and share duties well despite having limited time (O'Leary, 1999). Significant event in this family at this time are Joy

entering into her teenage years, she is experiencing emotional, social and physiological changes. This is also the case with Tom. In the near future, one year, Joy is expected to go off to college, Tom to enter his teenage years and join high school while Bill will be joining Junior high school. As far as the family's current goals are concerned, nothing is off-track, mortgage payment is going well, and so is the children's education. The family has managed to buy a car for Joy through a joint contribution between Joseph and Samantha. The family is spiritually fine; they are strict members of the local church and the children have been well brought up on sound spiritual principles.

In this family interview, most of the taking was done by Samantha. This might be because she spends most of the time with the entire family and has a close relationship with everyone in the family. The family relates well with the outside well especially their neighbors. There is a general feeling of affection among family members despite tensions here and there amongst the children, and sometimes the parents. Strengths of this family system include its spiritual soberness, close relationship and great concern and care for one another. The family functions as a unit with the father and mother consulting when making decisions, and the children keen to come to one another's assistance. There are evidences of triangle within the family, with Joy seemingly trusting and confiding in her mother. Tom seems to be in some way cutoff and with loads of secret. Bill too is very close with his dad Joseph. The family also has some rituals, which are as a result of multigenerational effects. The family eats dinner every Sunday at the paternal grandparent's home and keenly observes Christmas and thanksgiving at the grandparents, as well.

Evaluation and Self-Reflection of the experience

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This interview experience offered insights into what families go through during different development stage, specifically, the parenting stage. Additionally, it helped learn and identify triangles, secrets, cutoffs and rituals in a family setup. Through this interview, I was able to learn and understand that triangles, secrets, cutoffs and rituals exist in any family setup, be it functional or dysfunctional. I think this I conducted this interview in a professional sound manner and was able to gather enough insights that helped in understanding the family well. My strong points were in regards with how I ensured participation of all family members in the interview, despite the mother doing most of the talking. Additionally, I managed to gather additional information through observation. In comparison to my family of origin and family/couple experience, there is a very big difference especially in how parents relate to their children and how decisions are made, as well as how set goals are met and roles shared. In working with families and couples, personally and professionally I would further develop my active listening and empathy skills so that I can be able to understand couples problems better.

Based on my experience, there are three important, practical implications of counseling and therapy that are worth sharing. First, at times, counseling can result in conflict, hatred or even divorce. This is because, during counseling; many secrets are revealed, which can aggravate hatred.

Counseling can also harm trust as a result of the secrets shared in the open by couples. It additionally, can build trust, cool tempers and end conflicts.

These are important points to make since most family/couple counseling, or therapeutic sessions are aimed at resolving some conflict, rebuilding trust, unearthing cutoffs and/or triangles. If care is not taken, these goals may not

be met; rather, these problems may be aggravated or the exact opposite achieved. To meet counseling goals, counselors need to be cautious, with how they approach different cases.

#### References

O'Leary, C. J. (1999). *Counselling Couples and Families: A Person-Centred Approach*. London: Sage Publications.