

Philosophy of social work

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The case in point of this paper is pertinent to Genny – a sixteen year-old Hispanic gal who comes from a family that recently migrated to the United States. She is noted to have a “slightly overweight” stature for her age, and complains of having to wrestle with bouts of depression. Notwithstanding her intellectual adeptness, there are reasons to believe that Genny is an underperformer in that she skips classes every so often; and this can be liberally construed as a reaction secondary to communication and relational problems she has in her own family.

Genny’s case presents a classic example of a manifesting problem that takes root from, and is sustained by deeper and more complex personal and family issues protruding underneath. Genny’s manifestations are merely symptomatic of a greater problem; they constitute, in a figurative manner, just the tip of an iceberg. Since the issues involved are much too complex to be covered, it would be wise to concentrate the discussion on a particular presenting problem – i. e. , Genny’s patent inability to function normally, both personally and socially.

Genny’s Case in the Light of Lewin, Muchini and Bowen’s Family System Theories Any social worker who intends to help Genny has to remember that taking her case essentially involves looking into the dynamics of the entire family where she belongs, in order to appreciate her symptomatic inability to function normally. This is consistent with Lewin’s belief that “individuals cannot be conceived apart from the environment” in which “they are related behaviorally” (Norlin, et. al. , 2003, p. 182).

The reasoned premise presupposed here lies in the acknowledgment that Genny’s problems are intricately knitted with the apparent lack of

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meaningful communication and interaction – seen concretely in her unmistakable inability to express her own feelings, which in turn is very revelatory of the family's tendency towards the same – between and among her family members. Muchini's family system theory explains in part why this is so. According to him: “ all families operate under both universal and idiosyncratic constraint” (Norlin, et. l. , 2003, p. 217); and as for Genny's family, its structures reveal that there are idiosyncratic patterns, such as frequent spousal conflicts, and ensuing physical abuse, as well as resort to mind-reading as alternative to communication, among others, which may have in the process become impediments to Genny's normal functions.

In particular, Genny may be said to be severely suffering from what Bowen refers to as problems with “ differentiation” – i. e. “ the inability to gain rational control over one's emotions produced by personal and social distress” (Norlin, et. al. , 2003, p. 229). This would help explain why Genny ‘ withdraws’ from her usual normal function – at home, school or the larger society, in that she is unable to adapt to the emotional distress created by her ‘ field’, and thereby successfully comport herself in respect to her daily functions. By Way of Conclusion: Proposing a Therapy Technique for Family Mobilization

By right of logic, the therapy which must be proposed to Genny must consist in a two-dimensional approach. The first may have to involve addressing Genny's personal issues. And this would entail looking into how can the therapist empower her to put things into their proper perspective – i. e. , to make her realize that while bad things happen, these instances should not effectively rob her of the right to live life beautifully and meaningfully.

Corollary to this, the therapist needs to work on uplifting Genny's self-esteem and worth.

This, it can be argued, is an effective antidote to 'differentiation' issues. Along the same vein, a therapy must be designed for the family to work on. Consistent with the theories of Lewin and Muchini, this multi-structural approach needs to include series of family therapy sessions that can enable them to express their feelings for each of the members, and thereon work towards creating significant avenues for respect and understanding from within the circle.