Family Dynamics: The Good, The Bad & The Ugly

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Objectives

• Identify 3 patterns of relating within families
• Define 3 important elements that influence how a family functions together
• Describe 2 strategies for communication within family conflict
noun  fam·i·ly ˈfam-lē, 'fa-mə-
: a group of people who are related to each other
: a person's children
: a group of related people including people who lived in the past

Source: Merriam-Webster's Learner's D
Patterns of Relating Within Families

Helpful

Unhelpful

Abusive
Who are these People?
What are the challenges???
Personalities

• Care giver – People who feel compelled to care for others (this may be fueled by a variety of love, guilt, compassion, sense of duty, medical skills)

• Peace maker – Family members who will attempt to keep the peace within the family unit.

• Out of towner – Family members who have not been regularly involved in participant care and decision making
Personalities

• Manipulator – People who cannot allow the participant or others to make their own decisions

• Bully – Similar to manipulator but more aggressive in their demands

• Addict – Person who has a physical & psychological dependency on alcohol or drugs
Mix of Generations in Home

• Diverse Thinking – may be valued, may be source of tension
• Values - may or may not be shared across generations – for example food, music, religion, gender roles, money management…
• Communications Styles – technology vs story telling vs making eye contact
Trauma

• **Illness** – Loss of function which can create a loss in ability to play a role as breadwinner, or homemaker, or care giver may create severe stress

• **Death** – multiple deaths, deaths due to violence, complicated grief can compromise ability to cope

• **Divorce** – Restructuring of a family may cause painful memories that influence decision making for a life time
• **Alcohol or Drug Abuse** – witnessing parents or loved ones struggle and secondary effects as children or adults can uproot family connections and prevent formation of healthy coping skills

• **Mental Health Problems** – mental illness may influence the ability for individuals to understand complex problem which may result in limited ability for decision making
Trauma

• **Disabilities** – physical disabilities may

• **Violence** – research reports effects of violence can be life lasting placing people at higher risk for many chronic illnesses. People can also suffer from PTSD (Post Traumatic Disorder) which can effect behaviors and decision making.
Family Values

- Culture/Ethnicity
- Beliefs about gender roles
- Power/status of family members
- Poverty
- Racial History
Families in Conflict

IDT GOAL...

Not to “fix” the family, but to join with them finding consensus on a common good for their loved one.
Surviving Difficult Personalities

• Dealing with various personalities
  • Bully, Manipulator, Screamer -> *Pre-meet with IDT*
  • Drug/Alcohol Abuse -> *Opiate Contracts*
    • Diversion of meds; Now you see them, Now you don’t!
    • Pain Crisis

• History of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect, & family secrets -> *Policy related to violence*

• What about euthanasia? -> *Mission is to ease suffering not hasten death*
Managing the Family Meeting

• Pre-meeting plan
  • Who is facilitating?
  • What are you looking for?
• Seating arrangements
• Introductions
• Setting Agenda
• Setting Limits
• Prepare before, and process after a family meeting to build and strengthen the IDT skills set.
• Notice if you are “working harder than the family”. Discuss this as a team.
• Notice if the team is reflecting the chaos of the family. Discuss this as a team.
Bibliography

Building Family Connections
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Family Dynamics When Someone is Dying
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Managing Family Dynamics
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Adverse Childhood Events Study
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/
Family Dynamics: 
The Good, The Bad, The Ugly - author

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