

Deanna Melillo-Degia

Debbie, a single mother of Deanna (age 15) describes an ongoing situation in her home which involves her daughter inviting her father (Richie, her ex husband) over to the house without asking for any permission, when confronting her daughter, Deanna says the answer is “always a no” when she does ask so she just figures there is no point in asking, plus her mother seems to have a good time when her dad is around so she doesn’t understand why she gets so upset. Debbie then gets very annoyed with Deanna after Richie leaves and “gives her the cold shoulder”. Richie doesn’t seem to understand why Debbie is upset either since “this used to be the place he once lived.” This only furthers Debbie’s distress. Ultimately Debbie’s ability to relax and unwind in her own home brings about Anxiety and frustration. Deanna grows in confusion because of the lack of consistency and consequences which then also causes Anxiety and Hopelessness.

It looks as if Deanna is living out of the dominant discourse that moms and dads should always stay together because that’s just the way her Church centered culture portrays life and since Debbie is not complying to the discourse she “finds” herself in, it is causing great strife at home.

When looking for the unique outcomes we see that there are multiple times when approached by her mother Deanna does in fact refrain from inviting her father over, in fact it turns out that when Deanna knows her father will be over on the weekend she does not invite him over without permission. We also see that it isn’t as black and white as Deanna makes it out to be, Debbie does in fact allow Richie to come over to the house (when Deanna asks) to either hangout with them or have dinner a few nights a week.

Goal would be to increase both Debbie and Deanna’s sense of agency and preferred narratives and to reduce the conflict between the 3 of them.

Intervention would be to first map the influence of the problem, and then map the influence of the persons, this can help bring about the heaviness of the issue on Debbie for Deanna to see (and vice versa) and it might also bring about more unique outcomes they may have not realised. Secondly I would externalize the problem and help Debbie and Deanna to see each other separate from the problem that is at hand (Deanna is not the problem, Debbie is not the problem, Richie is not the problem, the problem is the problem). I would also do this by externalizing metaphors with language such as “harnessing the problem”, “resigning from the

problems service” or “educating the problem” allowing the clients to feel a detachment from the problem.