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MFT 610: Experiential therapy

When evaluating my family of origin, the unresolved issues between the parents are notably making the middle child begin to act out in school. The family system maintains its family's homeostasis by focusing on the role of the misbehaving child versus the good parents. Another potential problem is the separation between the parents in the family's life, causing pivotal changes in how each member reacts and senses an unwanted situation. The symptoms of cutting school allow the teenager to receive attention from both parents while serving a less problematic interaction between the separated parents. The complex dynamics are present when there is a lack of validation from the parental authority, not openly expressing emotional support to their children, and the lack of intimacy as one unit to share their emotional life.

The goal for the family is to acknowledge each individual's feelings and true yearnings of compassion behind the problematic behavior. In the session, the family tackles the invisible layers to comprehend the level of experience and deep-rooted validation the daughter is seeking. The goal is also to address the contradicting behaviors of the teenager who does not desire to be causing trouble. As one unit, the goal is to help the family communicate their needs respectfully and encourage congruent communication regarding the issue of parental separation and how to establish emotional expression to regain a place of compassion.

An intervention I would use is family sculpting, allowing each family member to physically position how they see each person in the family according to their roles. When the daughter can be the sculptor, she may place herself in the middle of her parents with their backs turned away from her, allowing a nonverbal confrontation. When the parents have their turn to be the sculptor, they can visually begin to see how they contribute to the dysfunctional family

process without having to use words. This sculpting method allows the daughter's fear of vulnerability to become easier to communicate through a visual representation of her emotional reality for the rest of the family.