

**Film Ordinary People with Family Systems Therapy Applied**

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GCN 502: Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy

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April 11, 2023

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Family systems therapy focuses on the interrelated patterns of behavior within a family system. This therapy views the family as a complex system with its own unique structure, communication patterns, and dynamics, and seeks to address and resolve issues by working with the entire family unit rather than just one individual. The underlying theories of family systems therapy include systems theory, which posits that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their environments. Family systems therapy also acknowledges the role of cultural and societal factors in shaping family dynamics. In terms of mental health, family systems therapy recognizes the interconnectedness of family members' emotional and psychological well-being, and seeks to improve the overall functioning of the family system as a means of addressing individual issues.

Conrad's behavior and symptoms can be seen as a result of the dysfunctional dynamics within his family system. The death of Conrad's older brother Buck had a profound impact on the family's emotional landscape and disrupted their usual patterns of communication and interaction. Conrad's mother Beth becomes increasingly distant and preoccupied with maintaining a façade of normalcy, while his father Calvin tries to establish a closer relationship with Conrad but struggles to communicate his own feelings. These patterns of behavior create a sense of emotional disconnection within the family, exacerbating Conrad's feelings of isolation and contributing to his depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation.

I would use two techniques from family systems therapy to treat Conrad. The first technique would be to use genograms, which could be used to map out the family's generational history and relationships. Through a genogram, Conrad and I could identify patterns of behavior and communication that have been passed down through his family and are contributing to his

current difficulties. By exploring his family's history, we could identify key events and relationships that have influenced Conrad's development and understand how they have shaped his current emotional landscape. The second technique I would use is reframing, which can help individuals to shift their perspectives and see their problems in a new light. For example, I might encourage Conrad to reframe his relationship with his mother as one in which she is struggling to cope with her own emotional pain rather than one in which she is intentionally rejecting him. By reframing his perceptions of his mother's behavior, Conrad might be able to feel more empathy for her and develop a greater sense of compassion and understanding within the family system.

I believe that family systems therapy could be very helpful to Conrad in addressing his symptoms and emotional difficulties. Conrad's symptoms are deeply rooted in the dynamics of his family system, particularly the unresolved trauma following the death of his older brother Buck. Family systems therapy could help Conrad and his family to identify and address the patterns of behavior and communication that are contributing to his difficulties and promote new patterns that encourage emotional connection and healing. By working together in this way, Conrad and his family could develop a greater sense of understanding and empathy for one another and ultimately, establish new patterns of communication and interaction that promote emotional well-being and growth.

## References

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