

**Ordinary People: Family Systems Therapy**

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Family systems therapy places a keen focus on the client within the family system. An individual's problematic behavior grows out of the interactional unit of the family as well as the larger community and societal systems. Family therapy is typically short term, solution-focused and action oriented. The main focus of this approach is on the here and now interactions in the family system. A collaborative approach between the family and the therapist or the practitioner's orientation determines the specific goals. Some of these goals would include using interventions that enable all members of the family to change in ways that will reduce their distress. Family therapy is also rooted on a set of values and theoretical assumptions. Each intervention a therapist performs expresses a value judgment. It is critical for therapists, regardless of their theoretical orientation, to be aware of their values and monitor how these values influence their practice with families. Personal characteristics such as respect for clients, compassion, empathy, and sensitivity are human qualities that influence the manner in which techniques are delivered. In deciding which intervention options to use, practitioners will need to be adaptable. The central consideration is what is in the best interests of the family. Treatment is multilayered.

The characteristics of Conrad's family system explained some of his maladaptive behaviors that surfaced after his brother's death. His inability to form a proper relationship with his parents and the people in his environment resulted from the structural failings within the family. His mother was withdrawn, distant and self-absorbed. Conrad's father seemed to turn a blind eye and/or minimize the legitimate issues that were present in his family, particularly when it came down to the lack of communication.

I would encourage Conrad and his family to engage in multigenerational family therapy as this would help facilitate change in the individuals within the context of his family. The treatment goal of this therapeutic approach would also help to lessen Conrad's anxiety and help

end generation-to-generation transmission of problems by resolving emotional attachments. I would also encourage Conrad and his family to participate in structural family therapy. Allowing for structural changes to occur in his family system may reduce some of Conrad's maladaptive behaviors. Techniques in this approach are well thought out, active and directive. This approach would help to modify his families' transactional rules, set appropriate boundaries and create an effective hierarchical structure.

I believe family systems therapy would be an effective approach in treating Conrad. Since this approach focuses on the family as a whole. This approach would help bring fresh revelation and insight into how his family functions. This approach would reveal whether there is a strong foundation in the family structure or where weaknesses within the family structures lie. Bringing Some of the problems to the surface would be the first step in this approach. By pointing out the things that have not been working within Conrad's family system, the therapist would be able to help the family dig deeper into their own personal issues, hopefully promoting change within the family system. Change within his family system would help him heal, break generational transmission of maladaptive behaviors and coping strategies. Change would hopefully encourage the family to work together as one cohesive unit thus helping to develop a healthy family system that would meet the needs of all members, including Conrad's.

## References

Corey, G. (2021). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*. Cengage.

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