

Family Systems Theory

Basic Principles:

1. All of the elements of the system affect each other
2. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts
3. “Fit” is more appropriate than “cause”
4. Feedback loops change and maintain the system
 - a. Negative feedback loops operate to keep the system the same – homeostasis
 - b. Positive feedback loops operate to change the system

Bateson’s four levels of learning:

- Zero learning – Not subject to correction by trial and error
- Level 1 Learning – A revision of choice among known alternatives
- Level 2 Learning – A revision of the set of alternatives
- Level 3 Learning – A corrective change in the system
- Level 4 Learning – A combination of phylogenesis with ontogenesis

Kantor and Lehr’s Family Systems Theory

Definitions:

- Target dimensions or family goals
 - Affect: joining- separating, amplitude
 - Power: freedom - restriction
 - Meaning: sharing - not sharing
- Access dimensions – how families achieve goals
 - Space: closeness - distance
 - Time: in phase - out of phase
 - Energy: balance - imbalance
- Family types and core purpose
 - Closed: Stability through tradition
 - Open: Adaptation through consensus
 - Random: Exploration through intuition

Access Criterion Variables, Core Purposes and Target Ideals

	<u>Closed System</u>	<u>Open System</u>	<u>Random System</u>
<u>Access Dimensions:</u>			
Space:	Fixed	Movable	Dispersed
Time:	Regular	Variable	Irregular
Energy:	Steady	Flexible	Fluctuating
<u>Target Goal Ideals:</u>			
Affect:	Durability	Responsiveness	Rapture
	Fidelity	Authenticity	Whimsicality
	Sincerity	Latitude	Spontaneity
Power:	Authority	Resolution	Interchangeable
	Discipline	Allowance	Free Choice
	Preparation	Cooperation	Challenge
Meaning:	Certainty	Relevance	Ambiguity
	Unity	Affinity	Diversity
	Clarity	Tolerance	Originality

Family Traffic Patterns

Pro – The family members move closer together

Anti – The family members move further apart

Vacillating – The family members vacillate between closeness and distance

Parallel – The distance/closeness dimension remains stable

Family Player Parts

Mover

Opposer

Follower

Bystander

Virginia Satir's Communication Styles

Blamer

Placater

Computer

Distracter

Psychoanalytic contributions to systems theory

Murray Bowen

Individuality (autonomy) vs. togetherness (fusion)

Emotional vs. intellectual functioning

Triangles are the basic social unit

The family projection process

Differentiation of self

Emotional cutoff

Bowen's family therapy style

Systems conceptualization, individual approach

Life-long

Theodore Lidz' theories

Marital schism

Marital skew

Additional Principles important to continuity and change

Boundaries

Intergenerational processes

Scapegoat

Structure (Minnuchin)

Triangles

Strategy (Haley)

Directives

Paradoxical methods