

ADVANCED FAMILY THERAPY PRACTICES

Integrating Family Therapy Techniques: Post-
Modern Milan, Narrative, and Cognitive
Behavioral Family Therapy

- ▶ **“Society acts as if all family violence is instrumental, and the response, therefore, is to increase control. But it is clear to us as family therapists that most cases of family violence are the products of generations of powerlessness. When we try to intervene by controlling the parents or with concern for the child alone, we can only produce a continuation of the pattern.” (Salvador Minuchin)**
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Initial Sessions

Milan Post-Modern techniques

- ▶ The focus of attention is cognitions, behaviors change based on new belief system
 - ▶ Help families recognize their choices and assist members | exercising their ability to choose
 - ▶ Hypothesizing
 - ▶ Neutrality
 - ▶ Circular Questioning
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- ▶ **Therapist as “Not Knowing” – The client not the therapist is the expert in his/her own life**
 - ▶ **Utilizing the assumption of shared expertise among all participants**
 - ▶ **Use of circular questioning (learning the “others” perspective)**
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Tomm's Reflexive Questioning

- ▶ **Future-oriented questions**
 - ▶ **Observer-perspective questions**
 - ▶ **Unexpected counterchange questions**
 - ▶ **Embedded suggestion questions**
 - ▶ **Normative-comparison questions**
 - ▶ **Distinction-clarifying questions**
 - ▶ **Questions introducing hypothesis**
 - ▶ **Process-interrupting questions**
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- ▶ **Expanding clients' rigid and inflexible views of the world (dogmatic convictions/usually negative)**
 - ▶ **Use of reflective team techniques – the family reflects on the therapist's progress**
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Talking is Not Enough

Changing Entrenched Behaviors Patterns

CBT

- ▶ The focus of attention is changing behaviors
 - ▶ What happens when the family leaves the room – tools to help
 - ▶ In cognitive behavioral therapy, the practice of tracking cognitions or automatic thoughts is assessed. The goal behind this tracking procedure is to identify when certain thoughts are beneficial to the client and when they are not. (Hyer, Kramer, & Sohnle, 2004).
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Seeking Safety as CBT Tool

- ▶ *Seeking Safety*, a cognitive behavioral approach, addresses patterns of dysfunctional thinking
- ▶ Teaches coping skills, identifying triggers, relapse prevention, personalized feedback, seeking answers to whether the cost outweighs the benefit of certain cognitions or behaviors, behavioral strategies, calming self-statements, and developing new skills that can be adapted for use with couples and families.

Narrative Family Therapy

The Client is not the problem. The family is not the problem. The problem is the problem

- ▶ Thin Descriptions – leads to thin conclusions, problem filled, developed from “authority/power” figures
- ▶ Thick Descriptions – multi-faceted, multi-storied, involves the protagonist views, includes hopes, aspirations, purposes, passions, thick descriptions of why people behave as they do
- ▶ Deconstruction – dominance of one meaning or one set of assumptions is an illusion; disassembling and examining taken for granted assumptions

Narrative Family Therapy Interventions

- ▶ **Externalizing Language**
 - ▶ **Externalizing and Naming the Problem**
 - ▶ **Search for Unique Outcomes: a plan, action, feeling, statement, quality, desire/dream, thought, belief, ability, commitment**
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CBT Weds Post-Modern Modalities for Trauma Recovery

- ▶ Donald Meichenbaum, founder of current cognitive-behavioral practice, one of the founders of the “cognitive revolution” has linked post-modern constructivist thinking with behavioral therapy. His stress inoculation and self-instructional training is aimed at helping clients teach themselves to overcome previously stressful situations. (Goldenberg, p.338)

“What is to give light must endure burning.” Viktor Frankl

- ▶ “narrative repair”
- ▶ Schemas are changed
- ▶ Ability to manage stress changes with the new schema
- ▶ Meichenbaum teaches it is natural emotional response to become anxious/depressed with trauma, **but**
- ▶ It is what they say to themselves about their situation or condition that is critical
- ▶ In cognitive-behavioral sessions the therapist coaches clients to talk to themselves differently—unfreezing their beliefs, creating new narratives—in order, ultimately, to behave differently. (Goldenberg, p. 338)

Adapting *Seeking Safety* for Families

- ▶ **Changing Unhealthy Relationships (pg. 328)**
 - ▶ **Detaching from Emotional Pain (Grounding) (pg. 125)**
 - ▶ **Healing from Anger (pg. 345)**
 - ▶ **Healthy Boundaries (pg. 265)**
 - ▶ **Commitment (p. 231)**
 - ▶ **Community Resources (p. 250) (Sharing Local Resources)**
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