CHANGING ROLES IN FAMILIES

NJ CONNECT FOR RECOVERY

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JOEL M LEVINE, LCSW, LPC, LCADC, LMFT

WHAT ARE ROLES IN THE FAMILY

- A family role refers to the responsibilities and behavior associated with a particular member within a family unit.

- These roles can include tasks like caring for children, earning income, maintaining the household and providing emotional support.

- Each family member contributes to the family's functioning.

FAMILY ROLES

Family Roles refer to the functions and responsibilities that individual members of families take on within the household structure

The roles can shift and evolve based on social, economic, and cultural influences

This is referred to the as the lifecycle model

ATTITUDES ARE CHANGING

Gender roles, values and attitudes have become more fluid, blurring the boundaries of family and work life as men and women see themselves increasingly as not only co parents but also co-providers for their children.

The increasing shift in parental roles has been triggered by a series of demographic, socio-economic and cultural transformations that have occurred in the past several decades.

The modern family is in a constant state of flux, adjusting and adapting itself to accommodate our contemporary and diverse society and culture.

Irrespective of its structural makeup, the most important function of a family is to meet the basic needs of each individual member - and provide a stable and supportive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging, whether biologically, socially or legally.

Diversity in our families, like the diversity of our communities, simply makes our world better.

WHAT ARE GENDER ROLES

- Gender roles within families have shifted considerably.

- Traditional expectations often placed men in the role of breadwinner and women as homemakers.

- Modern perspectives encourage equality, with both genders sharing in work and home responsibilities based on preference and necessity rather than societal expectations.

- Gender roles allow us to explore ideas of fairness and equality within the family context.

CHANGING ROLES

- Usually men and women add to their roles, rather than change them completely. In a large percentage of families, mothers and fathers share wage-earning and family-maintaining roles. And that can lead to role conflict, role overload and/or role ambiguity.

ROLE CONFLICT, ROLE OVERLOAD AND ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role conflict comes from trying to do two or more jobs well.

Role overload comes from trying to be too many things to too many people.

Role ambiguity occurs when adults get mixed messages on how they are expected to act.

For example, a man may prefer to stay at home with the children, but feels he is expected instead to be the main income earner. Or, a wife may want to have a job, yet feel guilty if others take over some of her home duties.

ESTABLISHING CLEAR FAMILY ROLES

- Family roles are defined as a set of goals and responsibilities expected of each member of the family.

- Typically, there are five roles required for a healthy family: providing resources, nurturing and support, life skill development, maintenance and management of the family system and gratification of marital partners.

- Within the great diversity of the family structures, each family member may fulfill many possible roles.

- Everyone's role is important.

- Each role provides a way to share responsibilities that ensure a successful functioning family.

- During major life changes or crisis, family roles may need to be re-defined and re-assigned to cope with the changes.

CHANGE

- Change is a part of life.

- It happens in all areas of our life and is not always bad.

- People handle change in different ways.

- Some do not handle change well at all, while others seem to adjust quite easily.

- With change, we all have opportunities for growth by learning new ways of doing things.

- How you and your family choose to manage change may determine how much stress you experience.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SHIFTS

- Traditional dynamics begin to change as more families embrace new ways of living and parenting

- Traditional gender roles are becoming more fluid

- Both parents are working creating the need for dual earner income households

- Both parents share in responsibilities for income generation and domestic tasks

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- During the Baby Boom many families shifted from extended family structures to nuclear families, focusing on parents and children living together

- The rise of suburbs in the 1950's influenced family roles as many women adopted homemaker roles while men went to work and were responsible for the income generation

- Changing economic conditions forced many families to need dual incomes in the later half of the 20th century challenging traditional family roles

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

- The feminist movement in the 1960's and 1970's played a crucial role in reshaping perceptions of gender roles within families, advocating for shared responsibilities between men and women

- Continuing evolving family roles today with diverse family structure including single parent households and LGBTQIA+

- Your thoughts?

SYSTEMS LEVELS

Sociocultural, political, economic

Community: neighborhood, work, friends, religions, organizations

Extended Family

Immediate Family

**Individual**

VERTICAL STRESSORS

Racism, sexism, classism, ageism, homophobia, consumerism, poverty

Disappearance of community, more work, less leisure, inflexibility of workplace, no time for friends

Family emotional patterns, myths, triangles, secrets, legacies, losses

Violence, addictions, ignorance, depression, lack of spiritual expression or dreams

Genetic makeup, abilities and disabilities

Larger Society

Community

Extended Family

Immediate Family

INDIVIDUAL
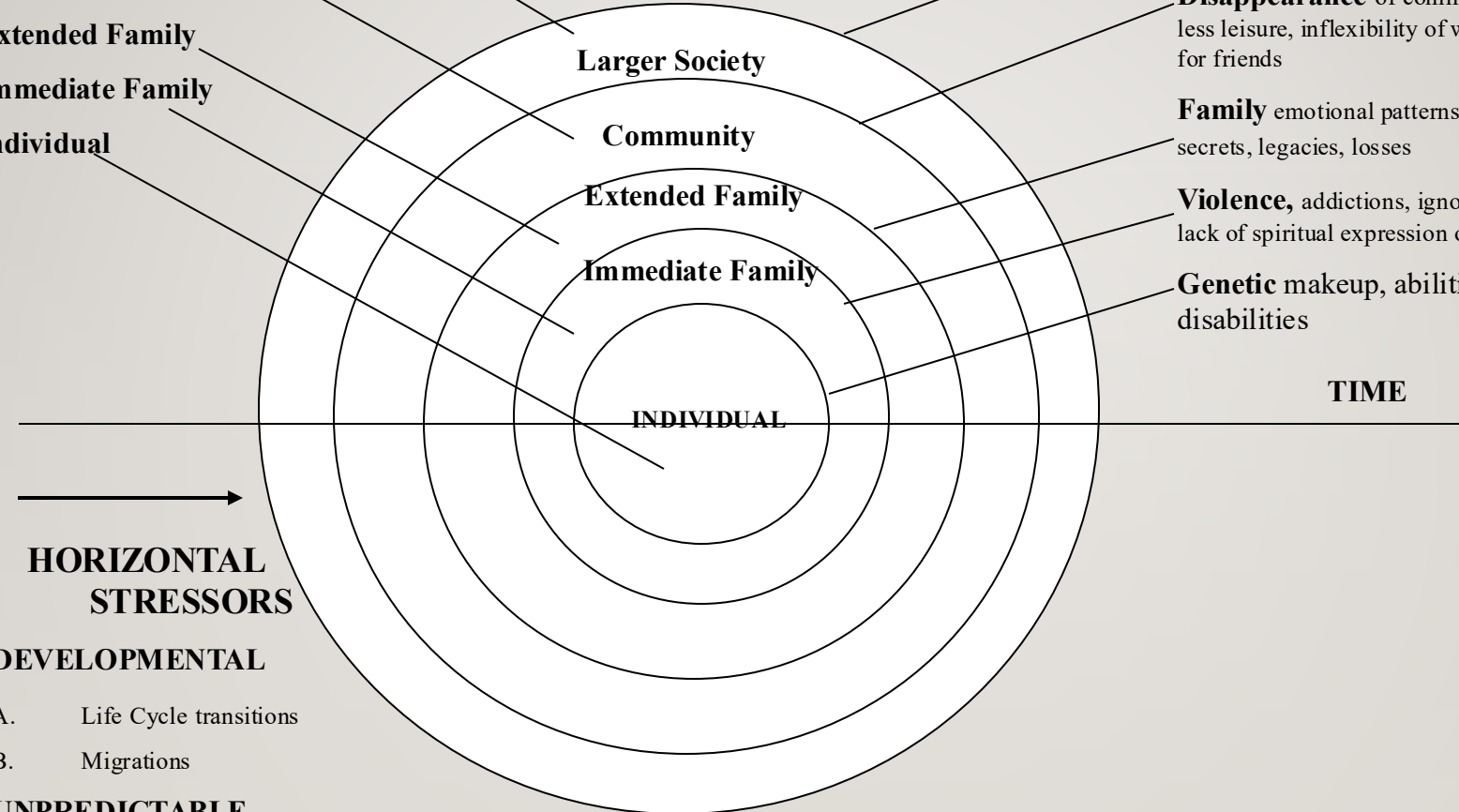
TIME

HORIZONTAL STRESSORS

DEVELOPMENTAL

A.   Life Cycle transitions

B.   Migrations

UNPREDICTABLE

A.   Untimely Death

B.   Chronic Illness

C.   Accident

D.   Unemployment

Historical Events

A.   War

B.   Economic Depression

C.   Political Climate

D.   Natural Disasters

FLOW OF STRESS THROUGH THE FAMILY

Multicontextual Framework

THE INDIVIDUAL

- Age
- Gender roles and sexual orientation
- Temperament
- Developmental or physical disabilities
- Culture, race ethnicity
- Class
- Religious, philosophical, spiritual values
- Finances
- Autonomy skills
- Affiliative skills
- Power/privilege or powerlessness/abuse
- Education and work
- Physical or psychological symptoms
- Addiction and behavioral disturbances
- Allocation of time
- Social participation
- Personal dreams

IMMEDIATE HOUSEHOLD

- Type of Family Structure
- Stage of family life cycle
- Emotional climate
- Boundaries, patterns, and triangles
- Communication patterns
- Negotiating skills
- Decision-making process

EXTENDED FAMILY

- Relationship patterns
- Emotional legacies, themes, secrets, family myths, taboos
- Loss
- Socioeconomic level & issues
- Work patterns
- Dysfunctions: addictions, violence, illness disabilities
- Social and community involvement
- Ethnicity
- Values and/or religion

Multicontextual Framework cont.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

•Face-to-face links between individual, family, and society

•Friends and neighbors

•Involvement with governmental institutions

•Self-help, psychotherapy

•Volunteer work

•Church or temple

•Involvement in children's school and activities

•Political action

•Recreation or cultural groups

LARGER SOCIETY

•Social, political, economic issues

•Bias based on race ethnicity

•Bias based on class

•Bias based on gender

•Bias based on sexual orientation

•Bias based on religion

•Bias based on age

•Bias based on family statue (e.g., single parent)

•Bias based on disability

•Power and privilege of some groups because of hierarchical rules and norms held by regions, social, business or governmental institutions

•How does a family's place in hierarchy affect relationships and ability to change?

LIFECYLE STRESSORS

- Changing economic structure – Rising cost of living and changing employment can necessitate both parents working, leading to shifts in childcare and household duties

- Changing Political Structure – Uncertainty for the future

- Recovery issues – How to balance 12 step attendance and time for recovery

- Immigration Status – Fears of deportation and policies that affect immigration status

- Cultural Shifts – Ability to express traditional, language, dress, foods, etc.

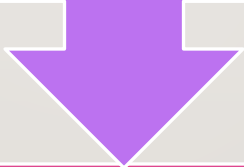# WHAT IS CULTURAL DIVERSITY

- Different cultures have varied expectations and traditions related to family roles.

- Some cultures place emphasis on extended family involvement, while others focus on independence.

- Roles of elders, children and gender can differ widely across cultures.

- This diversity enriches our perspectives and fosters respect for different family practices.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CHANGING ROLES

Individual circumstance – Life events like illness, disability, or career changes can necessitate reassignment of roles and responsibilities within the family

Family structures – The rise of single parent families, cohabitation and LGBTQIA= families complicate traditional role expectations

WHAT ABOUT TECHNOLOGY

- Advancements in technology have influenced how families operate.

- Appliances have reduced the time needed for household chores and flexible work arrangements have altered how parents balance work and family life.

- Communication technologies enable families to stay connected even when apart.

- How else has technology changed the roles in our family

IMPACT OF CHANGING ROLES

- Increased flexibility- families need to be willing to adapt and redefine roles and responsibilities as circumstances change

- Shared flexibility – Equal sharing of household chores and and childcare can promoted a more equitable and balanced family dynamic

- Impact on children – Children may experience confusion or anxiety as they navifgate changing family structures and gender roles.

- Opportunities to manage conflict – disagreements can arise when family members hving different expectations or struggle to adapt to new roles

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN

- Children's roles in the family have also changed.

- In the past, children might have had more responsibilities, such as working to support the family or caring for siblings.

- Today, there is greater emphasis on education and personal development, with responsibilities at home often balanced with schoolwork and extracurricular activities.

- Discussing this shift helps us understand our own roles and expectations.

WAYS TO ADAPT

- **Establish clear roles** – Make sure that your family roles are clearly defined. It is important that each person understands and recognizes the rights and responsibilities associated with their roles and that everyone understands what is expected of them in their role.

- **Be flexible** – Understand that roles may develop and change over time. Family members must be willing and able to change and adapt as needed, as well as taking on new or additional roles.

- **Assign family roles fairly** – Make sure no one is overburdened with too many responsibilities. Discuss and review each family member's role and check to see that everyone is comfortable with his or her roles. Lastly, make sure that the children's roles are appropriate for their age.

- **Be responsible for fulfilling the role** – Each family member needs to take their role seriously and follow through on responsibilities. If for any reason, a family member is having difficulty carrying out their role, it may be necessary to re-assign that responsibility.

TIPS FOR COPING

- Open communication -Regularly discuss family roles and responsibilities to ensure everyone understands expectations and feels heard

- Establish clear roles - Define specific roles and responsibilities to avoid confusion and ensure tasks are shared fairly

- Be flexible -Recognize that roles may need to be reassigned or redefined as family needs evolve

- Seek support -Don't hesitate to ask for help from family members, friends, or support groups

- Prioritize self care -Ensure family members are taking care of their own needs to avoid burnout and maintain emotional well-being

- Celebrate success -Acknowledge and appreciate each family member's contributions to foster a positive and supportive environment

COPING STRATEGIES

- Avoid gender stereotypes when making decisions about family employment, child-rearing, financial management and household chores. Decisions should be based on interests, skills and an equitable distribution of responsibility.

- Share household responsibilities equally. Keep records of how much time each member of the household spends in schoolwork, paid work, housework, child care, travel, and leisure for one week and see how chores can be more fairly shared.

- Take turns playing different roles. Family problems often arise because people think they need to keep the same routines year after year. Instead, family members can take turns filling time-consuming, energy-demanding roles.

COPING STRATEGIES

- Handle balance-of-power issues as they arise. When roles change, so do the power interactions within the family. A husband may feel threatened by his wife's job and refuse to do his share of housework. Children may become messier when it's dad's turn to take charge of home cleaning. Talk about power problems as they come up.

- Spend time with friends and relatives. Filling several roles can make time a scarce commodity, so go out of your way to maintain the relationships you enjoy most.

- When possible, negotiate for changes in the workplace. Does your employer offer flextime or a day care subsidy? Many don't, but more do each year. Consider discussing policies that would make it easier to balance work and family life with co-workers, other parents in your community, and your employer.

SUCCESS

- Success or a problem at work can affect home life, and vice versa. The trick is not to ignore work stresses at home or home stresses at work. Rather, it is important to learn to cope with the stresses that occur in both situations.

- Becoming aware of the sources of your stress is the first step. Make a list of those stressful things that are on your mind. Then, on that list, next to each problem, indicate how much control you have over that problem.

- Life will never be stress free. We must cope with stress, not eliminate it. To do that, find supports that can help: networks of family and friends can help reduce some of those daily stresses.