Why is Addiction a Family Disease?

Brynn Cicippio, LMFT, CAADC
Objectives – Part One

- 1. Understand what it means to work systemically
- 2. Understand the genetic influence on addiction
- 3. Identify common roles in addicted families
- 4. Formulate treatment goals for each role
Who are MFT’s?

- Individuals, couples, and families
- Training and Education
- Taking in the big picture
  - Context and relationships
- Different than other clinicians
Genetics

Family #1

Family #2
Genetics – What’s the difference?

- Predisposition
- Evolution
- Genes and Environment
  - First use
- Heritability
  - Addictions – moderately to highly heritable
    - Hallucinogens 0.39; Cocaine 0.72
- Treating the family
Common Family Roles

1. Responsible/ Family Hero
2. Adjuster/ Lost Child
3. Placater/ People Pleaser
4. Mascot/ Family Clown
5. Acting Out/ Scapegoat
Responsible/ Family Hero

**Strengths**
- Responsible
- Organized
- Leaders
- Valuable to the family system

**Limitations**
- Expect perfection
- Can’t make mistakes
- Can’t listen to others

**Clinical Presentation**

**Treatment Goals**
Adjuster/ Lost Child

Strengths
- Independent
- Flexible
- Quiet
- Easy going

Limitations
- Ignored, neglected
- Can’t make decisions
- Lack initiative
- Follow the leader

Clinical Presentation

Treatment Goals
Placater/ People Pleaser

Strengths
- Caring
- Empathetic
- Good listeners
- Sensitive

Limitations
- Fear conflict
- Can’t receive
- Taken advantage of
- Anxious

CLINICAL PRESENTATION

TREATMENT GOALS
Mascot/ Family Clown

**Strengths**
- Humor
- Wit
- Behavior often reinforced
- Easily liked

**Limitations**
- Immature
- Attention seeking
- Unable to focus
- Poor Decision making

**CLINICAL PRESENTATION**

**TREATMENT GOALS**
Acting out/ Scapegoat

**Strengths**
- Creative
- Funny
- Leadership

**Limitations**
- Anger
- Self-destructive
- Irresponsible
- Social problems

**Clinical Presentation**

**Treatment Goals**
The Big Picture

- Putting it all together
- How do roles maintain addiction
- Specific tangible goals
- Impact on family system
Conclusion

- The role of genetics
- Understanding roles
- How might we see roles in our positions
- What can we do
Why is Addiction a Family Disease? Pt. 2

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Objectives – Part Two

1. Describe the components of medical model

2. Identify the unspoken rules in addicted families

2. Describe the function of each rule

3. Implement three interventions for each unspoken rule
Intro to Addiction – the ingredients

- Drug or Substance Availability
- Genetic predisposition or sensitivity
- Environmental Stress
The Unspoken Rules

- Allow addiction to surface and thrive
- Prevent health and wellness
- Stay with the child through adulthood

- Don’t Talk
- Don’t Trust
- Don’t Feel
DON’T TALK

- May begin as rationalization
- Moves into denial of the problem
- Supported by the silence of other family members
- Failed attempts to make the problem go away
- Explicitly told not to talk
- Influenced by shame
- Disbelief and betrayal
DON’T TRUST

- Instability
- Needs are not being met
- What is normal?
- Contribution of other family members
- Disappointment, embarrassment, humiliation
- Honesty in relationships
- Unable to trust the truth
DON’T FEEL

› Keeping yourself safe
› Shift the focus
› Not accessing
› Avoiding pain
› Self-protection and self-preservation
  › Fear/ afraid
  › Sadness
  › Anger
  › Embarrassment
  › Guilt
INTERVENTIONS
Let’s Start Talking

- Objectives
  - Develop understanding that addiction is a family disease
  - Recognize the multigenerational legacy of addictive disorders
  - Enhance Communication

- Genogram
  - 3 generations min; SA/MI/SI

- Assumptions
  - 11 statements

- S.A.F.E.
  - Secretive, Abusive, Feelings, Emptiness
Who Can You Trust?

- Objectives
  - Break denial to build honesty
  - Develop understanding of codependent behaviors and their function within the addicted system
  - Formulate honest dialogue about behaviors

- Defense and Denial Collage
  - What is really happening

- Control Questions
  - Difficulties, demonstration, ultimate cost

- Co-Addiction Checklist
  - What is really happening
All the Feelings

- Objectives:
  - Recognize personal belief systems about expressing emotions
  - Identify consequences of those beliefs
  - Identify feelings that are easy and difficult to express

- Identification of feelings
  - Times I felt...
    - Fear, Anger, Sadness, Guilt, Embarrassed
  - Beliefs about feelings
    - Beliefs that deny or rationalize
    - Beliefs that support healthy expression
  - Expressing Feelings
    - Easiest, Most Difficult, and Fear of outcomes
Conclusion

- Where can we influence change
- What are the unspoken rules
- What is one way your role can move someone away from these rules
Share Your Thoughts and Questions!
References


