



## **LEARNING MODULAL II**

### **Seminar # 1**

“The Family is a System”

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. How is this issue impacting the family members?
2. What response is required?

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### *How Does/Will this Issue Impact the Family?*

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A family is a system, and in any system each part is related to all the other parts. Consequently, a change in any part of the system may bring about changes in all the other parts. (*Brodrick, 1993; Klein & White, 1996*)

#### **With Substance Use Disorders, change is the new norm in the Family**

When substance use disorder is introduced to the family system the one with the disorder becomes a subunit to the family system. The other parts adjust with constant adaptations to accommodate the new behavior. This is disruptive to the overall family system.

Because the goal of a family (realized or not) is to help each other, the family will seek to aid the one that has the disorder. These efforts take away from other parts of the functioning family system and create an in-balance. (Day et al, 2001)

Because the family system exists around the idea of well-being, overall, the family goal is to help each other to “do better”. The idea of subsystems is important to separate the needs of the family from the one experiencing substance use disorder. (*Minuchin, 1981*)

Therefore, within the family system is an ongoing stream of transitions requiring change and adjustments from each member of the family. (*Klein & White, 1996, p. 128*)

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### *The Four Dominate Parts of the Family System*

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There are four primary domains to consider when looking at a family as a family system:

1. **The Child** – Is there an intrapersonal and relation development with the child.
2. **The Parent** – Are the parents individually functioning and can provide parenting.
3. **The Family Environment** - How well does the family transacts within itself, between family members.
4. **The Family External System** - How much is the family is influenced from outside the family system, i.e., Schools, work, faith organizations, legal issues.

These four need to be considered as you take this seminar training. Each domain needs to function

at its best using its potential and being committed toward contributing to the outcomes of how the family responds to issues that are presented in their journey with substance use disorders. Even though we seek balance in the family system, what one family member is willing to contribute or give up, may be completely different from the other family member.

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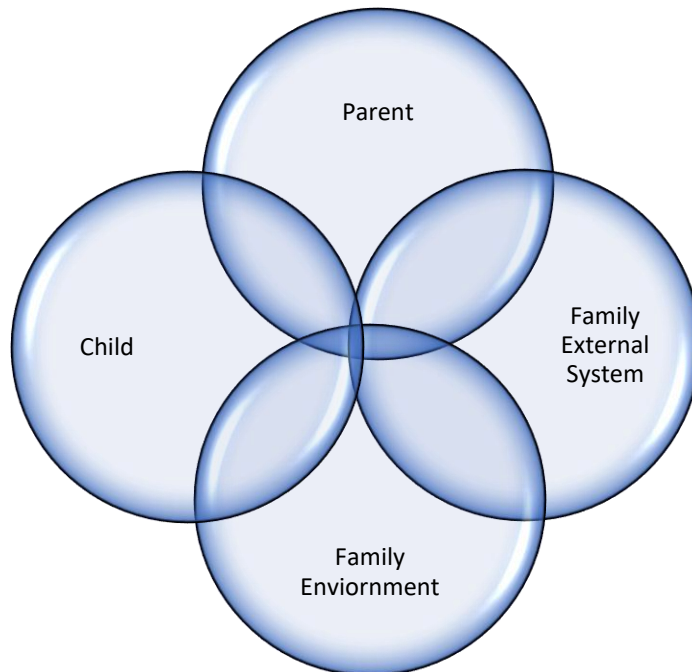
### *Homeostasis Theory Homeostasis Theory*

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As the family responds to this undesired behavior, it compensates by adjusting. The greater the behavior, the greater the required adjustments.

In family therapy, the unit of treatment is the family, and/or the individual within the context of the family system. The person abusing substances is regarded as a subsystem within the family unit—the person whose symptoms have severe repercussions throughout the family system. The therapist facilitates discussions and problem-solving sessions, often with the entire family group or subsets thereof, but sometimes with a single participant, who may or may not be the person with the substance use disorder.

#### **KEEPING IT IN BALANCE**



**Where the four overlap,  
is where the family system becomes one.**

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*Family Practical Life Exercise # One: Your Family System, Homeostasis?*

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Take a moment to identify the members of your family, as it is currently:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Homeostasis Applied to your Family.

Have you noticed any new behavior patterns in the members of your family now that substance use has been identified?

1. What Have You Noticed?
  
2. What is the impact to your family system?

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***What are the Obstacles***

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In Functionality and Potentiality there will be many obstacles.

**Q: Does your family have the ability and skills to respond effectively?**

There is no right or wrong. However, the family needs to focus on how to navigate the journey, not why each obstacle (issue) that comes up must be addressed.

Therefore, the focus for the family is on “What has to be done, and How”. Not why this issue has happened. When rafting down a stream, we do not ask why the rocks are there, we just determine what needs to be done to navigate around them and how to each paddle and steer our effort as a family to move forward.

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***Family Practical Life Exercise # TWO:***

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***Instruction:*** Take an issue, then apply it to your current family dynamic. Describe in your own words how well your family is likely to work as a system in addressing this issue: Consider Homeostasis (helping each other to keep the family balanced). Also consider, each family members functionality and potentiality. Using a numeric score rate their level of functionality and potentiality in the relationships between mother, father, sister brother, etc. This does not include the substance use disorder family member(s).

**SCORING KEY: (Good 5 pts, Fair 3 pts, Poor 1 pt.)**

**Choose an issue facing the family:** (describe the issue “example, Enabling”)

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**The Families Ability to Respond to this issue example: “Enabling”:** (complete and score each question)

**1. Are the mother and father able to address this issue?**

**Functionality** (do they know what to do, as individuals and together as parents, regarding “Enabling”)

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**Potentiality** (are they willing to do it)

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How well do you feel this is currently working? Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

**2. Parents to the other siblings?**

**Functionality** (do they know what to do with the “other siblings”, as individuals and together as parents, regarding “Enabling”)

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**Potentiality** (are they willing to do it, regarding “Enabling”)

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How well do you feel this is currently working? Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

**3. Parents and Siblings to the person with Substance Use Disorder?**

**Functionality** (do they know what to do, as individuals and together as a family, regarding “Enabling”)

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**Potentiality** (are they willing to do it)

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How well do you feel this is currently working? Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_

**4. Parents and Siblings to those outside the family?**

**Functionality** (do they know what to do, as individuals and together as a family, regarding “Enabling”)

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**Potentiality** (are they willing to do it)

How well do you feel this is currently working? Good \_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_ Poor \_

**OVERALL SCORE:** (take this worksheet to a family counselor for discussion)

Good                    35pts – 22pts

Fair                     21pts – 8pts

Poor

7pts – 0pts

**Video One:**

**Instructions:** Go To [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



**In the search field type this title** **3 Rules That Govern The Family System In Addiction**

**Duration: 5:00 min Published** on Mar 10, 2019 By [Jim Savage](#)

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*VIDEO WORKSHEET “Family Matters: Bowen Systems Thinking & Addictions*

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**In your world situation**

1. In what way does the family “circle” itself around the persons substance abuse?
2. What is the impact to the family members?
3. What changes can be used to create a different family dynamic?
4. Why should the family seek “Family Therapy”?

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***What Response is Required?***

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Nearly every person in contact with an addict is impacted in some way. It is rare that the effects of an addiction are limited solely to the one who is abusing substances. Everyone around him or her is affected in some way. Frequently, the people who spend the most time around the addict are friends, family, and co-workers – therefore, these are the people who are likely to be most impacted by drug addiction or alcoholism.

Family members, especially non-addicted spouses, are forced to pick up the slack for the substance abuser, make excuses for his or her behavior, and potentially endure sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. In many

cases, extended family members and close friends must help financially and in other ways to account for the ignored responsibilities by the substance abuser. The children suffer in school and are more likely to be involved with drugs and alcohol as adults. Coworkers are not always as close to the addict, but they may also be affected by having to increase their workloads to make up for diminished job performance. Nearly every person in contact with an addict is impacted in some way.

When a family member is suffering from a substance use disorder, it can affect the entire family in countless ways. One of the most common is through a dynamic where family members are divided on the reality of the addict in their family. In other words, those that see the addiction for what it is and *those that refuse to see that reality*.

### **Video Two: (Optional)**



**Instructions:** Go To [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

**In the search field type this title:** Exposing the Family Effect of Addiction | Sam Fowler | TEDxFurmanU

**Duration: 15:17 min Starting Instruction:** Hit (skip ad) to start video.



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*VIDEO WORKSHEET: Exposing the family effect of addiction*

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In what way is getting educated on the brain disease of addiction helpful to the family system?

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What can your family do to beat back the stigma of addiction?

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Is denial a healthy response if no state why?

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In what can you relate to the speaker's life?

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How can you live a life of vulnerability?

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**“THE FAMILY IS A SYSTEM”:** *FAMILY PLAN OF ACTION*

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**Complete answers and move these to “Master Family Plan of Action” found It is Time to Get Organized Workbook.**

1. Our family will identify the theory of Homeostasis in our family dynamic. *How does it present in the family?*
2. Our Family will need to first understand each member functionality and potentiality and agree that it is accurate then gather the resources which will empower each family member in dealing with their response to the issue. This will be done by using the *Self-Assessment of Family System Worksheet, Functionality and Potentiality found in Practical Exercise # One,*
3. We know as a family no one escapes addressing the obstacles in this journey. When issues present in this journey the obstacles will be even more prevalent. For this reason, the family chooses to address them now, so later they are not a contributor to the impact or a family issue. This will be done by using *The Obstacles Denial, Enable, Codependency will be included to the Master Plan of Action, from the study guidebook.*