(1)​Discuss the selected psychological theories in terms of explaining the psychological underpinnings of each theory. Trace the evolution of each theory, relating briefly the phases, if any, each theory has undergone over time.

Family System theories developed out of the disciplines of social and physical sciences after World War II (Archer & McCoy, 2007).The theoretical notion of the Family System approach originated with the concept of a “binding positon” based on the notion that what families did affected the children. The theory was focused on communication patterns, and was originally based on a non-psychological movement. It was later adopted in psychoanalytical models, and applied to Family therapy based on the strong affect (feeling) involved in family relationships (Archer & McCarthy, 2007).

Family therapy developed as a treatment model with the view of the entire family as a unit. The psychological underpinning underlying the family system theory is communication in counseling and therapy. The theory was influenced by patterns of social interaction among schizophrenic families, and later applied to family therapy. The approach is represented officially by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT, Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2005).

(2)​Critical analysis: Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses or benefits and liabilities of utilizing each of the selected therapeutic approaches through support of appropriate sources.

The major strengths of the Family approach has been the emphasis on communication and relationship patterns that includes the system’s subsystems (e.g., father, mother, children), although treated as a unit. According to Archer and McCarthy (2007), the Family system and its subsystems function in a complex way. Thus, one strength is that it takes special skills to work with the complex system, which has contributed to the emergence of new professions and professional organizations in the field. It also is significant in that the system can be used in an integrative approach with other interventions.

Research points to several weaknesses including the realization that there will be different socialization processes for men and women that may bring resistance from one partner. For example, the therapist may fail to recognize the different roles that exists in some families. According to Archer and McCarthy (2007), a major weakness in the Family System model occurs when family therapists treat all individual problems as a part of the family system. Finally, a weakness exist with the difficulty in defining the concept of the family with the changing structure of the contemporary family.

• Identify how the scenario selected can be affected by divergent cultures factors.

Individuals from culturally diverse background possess important differences that must be taken into considerations when counseling, and/or providing treatment. For example, gender roles often develop out of stereotypes, and the bias that could have an impact upon individual psychological functioning.

The therapist must be culturally competent and recognize diverse cultural backgrounds to provide effective therapy for the couple. Both Robert and Sophia have a diverse family background. Therefore, the therapist would have to be knowledgeable regarding both German and Italian cultures. For example, Sophia is experiencing guilt that may be linked to her culture. Family system theories have given attention to the role of culture in treatment. According to Archer and McCarthy, multicultural factors in treatment and assessment is critical to avoid imposing the therapist’s values on the client.

Part 3 - Application of therapeutic approach: Propose an intervention plan to solving the hypothetical therapy scenario or crisis. Utilizing the selected therapeutic approach, develop a therapeutic intervention plan for the selected scenario.

From the perspective of Family therapy, it is held that family members are interdependent as all members are affected the experiences and behavior of another. Thus, in terms of relationship/sexuality issues, Sophia’s infidelity as a member of the family unit exposes Robert to danger by engaging in an extra-marital affair that could reflect what else is going on in the family system: (Szapocznik, Schwartz, Muir, & Brown, 2012). Focused on an intervention plan, the therapist must consider all issues in which the couple may be exposed to harm. Following this process, the therapist seeks to understand how the couple functions in relation to one another. This approach includes having then listen to the feelings of one another. In addition, Sophia doesn’t know how to disclose her affair to Robert. The therapist can help her in making this decision by encouraging interaction patterns. A treatment Plan for Sophia and Robert could be based on an integrative Family theory approach consisting of the Family System Model and The Brief Strategic model (BFST)—both models encompassing the Faily System theory,

• What issues would you focus on?

Sophia infidelity

Her history of sexual abuse

Robert’s drinking problem

The couple’s communication issues

• What specifically would be the role of the therapist?

The therapist’s role is to help the family find solutions to their problem. The emphasis is on attending to the present as opposed events that happened in the past. For instance, the couple’s marital problems are linked to their reaction to the problem. Their marriage is in trouble—Robert does not wish with to communicate with Sophia, and she is becoming more depressed. The therapist provides therapeutic strategies focused on an adjustment, or change within the couple’s relationship. Thus where there are conflicts in the relationship, the therapist must treat the couple in the relationship unit as individuals and from the perspective of the family as a single functioning unit in the therapeutic process.

• What stance would the therapist take with the couple?

Based on the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapist (AAMFT,2005) guidelines, marriage and family therapist are encouraged to respect the privacy and confidentiality of each member in the therapeutic relationship. The intervention must be focused on factors such as: (a) privacy, (b) disclosure, (c) limits of confidentiality, and (d) confidentiality.

The therapist would emphasize confidentiality, and encourage Sophia to disclose her infidelity. He or she will respect and treat each family member’s confidences as though the person was an individual client, and (b) adopt the policy of not keeping secrets from other family members. In addition, when providing couple, family or group treatment; the therapist must obtain written consent from each person who is competent to understand his or her involvement in therapeutic process.

• What would be the specific goal of the couples’ therapy?

Couple therapy is focused on solving problems in a relationship. The therapeutic process is a wy of resolving conflicts that couples cannot solve. On this basis, problems in the relationship may depend on helping couples grow in their relationship. For example, Robert and Sophia will be aided in identifying conflict issues within the relationship, and assess what changes are needed in the relationship; and work to improve their relationship. The changes could consist of personal changes such as communicating and interacting with one another(Psychology information).The primary objective of couple therapy is to show couples how to communicate with one another, help the live together in ways that are healthy; and improve the relationship.

• What assessment and treatment plan would you develop as the therapist, based on the selected therapeutic approach, to assist the couple in the selected scenario?

Strategic Family therapy (BSFT, Haley, 1991as cited in Archer & McCarthy, 2007) is based on a brief assessment of a family or couple current relational patterns. Relationships were viewed as a way to solve an existing problem. These relationship patterns were postulated by Haley to protect the family from the threat of disintegration. He held that therapeutic change occurred when a family’s dysfunctional protective patterns are interrupted. Thus, the role of the family therapist is to provoke each interruption. The therapist using BFST focuses on family interactions would assist the couple by helping to eliminating “client identified privileges”, and using directives such as homework assignments following sessions. Thus, the therapist would attempt to reconnect with the couple while focused on the relationship. This could be accomplished with the use of the Genogram. The Genogram is used to chart the progression of a family throughout the lifespan. This could aid to see if there are generation problems within Sophia and Robert’s marriage that has a historical basis. In other word, are the problems including sexual abuse, infidelity, and drinking behavioral patterns that have occurred through family generations.

The Family systems approach suggests conflicts within the individual person that are linked to the entire family. Thus, as most members of the system accept their roles in the family, the more they will change. It is the lack of acceptance or striving for change that becomes the highest obstacle or conflict. The treatment plan could involve having the couple do homework assignments to set a precedent for learning how to communicate with one another.

• Conclusion: Summarize and draw conclusions from your discussion. Tie all aspects together and provide the reader with some final thought to consider.

Both family therapy and couple therapy are focused on interaction, emotional and communication patterns as markers for bringing change. For instance, according to Framo (1996), psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, and therapists often treat marital relationship problems by seeing partners together. In this way, family therapists attend to each individual needs, while treating the family as a functioning unit. In addition, diagnosing and treating emotional problems is still the dominant power in the mental health field in both family and couple therapies (Szapoczniket al., 2012). Finally, research suggest that there are a number of interaction patterns that are prevalent in Family therapy and among improved couples that are successful in therapy.

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