

Harold Anderson, Ph.D.

Harold Anderson's Counseling Services - A Window of Hope
A World of Opportunity

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Topic: Family Therapy

The Importance of Families to Mental Health

Why family therapy? Many people have asked me that question. In Colorado there are a number of licenses by which a person practices therapy (Licensed Professional Counselor [LPC], Licensed Clinical Social Worker [LCSW] and an Unlicensed Psychotherapist just to name a few), but the Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) normally takes more graduate work and more hours of supervision, so why family therapy?

In this newsletter, we will explain the differences between a Family Therapist and other types of therapists, the nature and extent of family and couples therapy and a little bit about the systems theory that lies behind Marriage and Family Therapy. To do this, guest author, Donna Bishop Davis (LMFT) will explain some of the differences between LMFTs, LPCs and LCSWs. Her article will help distinguish between these different therapeutic professionals helping you make a more informed choice between the services they offer.

This issue will also include some information on how family therapy might help with a number of different problems in family and marriage life. Have you ever wondered why a middle child behaves and thinks differently from her older or younger siblings? In this issue, we will examine this and how it affects family structures. Also in this issue, if your marriage has lost its pizzazz, what should you do to seek help?

While space does not allow for an exhaustive perusal of these topics, hopefully you will begin to understand how family therapy can make a difference to families and couples. Why family therapy indeed?

Does your group need a speaker?

Dr. Anderson speaks to groups and organizations. Call 970-380-1160. Speaking topics are:

- ✓ An Introduction to Family Therapy
- ✓ Kinship Families and Mental Health
- ✓ Building a Sound Marriage
- ✓ Parenting Difficult Children,
- ✓ Problem Childhood behaviors
- ✓ Mental Health and Aging Populations,
- ✓ Internet Sexual Addiction
- ✓ Methamphetamine Abuse,
- ✓ Religion and Mental Health, and more.

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On Families & Marriage

- In a recent study, consumers report that marriage and family therapists are the mental health professionals they would most likely recommend to friends.
- Risk for divorce in a first marriage doubles for couples living together prior to marriage.
- Research indicates that marriage and family therapy is as effective, and in some cases more effective than standard and/or individual treatments for many mental health problems.

Psychology is a relatively recent arrival on the health care scene. Sigmund Freud, the progenitor of modern psychology, was born in 1856 and began publishing around 1900. As the baby of mental health sciences, however, family therapy is even younger. Its development coincided with the development of systems theory, which took place just before the beginning of World War II. We will briefly review family therapy's development in this article.

Gregory Bateson worked on systems theory and has the strongest claim to beginning family therapy. In 1952 Bateson began work in Palo Alto, CA and, joined by Jay Haley and others, began to apply systems theory to schizophrenia in the context of families. While not successful, they treated schizophrenia patients by working with their families. They thought that family struggles



Gregory Bateson

were manifest in a family member who was scapegoated by other family members as being the sum total of their problems. So, for example, the stress of fighting parents may be manifest in the oppositional behavior of a child.

By concentrating on the oppositional behavior, the parents can ignore their fighting by justifying it because of the child's behavior. The Bateson group postulated that the problem was not solved by treating only the oppositional behavior of the child. Rather, it was solved by healing the struggles of the family that in turn heals the fighting of the parents and the oppositional behavior of the child. This is the insight that gave birth to family therapy.

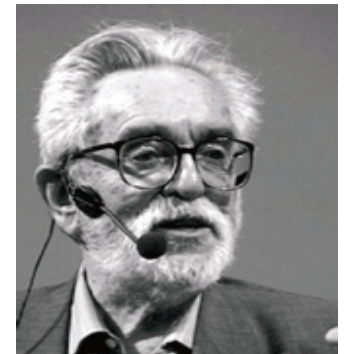
A number of theories soon developed. However, two people have greatly influenced family therapists and form the backdrop for much of Dr. Anderson's work. These therapists are Murray Bowen and Salvador Minuchin.

According to Bowen, family structures are transmitted from generation to generation. If one generation has an abusive father, it is highly likely that following generations will as well. Abuse is a transgenerational problem. These are charted by a genogram, a family schematic that details the family structure along with relational issues. Genograms are also a way of identifying triangles, a smaller relational network within a family involving three family members, two of whom are in alliance against the third thereby creating a problematic family structure.

Differentiation is another issue for Bowen. When people are so close together that they seem to live through each other, they are too close and this causes problems. Sometimes this happens when a spouse can't imagine life apart from their partner and begin to suffocate their partner, not giving them enough freedom for self identity. Or, it takes place when parents live vicariously through their children, not allowing children to distinguish themselves from the family during adolescence. This can create rebellion or make the child overly dependent.

Minuchin's theories are similar in that he too examines the family system. These systems have family structures determined by rules, coalitions and alliances. Minuchin argues the rules may not be verbalized and a family member does not know they have violated one until others react negatively. Making rules apparent reveals the coalitions and alliances that distort family structures, making it difficult for the families to function. By changing rules and family structure, families can exist in more fulfilling and meaningful ways.

The job of the family therapist is to examine the family system in an effort to determine where it has problems. By utilizing the theories of Bowen, Minuchin and others, the family therapist guides the family in correcting its dysfunctional structures and overcoming its structural flaws, which move it towards healing and satisfying ways of living together.



Salvador Minuchin



Dr. Anderson's wife, Rebecca Hutcheson, FNP, was invited to go to Egypt as a Citizen Ambassador for the People to People cultural exchange program. As such, she will be 1 of 44 nurses representing nursing health care practices to health care providers in Egypt. She is the only person from NE Colorado to be in attendance. and is only one of two from Colorado. Harold will accompany Becky on her trip and jokes that his job is to take pictures. When they return, they will present a PowerPoint presentation of their trip at various locations throughout NE Colorado. It is truly an honor that Becky was chosen for this trip and is acknowledgment that she is one of the leading practioners of her field Becky is an Advanced Practice Nurse and works at Washington County Clinic and the Brush Correction Facility.

David Schnarch, a well-known sex therapist, says there are three types of couples: dysfunctional couples, functional dysfunctional couples and the blessed few. The question is, how does a couple join the blessed few?

There are number of problems that couples face from religious and cultural conditioning. Culture suggests that people “fall” in love and makes this sound easy. It is not. Sometimes religious folk talk about the “two becoming one” and think



If a couple's problems are addressed early, then their issues are healed more quickly. However, if they wait until they are in crisis, or trust has been eroded by infidelity or abuse, then the healing process becomes much more complex and long-term.

that the partners' identify is subsumed in the partnership. While couples do identify themselves as a couple, it is problematic when the two-becoming-one means that one partner's identity is subsumed by the identity of the other. That does not work.

What makes a successful relationship? This question cannot be answered fully here. Suffice it to say that most relational difficulties occur because people assume the success of their relationship without a good model that leads to success.

The research of John Gottman provides such a model. Called a “Sound Marital House” theory of marriage and successful partnerships, this model has seven different levels (see www.HaroldAnderson.net/couples_house.html for all levels). The bottom three provide the relationship's foundation: “Love Mapping,” “Affection & Admiration,” and “Turning Toward vs. Turning Away.” If a couple establishes the foundation of their relationship, the other four stages will develop more easily. What, then, is this foundation?

Love Mapping is the work of getting to know each other. This begins with dating, but continues in the marriage relationship. It is the will to move beyond a sexual relationship to the joy of intimacy. To do this means that each partner needs to see the world from their partner's eyes. What turns them off, what turns them on? Grounded in friendship, love mapping is formed when couples understand not only what makes them alike, but also what makes them different, and developing an appreciation for each others' differences. If this takes place and each partner is able to express and understand their partner's world, then the groundwork for intimacy will be set helping them develop a healthier relationship.

Affection & Admiration: At this level, the mutuality of a couples' intimacy blossoms into respect and admiration. It is emotional caring noted by positive responses in love mapping. Put differently, it is the ability to revel in the intimacy of a loving friendship. People who have developed this part of their relationship will say things like “I love taking care of my partner,” “We respect each other for who we are and we respect each other's opinion,” and “My whole body tingles when we touch.”

Finally, **Turning Toward vs. Turning Away** is the last part of a successful foundation. All too often, when a relationship is in crisis, the one partner “stonewalls” the other. They do this by turning away from their partner, refusing to address heated issues and the issues remain unresolved. While all couples will fight, a successful relationship is marked by the partners' ability to address their issues and see them through to a positive resolution. The ability to do this is based upon what family therapists call an “emotional bank account” (EBA). Just like a financial bank account, people cannot function well when their EBA is overdrawn. How does this happen? It happens when people experience more negatives than positives in their relationship. In fact, some have suggested that it takes up to 12 positives to overcome one negative. If that is true, and a couple's relationship is characterized by more negatives than positives, then even the positives can be-

Putting the Pizzazz back...



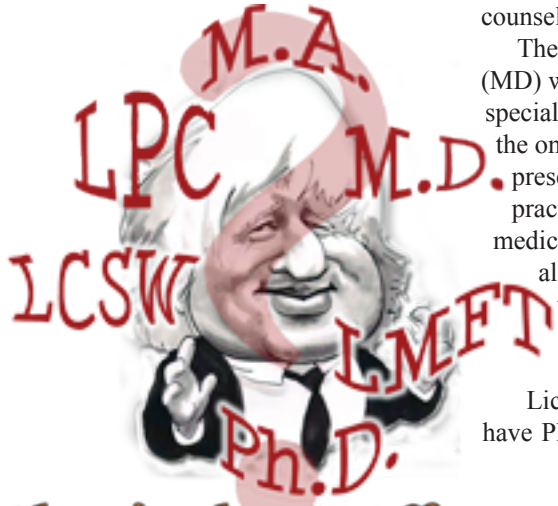
come negative. For example, if an estranged husband brings his emotionally drained wife flowers, rather than being a good thing, the frustrated wife is probably thinking, “What is he up to?” rather than being grateful.

The possibility of an overdrawn emotional bank account makes love mapping and affection & admiration important. If developed successfully, the relationship should be characterized by more positives than negatives thereby building one's emotional bank account. This allows the couple to encounter the negatives in their relationship with positive resolution. However, if left unattended, ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) will likely be the outcome. The good news is that ANTs can be overcome, but it will take some intensive one-on-one work to do so.

The work of a couples' therapist is to provide the couple with the tools to create a strong foundation for their relationship. If the problems are addressed early, these issues are more easily healed. But if the couple waits until they are in crisis, or if trust has been eroded by infidelity and/or abuse, then the process of healing becomes much more complex. The good news is that these problems can be resolved if the foundation of the relationship is reestablished.



If each partner is able to express and understand their partner's world, then the groundwork for intimacy will be set, helping them develop a much healthier relationship.



What's the Difference?

What's the Difference?

By Donna Bishop Davis, M.A., LMFT

Psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapist, MA, MD, PhD, LMFT, LCSW..... Yes, it can get a bit confusing. What do all the letters mean behind a professional's name? Who do I need to see to get help with my depression? Who can help me with my out-of-control child? Who should my spouse and I talk to about our conflicted marriage?

There are several different branches of professionals in the mental health field. They are similar, yet different, and within each branch, there are specialties. The prominent professional licensures in the state of Colorado are psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, professional

counselors and social workers.

The psychiatrist is a medical doctor (MD) with a medical school education specializing in psychiatry. Psychiatrists are the only mental health professional that can prescribe medication. Most psychiatrists practice the medical model using medication. However, some psychiatrists also practice psychotherapy. You will find psychiatrists practicing in hospitals, county mental health agencies and in private practice.

Licensed Clinical Psychologists will have PhD behind their name. This indicates that they have a doctorate degree in psychology. Most psychologists perform psychological testing and evaluations.

However, some practice psychotherapy, do research or teach.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT) are the relationship experts. They have a minimum of a masters degree (MA or MS). Marriage and Family Therapists practice psychotherapy with individuals, couples and families either singularly or in groups through organizations, institutions (public or private) and private practice. Marriage and Family Therapists are trained to deal with a broad range of mental and emotional issues as well as relational problems.

Licensed Professional Counselors (LPC) have a masters degree, usually in psychology or a related field. They treat individuals and groups to alleviate mental and emotional disorders or modify

behaviors that interfere with effective life functioning.

Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) practice in public (Dept. of Human Services) or private agencies or institutional, educational or independent settings. They have a masters degree from a school of social work. They are trained to work with the public to improve psychosocial functioning of individuals and family. Licensed Social Workers (LSW) cannot practice psychotherapy unless under the supervision of an LCSW.

Who do I call first? If you are looking for help, I would suggest first talking to a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist or Licensed Professional Counselor. After they listen and evaluate your problem, they will decide whether further psychological testing or a psychiatric consultation for medication is indicated and if so, refer you to a Licensed Clinical Psychologist or a psychiatrist.

It is legal to practice as an unlicensed psychotherapist in the state of Colorado. If you want to check on a mental health provider's licensure, you can do so at www.dora.state.co.us. Insurance companies will not reimburse an unlicensed mental health provider. All mental health providers are accountable to the laws of their state and the ethics of their profession.

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For some time, mental health providers have emphasized a person's birth order. They think that a person's place in the birthing order will have a bearing on how they view the world and their personality development. Here we will consider birthing order and its impact upon families.

What is birthing order theory? It is the

thought that children will develop certain personality structures based upon whether they are an only, oldest, middle or youngest child. The following list is typical:

Only Child

- Pampered and spoiled.
- Feels incompetent because adults are more capable.
- May feel special.
- Self-centered
- Feels unfairly treated when doesn't get own way
- May refuse to cooperate
- Plays "divide and conquer" to get own way.

First Child

- Is only child for a period of time; used to being center of attention
- Believes must gain and hold superiority

over other children

- Being right, controlling
- May respond to birth of second child by feeling unloved and neglected
- Strives to keep or regain parents' attention through conformity. If this fails, chooses to misbehave.
- Strives to please.

Second Child

- Never has parents' undivided attention
- Always has sibling ahead who's more advanced.
- Acts as if in a race, trying to catch up or overtake first child.
- May rebel, doesn't like their position
- Feels squeezed if 3rd child born.

Middle Child of Three

- Has neither rights of oldest or privileges
- (Continued, "Birthing Order" p. 5)*

"Birthing Order (from p. 4)

- of younger siblings
- Feels life unfair
- Feels unloved, left out, "squeezed"
- Feels doesn't have place in family
- Becomes discouraged and "problem child" or elevates self by pushing down other siblings.
- Is adaptable
- Learns to deal with both oldest and youngest sibling.

Youngest Child

- Behaves like an only child.
- Feels others bigger and more capable.
- Expects others to take responsibility.
- Feels may not be taken seriously
- Remains "The Baby." Places others in service.
- If youngest of three, often allies with oldest child against middle child.

You may be saying, "That doesn't apply to me," but studies indicate that traits are often accurate. Therapists can use them as a tool for understanding family structures and the way siblings think of each other and their parents. Indeed, the birth of the first child is one of the major stressors in the family life cycle. The first birth is

more stressful and certainly more novel than later births. As such, parents often become more permissible and more experienced with laterborns. In fact, this may play an important role in birth order traits and leads to a perception of parental favoritism. If a family is in crisis, then this can provide clues for why it is taking place.

Another factor is parental feedback. Feedback can be separated into two types: process and outcome. Process feedback provides information concerning how a person implements a strategy. So, for example, if a child is involved in baseball, process feedback is the encouragement and instruction the child receives while playing the sport. Outcome feedback, on the other hand, has to do with the judgment of performance. This type of feedback judges a child's ability to play baseball. Studies indicate that process feedback is more effective than outcome feedback but it is also more time consuming. This may affect birthing order for parents have more time to spend with firstborns or only children. When siblings come along, their time is split between children and outcome feedback is easier, and less time consuming albeit less effective. If this is true, the oldest child

may implement strategies better than their younger siblings.

Two other factors may be of note. Parents tend to place higher expectations on firstborns and tend to describe them more positively than their younger siblings. Therapists may find it useful to address the thoughts and expectations that parents attribute to their children if some issues are to be effectively addressed. The other factor is self esteem. Firstborns and only children tend to compare themselves to their parents while younger siblings tend to compare themselves to their older siblings. Because comparing oneself to a parent has a greater discrepancy, firstborns and only children may have lower self esteems than their younger counterparts. While this claim is controversial, it may provide insight into problems suffered by older children.

Birthing order is controversial and studies continue, some debunking, some validating these traits. However, awareness of birthing order can help therapists treat families in crisis and it can be helpful to parents when raising their children.

Author's Needed...

If you would like to write something for the HaroldAnderson.net newsletter, please limit your article to 500 - 750 words and e-mail it to hwanderson@q.com. The editorial staff will deem the suitability of articles submitted and their appropriateness for publication. If you don't have e-mail or would prefer to mail your material, mail it to:

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Possible topics for future newsletters are:

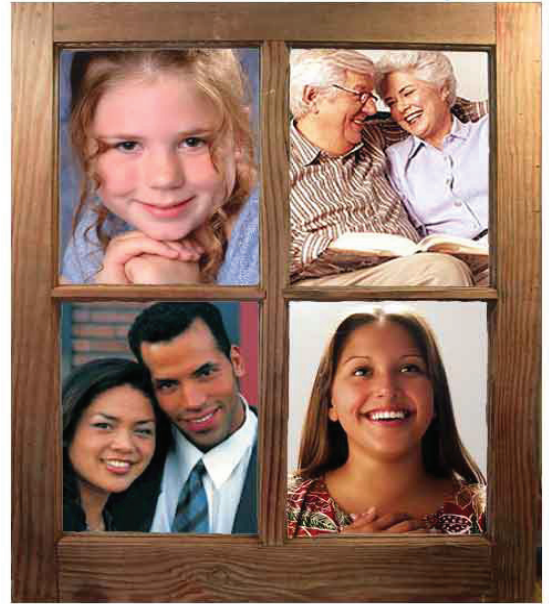
- Dealing with Infidelity and issues of forgiveness.
- Issues of Abuse and Control in relationships.
- Living with oppositionally defiant children
- Empty Nesters -- What do you do when the children are gone?
- Making the best of Retirement Years -- Mental Health Issue for Aging Populations.
- Bereavement
- Grandparents raising grandchildren, or "Kinship Families."

If you would like to write an article on one of these issues, contact Dr. Anderson at the above address or e-mail.

Cartoon Corner...



A Window of Hope...



A world of opportunity

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Harold brings a wide range of experience to his counseling practice. He has been a pastor for over twenty-five years, has taught philosophy and ethics throughout the front range area, and has spoken and lectured on a wide range of topics including mental health. He has a M.A., M.Div., Ph.D. and has done postgraduate work in family therapy and counseling. Harold received a certificate on Marriage and Family Therapy from the Denver School for Family Therapy last year.

Harold's training has prepared him to work with families and couples, but he also enjoys working with individuals of all ages. Harold is the mental health consultant for Brush Head Start and sees clients one day a week in Akron at the Washington County Clinic.

Check out my website at:

www.HaroldAnderson.net. . . a source for mental wellness

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In this Issue: Learn about Family Therapy and how a family therapist can help your family be healthier or place you marriage relationship on a firmer foundation.