Application of Systems Theory to a Case Study

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The Levy Family Case Study

The details of the case study reveal that Jake Levy is a thirty-one years old Iraq war veteran. He is married to twenty-eight years old Sheri and the couple has two sons, ten years old Myles and eight years old Levi. The couple belongs to the Jewish Caucasian background. The presenting problem of the case study is that Jake has reached out to the Veterans Affairs Health Care Center for help. He has been drinking a lot in recent times, which has given rise to fights between the couple. He has isolated himself from the people which include his sons as well and this is one of the most important reasons for the fight between the couple. He has become mean and distant from his family and shows no concern for the third pregnancy of his wife, which has been revealed a few weeks earlier. His wife thinks that he has changed after returning from the war. Jake believes that he has the responsibility of providing for his family; however, his drinking habit is becoming a hindrance in fulfilling the responsibilities and he also fears to lose his job. It has been only ten months since Jake has returned to civilian life. He was having disturbed sleep due to nightmares, which resulted in frequent heart palpitations, and moodiness. He consulted Doctor Zoe, a psychiatrist at the VA and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. He was not much aware of the disorder regarding which he was provided the guidance. He was also asked to join the support group, in order to know more people like him and getting support from them. His wife was also not aware of the mental health issue he was suffering from, which was an important reason that she felt concerned about his changing attitude and lack of interest towards his family. This paper will discuss the application of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory to the case study of the Levy family, in order to devise the solution of the situation.

The Systems Theory states that human behavior and personality depicts the intersection and influence of a number of systems, which are interrelated. Different sections of the society impact and define the makeup of human beings and it is quite important to dissect them in order to explore the issues with the behavior of human beings. Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American psychologist, specifically focused on the interaction and influence of the societal environment on a child while growing up, which was termed as Ecological Systems Theory. The five specific environments that influence children or human beings include microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. All of these systems will be applied to the case of Jake Levy in order to explore the influence of the environment on his attitude and behavior (Turner, 2017).

The microsystem is the most immediate as well as the smallest environment of the life of children which affect their growth and development. In the case of Jake, his father was also in the military and was strictly against the portrayal of weaker emotions by the soldiers or officers. He was not in favor of men being weak and raised with the mindset that he should be the head of his family and fulfill their needs. Jake's inability to not realizing his traumatic condition and his efforts to finding solace in drinking could be due to the fact that he was taught by his father to not depict himself as weak. He was not able to communicate all the worst scenarios and living conditions which he had faced in Iraq during the war even to his wife, because of the teachings of his father. He may have forgotten whatever his dad told him about the traditional role of real men; however, all of that was a part of his subconscious mind which did not let him cry in front of his wife or seek help. It was only due to his love for his family and the deteriorating conditions of the family that he was forced to seek help in order to set things right.

 The next environment is the mesosystem in which different microsystems interact and impact the development of the children. It can include the family, school, peer group, and church, etc. in the case of Jake, this level is not quite significant as he received normal schooling and attended the church like all the other people of his age. He was not prone to the criticism of his family due to his peer group or his involvement in any other situations. His grown-up personality contributed to the disequilibrium in the personalities of his sons by not giving them proper attention and developing relations with the parents of their friends (Turner, 2011).

 The next environment is exosystem in which two or more settings are interlinked and impact the personalities of the growing children. In the case of Jake, it was not him who got affected but his children. Most of the times, the children at this level become the point of the anguish and resentment of the parents even when they have not done anything at all, as the parents try to relieve the frustration of the outer world on the children. Jake also did the same but in a different manner. Instead of making the children the point of his anger, he completely distanced himself from them, while robbing them from the affection and emotional attachment of the father figure who was in front of them but totally a stranger to them.

 The next environment is the most distant as well as the largest one which is called macrosystem. It represents the collection of the people and place which impact the personality. In the case of Jake, his personality was impacted by the horrible experiences of the Iraq war, which tormented his personality to the extent that he was unable to act as the head of a family which was the most important thing taught by his father. He only finds solace in drinking because he was able to get some sleep by doing so, as it made his senses and thoughts numb and provided him the chance of feeling light and relieved.

 The last environment is chronosystem which considers the time dimension, as well as the influence of change and consistency on the personality. In the case of Jake, the time played an important role in impacting his personality, as it was the time in Iraq which changed his personality and the time of ten months as civilian after the war, which played an important role in distancing him from his family. Moreover, he did not share his condition with his wife due to which she was also unable to understand him and the growing fights of the couple made them reflect on their personalities. Getting the diagnosis and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder will prove helpful for Jake, as his reaction was just the depiction of his immense trauma (Turner, & Lehning, 2007).

The systems theory states that the different sections of society impact the personality of human beings. Being a veteran of the Iraq war changed the life of Jake in the way that he was unable to accept his traumatic mental condition due to the teachings of his dad. The concern and love of his family motivated him to get the help, as he had become alcohol addict, mean and distanced towards his family and specifically his children. The diagnosis helped him to get the treatment, join the support group and know about the suffering of other people. All of this helped him to get back to his life as he learned to accept his pain instead of trying to deny it by becoming an addict.

References

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