Bowen’s Family Theory

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 Renowned Dr. Murray Bowen, who intended to create a model that would help people understand family systems better developed the Bowen’s Family theory (Priest, 2015). According to this sociologist theory, it is easier to comprehend human beings and their issues when you view them from the context of relationships or family ties. It is eminent that not all families are close especially when it comes to the parent to child relationship (Butler et al, 2015 ). However, family members are always dependent on each other in one way or another. This dependence is efficient when it comes to solving or treating issues when an individual’s family is involved. Bowens family theory stipulates that every human being is governed by two life forces; the force towards individuality or togetherness. The latter drives us towards the need for having social support, adoration, and affection. On the other hand, there is the force that drives a being into being their person hence always striving to be different or unique. As earlier mentioned, Bowen posits that human functioning is driven by an extraordinary emotional system. The system is innate and instinctual and guides an organism through the day to day activities such as; feeding, nesting, resting or even mating.

In this sociology case study, a focus is given to an African- American family who are residents at South Miami, Florida. The couple has resided with each other for over 15 years. The situation at hand came about after the two parents were reported for negligence by University Hospital's social worker. Ms. Williamson noted signs of neglect after the couple's three-year-old child was brought in to the hospital’s ER after ingesting alcohol. The child was immediately treated and was admitted to the hospital for several days. The department of family services at the Child Welfare Division did a follow up on the family and there were relative signs that this family unit, in general, had a problem. The investigation results indicated that; the parents were drunk of the night that Elizabeth consumed ¾ cups of Vodka. The parents were not keen enough to close up the room that contained the toxic substance to the child. The parents admit that this was a case of isolation since if they gave more attention to their children; their three-year-old would not have been admitted for ER services. According to the older children who are (13 and 8), their mother has a tendency drinking more than their father which has created fear in them towards her. Having seen her pass out on several occasions, the children have realized that their father does not drink much and is more compassionate towards them. In this case, the father becomes the nurturer, which is contrary to most homes.

Parents and children have a strong connection, according to Bowen’s theory (Priest, 2015). When negligence occurs from parents, children begin to withdraw from having a less emotional association with their parents, which is very important. The parents of the mentioned nuclear family have created an emotional cutoff between them and their children. The Bowen Family theory describes that this factor leads to distancing which may cause emotional and psychological issues. The children admit that they are fearful of their mother who should be the closest individual to all family members. Her negligence towards her three-year-old daughter makes it hard to notice that she is missing in the room that had the alcohol drink. The negligence clearly shows that there is a psychological withdrawing between the parents and children which is caused by extreme emotional distancing. There are vast conditions that may contribute to parents distancing from their children. The factors include; unemployment, natural disasters, work burn out, political instability and poverty. These conditions put more pressure on the aspect of togetherness that should be observed between family members. A vicious cycle of anxiety is viewed in the family which may lead to regressive behaviors from parents and children. Parents can transmit their emotional issues to their children (Scharp, 2016). These issues create personality disorders that may affect the child during interaction with other social circles.

Negligence from parents that leads to anxiety pressure contributes to children having; a great need to obtain recognition, tendency of blaming others, and impulsiveness (Scharp, 2016). The children’s functionality also tends to be lower than that of their age mates making them poor performers in class. Parents control the emotional system within a family unit. When parents are more attached to their children, the children become emotional stable creating togetherness within the unit. On the contrary, when parents are not emotionally present to their children's feelings, a rocky relationship is developed in the family unit. Putting this into considerations, the parents in our case study should be presently involved in their children's lives by supporting them emotionally and psychologically. Despite, having factors that may make them succumb to pressure such as; a bad day at work, the parents should prioritize their children’s needs to ensure that they are emotionally, physically and mentally safe.

Sources

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