Theory and Practice in Child Welfare and Protection

Improving the protection and wellbeing of children in Europe: enhancing the curriculum
Disclaimer:
The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
Critical reflection on practice is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice. Otherwise theory becomes simply "blah, blah, blah, " and practice, pure activism.

Paulo Freire
Learning outcomes

• Demonstrate understanding of theories and approaches explaining specific situations of children in need for protection and wellbeing.

• Knowing how to apply knowledge of system theory; psychodynamic theory and behaviourism and social learning theory in direct practice with children and families.

• Analyseing family, being conscious about the family role of children development and children wellbeing, explaining clients’ situations and predicts their behaviours

• Develop and apply awareness about the need to have an organized plan to their work and reduces the wandering that can happen in practice

• Applying knowledge on international and Albanian legal framework and knowing how to address children need.
Why do we need theories in social work?

The use of theories makes Social Workers feel more safe & competent in their practice, reduces feelings of helplessness & fear of unknown.

In order to see the beauty of one theory, it’s important to learn about many theories. This is how we can prevent making an ideology out of one theory.

For social workers theory is important because it teaches social workers how to perceive people through their resources, not to classify them according to their problems...it’s a shift from control to help.

The more social workers use theories, less they use intuition, and it makes social work practice more professional and efficient.

Theory, together with intuition is a way to develop personal style of professional practice...without theory, just with intuition, social workers would feel like a puppet on strings.
SYSTEMS THEORIES

- **Value Based**: Two primary values
  1. Society has the obligation to ensure that people have access to resources and opportunity
  2. When providing resources dignity and individuality should be obtained.

- **Assumptions**:
  - General systems theory involves goal oriented planned change
  - The small group/individual is seen as an organic entity with boundaries, purposes and mechanisms for attaining change and maintaining stability. Whatever happens to one component of a system directly affects another.
  - 4 systems are identified in which the social worker must be involved:
    - Change agent system: includes the change agent and others within the agency or employment organization
    - Client system: people who sanction or request services, the expected beneficiaries of the service and those who have a working agreement with the change agent.
    - Target system: people or things that need to be changed to accomplish goals.
    - Action system: change agent and individuals that help accomplish change
SYSTEMS THEORY

FOCUS  How people interact with their environment.

MAIN CONCEPTS
- People are in continuous transaction with their environment
- Each subsystem impacts all other parts & the whole system
- Systems can have closed or open boundaries
- Systems tend toward equilibrium
- Individual functioning shapes family functioning. Family can create pathology with an individual
ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS
(Parsons; Merton; Germain; Gitterman)

❖ Main concepts: *Persons are in continual transaction with their environment
  *Systems are interrelated parts or subsystems constituting an ordered whole
  *Each subsystem impacts all other parts and whole system
  *Systems can have closed or open boundaries
  *Systems tend toward equilibrium

❖ Some practice applications: *Useful for developing holistic view of persons-in-environment
  *Enhances understanding of interactions between micro-meso-macro levels of organization
  *Enriches contextual understanding of behavior
Ecological systems Perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Human Systems

- Macro
- Mezzo
- Micro
- ME

Are Complex

They have nested effects influencing meaning across systems levels and tied to events and transitions over time.

Chronosystem
Family Systems Theory: Basic Elements

- The family is a structure of related parts or subsystems. Each action or change affects every other person in the family.
- The family structure has elements that can only be seen in its interactions. Individual make up a family system. This family system is a complex whole that cannot be understood by examining members separately.
- Family Roles: Patterns of interaction become ingrained habits that make change difficult.
- Family Rules: Each family has certain rules that are self-regulating and peculiar to itself. The family is a purposeful system; it has a goal. Usually the goal is to remain intact as a family.
- Boundaries: For families to function well, subsystems must maintain boundaries.
- Adaptation: Despite resistance to change each family system constantly adapts to maintain itself in response to its members and environment.
- Systems change through the family life cycle. Changes in family systems are caused by both nominative (predictable life cycle changes) and non-normative (crisis) stresses.
Family System

1. Family Structure

2. Family Interactions

3. Family Functions

4. Family Life Cycle

Inputs

Change/Stress

Outputs
Family cohesion

Family flexibility

Family communication

Social system

Belief system

Extended family system
Psychodynamic theory
(Classical psycho-dynamic theory, Ego-psychology, Object-relations theory, Self–psychology)

➢ Psychodynamic psychotherapy is concerned with how internal processes such as needs, drives, and emotions motivate human behaviour.
➢ Emotions have a central place in human behaviour. Unconscious, as well as conscious mental activity serves as the motivating force in human behaviour.
➢ Early childhood experiences are central in the patterning of an individual’s emotions, and therefore, central to problems of living throughout life.
➢ Individuals may become overwhelmed by internal and/or external demands.
➢ Individuals frequently use ego defence mechanisms to avoid becoming overwhelmed by internal and/or external demands.
Psychodynamic Theory

Both of these types of response release the tension.

- Blockage → Frustration → Anger → Inflicting pain on others (primary aggression)
- Pleasure seeking
  - New effort or delay of gratification
  - Repression and/or defense
Psychodynamic perspective

Branches of Psychodynamic Theory

- Psychodynamic theory
  - Ego psychology: Ego plays central role in behavior
  - Theory of defense mechanisms: Changes in defense mechanisms over adulthood
  - Adult attachment theory: Early relationships set stage for later development of self and relationships
**Behaviourism & Social Learning Theory** (Cognitive theory, Behavioural theory, Social Learning theory)

- Social learning theory suggests that human behaviour is learned as individuals interact with their environment.
- Problem behaviour is maintained by positive or negative reinforcement.
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy looks at what role thoughts play in maintaining the problem. Emphasis is on changing dysfunctional thoughts which influence behaviour.
- Methods which stem from this theory are the gradual shaping of new behaviour through positive and negative reinforcement, modelling, stress management: biofeedback, relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, imagery and systematic desensitization.
Main Reference:
Exercise:
From theory to practice

Instruction for tutor:
Divide students in three groups 4-6, and ask to explain:

(1) how AM family members may contribute to and are affected by problem situations;

(2) how members of AM CASE can be resources in solving problems;

and

(3) how AM family functioning and relational bonds can be strengthened for greater well-being and positive growth.
Group 1. System Theory

• Discuss in group your role as social worker in a specific system theory,
• Be specific if you are going to work with a specific member of the family or with the entire family (after defining family).
• Make a diagram of AM family
Group 2. Psychodynamic Theory

• Discuss in group your role as social worker in a specific psychodynamic theory,
• Be specific in underlying why you choose it and what are you going to do if you work with AM family
• Make a diagram of AM family
Group 3. Behaviourism and social learning theory

• Discuss in group your role as social worker in behaviourism or social learning theory

• Be specific in underlying why you choose it and what are you going to do if you work with AM family with some practice interventions

• Make a diagram of AM family according to this theory
DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

Summary Chart of Developmental Theorists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Piaget</td>
<td>Erickson</td>
<td>Kohlberg</td>
<td>Fowler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Psycho-social</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Faith</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Concrete thinking</td>
<td>age of fantasy; Virtue: autonomy egocentric; grows via identification with adults</td>
<td>Fear of getting caught</td>
<td>Imaginative-Projective Faith: highly imaginative; fluidity between reality and fantasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Concrete thinking; begins to categorize &amp; classify; begins to be able to take another's perspective</td>
<td>Ego-centric to social awareness &amp; strong peer group</td>
<td>From Stage 2-self-interested concern (I'll scratch your back, if you scratch mine) to Stage 3 (Pleasing Others); recognizing feelings &amp; meeting expectations of others</td>
<td>Mythic-Literal Faith: literal approach to stories of faith; Incapable of reflecting on meaning of stories; symbols &amp; myths taken at face value</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses both concrete &amp; abstract logic (but needs experience in using abstract concepts &amp; deductive logic)</td>
<td>Physically awkward, self-conscious, prone to moodiness; Virtue: industry</td>
<td>From Stage 3-meeting expectations of others; beginning to think about intent of act; Rules of group important to Stage 4-beginning to see importance of adhering to acceptable standards; justice seen as uniform for all (lacking sense of mercy)</td>
<td>Synthetic-Conventional Faith: ability to reflect on one's own thinking; begins to pull together important images &amp; values; Images of God as extensions of interpersonal relationships (e.g., God as Friend, Companion, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>Abstract concepts &amp; deductive logic</td>
<td>Identity formation; interpersonal relationships very important Virtue: Identity</td>
<td>Stage 2-Stage 5 questions injustices &amp; moral issues; concerned with good vs. evil may become rebellious</td>
<td>Individuative-Reflective Faith: begins to reflect on self and faith apart from groups &amp; shared worldview held up to that point; authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult 20s</td>
<td>Intimacy needs; isolation &amp; loneliness Possible; seeking Stable and personal Relationships Virtue: intimacy</td>
<td>From Stage 2 (brought on by insecurities) to Stage 5</td>
<td>Searching Faith: struggles with doubts &amp; questions; challenges authority; commitment to causes &amp; related actions; experimentation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult 35+</td>
<td>Abstract/logical</td>
<td>Search for personal identity with God that gives special meaning to life Virtue: Generativity &amp; Integrity</td>
<td>Stage 5—respect for rights, life, and dignity of all</td>
<td>Conjunctive Faith: awareness of unconscious; deepened readiness for relationship to God that includes mystery; more comfortable with paradox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult 35+</td>
<td>Search for personal identity with God that gives special meaning to life Virtue: Generativity &amp; Integrity</td>
<td>Stage 6—willing to forfeit one's life for the sake of one's beliefs &amp; others</td>
<td>Universalizing Faith: Few people experience a shift from the self as center of experience to participation in God or Ultimate Reality; more lucid, simple, liberated</td>
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(Continuation of the above)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensorimotor</td>
<td>0-2 years</td>
<td>Coordination of senses with motor response, sensory curiosity about the world. Language used for demands and cataloguing. Object permanence developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoperational</td>
<td>2-7 years</td>
<td>Symbolic thinking, use of proper syntax and grammar to express full concepts. Imagination and intuition are strong, but complex abstract thought still difficult. Conservation developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Operational</td>
<td>7-11 years</td>
<td>Concepts attached to concrete situations. Time, space, and quantity are understood and can be applied, but not as independent concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ERICKSON’S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Crisis</th>
<th>Favorable Outcome</th>
<th>Unfavorable Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Childhood</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st year of life</td>
<td>Trust vs. Mistrust</td>
<td>Faith in the environment and future events</td>
<td>Suspicion, fear of future events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. Doubt</td>
<td>A sense of self-control and adequacy</td>
<td>Feelings of shame and self-doubt</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd through 5th years</td>
<td>Initiative vs. Guilt</td>
<td>Ability to be a “self-starter,” to initiate one’s own activities.</td>
<td>A sense of guilt and inadequacy to be on one’s own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th year to puberty</td>
<td>Industry vs. Inferiority</td>
<td>Ability to learn how things work, to understand and organize.</td>
<td>A sense of inferiority at understanding and organizing.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transition years</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Identity vs. confusion</td>
<td>Seeing oneself as a unique and integrated person.</td>
<td>Confusion over who and what one really is.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Adulthood</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early adulthood</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. isolation</td>
<td>Ability to make commitments to others, to love.</td>
<td>Inability to form affectionate relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle age</td>
<td>Generativity vs. self-adsorption</td>
<td>Concern for family and society in general.</td>
<td>Concern only for self—one’s own well-being and prosperity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging years</td>
<td>Integrity vs. despair</td>
<td>A sense of integrity and fulfillment; willingness to face death.</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction with life; despair over prospect of death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theorist</td>
<td>Findings or Ideas</td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)</td>
<td>Freud believed that personality develops through a series of stages. Emotional experiences in childhood have profound effects on a persona as an adult.</td>
<td>The idea that early experiences affect adult life has profound importance for anyone caring for a child.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maria Montessori (1870-1952)</td>
<td>Montessori stressed that children learn by using their senses and that they learn best by pursuing their interests.</td>
<td>Children need to be given objects to manipulate so they can exercise their sensory learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arnold Gesell (1880-1961)</td>
<td>Gesell developed basic information about the order in which children master various skills and the typical rate of this development.</td>
<td>Parents and other caregivers need to be aware of the standard course of development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean Piaget (1896-1980)</td>
<td>Piaget, the first to study children in a scientific way, focused on how children learned. He said that children go through four stages of thinking that shape how they see and learn about the world.</td>
<td>Children should be given learning tasks that are suitable for their stage of thinking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lev Vygotsky (1898-1934)</td>
<td>Vygotsky believed that both biological development and cultural experiences influenced children’s ability to think and learn. He said social contact was essential for intellectual development.</td>
<td>Children should have many opportunities for social interaction to develop intellectually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erik Erikson (1902-1994)</td>
<td>Erikson, like Freud, said personality develops through stages. He thought that each stage includes a unique psychological crisis. If that crisis is met in a positive way, the individual develops maturity.</td>
<td>Parents and other caregivers must be aware of a child’s needs at a particular stage and be sensitive to the child’s needs at that stage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. F. Skinner (1904-1990)</td>
<td>Skinner argued that when a child’s action repeatedly brings positive effects, it will be repeated and learned. When negative results repeatedly occur, the child will eventually stop the action.</td>
<td>Parents and other caregivers can use rewards and punishments to try to influence a child’s behavior.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Bandura (1925-)</td>
<td>Bandura said that children learn by modeling. He disagreed with Skinner. He pointed out that although the environment shapes behavior, behavior also affects the environment.</td>
<td>Since children learn by modeling, parent and caregivers must provide good examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Coles (1929-)</td>
<td>Coles has studied children’s moral development. He stresses the important role that parents and other caregivers play by the examples they set.</td>
<td>For children to adopt moral learning, parents must show moral behavior.</td>
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</table>
Divide class in two groups.

• Each group has to explore and write down individual stages of development for AM family members, including:
  • -specific tasks to be completed in each stage;
  • -how they are realize;
  • -if there have been any crises, how it has been managed.
Strengths perspectives
Feminist Perspectives on the Family

- Feminists of all types have encouraged sociologists to see the family as an institution involving power relationships – “the personal is political”

- Feminism has **challenged** the view of the family as being based on cooperation, shared interests and love

- Feminism has tried to show that men gain more from family life than women.
Feminist Theories

- **Liberal feminists**: Believe that society holds false belief that women are less capable.
- **Radical feminists**: See patriarchy as the main form of inequality in society.
- **Marxist feminists**: See patriarchy as a result of class inequality.
- **Black Feminists**: Believe they get less opportunities than white women and men.

Domestic labour: Within the family most unpaid work is done by women. Marxist feminists argue that this is invaluable to capitalism as she produces and rears future workers without any cost.

Emotional labour: Radical feminists claim that wives provide emotional support for partners.

Economic dependency: Women are dependent on their husbands, in most cases the wife will give up work to care for children.

Male domination: Men often control key decision making and sometimes use force to maintain control. Around 570,000 cases are reported each year in the UK.

**Criticisms:**
- Ignores positive aspects of family life: They ignore that women may enjoy running the home and raising children.
- Gender equality: There is evidence that there is now greater equality between partners and there are also househusbands.
Eco-System perspectives

• This perspective conceptualizes human behaviour and social functioning within an environmental context.
• Personal, family, and environmental factors interact with each other to influence the family.
• Child maltreatment is viewed as the consequence of the interplay between a complex set of risk and protective factors at the individual, family, community, and society levels.
Discussion

• Which of the following perspective will you pick up to explain and treat AM Family?

• Why do you think that?

• Encourage students to argue and identify how specific factors interact with each other.
Problem Solving Process

1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM
What is the problem?
Defining the Problem/ Directly Measuring Behavior

2. PROBLEM ANALYSIS
Why is it occurring?
Identifying Variables that Contribute to Problem Development Plan

3. IMPLEMENT PLAN
What are we going to do about it?
Implement with fidelity / Progress Monitor / Modify as Necessary

4. EVALUATE
Is it working?
Response to Intervention (RtI)
Was it Effective?
Definitions

- **Task-centered model**: “A technology to alleviate specific target problems perceived by clients, i.e., specific problems they recognize, understand, acknowledge, and want to attend to.” (Laura Epstein and William J. Reid)

- **Target problem**: state of distress, unease, upset, turbulence, malfunction, handicap, perplexity, or threat to goals/expectations which has to be worked on.

- **Task**: What the client should do to alleviate problem; both an immediate goal and means to alleviate problem.
# Steps in Task-centered Model for Individual Clients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start-up</td>
<td>Client referred by an agency source OR Client applies independently, voluntarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Client target problem identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Contract (plans, target problem priorities, goals, tasks, duration, schedule, participants) agreed upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Problem solving implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Contract terminated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Why a Solution Focused Approach?

Change happens all the time; You’re job is to identify and magnify useful change.

There is no one right way of seeing the world.

A detailed understanding of the problem doesn’t translate into a solution.

The solution’s clues are there in front of you; You just have to see them.

Intelligent small changes can have bigger impacts later on.

It is important to stay solution focused, not solution forced.

“Find out what works and do more of it.”
Solution Focused Model
Strength based person centered approach

PAST -> Thinking
- Memories
- Experiences
- Regrets
- Values
- Beliefs

PRESENT

Feeling
- Needs
- Wants
- Expectations
- Supports
- Skills

Doing

FUTURE
- Dreams
- Hopes
- Goals
- Fears
- Concerns

BEHAVIOUR

How do we understand, respond, manage ???
What we *think* affects how we act and feel.

**Thought**

**CBT**

What we *feel* affects how we think and do.

What we *do* affects how we think and feel.
The COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL Sequence

EVENTS ➔ THOUGHTS ➔ BEHAVIOR

This is the stuff that happens as you experience daily life.

Senses input to brain, also uses memory (learned experience) and decides response.

What the brain has decided as the best response for the event

When the brain records memory it includes any emotions experienced.
Strengths-Based Approach

Strength-based approach IS:
- valuing everyone equally and focusing on what the child can do rather than what the child cannot do
- describing learning and development respectfully and honestly
- building on a child’s abilities within their zones of proximal and potential development
- acknowledging that people experience difficulties and challenges that need attention and support
- identifying what is taking place when learning and development are going well, so that it may be reproduced, further developed and pedagogy strengthened

Strength-based approach is NOT:
- only about ‘positive’ things
- a way of avoiding the truth
- about accommodating bad behaviour
- fixated on problems
- about minimizing concerns
- one-sided
Strength-based Approach

- Changes the focus from problem solving and deficits to a focus on strengths and success
- Emphasizes the power of the individual in terms of self-knowledge and self-determination
- Client-led approach, with focus on future outcomes and the strengths that the people bring to a challenge
- Empowerment results from being treated with respect and having strengths acknowledged and enhanced
- CDF to focus first on listening and identifying the person’s strengths and resources, to understand clearly their goals and aspirations for the future, and then support them in addressing any barriers or blockages as they move forward their goals
Figure 1 – A system for protecting children

LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

- Universal preventative initiatives to support all families and children
- Early intervention services targeted to vulnerable families and children
- Targeted services and programs for ‘at-risk’ families and children
- Statutory system

State and Territory Governments

Non-government Organisations

Commonwealth
Reference list


Reference list (cont’d)