SESSION 2: THEORY

Improving the protection and wellbeing of children in Europe: enhancing the curriculum

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SESSION OBJECTIVES:

• Comprehend and apply *relevant theory* and *research* on child protection and wellbeing

• Consider and apply *national policy and legislation* as it relates to child protection and wellbeing

**Knowing, Being and Doing an Overview**

*Knowing* – gaining/using theory and critical reflection in your practice  
*Being* – using empathy and utilising your own experience and personality  
*Doing* – putting it all into practice, in essence social work is about hands on experience, meeting and working with clients face to face
Social workers need to have adequate knowledge to be able to provide services for child protection. In this context students, will gain:

- **General knowledge about the profession or the professional identity**
  - (knowledge on the history of the development of the profession and child protection, organizations or institutions that provide child protection as well as professional ethics).

- **Knowledge in context, the theme of child protection**
  - (structure of social services in Kosovo, Kosovo's political system, the legal system in Kosovo, social and political aspect, educational and political aspect, cultural issues and political aspect, policies on community development.

- **Theoretical knowledge of other scientific disciplines**
  - (psychology, sociology, pedagogy, social work sciences, ethnology, economics) which relate to aspects of child protection
WHAT IS THEORY?

• Theory explains how some aspect of human behaviour or performance is organized. It thus enables us to make predictions about that behaviour.

The components of theory are concepts (constructs) and principles.
➢ A concept is a symbolic representation of an actual thing - tree, chair, table, computer, distance, etc.
➢ Construct is the word for concepts with no physical referent - democracy, learning, freedom, etc.
➢ A principle expresses the relationship between two or more concepts or constructs

Concepts and principles serve two important functions:
➢ They help us to understand or explain what is going on around us
➢ They help us predict future events
Why Theory is Important?

- Theory provides concepts to name what we observe and to explain relationships between concepts.
  - Theory allows us to explain what we see and to figure out how to bring about change. Theory is a tool that enables us to identify a problem and to plan a means for altering the situation.

- Theory is to justify reimbursement to get funding and support - need to explain what is being done and demonstrate that it works - theory and research

- Theory is to enhance the growth of the professional area to identify a body of knowledge with theories from both within and with out the area of distance learning.
  - That body of knowledge grows with theory and research. Theory guides research.
DEVELOPMENT OF THEORIES

Theory is constantly revised as new knowledge is discovered through research.

There are three stages of theory development in any new science

- **Speculative** - attempts to explain what is happening.
- **Descriptive** - gathers descriptive data to describe what is really happening.
- **Constructive** - revises old theories and develops new ones based on continuing research.

Theory development process:

- **Theory-practice-theory**: take existing theory in education, apply to social work, develop new theory
- **Practice-research-theory**: see what is happening in social work, submit to research, develop theory from results
CONTEXTUALISING THEORY TO THE CASE STUDY

WHO IS OUR CLIENT?
ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY

Systems theory:

- Focuses on how people interact with their environment
- People are constantly interacting with their environment, being changed and changing
- Systems can be open or closed
- The whole system is effected by each subsystem, which affect each other

(Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, and Larsen, 2010)
ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL
The ecological systems theory states that during their existence an individual interacts with a multitude of varying environments that potentially effect behaviour.

The systems consist of the micro system, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macro system, and the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Evans & Wachs, 2010).

Habitat and niche are the two concepts of ecological theory that are of importance to social workers (Hepworth et al., 2010):

**Habitat:** is the area in which the person exists, comprised of both the social settings specific to their cultural framework as well as their physical environment.

**Niche:** refers to the role or status of an individual within their society. A critical component in the process of maturity that allows for a participant to create a solid sense of self and respect.
1. **The Microsystem:** The immediate environment of an individual comprised of the social agents (family, friends, etc.) that they are in direct contact with.
   - The theory argues that rather than being passive the participant both effects and is affected by socialization of the microsystem environment thereby aiding in its construction.

2. **The Mesosystem:** The mesosystem focuses the associations between the microsystems, specifically the ability of one microsystem to generate proximal processes other microsystem, for example the influence of home life on a student's ability to study.
   - A neglected child may bring negative perceptions of authority and have difficulty relating to peers.

✓ (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Evans & Wachs, 2010).
THE FIVE ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS
(THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL)

3. The Exosystem: The situation where there is a connection between a relationship situation where an individual does not have any active role, and the situation where there is.
   - A child whom has greater attachment to one parent may suffer in their prolonged absence directing resentment towards the remaining parent, conversely the absent's may create a bonding opportunity.

4. The Macrosystem: The culture of an individual involving the socioeconomic status of the person (family), their ethnicity/race and location (first/third world).
   - For example, a child for a minority group born into poverty may have no opportunity for formal education.

5. The Chronosystem: The chronosystem consists of the changes and evolutions over the period of the individual's lifetime, such as potential socio-historical effects upon the individual.
   - One such example is that of divorce, which not only impacts parents but also has an adverse effect on their children's behaviour both immediately and over the next year, with normalcy progressively returning over the subsequent years.

†(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Evans & Wachs, 2010).
Discussion about the case study using the Ecological System Model:

➢ In the presented case study, which is the habitat and niche (from children’s perspective, mothers and fathers)?

➢ Would that habitat and niche be the same for the family (children/child) if they were other nationality in Kosovo? In what sense, will effect and in which it will not?

➢ How much do you know about the culture of Roma community in Kosovo?
Based on the ecological model how would the children situation change if the father/mother would get a job?
- What difference would it make for the children well-being?
- Will their needs change, if yes how?

How would the situation change if all children go to school?
- What difference would it make for the overall family and children well-being?
- Will their needs change, if yes how?
• **Prejudice**: preconceived judgment or opinion

✓ positive or negative feelings and attitudes and feelings of people towards **others** that can be either conscious or unconscious.

• **Stereotypes**: specified opinions in regards to an external individual that are universally applied to all members of the individual’s external group, *e.g.* their skill set, hygiene, honesty, appearance and intelligence.
KOMF (The NGO Coalition for Child Protection - Kosovo) report conducted in 2015 in which one children interviewed states:

“There are times when if children are labelled by teachers, either by their peers for their behaviour or their nationality, which often prevent them in the process of re-integrating them into society. ‘In school, they call me a Roma and they accuse me to have broken a chair, but I have not broken the chair...’said one of the interviewed children’ (KOMF, 2015, p.22).

**Self-fulfilling prophecy:** a prediction made by an individual or a group that through direct or indirect action comes into being, the result of a reinforcing negative or positive feedback loop between belief and behaviour e.g. ‘I am no good at math so there is no point in studying’.

**Learned helplessness:** a state of being where due to past experiences such as failure or trauma an individual experiences powerlessness towards a given event.
• Maslow hierarchy of needs
  • The lack off or inconsistency in fulfilment of the elementary needs such as physiological and security will inhibit and halts the person to fulfil or direct their behaviour to fulfilment of the other needs.

How does this information add to our evaluation of the children needs and plan of action?
Empirical data from the report on ‘The position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo’ in 2009 founded by Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS – SOROS) which states:

“For the three communities together (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian), when we divide the average of monthly incomes of families (€119.68) with the average number of family members (5.60 members), it comes out that:

- 1 person lives on €21.37 a month, or
- 1 person lives on € 0.71, or 71 cents a day.

All these calculations show that the majority of members of these communities live in extreme poverty and can barely secure their existence. Compared to the minimal limit of poverty which for developing countries has been set at US$ 4.3 a day per capita, by the World Bank and UNDP, it can be easily concluded that individuals of these communities live in poverty levels that are characteristic for African countries” (KFOS, 2009, p.21).
EDUCATION

• Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian children experience:
  ➢ low school enrolment
  ➢ low attendance
  ➢ high drop-out rates, more pronounced in females
  ➢ late school enrolment

**Contributing factors consist of:**
✓ extreme poverty
✓ inter-ethnic tension
✓ harassment and discrimination
✓ low levels of education within communities
✓ low awareness of the importance of education
✓ lack of teachers of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian origin

**EXISTING SOCIAL AND ASSISTANCES SERVICES**

- **Social Assistance in Kosovo**
  - The government of Kosovo provided limited social benefits, in that all funds are directed towards one super category, pensions. Pensions are provided with the goal of alleviating some of the pressures of poverty and are divided into two categories of recipients:
  - Category I where no one is capable of work, and/or where the only adult capable of work is looking after an incapable person over 65
  - Category II with unemployed adults with a child under 5 or providing full-time care to an orphan.
- Fiscal benefits have been in a state of stagnation form 2003 consisting of: remained
  - €35 for a 1-person household
  - €50 for a 2-person household
  - €5 for each additional household member
  - maximum amount of €75 for households for 7 or more members

As Pincus & Minhan (1976) highlight that if the systems are non-existent or insufficient, when they lack information for the existing services or availability or those systems, when there is conflict between or within different systems, and the policy/politics for the availability of these systems may cause issue for the person.
What is child protection system?

“...a coherent set of actions and actors, in which the child is the starting point and which aims to guarantee the rights and well-being of the child by constructing synergies within and between protective environments” (Terre des hommes, 2014, p.11).
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<tr>
<th>approximate age</th>
<th>psycho social crisis</th>
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<td>infant - 18 months</td>
<td>trust vs. mistrust</td>
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<td>18 months - 3 years</td>
<td>autonomy vs. shame &amp; doubt</td>
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<td>3 - 5 years</td>
<td>initiative vs. guilt</td>
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<td>5 - 13 years</td>
<td>industry vs. inferiority</td>
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<td>13 - 21 years</td>
<td>identity vs. role confusion</td>
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<td>21 - 39 years</td>
<td>intimacy vs. isolation</td>
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<td>40 - 65 years</td>
<td>generativity vs. stagnation</td>
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<td>65 and older</td>
<td>ego integrity vs. despair</td>
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(Erikson, 1950)
**ACTIVITY**

Based on the case study the family has 4 children:

- Artan (17 years old); Hana (15 years old); Astrit and Sofija (10 years old) and Aida (7 years old).

- Divide the students in 4 groups:

**Each group represents one child (Example: Group 1: Artan; Group 2: Hana)**

- *Each group should discuss child psychosocial development based on Erikson’s stages*
ACTIVITY

How would this information assist us in the work with the children?

- How can you link Erikson stages of children with the Ecological system model?
  - What is their effect and integration?
  - Who do they effect each other?
What is attachment?

- There exists an innate biological survival mechanism within healthy new-born babies for protective adult immediacy, a committed individual that is consistently physical and emotional accessible.

- The satisfaction of which is critical to their development of self, trust and connection to others.

- While building upon the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth attachment theory in particular deals with the sense of safety and security that a child gains while in proximity to a specific adult.

- This context the term attachment refers to the care eliciting and seeking conduct of an individual towards another whom they believe to be more capable in a given situation.

- To that end attachment theory proposes that both positive and negative child development is innately linked to the years of early childhood dependent upon whether infants need in regards to security and comfort are meet.

Ainsworth et al (1978)
TYPES OF ATTACHMENT PATTERNS

Secure attachment
Insecure avoidant attachment
Insecure ambivalent attachment
Disorganized attachment

(Golding, 2007)
ACTIVITY:

Based on the case study discuss the possible attachment style of each child / parent?

✓ How did you arrive at those assumptions?
✓ How do different styles of attachment effect social worker’s assessment and action plan?
✓ What skill does the child protection practitioner need to have to address the child attachment issues?
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.

Hepworth et al., 2010
Children desire approval and as such they will participate in behaviours that they have learnt reward that need.

The learning of what is appropriate behaviour is done through reinforcement, reinforcement of behaviour can be both positive and negative and internal or external.

- **External reinforcement**: approval/disapproval from an external source, parents, teachers, peers etc.
- **Internal reinforcement**: approval/disapproval from within, feel good after positive reinforcement of an activity by a parent/ feel bad after negative reinforcement of an activity by a parent
SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

• Bandura identifies **four mediational processes**, which are as follows:

  • **Attention**: an individual observes a multitude of behaviours over the course of a day and yet most if not all are rejected, hence the individual attentiveness/exposure to the behaviour is critical.

  • **Retention**: Once the behaviour is noticed the ability to retain that behaviour comes into play. As most behaviour is not immediately replicated the individual not only must have noticed it but also remembered.

  • **Reproduction**: There must be adequate ability to replicate the behaviour the influencing model displayed. Excellence in football needs ability as well as desire, as the individual is inhibited by their physical ability.

  • **Motivation**: Only once an individual assesses the vicarious reinforcement and determines the potential positive outcome outweighs the negative will the behaviour be perceived as being worth replicating, thereby providing a desire to engage in the behaviour.

✓ There is a mediating processes that happens between stimuli and responses
➢ Through the process of observational learning behaviours are learnt from the environment in which the individual resides.
ACTIVITY

- Based on the case study discuss possible models of influence for each child?
- How did you arrive at those assumptions?
Anti-Oppressive Practice Model

Dominelli (1998: 7) defines “anti-oppressive practice”, as follows:

‘Anti-oppressive practice is a form of social work practice which addresses social divisions and structural inequalities in the work that is done with “clients” (users) or workers. Anti-oppressive practice aims to provide more appropriate and sensitive services by responding to people’s need regardless of their social status.

Anti-oppressive practice embodies a person – centred philosophy, an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people’s lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome; and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of hierarchy in their immediate interaction and the work they do together.’
Anti-oppressive practice model

Dominelli (1997: 238) lists 5 key principles that she believes can be used to create practice that are critical to assisting those that are oppressed by broader society:

- Redefine what it is to be professional to avoid inflicting clients with another layer of oppression
- Ask the clients what they want and listen to them
- Realise that people are living their lives in both private and public spheres
- Provide information so the users themselves can take advantage of it
- Challenge personal, institutional and cultural forms of oppression
Slettebø (2000) breaks down empowerment in social work practice into 4 categories, that of goal, method, and process.

- **Goal**: increase real power of the client, group or community as a means of overcoming and preventing circumstances that have created the problems being faced.

- **Method**: is driven by a power analysis of the client’s situation that relies on client participation, equality, partnership and cooperation.

- **Approach**: is resource oriented and it uses Freire (1974) and his dialogical education to activate the client’s own resources.

- **Process**: a process of client ‘consciousness raising’ thorough which the client is encourage to see beyond their immediate situation so as to understand the role that societal conditions contribute to the level and type of issues that they might be facing.
ACTIVITY

✓ Divide the students in groups
✓ Create groups with min. 3 to max. 6 students in one group

Students are to complete the following tasks:

➢ Using conflict theory discuss and list who is at risk?
➢ What is the level of power of the clients?
➢ What effect does this have on the day to day situation of the clients?
➢ How can this situation be improved?

➢ How did you arrive at those assumptions?
➢ How can conflict theory be incorporated into an effective social worker’s assessment and action plan?
What are similarities of all countries?
What are differences between Kosovo and other countries?
Which country you considered a good model or practice?
REFERENCES
AND SUGGESTED READINGS


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THANK YOU!

FALEMINDERIT!