Understanding Family Dynamics
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Understanding Family Dynamics

What Influences Family Dynamics?
Influences on Family Dynamics

- Nature of the parents’ relationship
- If parents are lenient or strict
- Number of siblings in the family
- Personalities of the household members
- An absent or single parent

Conduct a discussion about how each item listed can influence the dynamics of a family.
Conduct a discussion about how each item listed can influence the dynamics of a family.

Crisis events which affect family members:

- an affair
- divorce
- trauma
- death
- unemployment
- homelessness
- family violence
- abuse
- alcohol or other drug use
- mental health difficulties
- poverty

How do family values, culture and ethnicity, including beliefs influence the family dynamics?

How does the nature of attachments in a family, such as being secure or insecure, influence the overall family dynamics?
How do the dynamics of previous generations (parents and grandparents families) influence the family dynamics?

Slide 6

**Changing Family Dynamics**

Families take on many forms and shapes, and yet they perform some of the same basic functions from culture to culture. Individuals within the family provide the following:

- Basic needs (such as food, clothing, and shelter)
- Economic support
- Education
- Love and affection

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Changing Family Dynamics

Families take on many forms and shapes, and yet they perform some of the same basic functions from culture to culture. Individuals within the family provide the following:

- Nurturance
- Opportunities to have fun
- Protection
- Religious background

Each individual in the family has certain roles. Your role as a son, daughter, sister, brother, niece, nephew, aunt, or uncle is a given role that you acquired when you were born into the family. When you marry, you will assume a chosen role as husband or wife. Roles are defined by age and responsibilities. Parents are usually responsible for providing food and shelter. As children get older and enter the workforce, these responsibilities might fall partly on their shoulders. In relationships, it is important to communicate the roles you will be sharing or expected to fulfill to meet the needs of the family.
Given Roles: The roles we are given because of a birth in the family such as mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, aunt, or cousin.

Acquired Roles: The roles you assume because of choice such as husband, wife, co-worker, or vice-president

Character Roles: The roles you demonstrate because you have been labeled as such an athlete, brain, breadwinner, baby, scapegoat, or victim.

Some roles happen by chance (given roles) and others by choice (acquired roles). The roles we choose for ourselves can be changed.

If we are not happy with our acquired roles, we can simply make the change.
Find a new job
Decide to get married or stay single
Roles in Life

Life gives us a lot to balance:
- Family
- Work or school
- Different personalities
- Various roles

We have learned that people play many roles in their lives. Some are by choice and some are not.

What are some roles you have as a family member?

What are some roles you have at work or at school?

Do people’s different personalities impact your roles in life? How?
These are the roles that we are “labeled” because of other’s views of us.

Example: The youngest child of the family is labeled “The Baby”. This child assumes the “baby” role and begins to act this way.

Other family members may feel that this child is spoiled or treated special because they are the baby of the family.
Scapegoating - The person who gets blamed for the problem is the scapegoat.

Peace-Keeper - A young person may be inadvertently playing the role of the ‘peace-keeper’, interceding and reducing strain between a disagreeing parent and family member.

How do these two roles influence the family dynamics?
Character Roles

- Can be a true character trait or a myth
- Can be changed, but it takes communication and understanding on all parties.
- Can raise or lower one's self-esteem
- Can put extra expectation on a person
Roles in Life

- **Buffering**: Balancing of roles so that the negative aspects of one role can be offset by the positive aspects of another role

- **Multiplicity**: Having several different roles and responsibilities

- **Roles**: The responsibilities we assume and how we portray them individually and in the family

- **Stereotyping**: Categorizing all into one type
Life Stages: A predictable developmental stage in a person’s life. Example: Teen years, 20’s, 30’s, or 40’s.
Marker Event: A significant event that marks real change in one’s life. Example: graduation, marriage, birth of child, or winning the lottery.

Marker events can affect a life positively or negatively. But the one thing about life, is that it is constantly changing.
Family Dynamics: Scenario 1
Family Dynamic to illustrate closed, inflexible family boundaries.
http://youtu.be/gddHVT0NPA

What are the family dynamics in this scenario?
References and Resources

Images:
Microsoft Clip Art: Used with permission from Microsoft.

Textbook:

Websites:
Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
Website containing curricular ideas and information related to family, career and community.
http://www.texasfccla.org

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
Website with links to television, articles and information on various curricular subjects of public interest.
http://www.pbs.org

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
This PBS article discusses the importance of family meal time and gives tips on how to make it successful.

YouTube™:
Family Dynamics: Scenario 1
Family Dynamics to illustrate closed, inflexible family boundaries.
http://youtu.be/gddHUVT0NPA

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