

The Laws of Family Process

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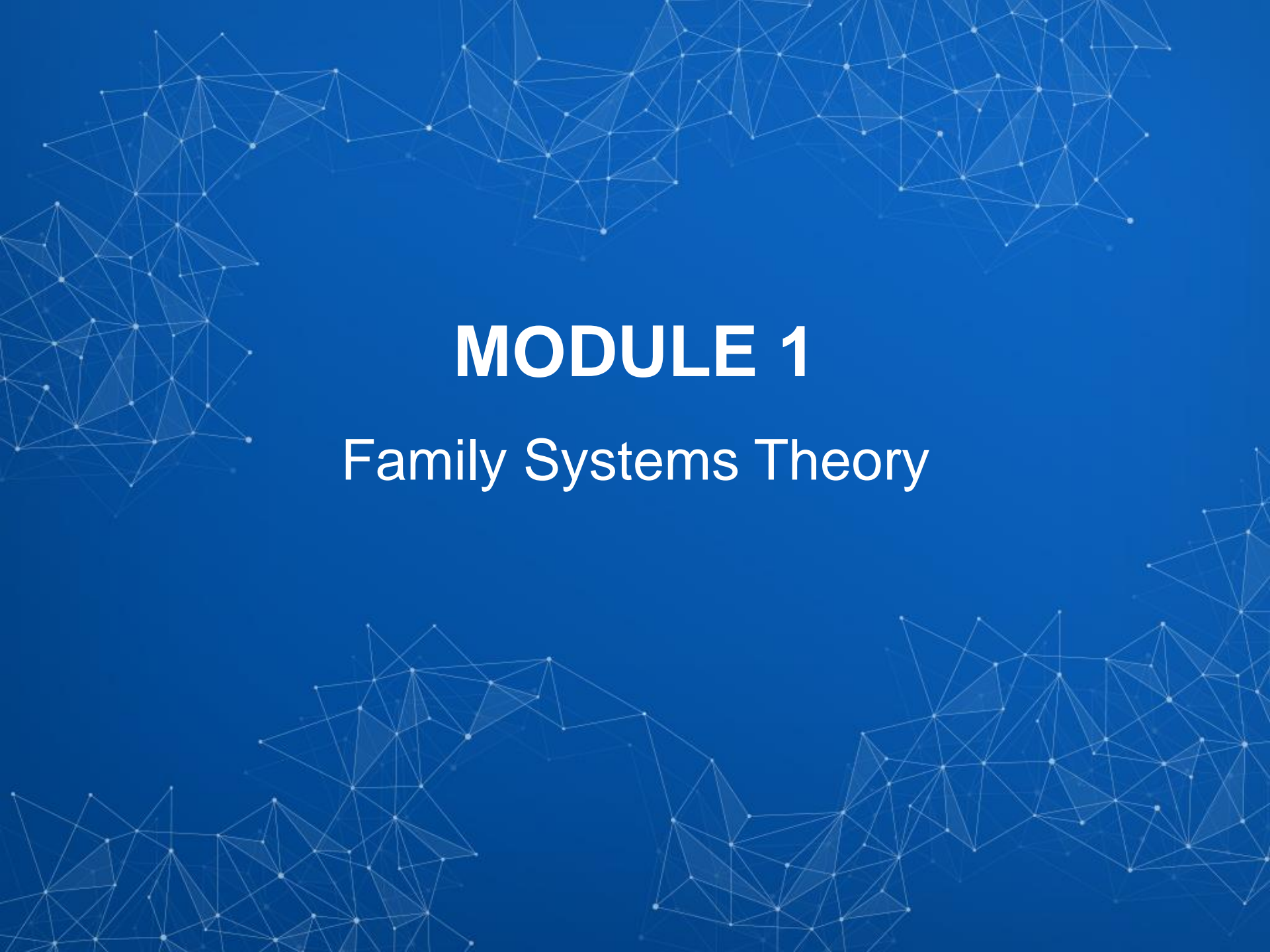
WELCOME



J Flowers Health Institute

J. Flowers Health Institute specializes in providing truly comprehensive health and wellness evaluations for individuals who want to improve their quality of life. Every client receives personal, one-on-one concierge care, luxury accommodations, and a workable plan for future health.

J. Flowers Health Institute benefits from the resources of the world's largest medical center in Houston, Texas. Excellent client care and years of experience are critical components to evaluate and diagnose the individual's core issues that are holding them back from a full life.



MODULE 1

Family Systems Theory



Family Systems Theory

The family unit is an organizational system that functions according to natural laws that govern the structure of the system and the function of the individual members.

Systems have problems and people have symptoms.



Structure

The relationship system has a hierarchical structure and interpersonal boundaries that define the roles of the individual members of the system.

Executive - The executive subsystem is occupied by the persons with the highest level of power and control in the system.

Sibling – the sibling subsystem is occupied by the persons in the system who are dependent on the executive system for survival, power and control.



Function

The individual members of the relationship system occupy specific roles that define their function in the relationship system.

Boundaries - These are distinctions made by the individual that define the rights and responsibilities in the relational system.

Roles – the purpose an individual serves in the relational system. Roles define behaviors and expectations for the individual occupying the role.



FUNCTION

The function of each member of the system is defined by the role they occupy.

The relational system has rules that define acceptable and expected behavior for the individual members.

The pathological symptom that manifests in an individual member of the system serves a function in the organization of the system.



Linear Causality

Linear causality is the traditional understanding of psychopathology and defines pathology as the “effect” of some biological or psychological “cause” that is within the individual.

Interventions focus on resolving the symptoms of dysfunction in the individual.

Medication

Individual Psychotherapy



Circular Causality

Circular causality is the Systems Theory understanding of psychopathology and defines pathology as a symptom exhibited by an individual as a manifestation of some organizational dysfunction caused by multiple interactional processes.

Interventions focus on resolving the dysfunction in family process.

Conjoint Interactional Family Therapy
Communication, Structure and Function



The Identified Patient

The identified patient is the member of the system who manifests some symptom that represents the stress or pathology of the family system.

The identified patient can then be “sacrificed” by the family system through labeling, diagnosis and treatment so that the system can stay the same and continue in the familiarity of their dysfunctional processes.



Homeostasis

The tendency of an organizational system to strive in self-corrective ways to preserve the organizing principles of its existence.

When the balance of the system is disrupted the system activates mechanisms of control to suppress the deviation.

Healthy “rebellion” can lead to a recalibration or change in the system to accommodate the deviation.



Differentiation of Self

Differentiation of Self is the degree to which an individual member is able to define themselves as an autonomous being independent of the system.

Differentiation of self enables the individual to have a distinct identity apart from the system.

Differentiation of self is the ability to remain a non anxious presence in the context of an anxious system.



The Extended Family Field

The family of origin exerts a field of influence on each individual member of the system.

The extended family field exerts influence on specific patterns of behavior as well as beliefs and attitudes about issues like; sex, parenting, loyalty, money, territory, substance use, spirituality, morality, and other values.

Emotional Triangle

An emotional triangle is formed as stabilizing function to bring balance to a relational dyad by distributing the stress of that dyad over three times the relational real estate.

Conflict in a dyad can be de-escalated by a third person entering into the dyad and absorbing the distress into two more relational links.



MODULE 2

Laws of Family Process

Emotional Distance

Emotional distance is the degree to which members of the system are able to emotionally differentiate from the whole of the system.

Emotional distance is a rhythm of closeness and separateness that is essential for healthy functioning, growth and maturity of the system.

Too much closeness when separation is optimal or too much separation when closeness is optimal can be dysfunctional.



Loss and Replacement

The relational system has a natural tendency to replace loss.

There are times when loss is a functional process in the natural development of the family lifecycle.

The pain of loss can move the system in a healthy way to recalibrate and change to accommodate the loss.

The speed at which loss is replaced can relieve pain but it can also prevent growth and maturity of the system.



Chronic Conditions

If a relational system problem is chronic, there must be a reactive or adaptive feedback from somewhere in the system to sustain it.

The volunteer firefighter who sets a fire to have a fire to fight.



Pain and Responsibility

If one member of the relational system can successfully increase their tolerance for another's pain, the other's own threshold will increase, thus expanding their own range of functioning.



Seriousness and Playfulness Paradox

The seriousness with which families approach their problems can be more the cause of their difficulties than the effect of the problem.

Playfulness can serve a stabilizing function as a remedial power to the seriousness of a perceived problem.

“You have to laugh to keep from crying.”



Secrets and Systems

Secrets delineate the system along lines of who knows and who does not know the secret.

Secrets are the plaque in the arteries of communication.

Secrets exacerbate other pathological processes by keeping the system anxiety high.



Sibling Position

The position a person occupies in the sibling constellation of the nuclear family of origin will exert influence on the the expectations about leadership, responsibility, success and gender.



Symmetry

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

There are cycles of centripetal and centrifugal forces at work in the organizational system to push and pull particles in the organism to a balance point.



Survival

A relational system will respond to a challenge is such a way to ensure the survival of the relational.



References

1. Friedman, Edwin H., 1985. Generation to Generation. The Guilford Press: New York.