

Week 2: Family Assessment and Psychotherapeutic Approaches

A family's patterns of behavior influences [sic] the individual and therefore may need to be a part of the treatment plan. In marriage and family therapy, the unit of treatment isn't just the person—even if only a single person is interviewed—it is the set of relationships in which the person is imbedded.

—American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, “About Marriage and Family Therapists”

When issues arise within a family unit, the family often presents with one member identified as the “problem.” However, you will frequently find that the issue is not necessarily the “problem client,” but rather dysfunctional family patterns and relationships. To better understand such patterns and relationships, and develop a family treatment plan, it is essential that the practitioner appropriately assess all family members. This requires you to have a strong foundation in family assessment and therapy.

This week, you practice assessing and diagnosing client families presenting for psychotherapy.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Apply concepts, theories, and principles related to patient interviewing, diagnostic reasoning, and recording patient information
- Formulate differential diagnoses for patients using DSM-5 criteria
- Formulate plans of care for patients that incorporate family psychotherapy interventions
- Develop psychotherapy genograms

Learning Resources

Required Readings (click to expand/reduce) ▲



American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.)



- For reference as needed



Nichols, M., & Davis, S. D. (2020). *The essentials of family therapy* (7th ed.). Pearson. Introduction

- Chapter 2, “Basic Techniques of Family Therapy”
- Chapter 3, “The Fundamental Concepts of Family Therapy”
- Chapter 4, “Bowen Family Systems Therapy”



Therapist Aid. (2012–2020). *Genograms for psychotherapy*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/genograms>



Therapist Aid LLC. (© 2012-2020). Genograms for psychotherapy. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/genograms>



Document: Comprehensive Psychiatric Evaluation Note Template



Document: Comprehensive Psychiatric Evaluation Note Exemplar



Required Media (click to expand/reduce) ▲



Gehart, D. R. (2013, August 29). *Progress note* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEB1vBOBUqc>



Masterswork Productions. (2003). *Mother and daughter: A cultural tale* [Video/DVD]. <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/watch/mother-and-daughter-a-cultural-tale>



Sommers-Flanagan, J., & Sommers-Flanagan, R. (2013). Counseling and psychotherapy theories in context and practice [Video]. <https://waldenu.kanopy.com/video/counseling-and-psychotherapy-theories-contex>



- Family Systems Therapy (starts at 4 hours)