

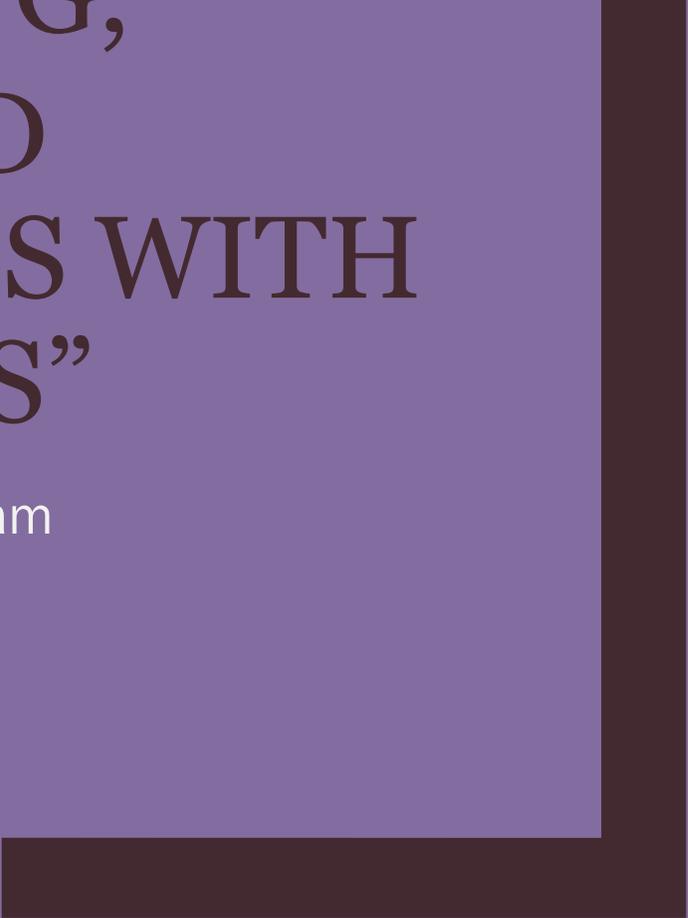


“UNDERSTANDING,
ACCEPTING AND
SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH
COMPLEX NEEDS”

Sponsored by the Home Innovation Team

June 10, 2019

Presented by Deb Sunderland LCSW



“GOD ONLY KNOWS”

BBC Video –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqLTe8ho-jo>

Context

- Getting Present
- Introductions
- Acknowledgments
- What the day looks like
- What do you hope to get out of this training ?
- My intentions for this morning

UNDERSTANDING

Xscape – “Understanding”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR5J5jUDcnA>

Defining:

- 1. *Why it is important to take the time to understand?*
- 2. *What has been changing for families in the past five to ten years?*
- 3. *Why we will be naming the complexity you are experiencing.*
- 3. *Complexity in needs versus complexity within the environment or systems.*

*“EVERYONE HAS THE CAPACITY
TO LOVE, TO FORGIVE, TO
UNDERSTAND AND TO BE
COMPASSIONATE.”*

Thich Nhat Hahn

Complexity – What Does it Look Like?

*Family

*Home Visitor Role

*Agency

*System

COMPLEXITY THEORY

Taken from the Waterloo School for Social Innovation –
Brenda Zimmerman

Newtonian Theory –vs– Complexity Theory

■ Newtonian Theory

- *World can be broken down into parts
- *Cause and effect
- *Rational and systematic
- *Your role predicts the outcome
- *Data informs unified choices and future outcomes

■ Complexity Theory

- *Interconnected world
- *Expect the unexpected
- *You cannot control outcomes
- *Things emerge quickly
- *Due to technology – information moves so rapidly that our environment is unpredictable

Complexity Theory – Types of Problems

- Problems are identified as: simple, complicated and complex

- *Simple – recipes for a cake

- Formula's that have proven to work consistently

- *Complicated – sending a rocket to the moon

- Needs high level of expertise, high degree of certainty

- *Complex – raising a child

- Raising a child gives no assurance of success with second child

- expertise can help but is not sufficient to address the challenge, the relationship is key in tuning to the environment of others

****Many of today's problems and challenges are complex in nature*

Complexity Theory – What is a System?

- Systems are a whole with inter-dependent parts
- Parts typically make no sense outside the system
- Behavior of the system depends on how each part is interacting with the other parts
- Each system is a sub-system of larger systems
- The observer/participant in a system has an impact on said system -vs- Newtonian which says you are only an observer of the system
- What you call a system is a piece of a larger system that you have chosen to look at – these boundaries are artificially imposed
- Complex problems require solutions at the level of the whole system

Complexity Theory – Social Innovation –Peter Senge

- Recognizing yourself in the system – when you fail to think systemically you create an illusion of a fixed role – “I am my position.”
- If the belief is I am outside the system – then the enemy is “out there” – this is an illusion of objectivity
- Failure to believe systemically – results in these stances:
 - “I believe I can take charge” – the illusion of control*
 - “Make your move.” – the fixation on events*
 - “Things will get worse unless...” – the illusions of continuity*

Complexity Theory – Fundamentals of Complex Systems

- Perspective and perceiver
- Relationships
- Emergence versus control
- Standing still to reflect on complexity – contemplation not action key
- Guiding Rules -
- Interconnected systems and sub-systems
- Agency and active role of the observer – observing can change human behavior
- Being part of the system
- Landscapes are continually changing and moving by our movement through it

Mapping a Families complexity

- Eco-Maps - what they map
 - *Those living in the home, the family system
 - *Bio-psycho-social material – agency involvement, medical needs, mental health, addictions
 - *Environmental considerations- learning, working and living
 - *Social engagement – friends, groups, significant other
 - *Values, spiritual, beliefs –
 - *Relationships – Positive, Negative, distant, Other
- Questions: How do the domains impact each other? Who has power? Who has least power? Strengths of the family?
- Practice – with your life

Eco Map - Example

- This family is two separate families that have become intertwined over a period of time. Family A is a mom and dad with 3 children. Family B is two Lesbian women (legally married) with two young children.
- Family B split up and one of the women (Mom B-1) and the children came to live with family A because they were longtime friends. While living with Family A, the mom from Family B became romantically involved with the father in family A. The mom from family B had wanted to be romantically involved with both the mom and dad in family A, however the mom of family A wanted nothing to do with the threesome.
- Mom B-1 and Dad A left the home with Mom B-1's children and moved into a place of their own. Mom B-1 and Dad A has remained a couple for several years. Mom A is now in a new relationship with a new partner. Over the past couple of years Mom B-1 and Dad A have been homeless with Mom B-1's children several times. Both Mom B-1 and Dad A have had some serious drug and alcohol issues. Mom B-1 had been to treatment but has a difficult time completing the program each time that she has tried. Mom B-1 has insisted that Dad A only be with his children during the time when she is present. This has caused friction between Dad A and his children.
- The other Mom (B-2) has now stepped in and has taken the children from Mom B-1 because they are without any place to stay. Neither Mom B-1 nor Dad A is currently working. They have had evictions in the past and some criminal history which has created a barrier to finding housing.

Complexity Theory – Questions to Ask

- *Do I believe I have control over this situation?*
- *Are the beliefs I am holding part of the system I am trying to change?*
- *What are the primary relationships within the system?*
- *How could I map the system to discern what is driving it?*
- *Can I stand still long enough to evaluate the system to see what might be helpful?*
- *What are some simple rules that may be driving the system and causing the current behaviors or patterns?*

ACCEPTING

Ed Sherran – “Even My Dad Does sometimes”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKa3KYS-AQA>

Why Acceptance is Important

- Accepting life on its terms versus refusing to accept reality
- The challenge of our own vulnerability
- The challenge of witnessing vulnerability in others
- The notion of creating space and accessing trapped energy to move forward

*“YOU EITHER WALK INSIDE
YOUR STORY AND OWN IT OR
YOU STAND OUTSIDE YOUR
STORY AND HUSTLE FOR YOUR
WORTHINESS.”*

Brene' Brown

Barriers to Engagement - Family

- Fear of judgement
- Isolated single parents who have been victimized, fearful
- Mental illness – as it can be stigmatizing
- Fear of stigma for ethnic groups around styles of parenting
- Hard to “change”
- Moves to other locations
- Systems not linked together
- High Aces score – complex trauma

******Lack of trust in the the unknown*

Barriers to Accepting Complexity – Home Visitors and Agencies

- ***“Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others”***
– Laura van Dernoot Lipsky
- **Trauma Exposure Responses**
 - *Minimizing
 - *Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
 - *Guilt
 - *Inability to empathize/numbing
 - *Feeling helpless and hopeless
 - *A sense that one can never do enough
 - *Inability to embrace complexity

Inability to Embrace Complexity – *What it Looks Like*

From “*Trauma Stewardship*”

* *Crave clear signs of good and bad or right and wrong, you feel an urgent need to choose sides – shows up in your work by taking sides in families, rather than holding the entire family*

* *The answer ‘NO’ comes out of your mouth regularly, you feel your shoulders are up around your ears*

**You find yourself taking a stand and becoming dogmatic*

**You find yourself at work gossiping, forming alliances with other workers, and having rigid expectations of others including supervisors*

* *Situations with families escalate as staff make assumptions, pass judgement, tell stories with only partial information*

**Inability to tolerate the grey areas of life , feels to painful*

**We see and participate in the polarization of issues – one side is right, the other wrong*

**The challenge is to feel and allow the feelings these issues raise in us, rather than push them away or project them onto others*

*“RADICAL
ACCEPTANCE IS A
PREREQUISITE FOR
CHANGE”*

Tara Brach - Youtube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K3503G82L4

Radical Acceptance - Practicing

- Notice that you are fighting reality. The first step towards radical acceptance is awareness that you are resisting reality. ...
- Turn your mind towards acceptance. Once you've recognized that you are resisting some truth in your life, the next step is to turn your mind toward acceptance. ...
- Use your body to help you. ...
- Act as if.

- Exercise: Choose a an area of complexity in your work you have not been willing to embrace so far.

*“THE GIFT AND POWER
OF EMOTIONAL
COURAGE”*

Susan David - Ted Talk

https://www.ted.com/talks/susan_david_the_gift_and_power_of_emotional_courage?language=en

Susan David – Ted Talk

- *How we deal with our emotions shapes actions – careers – relationships – health – and our very happiness*
- *Rigidity in the face of complexity is toxic*
- *Emotional agility – resilience*
- *Rigid denial and focusing only on the positive does not work*
- *Life's beauty is inseparable from its fragility*
- *Acceptance – dealing with the world as it is*
- *Discomfort is the price of admission to a meaningful life*
- *Radical acceptance to all emotions is the cornerstone to resiliency, thriving and true authentic happiness*
- *Emotions are equal to data needed for making decisions*
- *Curiosity – compassion – courage*
- *Cultivate a lifelong correspondence with your heart*

Impact on the Families –

- *When we do not embrace the complexity in their life*
- *When we do not embrace the complexity in our own life*
- *When we do embrace the complexity in the agency*
- *When we do not embrace the complexity in the system*
- *When we do not allow ourselves to feel, but go instead to rigid responses*

SUPPORTING

“Count on Me” – Bruno Mars

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-sz-002&hsimp=yhs-002&hspart=sz&p=bruno+mars+count+on+me#id=1&vid=019e68116e1e5fd60924759b3c81f831&action=click>

What Helps?

Research Says:

- *Long-term relationships with one professional
- *Dependable, long-term relationship
- *Open communication
- *Short and Long-term supports
- *Solution focus along with psycho-social history
- *Regular supervision
- *Integration of services and providers working with family

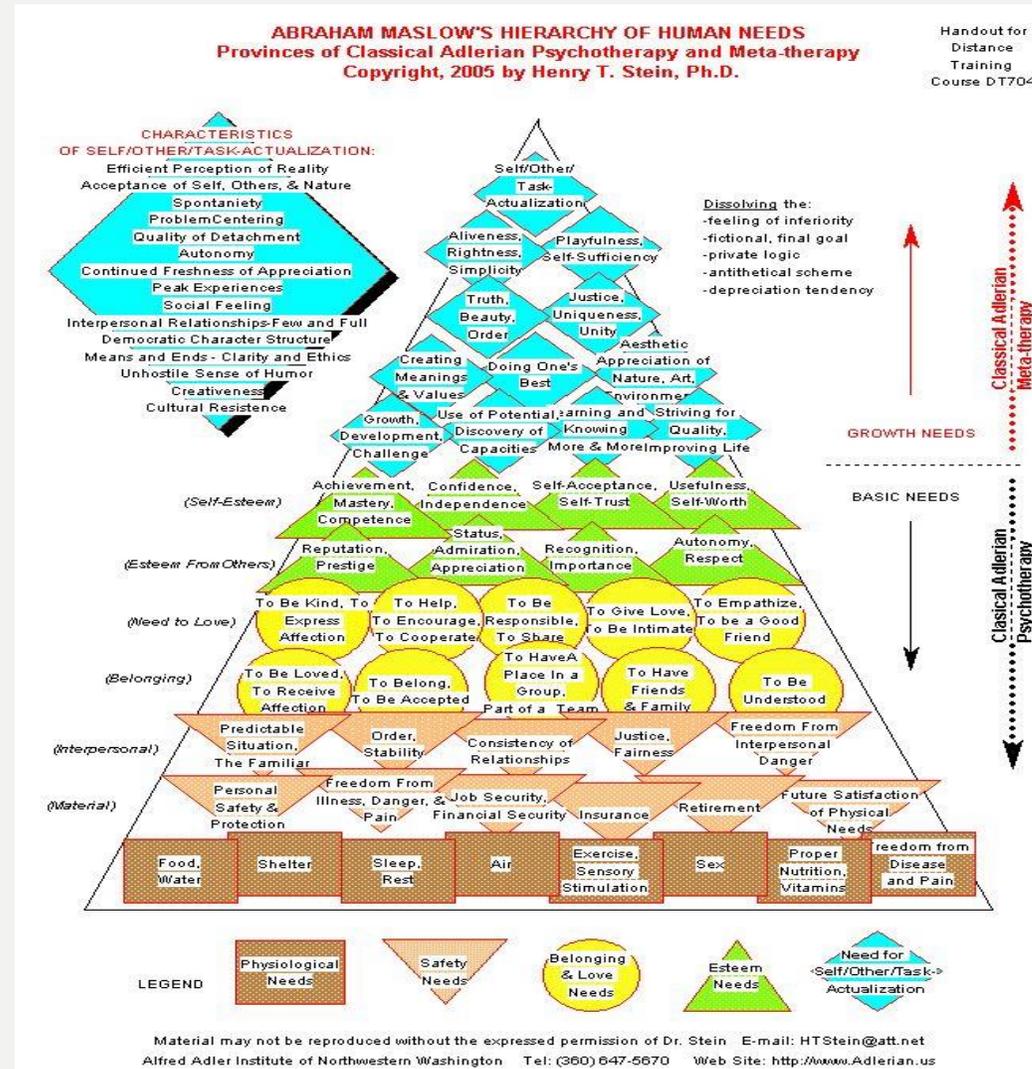
Engaging family and children:

- *Front-line staff need assessment skills
- *They must have the ability to raise tough questions
- *When long-term relationship not possible, family may need more tim

*“THE ONLY MEANINGFUL THING
WE CAN OFFER ONE ANOTHER IS
LOVE. NOT ADVICE, NOT
QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CHOICES,
NOT SUGGESTIONS FOR THE
FUTURE, JUST LOVE.”*

— Glennon Doyle

Assessing Family, Home Visitors, Agency or Program and Communities Needs



Identify Needs

- Family
- Home Visitor
- Agency
- Community

Prioritizing Needs

- *How might Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs help determine where to begin with a family?*
- *When the family, home visitor, agency and community have different needs whose take precedent?*
- *What can you do when needs are out of sync?*

What Helps?

■ **What have you have learned over the years...**

** Reflect for a moment on what you know helps families who are overwhelmed and overwhelming*

** Share these at your table*

Supporting What Can You Do?

- Be Kind, compassionate and empathetic
- Be mindful of the lens you are looking at family through
- Take good care of yourself
- Build your capacity for sitting with the pain of
- Focus on strengths – family’s, yours, agencies and communities
- Have realistic goals
- Learn how to have difficult conversations
- Help family’s build support systems other than you
- Focus on building a trusting relationship with safety

“ANATOMY OF TRUST”

Brene' Brown – Super Soul

<https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-sz-002&hsimp=yhs-002&hspart=sz&p=brene+brown+anatomy+of+trust#id=3&vid=5622c0600a00117906d060c86694a621&action=click>

Braving – Brene' Brown

- **B –is for boundaries** - *you respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.*
- **R – is for reliability** – *You do what you say you'll do. This means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don't over promise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.*
- **A - is for accountability** – *You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.*
- **V – is for vault** – *You don't share information or experiences that are not your to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.*

Braving - continued

- **I – is for integrity** – *You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.*
- **N –is for nonjudgement** – *I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment.*
- **G - is for generosity** – *You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.*

Resources – Eco-Maps

- Samples of ecomaps

 - *Genogram Analytics -

 - https://www.genogramanalytics.com/examples_ecomaps.html

- Eco – Map Templates

 - *template.net

 - <https://www.template.net/design-templates/print/ecomap-template/>

Resources - Videos

■ Complexity Theory

**Waterloo Institute for Social Innovation and Resilience*

** <https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-institute-for-social-innovation-and-resilience/education/learning-modules/complex-problems-and-systems>*

■ Eco-Map

**How to draw an eco-map*

** https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search;_ylt=AwrVk.lZywNdFTEACwgPxQt.;_ylu=X3oDMTB0NjZjZzZhBGNvbG8DZ3ExBHBvcwMxBHZoaWQDBHNIYwNwaXZz?p=ecomaps&type=type80060-3985767177&hspart=sz&hsimp=yhs-002¶m1=1555344922&ei=UTF-8&fr=yhs-sz-002#id=1&vid=888e1c0794a9e3b02b8abeadf67f8197&action=view*

■ Radical Acceptance

**google search will take you to how to practice as a form of DBT*

Resources - Books

■ **Radical Acceptance**

**“Radical Acceptance” – Tara Brach*

“Radical Acceptance: Awakening the Love that Heals Fear & Shame” –Tara Brach

“Radical Acceptance: ”The Secret to Happy, Lasting Love” - Andrea Miller

■ **Vulnerability, Acceptance and Relationship Building – all by Brene’ Brown**

**“Rising Strong :The Reckoning. The Rumble. The Revolution.”*

**”Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone”*

**”Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.”*

CLOSING

“*One Love*” - Bob Marley and the Whalers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdB-8eLEW8g>