

Lecture#12

Youth: Potential and Challenges

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Understanding the Family Constellation

- None of us lives life alone. Those who tried are foredoomed to be disintegrated as human beings.
- The family is the basic unit of growth and experience, fulfillment or failure. It is also the basic of illness and health.
- The family is constantly changing and always strives for accommodation.
- With a change in family pattern, the bond of love and loyalty may be fortified or weakened.
- It is apparent that children experienced both love and hate toward their parents.

Understanding the Family Constellation

- The manner in which parents characteristically show their love for one another and for their children is of utmost significance in determining the emotional climate of the family.
- The pastoral counselor needs to understand family dynamics to effectively counsel the adolescent, he/she needs to comprehend the dynamic processes of emotional integration of the individual into his family role; the internal organization of individual personality and its historical development.

Understanding the Struggles of the Adolescent

- Inferiority feelings- the normal condition of all people; the source of all human striving
- Compensation- a motivation to overcome inferiority, to strive for higher levels of development.
- The inferiority complex- people who have a poor opinion of themselves and feel helpless and unable to cope with the demands of life.
- The superiority complex- a condition that develops when a person overcompensates for normal inferiority feelings.

Understanding the Struggles of the Adolescent

- Striving for superiority- a fundamental fact of life- it is the urge toward perfection or completion that motivates each of us.
- All human being has an ultimate goal, a final state of being, and a need to move toward it.
- This is called: fictional finalism-the idea that there is an imagined or potential goal that guides our behavior.
- This leads to a style of life- a unique character structure or pattern of personal behaviors and characteristics by which each of us strives for perfection. Basic styles of life include the dominant, getting, avoiding, and socially useful types.

Understanding the Struggles of the Adolescent

- Identity confusion- is associated with distress about long-term life goals, relationships, and values, etc.. Is not a mental disorder but relational.
- Post-pubertal display symptoms are more similar to those seen adults and are frequently accompanied by other disorders such as anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, substance abuse, eating disorders, or attention deficit disorders.
- Many of these depressed adolescents struggle with social issues and social functioning that is so critical with this age group.

Understanding the Struggles of the Adolescent

- School difficulties, social skills deficits, prominent suicidal thoughts and attempts are frequently observed.
- These adolescents are often rejected and viewed negatively by peers and teachers.
- These peer problems typically persist after the resolution of the depressive episode.

Understanding the birth order

- The first born child- typically was the center of attention- they have a happy, secure existence until the second born arrives. The first born takes unusual interest in maintaining order and authority. they become the organizers, conscientious and scrupulous about detail, authoritarian and conservative in attitude.
- The second born- the one who causes upheaval in the life of the first born. Competes with the first born for attention and strive to surpass the older siblings. They are more optimistic about the future and are likely to be competitive and ambitious.
- The youngest child- becomes the pet of the family- driven by the need to surpass the others.

Symptoms of Identity Struggle

- The typical manifestation is said to be:
 - Insecurity
 - Instability of mood and action
 - Egocentricity
 - Exhibitionism
 - Shifting images of self and emotional disorientation
 - Preoccupation with the physical, feeling of indifference, conflict with authority, fear of inadequacy, ect...
 - They seek for identity in the followings:

Through family relations

- Young people search for identity through family relations
 - Teens often try to wean themselves from their protecting parent. Individuality may also be found from reactions to the identities of a sibling. Teens rebel when they think they possess no distinctive talents.
- They try to establish themselves through personal prestige. They seek fame in things that make them look cool (cars, cigarette, cloths, music, hairstyle)
- To be authentic, appropriate behavior must accompany the status symbol.

Through grown up behavior

- Teens have strong desires to be like adults
- Because maturity is not always visible, teens often resort to behavior that is symbolic of adulthood.
- The most common is pleasure of smoking, drinking, drugs, and sex.
- Rebellion is the means that young people use as an attempt to resolve incongruent ideas and authentic identity.
- Rebellion results from a desire to be unique
- They engage in such behavior to gain independence
- A rebellious attitude frequently accompanied by an idealism that prompt them to reject authority.

Through others opinions

- Essential to identity formation is the aspect of validation.
- Teens want to know what their peers think about what they do and the way they look. This is because their identity is shaped by perception of how they are positively viewed. When they are aware of their weaknesses, they feel vulnerable
- Adolescent may become remarkably intolerant and even cruel as they exclude others on the basis of minor aspects such as dress codes.
- Eric Erikson sees the cliquishness of adolescence as a defense mechanism against identity confusion.

Why do adolescent struggle with identity

- Adolescence is a period of transition that creates stress
- Identity is a thing that is ingrained in relationship that leads to gaining knowledge about oneself, creates security and sense of belonging.
- They struggle because of:
 - Their physical change – hormones set in motion
 - Their sexual change- new behaviors, thoughts, characteristic shapes
 - Their social change- dominance and subservient- the clash of civilization
 - Religious change- the crisis of belief
 - Moral change- what ought I do- according to who?

How Adolescents Deals with Life Stressors

- Hold them in- they do so through
 - sublimation→ transforming the unwanted feelings through actions that are more socially acceptable- they disguise their feelings by being active-
 - though emotional insulation-keep potential pain at bay- they suppress all feelings of pain
 - By intellectualizing it- interpreting life stressors cognitively.
 - Through repression- pushing thoughts, feelings out of awareness.

How Adolescents Deals with Life Stressors

- Act them out- they express the feelings through impulses
 - Object relation- (displacement)- transferring feeling to a more neutral object
 - Regression- retreating to an earlier period in life
 - Projection- shifting the blame- make another person or thing responsible for failures
 - Denial- refusing to accept reality for what it is
 - Avoidance- refusal to address the issues

Understanding why the Adolescents Struggle

- Anger- physical signs of anger is rapid talking, raised voice, shakiness, trembling, isolation, less successful, more impulsive.
- Anger is so common during adolescence that many people believe its absence of maladaptive sign.
- At home they fight their siblings and combat parents.
- Stress- in general, adolescents experience stress when the demands placed on them exceed the resources they have available to meet those demands.
- Negative experiences, a turbulent family life, can reduce one's overall sense of well-being.

Understanding why the Adolescents Struggle

- Unusually traumatic events, such as rape and natural disasters, may develop post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Increasing the level of stress and overt hostility through verbal and physical aggression, threats of separation and divorce, severe spousal denigration, criticism, or blame.
- All these things may lead to Depression
- Depression is one of the major causes why people become fragile- that is when you hear psychologist and your doctor talks about a diagnosis, known as depressive disorder.

Understanding why the Adolescents Struggle

- Mania often affects thinking, judgment, and social behavior in ways that cause serious problems and embarrassment.
- Mania, left untreated, may worsen to a psychotic state.
- The best predictor that an adolescent might be depressed is by far a personal history of depression.
- Depression can be a source of impairment, creates a lack of social skills. Depression may also be caused by childhood adversities. A child's perception of childhood is far more shaping than the realities.
- A child who felt no love in childhood had a traumatic childhood even if there was no single trauma. They are unpredictable and, at times, very embarrassing.

Mood Episodes

- These episodes refer to a period of time when a person feels abnormally happy or sad.
- These mood episodes are not diagnosable as separate entities, but serve as the “building blocks” for identifying a codeable diagnostic disorder.
- There are four types of episodes: major depressive, manic, mixed, and hypomanic disorder
- For a period of two weeks the individual feels depressed, cannot enjoy life, has problem with eating and sleeping, guilt, loss of energy, trouble concentrating, thoughts of death.

Mood Episodes

- Associated features are:
- Panic attack, separation anxiety, sexual functioning, substance abuse, suicide attempts, irritability, withdrawal.
- Depressed children are more likely to be rejected by peers, are perceived as less likable, and have more negative social behaviors.

How to help

- Explore the dominant childhood phobia, i.e. feelings (hurt that was ignored, or inadequate positive or negative feelings that may or may not have had an effect on the adolescent).
- Secondly, dominant adult phobias are extremely frustrating because from other people's perspective, there is no visible real basis for the fear.
- Look for unrealistic fear of failure, rejection, or insignificance, uncover the dominant emotional need (e.g., the need to be accepted, loved, and/or recognized).

How to help

- Failure means three very different things to people. Fear of failure could mean loss of favored position, feeling of personal inadequacy because of poor performance, fear of not being respected as an adult.
- No emotional healthy human being wants to fail, but that is different from having a dominant phobia in the area of failure. The dominant phobia is often tied to the emotional mask. Your emotional need is a one word answer to the “why” question of your life.
- Dominant emotional need is the focus of decisions, basis of listening, on which one judges relationships, one chooses to join a group, one reevaluate crisis, success and disappointment.

How Adolescents try to meet some of their needs

- Adolescents abuse substances such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco for varied and complicated reasons and they pay significant price for its usage.
- Hospitals and emergency departments record countless amount of damage to health by substance abuse and its link to physical trauma.
- Finding effective treatment for and prevention of substance abuse has been difficult.

The Effect of Abused Substance

- Abused substances produce intoxication and alter judgment, perception, attention, or physical control.
- Withdrawal-an effect caused by cessation or reduction in the amount of the substance used may cause a range of symptoms like: anxiety, seizures and hallucinations.
- It shares many of the same toxic effects as cocaine-heart attacks, dangerously high blood pressure, and stroke. Drug overdose may also cause death.
- People who use Tobacco cite many reasons for using it: it ranges from pleasure, improved performance and vigilance, relief of depression, curbing hunger, and weight control.

Club Drugs

- These are the more popular club drugs.
- Ecstasy (also called MDMA, Adam, STP): this is a stimulant and hallucinogen used to improve mood and to maintain energy, often for all-night dance parties.
- Long-term use may cause damage to the brain's ability to regulate sleep, pain, memory, and emotions.
- GHB (also called Liquid XTC, G, blue nitro): Once sold at health food stores, GHB's effects are related to dose. Effects range from mild relaxation to coma or death. GHB is often used as a date-rape drug because it is tasteless, colorless, and acts as a powerful sedative.

Club Drugs

- LSD and hallucinogenic mushrooms can cause hallucinations, numbness, nausea, and increased heart rate.
- Long-term effects include unwanted "flashbacks" and psychosis (hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, and mood disturbances).
- PCP (also known as angel dust, hog, love boat): PCP is a powerful anesthetic used in veterinary medicine.
- Its effects are similar to those of ketamine but often stronger.

Substance Abuse Causes

- Use and abuse of substances of any type may begin in childhood or the teen years.
- Factors within a family that influence a child's early development have been shown to be related to increased risk of drug abuse.
 - Chaotic home environment- Ineffective parenting- Lack of nurturing and parental attachment
- Factors related to a child's socialization outside the family may also increase risk of drug abuse.
 - Inappropriately aggressive or shy behavior in the classroom- Poor social coping skills- Poor school performance- Association with a deviant peer group- Perception of approval of drug use behavior

Basic Needs of Adolescents

- Adolescents have one basic need which require two kinds of solutions:
- The most basic need is a sense of personal worth, and acceptance of oneself as a whole, as real self.
- The two require inputs are *significance* (purpose, importance, adequacy for a job, meaningfulness, impact) *and security* (unconditional love, tolerance, and acceptance).
- Regardless of the needs, adolescents are motivated to meet them. They behave in ways designed to secure their felt needs.

Basic Needs of Adolescents

- Their sense of needs develop their sense of determination toward the pursuit of their felt needs.
- When the desired goals are not reached, they may turn to a host of behaviors (alcohol, sex, spending, violence, etc...) often design to compensate their gratification.
- In your approach as a pastoral counselor, you need to use several techniques to address the issue of the individual adolescent with a goal to emphasize the social dimension of his/her life and how these needs may create a mental problem.
- Mental disorder, involves not only traumatic intrapsychic processes but trouble interpersonal relationships and even strong societal pressures.

How to Counsel Adolescents

- This initial phase is called, "free association."
- Free association is a process in which a patient gives a running account of thoughts, wishes, sensation, and mental images as they occur.
- The patient is encouraged to reveal every thought or feeling, no matter how personal, painful, or seemingly unimportant.
- In this approach, the pastoral counselor will learn as much as possible about the adolescent current situation and difficulties, his/her accomplishment, how he/she relates to others, and the history the adolescent family background and context of living.

Basic Needs of Adolescents

- During the counseling sessions, observe resistance at some level, an inability or unwillingness from the adolescent to discuss certain ideas, desires, experiences.
- It is also called *repression*- an act by which the patient prevents a threatening thought from emerging into awareness. At this point, you may note reaction formation, this is when he/she masks an unacceptable emotion by focusing on the opposite, often in an exaggerated way. Then he/she may re-project the issue at the external world rather than to the self.
- During the course of therapy, the adolescent may experience emotional reactions toward the counselor and transference his/her anger at him/her.

Basic Needs of Adolescents

- Sometimes the patient may regress as a mean of controlling an emotional story that may be too much to handle at this time.
- These things are often related to the adolescent's sexual and pleasurable feelings, to hostile, resentful feelings toward others.
- When the repressed material comes out in therapy, the adolescent may claim that it is unimportant, absurd, irrelevant, or too unpleasant to discuss.

Basic Needs of Adolescents

- This resistance to disclose information may hinder the development of the individual toward next stage of problem solving.
- The pastoral counselor needs to re-assure the adolescent of the importance of disclosing information that may be considered embarrassing.
- In so doing, the counselor tries to breakdown the resistance and enable the patient to face these painful realities in a safe way.
- They goal is to eliminate the immediate symptoms of psychopathology and help the adolescent to reorganization his/her personality feelings.

Common Pitfalls in Counseling Adolescents- listening

- In the session, the counselor will work to examine empathy (a form of emotional knowing) the experiencing of another's feeling- intuition (how does he comprehends the issue at hand) -and introspection (how the patient became aware of his understanding).
- He talks about the importance of "Hearing and understanding," he says in Mk 4:23 *"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."*
- The apostle James tells us in Jas 1:19 *"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak i and slow to become angry,"*
- And in Pr 18:13 we read *"He who answers before listening— that is his folly and his shame."*

The Importance of Listening

- Listening requires reflection
 - Unspoken messages communicated when one engages in reflective listening:
 - *you are important- I respect you- I want to understand- You have the resources and wisdom to find your own solutions- Keep talking- you are making sense- this implies the idea of Acceptance- Acceptance is not approval. It simply implies the idea that I take what you say at face value.*

Active Listening

- Clarification serves two basic purposes- to gather additional information- To help explore and issue more thoroughly- to discover whether or not there is a greater issue of concern.
- Active listening is the act by which the counselor mirrors the client's internal process, thoughts, insights and feelings.
- Active listening:
 - Unearth hidden feelings, takes away the fear of feeling- and create a safety net for the counselee
 - Helps the counselee to become more confident of finding ways to deal with his or her own issue.

Roadblocks of active listening

- Roadblocks are a series of necessary behavior that often takes place during the counseling session but are effectively blocking and diverting the person's own exploration of meaning. They are:
 - Ordering, directing, or commanding- Warning or threatening- Giving advice, making suggestions, providing solutions-
 - Persuading with logic, arguing, lecturing- Moralizing, preaching, telling them their duty-
 - Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming- Agreeing, approving, praising-
 - Shaming, ridiculing, name-calling- Interpreting, analyzing- Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling-

Helpful key to listening

- Col 4:6 "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."
- Active listening earns the counselor the right to share information with the counselee.

Discussion

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