Clinical Application Paper Part I & II

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Introduction

The case study revolves around a Hispanic family where the children have been adopted by their Spanish-speaking grandparents. The children's biological parents are divorced, with the mother struggling with addiction to methamphetamine and alcohol. The grandparents took custody of the children due to the mother's addictive behaviors and abusive relationships. The children experienced family discord and abuse during their time with their biological parents. While concerns over the legal status of the grandparents exist, they remain in the country. The grandparents face financial difficulties and have struggled to provide for the children. In recent years, all the children, except the youngest girl, have moved out of the grandparents' home. The youngest boy, now 17, wants the 13-year-old girl to come live with him but is being prohibited by the grandparents. The grandparents, described as verbally abusive and racist, limit the girl's interactions with people outside the home. The 13-year-old girl is attracted to African-American boys but fears her grandparents' intolerance toward dating outside her race. She identifies more with African Americans but feels pressured to date/marry someone Hispanic or white. The family faces cultural identity, acculturation experiences, and discrimination challenges.

The cultural identity development of this young girl has been shaped and nurtured throughout her short life experience. Theories of racial identity development and sociopolitical forces, such as Root's framework, the concept of intersectionality, her social location, and the acculturation process, could explain some of her family dynamics and her current worldview.

Theories and Models

Cultural identity is composed of a number of sociocultural factors, such as age, ethnicity, gender, and social location, that overlap with each other (Lee, 2019). If it were to be identified, some of the highlighted factors shaping her identity and personality formation would be the

dynamic of her grandparents' socioeconomic status and the intersectionality of her social location.

Root's ecological framework for understanding identity development for multiracial persons considers several factors affecting identity development, including regional and generational racial history, sexual orientation, gender, and socioeconomic status (Lee, 2019). Family variables may include extended family acceptance, sense of belonging, language spoken at home, parents' racial identity, and/or home values. In addition, physical appearance and neighborhood represent various elements in an ecological system that affect development (Lee, 2019). Given the family's socioeconomic status, the young girl may have been exposed to the cultural concerns other races and minorities live daily. Lee (2019) shares that African Americans and Hispanics represent the largest groups affected by poverty. Her statement, "white people are crazy," aligns with the views someone other than white colored skin would express. When conceptualizing her cultural identity development, as shown by Lee (2019), one can see that the individual can move from unawareness of identity towards awareness, acknowledgment, and understanding of cultural realities.

These different factors and dynamics lead to the notion of intersectionality, which expresses that human life cannot be explained by a single factor (Lee, 2019). What we know about this young girl is that her strong cultural traditions from the "Familia" may be generating stress to her identity development within her social location. Furthermore, acculturation can be inevitable as increased contact with a non-heritage culture increases the likelihood of cultural change by frequency of contact alone (Drankus, 2010).

Multicultural Counseling Competencies

The ability to establish, maintain, and successfully conclude a counseling relationship with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds can be achieved through multicultural counseling competency's foundational and cross-cultural dimensions. Lee (2019) shares the framework with its eight components organized in these two dimensions. To the foundational extent, it is located on the importance of knowledge of counseling theoretical traditions, such as the foundations of counseling practice of thinkers such as Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, and Carl Rogers, among others, and the ethical knowledge and aspiration of the ethical standards of American Counseling Association (ACA) call on counselors (Lee, 2019).

In the cross-cultural dimension, one will become self-aware of one's cultural realities and explore one's cultural background. This dimension requires multicultural counseling theoretical knowledge. The counselor must understand what cultural identity is and how it develops, different social systems, and systemic forces such as racism or classism, among others, because these play a significant role in a person's way of being. Cross-cultural encounters are a key dimension for competency as books, classes, and workshops do not offer the same genuine experience an encounter with an individual with a different cultural background can give. Indubitable global literacy is part of this dimension as the breadth of information extends over the major domains of human diversity (Lee, 2019). Cross-cultural skill development and commitment to social justice are imperative to become cross-cultural competent and embrace the advocacy to embrace diversity and humanity.

When applying these competencies to the clients in the case study, it is essential for me as a counselor to develop self-awareness of my own cultural biases and prejudices. I should also strive to understand the cultural worldview of the family members, including their Hispanic

heritage, and the impact of their acculturation experiences. Additionally, I need to develop culturally appropriate interventions that are sensitive to the unique needs and challenges the family faces.

<center>**Cultural Values and Acculturation**</center>

Cultural identity refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a specific group and the part of one's personality attributable to membership in that group (Lee, 2019). It is interesting to see how certain cultural norms from the Latin culture may be at risk in this situation. For Latinxs, there is a notion of "Familia" (family) first. Respect for and loyalty to the family are expected (Lee, 2019). Besides her being afraid of her grandparents learning about her attraction to African-American boys, the family system has been broken, leaving that strong cultural aspect to be questioned. The young girl could be driven away from her heritage and cultural traditions as her relationship with her grandparents is unhealthy. Furthermore, as she begins to raise her racial consciousness, she may start to realize the cultural realities.

The implications of each family member's group and family structure, cultural strengths, historical and sociopolitical backgrounds, and education concerns are essential to consider. The grandparents' poverty and limited resources contribute to their struggles in providing for the children. The girl's desire to live with her biological father but being forbidden by her father's girlfriend highlights the complexity of family dynamics and the influence of multiple individuals on the girl's thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. There is a gap between the granddaughter's and the grandparent's worldview. The process of adaptation that the young girl experiences as she interacts with a dominant culture that differs from her heritage culture is the process of acculturation (Drankus, 2010). As first-generation American, Lee (2019) shares that it may be necessary to process any acculturation gaps as the attempt to reconcile cultures may cause stress.

Power and Privilege

As a counselor, it is important to recognize the power dynamics involved, especially considering the clients' cultural background and socioeconomic status. As Lee (2019) shares, if counselors can understand clients' worldviews, they can help them identify, negotiate, and explain their position in social class environments. Power dynamics are evident in various aspects of the case, including the grandparents' control over the children and their restrictions on the 13-year-old's interactions. This last observation could be attributed to their cultural background. According to Lee (2019), in traditional Latinx households, males are typically allowed more social and familial freedoms than females. The grandparents hold power not only as the primary caregivers but also as the decision-makers regarding the child's living arrangements. While it is important to understand the power dynamics of a family, as a counselor it is important to acknowledge the possible situations of power and privileges a counselor goes through in a cross-cultural encounter. The counselor must acknowledge their cultural privilege, be willing to learn from diverse clients, and make commitment to advocacy and social justice while keeping up to date in their theoretical orientation (Lee, 2019)

Microaggressions and Racism

Chester Pierce coined the term microaggressions as everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, which communicate hostile, derogatory, and demeaning messages that threaten, intimidate, and relegate marginalized groups to inferior status or treatment (Hope College, 2020) The children in this case have experienced microaggressions and racism within their family system. The grandparents' use of derogatory terms towards their granddaughter reflects a microaggressive behavior that undermines her self-esteem and can contribute to mental health issues, such as calling her a "dumb ass." The grandparents' racial and

homophobic biases further marginalize individuals who do not fit their definition of acceptability. This is an example of systemic racism and discrimination that the counselor must address and challenge in their work with the family.

Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusivity

In this case, social justice, equity, and inclusivity must be prioritized. The counselor must advocate for the children's best interests and ensure their well-being. As Bell et al. (2012) recommend, educators must each acknowledge the harm that racism has, is, and will continue to inflict if they do not continue to engage in critical reflection, self-awareness, and honest dialogue.

The counselor should work to create a safe and inclusive space for the children, where their diverse identities and experiences are respected and valued. This may involve challenging the grandparents' discriminatory beliefs and behaviors while providing support and resources to help the children navigate their identities and cultural backgrounds.

Help-Seeking Behaviors

In this case, each client may have different help-seeking behaviors influenced by their cultural identity and past experiences. The grandparents may be reluctant to seek outside help due to their cultural values and fear of judgment from their church community. Usually, during stressful or challenging times, Latinx families traditionally turn to prayer and spiritual practices, looking to religious and spiritual leaders for counseling (Lee, 2019). Similarly, The biological father may be hesitant to seek help due to concerns about child support and the potential impact on his new family.

On the other hand, the 17-year-old boy's desire to have his sister live with him indicates his recognition of the negative environment she is in and his willingness to provide support. This

young dad represents the Latinx culture of "machismo," which best describes a man who is

proud, respectful, and cares and provides for his family (Lee, 2019). The 13-year-old girl may

seek help by expressing her desire to live with her father or brother in an attempt to escape the

abusive and neglectful environment. Help-seeking behaviors can be both harmful and helpful. In

this case, seeking help and support outside of the family system can be incredibly beneficial for

the well-being of the children. However, the fear and resistance from the grandparents and

biological father may hinder the process and make intervening challenging.

Spiritual Beliefs

In this case, the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' views and the counselor's worldview

is significant. The grandparents' strong Catholic faith influences their beliefs and attitudes about

family, tradition, and their perception of acceptable behavior. This may contribute to their

resistance to change and their reluctance to seek help outside of their community.

The clients' spiritual beliefs may impact the counseling experience by shaping their values,

expectations, and perspectives on certain issues. The counselor needs to be respectful and

sensitive to their spiritual beliefs while recognizing potential limitations or challenges that may

arise due to religious differences. It may be necessary for the counselor to explore with each

family member the importance that he or she places on religion or spirituality and assess if

religion may help them through their family challenges (Lee, 2019)

Countertransference

When planning to advocate, counselors may need to be cautious. This family can raise

sympathy for the young family members. It is clear that the 13-year-old girl is in need of a

healthier environment and that the young father could benefit from some extra help or attention.

As Lee (2019) shares, given clients' experiences, counselors may find it tempting to become

overly emotionally involved with clients, and countertransference may occur when counselors feel maternal or paternal instincts in caring for clients. Furthermore, the counselors must be cautious about not projecting their own values and beliefs onto the clients, as advocating for clients can be frustrating and disappointing, and these feelings need to be managed professionally (Lee, 2019).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this case highlights the importance of applying multicultural perspectives and diversity awareness in counseling. Power and privilege, help-seeking behaviors, spiritual beliefs, and countertransference all have significant implications in this case. The counselor must navigate power dynamics, address harmful behaviors, and promote social justice, equity, and inclusivity. They must also understand the diverse help-seeking behaviors of each client, respect different spiritual beliefs, and address any cultural biases or concerns that may impact the therapeutic process. By doing so, the counselor can provide competent and sensitive therapy that meets the needs of the clients in a multicultural context.

When working with this family, the counselor will need to adopt a philosophy that views each client as a unique individual while at the same time taking into consideration the client's common experiences as a human being and the specific experiences that come from their cultural background (Lee, 2019). That is helping everybody gain perspective of everybody's behaviors, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings.

Reference

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