

KMC 3063 Family Counselling

Unit One: Understanding Family



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What is Family?

- ∞ A dictionary defines family as 'A group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit'.
- ∞ Another definition is - "Two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another and reside usually in the same dwelling."



∞ A family is more than a collection of individuals sharing a specific physical and psychological space. While families occur in diverse forms and complexities in today's rapidly changing society, and represent a multiplicity of cultural heritages, each may be considered a natural, sustained social system with the following unique properties:

- An evolved set of rules
- Many assigned and ascribed roles for its members
- An organized power structure
- Intricate overt and covert forms of communication
- Numerous ways of negotiating and problem solving that permit various tasks to be performed effectively
- (Golden berg, 2013)

Who Makes Family?

- ∞ The traditional family consists of a father, mother and children - the standard family.
- ∞ The idea that parents and children make a family is a basic definition. It changes in the 21st century showcases;
 - children raised in single parent homes,
 - children raised by grandparents,
 - families opt to have no children
 - friends/pets as family

Family
like branches on a tree,
we all grow in different
directions, yet our roots remain as one

Redefining Family

- ∞ Regardless of how you choose to define your family unit, whether it is traditional or unique, your definition is of the family unit that works for you.
- ∞ As the saying goes, "Family is what you make it." Whether made of blood relatives, friends, or pets, or a combination of these, your family can offer you the support you need to thrive.

Together
we make a
Family

Definition of Family

- ∞ According to the U.S. Census Bureau:
 - "A family includes a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption".
- ∞ Family, as defined by a 1970s Long Island, New York housing code (upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974):
 - "One or more persons related by blood, adoption, or marriage, living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit, exclusive of household servants. A number of persons but not exceeding two (2) living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit though not related by blood, adoption, or marriage shall be deemed to constitute a family".

∞ Three Views of "Family," by the U.S. Supreme Court:

- A traditional “nuclear family” of two parents and their children, and where the parents are presumed to be acting in the best interests of their children. In such a family, there is no need to give the children their own voice – even when parents do such things as institutionalize their children;
- An extended-kind model of family made up of a community of parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives which should be recognized as a primary family, even if the blood-ties are not as strong as a nuclear family;
- An individualist model where family members are fairly autonomous and that individuality should be respected.

∞ Family, as defined by Statistics Canada:

- “ A now-married couple, a common-law couple or a lone-parent with a child or youth who is under the age of 25 and who does not have his or her own spouse or child living in the household. Now-married couples and common-law couples may or may not have such children and youth living with them. Now-married couples and common-law couples are classified as husband-wife families and the partners in the couple are classified as spouses.”

Full Definition of FAMILY



- 1** : a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head : **HOUSEHOLD**
- 2 a** : a group of persons of **common** ancestry : **CLAN**
b : a people or group of peoples regarded as deriving from a common stock : **RACE**
- 3 a** : a group of people united by certain convictions or a common **affiliation** : **FELLOWSHIP**
b : the staff of a high official (as the President)
- 4** : a group of things related by common characteristics: as
a : a closely related series of elements or chemical compounds
b : a group of soils with similar chemical and physical properties (as texture, pH, and mineral content) that comprise a category ranking above the series and below the subgroup in soil **classification**
c : a group of related languages descended from a single ancestral language

What is Family Counselling

- ∞ It is a branch of psychotherapy that works with families and couples in intimate relationships to nurture change and development (Dictionary).
- ∞ It is a type of psychological counseling (psychotherapy) that helps family members improve communication and resolve conflicts (Mayo Clinic).
- ∞ It is whereby parents, or even other family members, work with trained individual's such as social workers, psychologists and licensed counselors to achieve a relative stability (Psychology Dictionary)

Types of Family

∞ Nuclear Family

- A core family unit of husband, wife, & their children.
- Has traditionally been seen as the main provider of socialization for the young & as a preserver of cultural traditions.
- Viewed as the social grouping in which society sanctions sexual relationships.
- The traditional nuclear family household is shrinking on both number and percentage.

Single Parent Family

- A family that includes one parent, either biological or adoptive, who is solely relationship for care of self and children.

Remarried Family

- A family created when two people marry and at least one of them has been married previously and has a child/children.

Other Types of Families

∞ Dual-Career Family

- Both marital partners are engaged in work that is developmental in sequence and to which they have a high commitment.
- The acronym DINK (dual income, no kids) is one that is used to describe a portion of this population.
- Balancing the dual career and family life can lead to satisfaction as well as conflict.
- Learning new skills, staying flexible, and continually assessing and revising work and family life are necessary if dual-career couples are to thrive.

∞ Childless Family

- Decide not to have children or remain childless as a result of chance such as (marrying late) or biology (infertility).
- Childless couples have opportunities and advantages less stress, more discretionary income, and greater options to serve in the community, but they face pressures and may be stigmatized if they elect to be childless.

∞ **Gay/Lesbian Family**

- Are made up of same sex couples without children or with children from a previous marriage or as a result of artificial insemination.
- Better educated and have higher incomes than heterosexual couples, which partially explains their varied lifestyles.
- Face some form of discrimination and prejudice in the communities in which they live.

∞ Aging Family

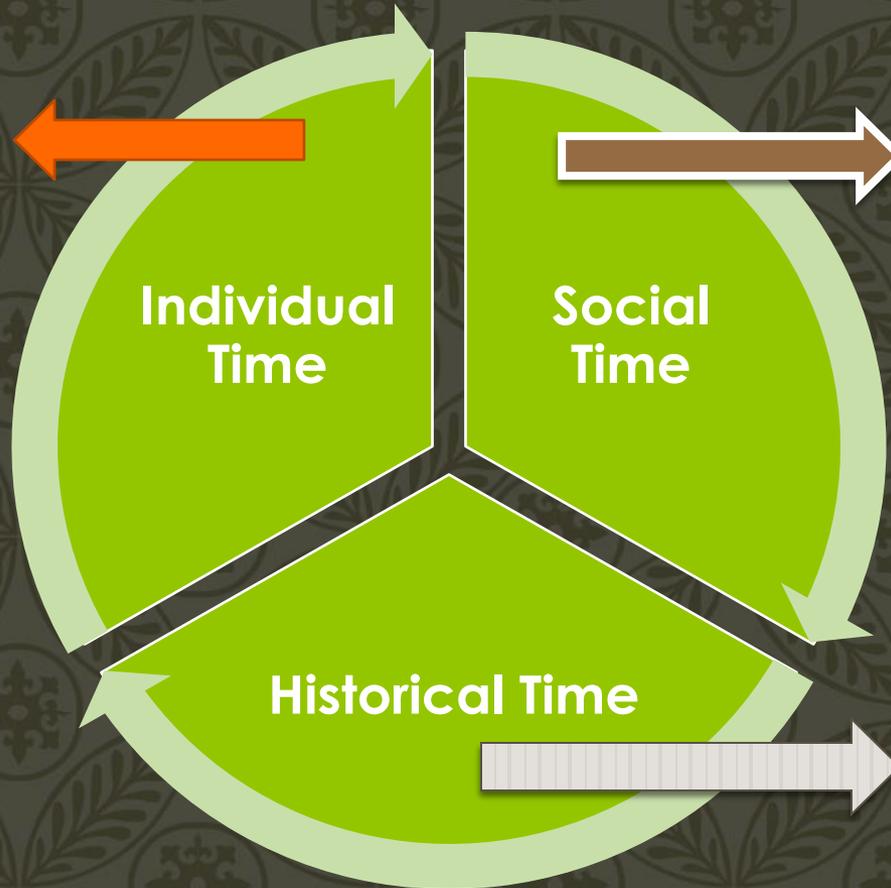
- A family headed by those 65 years old and above.
- The focus of this family type is on health, transition to retirement, widowhood, sexual dysfunction, dealing with adult children, grand parenting, imparting wisdom, and long-lived marriages.
- Aging families are involved with the launching or re-launching of their young adult children and sometimes in the care of their grand children.

∞ **Multigenerational Family**

- Households that include a child, a parent, and a grand parent are considered multi generational families.
- By the year 2020, the typical family will consist of at least four generations
- Two factors; the economy and medical advancement are influencing the increase in the number if these families.

Individual & Family Development

The span of life time between one's birth & death



Characterized by landmark social events such as marriage, parenthood and retirement

The era in which people live, that is the culture

Six Stages Cycle

1. Leaving home: Single young adults
2. The joining of families through marriage: The new couple
3. Families with young children
4. Families with adolescents
5. Launching families and moving on
6. Families in later life

TABLE 2.2 Stages of the Family Life Cycle

FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE	EMOTIONAL PROCESS OF TRANSITION: KEY PRINCIPLES	SECOND-ORDER CHANGES IN FAMILY STATUS REQUIRED TO PROCEED DEVELOPMENTALLY
Leaving home: single young adults	Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Differentiation of self in relation to family of origin b. Development of intimate peer relationship c. Establishment of self in respect to work and financial independence
The joining of families through marriage: the new couple	Commitment to new system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formation of marital system b. Realignment of relationships with extended families and friends to include spouse
Families with young children	Accepting new members into the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adjusting marital system to make space for children b. Joining in child rearing, financial, and household tasks c. Realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grandparenting roles

Families with adolescents

Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to permit children's independence and grandparents' frailties

- grandparenting roles
- a. Shifting of parent-child relationships to permit adolescent to move into and out of system
 - b. Refocus on midlife marital and career issues
 - c. Beginning of shift toward caring for older generation

Launching children and moving on

Accepting a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system

- a. Renegotiation of marital system as a dyad
- b. Development of adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents
- c. Realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren
- d. Dealing with disabilities and death of parents (grandparents)

Families in later life

Accepting the shifting generational roles

- a. Maintaining own and/or couple functioning and interests in face of physiological decline: exploration of new familial and social role options
- b. Support for more central role of middle generation
- c. Making room in the system for the wisdom and experience of the elderly; supporting the older generation without over functioning for them
- d. Dealing with loss of spouse, siblings, and other peers and preparation for death

An Additional Stage of the Family Life Cycle for Divorcing Families

TABLE 2.5 An Additional Stage of the Family Life Cycle for Divorcing Families

PHASE	EMOTIONAL PROCESS OF TRANSITION:		
	PREREQUISITE ATTITUDE	DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES	
Divorce	The decision to divorce	Acceptance of inability to resolve marital tensions sufficiently to continue relationship	Acceptance of one's own part in the failure of the marriage
	Planning the breakup of the system	Supporting viable arrangements for all parts of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working cooperatively on problems of custody, visitation, and finances b. Dealing with extended family about the divorce
	Separation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Willingness to continue cooperative co-parental relationship and joint financial support of children b. Work on resolution of attachment to spouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mourning loss of intact family b. Restructuring marital and parent-child relationships and finances; adaptation to living apart c. Realignment of relationships with extended family; staying connected with spouse's extended family
	The divorce	More work on emotional divorce: overcoming hurt, anger, guilt, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mourning loss of intact family; giving up fantasies of reunion b. Retrieval of hopes, dreams, expectation from the marriage c. Staying connected with extended families

An Additional Stage of the Family Life Cycle for Divorcing Families: Post-Divorce Family

Post-divorce family	Single parent (custodial household or primary residence)	Willingness to maintain financial responsibilities, continue parental contact with ex-spouse, and support contact of children with ex-spouse and his or her family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Retrieval of hopes, dreams, expectation from the marriage c. Staying connected with extended families
	Single parent (noncustodial)	Willingness to maintain financial responsibilities and parental contact with ex-spouse and to support custodial parent's relationship with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Making flexible visitation arrangement with ex-spouse and family b. Rebuilding own financial resources c. Rebuilding own social network

Source: McGoldrick and Carter, 1999, p. 375.

As we have noted, relationship changes must be addressed and a new

Family Transitions

TABLE 2.3 Common Transition Points through the Life Cycle

DUVALL STAGE	MAJOR TRANSITION TO BE ACHIEVED
1. Married couple	Commitment to each other
2. Childbearing family	Developing parent roles
3. Preschool children	Accepting child's personality
4. School children	Introducing children to institutions (school, church, sports)
5. Teenagers	Accepting adolescence (social and sexual role changes)
6. Launching children	Accepting child's independent adult role
7. Middle-aged parents	Letting go—facing each other again
8. Aging family members	Accepting old age

Source: Based on Duvall, 1977, and Barnhill and Longo, 1978.

Ethnicity & Family

- ∞ The ethnic background of families influences their concept of life cycles and their behaviors in regard to life events.
- ∞ Different ethnic groups within our culture have different language patterns that affect the way they communicate.
- ∞ Understanding the ethnicity background may improve the communication and develop the trust in the family.

Illness & Family

- ∞ The onset of an illness in a family member can disrupt life cycles temporarily or permanently.
- ∞ Illness represents one of the major adaptational challenges for the entire family system, as it attempts to cope with loss and dysfunction and tries to re-organize itself.
- ∞ Some families will have to confront the physical and cognitive declines that older members often experience.
- ∞ Many elderly people experience simple forgetting; but others endure more serious losses of cognitive capacity in the forms of dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

∞ The End..

