Invisible Loyalties
Uncovering the Transgenerational Impact of Addiction

Aaron Olson, MS, CMHC, SUDC

Definitions

“We become traumatized when our ability to respond to a perceived threat is in someway overwhelming,” (Levine, 2008)

“Research demonstrates that there are biological, psychological, and philosophical after effects of trauma. The person becomes a victim and will likely experience a rupture in his/her daily routine. Coping and adaptation patterns will be passed down to future generations. This process of passing down family behavioral patterns is considered to be done at both conscious and unconscious levels.” (Kahane-Nissenbaum, 2011).
How Trauma is Transmitted

PHYSICALLY
Epigenetics
In Utero

-Transmission Continued-

PSYCHOLOGICALLY
Silence
Over Disclosure
Identification
Re-Enactment
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Invisible Loyalties

◈ What if some invisible, unconscious loyalties linked to ancestors would contribute to our problems in everyday life?
◈ What if we couldn’t resolve some problems without connecting them to transgenerational issues?
◈ What if our lack of pursuing these issues will cause next generations carrying it on and on?

Would it be worth it to explore what is unconscious yet seriously affecting our life?
Invisible Loyalties

1. Who held the power in the primary relationship you witnessed as a child?
2. How was that power used?
3. How were feelings treated?
4. Did you see affection between them?
5. How were problems solved?
6. Was there open communication?
7. Phrases

Genograms

“Genograms help a clinician get to know a family. They thus become an important way of “joining” with families in therapy. By creating a systematic perspective that helps to track family issues through space and time, genograms enable an interviewer to reframe, detoxify, and normalize emotion-laden issues.” McGoldrick, Gerson, and Petry (2008)

✦ 3 Generation Genograms
✦ Missing Information
The Alcoholic Family

Regulatory Routines

Homeostasis

- Temperament
1. Daily Routine
2. Behavioral Range
3. Interactional Distance
4. “Goodness of Fit”
5. Rhythmicity

The Alcoholic Family

Family Identity

1. Ethics/Morals
2. Traditions (Holidays, Birthdays, Vacations, etc.)
3. Rituals (Weddings, Baptisms, Bar Mitzvah, etc.)

Problem Solving

1. Increased Affect
2. Shock and Awe

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Individual Roles

1. The Hero
2. The Scapegoat
3. The Lost Child
4. The Mascot

“...They took inventory alright but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness, and honesty, in the sense that we find it necessary, until they had told someone else all their life story.”  
Alcoholics Anonymous Basic Text p.73
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Identity

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References


