



Counselling Theory & Approaches

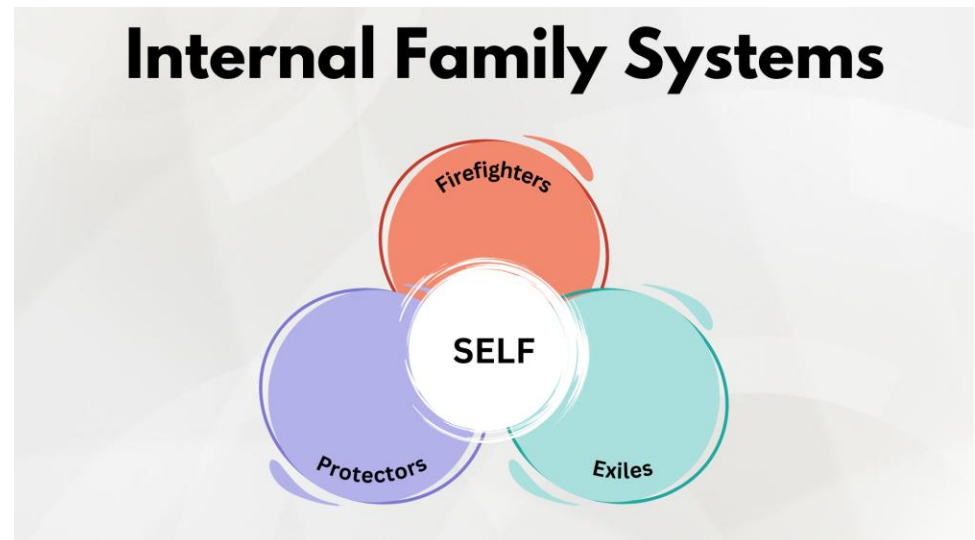
Systemic Therapy & Narrative Approaches

What is Systemic Therapy?

Relationships within
family/social systems.

Influences: Bateson,
Satir, Minuchin

Applications: Families,
couples, groups

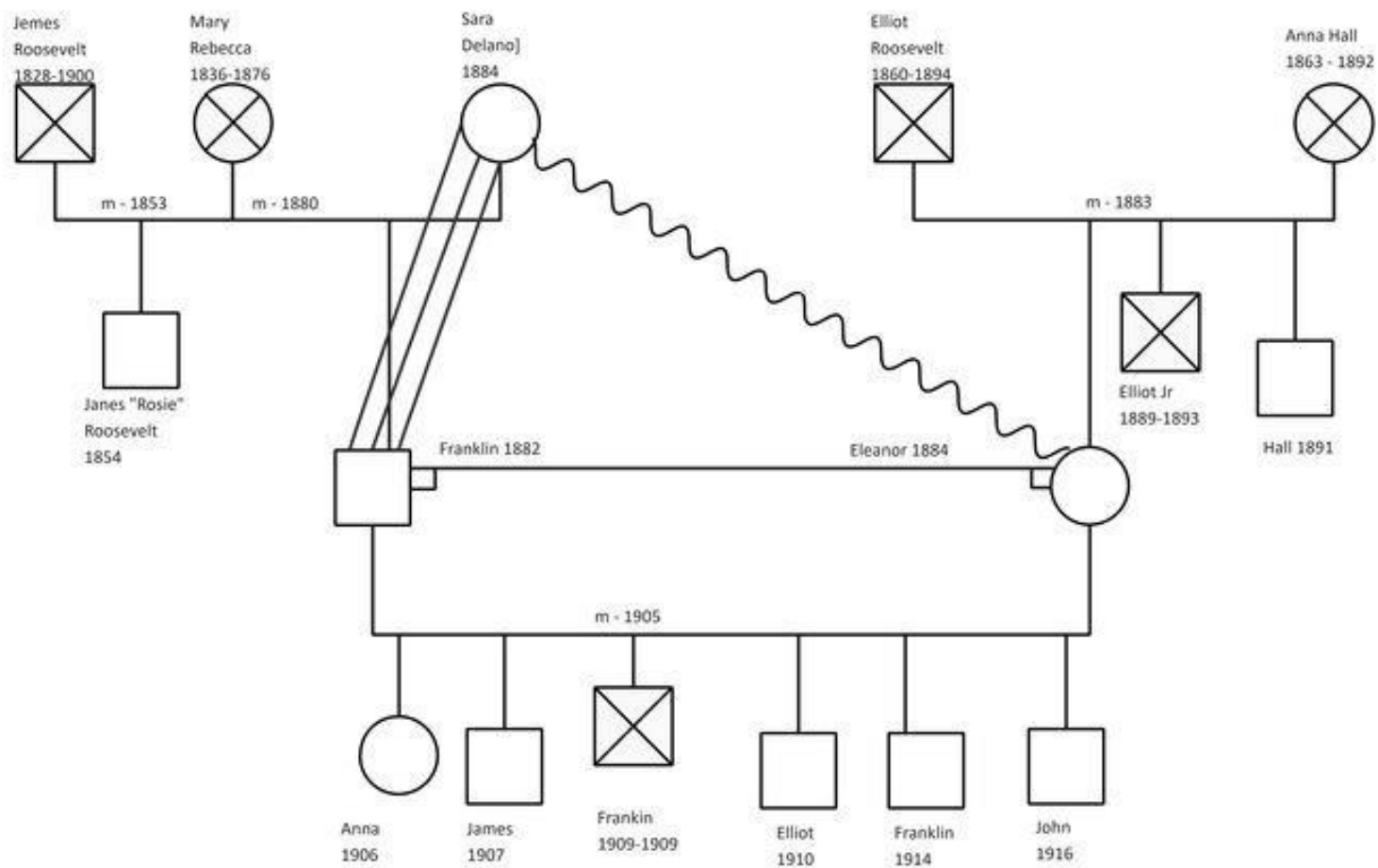


Key Concepts

- Circular causality
- Homeostasis & feedback loops
- Roles and patterns
- Context & culture
- Therapeutic neutrality

Techniques

- Genograms
- Circular questioning
- Reflecting teams
- Reframing



Therapist: (*addressing mother*) Can you tell me, how do you think your son feels when your husband and you argue?

Mother: I think he probably feels worried, maybe anxious.

Therapist: (*turning to the son*) Is that right? Do you feel worried or anxious when your parents argue, or is there another feeling you experience?

Son: Well, yeah. I feel worried, but mostly I feel kind of helpless. Like I can't do anything to fix it.

Therapist: (*to father*) Hearing your son say that he feels helpless when you and your wife argue, how does that make you feel?

Father: It makes me feel guilty. I don't want him to feel helpless. I never knew he felt that way.

Therapist: (*back to mother*) And hearing your husband express that guilt, what comes up for you?

Mother: It's surprising. I usually think he doesn't care about how these fights impact us emotionally, so it's helpful to hear that he actually does.

Therapist: *(to son again)* When you hear your mom say she's surprised your dad cares more than she thought, what does that do to your feeling of helplessness?

Son: It helps a bit, actually. Maybe things aren't as hopeless as they seem.

Therapist: *(to father)* Hearing your son now say that perhaps things aren't so hopeless, how does that change your perspective on the family arguments?

Father: It makes me want to communicate better, so we don't leave him feeling helpless. This dialogue illustrates how circular questioning gently encourages family members to see each other's perspectives, emotions, and experiences, creating new insights and fostering greater empathy within the family system.

Case Example

- Family scenario
- Techniques: circular questioning, reframing
- Outcomes

Strengths & Limitations

- + Addresses relational dynamics
- May overlook individual experiences

What is Narrative Therapy?

Stories
individuals/families
live by.

Influences: White,
Epston

Applications:
Individuals, families,
communities



Key Concepts

- Externalization of problems
- Dominant & alternative narratives
- Co-construction of stories
- Language & metaphors

Techniques

- Externalizing conversations
- Mapping influence
- Identifying unique outcomes
- Therapeutic documentation

Case Example

- Individual/family scenario
- Techniques: externalizing conversations, unique outcomes
- Outcomes

Tree of Life Activity

Participants introduced to the Tree as a metaphor for life.

An example is used to model how to engage with the different dimensions.

Participant's then write on the template, their personal responses to the prompts:

Leaves: Important others and role models in your life (e.g. family, friends, heroes & pets)

Branches: Your hopes, dreams, plans and goals for the future

Trunk: Your skills, abilities and talents. As well as your values

Ground: The things you choose to do on a regular basis (e.g. interests and hobbies)

Roots: Where you come from – to do with your family history, your past, culture, and key influences



Strengths & Limitations

- + Empowering, respectful
- Less structured, language-dependent

Recap

- Choosing approach based on client needs
- Possibility of integration between approaches
- Final thoughts??