Keeping it Real

The Day-to-Day Context of Social and Emotional Assessment for Children and their Families

Photography: Shannon Stevenson

Vanessa Lapointe, PhD, R. Psych.
Children and Families of 2011

- Family 1 – Single mom, 2 girls
- Family 2 - 2 parent family, girl & boy
- Family 3 – 2 adoptive parents, 1 girl

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Children and Families of 2011

- Multifaceted
- Complex layers
- Supporting cast

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Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory

- **Microsystem**
  - e.g. parent, teacher

- **Mesosystem**
  - e.g. home, church, school

- **Exosystem**
  - e.g. teacher training, religion, gov’t

- ** Macrosystem**
  - e.g. dominant beliefs and ideologies
Approaches to Assessment

- There will not be a single observation, a single measure, a single approach, a single source that could ever even come close to capturing the “essence” of each of these families.

- The exceptional families of 2011 require that we are exceptional in our approaches to assessment.

- When we know better, we must do better.

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5 Keys to “Real” Assessment
Making a difference for families and children

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Approaches to Assessment

1. A hierarchy of needs
Approaches to Assessment

2. What is your role?

- Sometimes a child or family or circumstance can present itself as incomprehensibly huge and complex

- Sometimes your “piece” is not at all what you had in mind

- Momentum can be cultivated in the most unexpected ways

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Approaches to Assessment

3. Who are you?

- What is the package that you bring with you into your interactions with this family?
  - Biases
  - Experiences
  - Limitations
  - Skill set
Approaches to Assessment

4. Understanding “process”

- What is your position in the process of someone else’s life?
- How does this step pave the way for the next?
- Know that change has a course it must follow – sometimes our role is simply to step in and walk alongside for a small part of that journey.

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Approaches to Assessment

5. Go big or go home…sort of…

■Multimethod:
  - Direct Observation; Rating Scales; Interviews; File Review; Standardized Assessment; Formal versus Informal; developmentally informed; etc.

■Multisource:
  - Child; Parent; Other Family Members; Teachers or other care providers; Community; etc.

■Multisetting:
  - Home; School; Clinic; Play; Community

Slide Credit: Dr. Deborah Amaral
A Family Update

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A Family Update

The journey continues…

- Family 1 – Single mom, 2 girls
- Family 2 – 2 parent family, girl & boy
- Family 3 – 2 adoptive parents, 1 girl
In Summary…

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Keep on…

What you do matters…immensely!

- Your approach to assessment with families and children can be the catalyst for change

- Your intuitive understanding, thoughtful approaches, and holistic lens can be synergistic in supporting a family

- Know who you are and what your role is

- Be *part* of the process

- Know the *whole* child

- *You must trust the change you endeavor to create*

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