

REMEMBERING CONTEXT: TRANSFORMING FAMILY THERAPY

Well, the first thing is that truth and power for me form an antithesis, an antagonism, which will hardly ever be resolved. I can define, in fact, can simplify, the history of human society, the evolution of human society, as a contest between power and freedom. And whether this contest is being performed along ideological lines or along religious lines, ultimately, really what we have is truth versus power. Truth for me is freedom, is self-destination. Power is domination, control, and therefore a very selective form of truth which is a lie. And the polarity between these two, in fact, forms for me the axis of human striving in the creation of an ethical society, an ethical community.

—Wole Soyinka (1998)

Healthy families, whose members demonstrate love, mutual respect, caring, support for differences, reciprocity, and equal distribution of power among adults, thrive with the support of communities that embody these values. But where do we find such communities?

Too often, we live and work in communities that glorify competition, consumption, revenge, war, and conquest—communities that prize “might makes right,” greed, and the ranking of people according to their differences. We see compartmentalized and fragmented communities, a coast-to-coast suburbia where interpersonal relationships can grow shallow, fleeting, and unreliable. Many people spend less time and energy relating to other people than they do relating to their favorite television reality and news shows. Given these conditions, is it any wonder that so many family relationships are deeply troubled?

The boundary that separates families from the larger world exists more in our imaginations than in reality. In the real world, human beings live, learn, and change communally. We learn to understand ourselves and relate to others from experiences within our homes, schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, communities of faith, organizations, and other places of belonging. We gather our perspectives from what we see on television, hear on the radio, read, and absorb from authority figures: child care providers, teachers, employers, and community leaders. Families, communities, and ultimately the societies in which we live create one another in an endless cycle.

Transformative Family Therapy is written for social workers, family therapists, counseling psychologists, students, and practitioners who wish to translate social justice values into everyday clinical practice. We offer a model for social justice practice, the cultural context model, which places the connection between family and society at the center of therapeutic thinking and intervention strategies. We remind helping professionals that too often the world surrounding families encourages values and actions that undermine health and sanity.

This chapter introduces

- A sociopolitical perspective on family life.
- A critical overview of the family therapy movement's relationship to social justice.
- The cultural context model, a family therapy model based on social justice.
- The challenge of transformative change.
- Concepts useful for understanding and delivering social justice-based intervention.

Despite the progress won by liberation movements, inequity persists. Traditional gender patterns still cause most married heterosexual women of all colors to shoulder more than half of their family's service work, including laundry, cleaning, food preparation, and managing child and elder care arrangements.

If the world modeled fairness across differences, it would be much easier for intimate partners to create fairness within their relationships. Individual couples do not invent this unjust division of labor or the underlying power imbalances. Similarly, single mothers and fathers do not invent school systems and workplaces that expect one parent to always be available. Nor do single parents invent the drastic choice they often have to make between focusing on work as a priority or on their children's education. Instead, we learn these patterns from the larger world.

The dynamic interplay between families and their broader contexts requires professional helpers to expand their focus beyond the individual and beyond relationships forged by blood and household connections. The professional helper faces the challenge of helping clients construct not only couple partnerships and families governed by just values but also communities that sustain these values.

THE FAMILY THERAPY MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

During the last two decades, with the advent of **multiculturalism**,* family therapy approaches emerged that recognize the importance of race, ethnicity, culture, and social class. While this scholarship greatly advanced the field by opening pathways to honor cultural differences and inequities such as racism and social class, the conceptual analysis's practice methods rarely addressed how power, **privilege**, and oppression interconnected. Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender, race, class, culture, and sexual orientation were absent from the multicultural scholarship. A social justice approach was missing, one that would weave all these threads into therapeutic practice.

Why this omission? Power, privilege, and oppression remain dirty little secrets that most therapy approaches continue to deny. Many family therapy approaches acknowledge cultural differences but rarely address injustice. Feminist family therapy charged the landscape around gender and family life. This scholarship challenged sexism but rarely other abuses of power. Some progressive therapists acknowledge cultural differences and injustice beyond sexism, but they address injustice only from the perspective of those victimized. They rarely challenge those who use their power to victimize others. The notion of accountability escaped this analysis (Tamasese & Waldegrave, 1993). Seldom were clients helped to organize against power inequities. An exception to this are the just therapy team in New Zealand who offered a paradigm that would bring all of these intersections to the therapeutic context. Most therapy approaches collude with the status quo of power, privilege, and oppression.

For example, a female client described how she became furious after telling her previous female therapist about sexist promotional practices at her workplace: "Twice within two years, I trained men who recently had been hired into my area, and both of them were subsequently chosen for supervisor positions. When I asked my director why I didn't get the job, he said, 'You do a great job, but we needed someone who could keep this team in line—someone who is aggressive.' He might as well have told me that he would only hire a man."

"Yes, I agree with you," the therapist replied. "It's tough to be a woman, but that's the way the world operates. It's much too big to take on alone. You have to find ways to adapt."

While the therapist's statement rightfully acknowledged the woman's dilemma, it also supported acquiescence—unmindfully adhering to what is considered normative. How different it would be for the therapist to send an empowering message: "You and all women find yourselves on the downside of a power equation to an extent that varies according to other factors such as race, sexual orientation, and class. Let's figure out how you and the people closest to you can organize with others to help change this injustice." Unfortunately, the therapist in our example did not see this possibility for herself or her client.

***Bold face** words are defined at the end of this chapter.

Though some theorists and practitioners do address the connections between family therapy and social justice, much of family therapy and social work practice has not moved beyond a shallow awareness of differences. Why?

We live in conservative times. Social work, family therapy, and the broader mental health field reflect the current social and political climate in which national policies lack compassion for the conservation of diverse families. Lack of accountability for increasingly large military spending exists in stark contrast to the lack of funding and support for hard-working families. This inequity has increased homelessness and the number of working families without health care. Emergency food requests increased 14.4% from 2003 to 2004, and in 2004, 81% of major cities turned people away from shelters because they were filled to capacity. Health coverage has declined fairly steadily from 1995–2004. According to US Census studies in 2004, 45.8 million individuals or 15.7% of the population did not have health insurance, as compared to 14.1% in 1995. (Wollman, Yoder, Brumbaugh-Smith, Largent, 2005). In contrast, Canada's health care, education, and social programs, together with a military budget that has decreased over the past two decades, reflects a different picture of equity than the dilemma for the middle and working class families in the United States. With increased pressure from the United States and its War on Terror, however, the military budget in Canada is rising against the wish of the people (Pizzigati, 2004). Moreover, the fields of family therapy and social work, like most academic and professional disciplines, adhere to a worldview that suffers from "patriarchal fragmentation."

Patriarchy depends on "this" being different and separate from "that," because difference and separation provide the rudiments of hierarchy. In other words, the differences between men and women, blacks and whites, and straights and **queers** must be punctuated and rigidly upheld in order for the pyramid of privilege to stand. Despite their often avowed systemic perspective, the patriarchal ordering of the world keeps most family therapists, and therapists in general, at a distance from the work of sociopolitical theorists (Cesaire, 1972; Collins, 1989; Crenshaw, 1994; Memmi, 1967). The path forward requires synthesis: simultaneous attention to multiple oppressions and privileges, the skills to link public and private matters, and the ability to connect the work of relational healing and social justice.

The term *postcolonial analysis* describes a simultaneous accounting for current and historical repercussions of oppressive social forces, including colonization, sexism, racism, homophobia, and classism (Said, 1993; Soyinka, 1999; Spivak, 1987; Spivak, 1989), Duran and Duran (1995) and Yellow Bird (1995, 2001) write about their therapeutic work with Native Americans in which it is essential to emphasize and acknowledge the Native American genocide and its intergenerational impact. They may situate a client family's experience of domestic violence or substance abuse within the family's multigenerational history of violent colonialization. Liberation becomes available by situating current experience in its historical context.

We are not implying that colonization should be used as an excuse for domestic violence or alcoholism. We believe it is essential to help a family review the social context in which problems emerge, including a community's historical

relationship to power, in order for clients to make informed decisions as they move forward. For Native Americans, this history includes their exile onto reservations and the mass kidnapping of their children into Christian boarding schools, where children were abused and forced to accept an alien religion. Highlighting history of colonization authenticates the therapeutic endeavor by bringing it in line with the family's longstanding efforts toward cultural resistance and survival alongside the issues for which they have sought therapy.

Similarly, an examination of domestic violence and/or incest in the African American community warrants a consideration of the history of slavery and racism in America, as well as white America's ongoing exploitation toward communities of color in the US and globally. Contextualizing the family's presenting crisis within larger crucibles of historical and contemporary public abuse toward marginalized groups brings integrity to the therapeutic process and identifies, evaluates, and addresses the multiple challenges each family member faces.

Acknowledging pressures from outside the family does not discount the existence of patriarchy within groups, such as the African American community. Nor does it mean that perpetrators of abuse are not held accountable. Much of the controversy surrounding incest and domestic violence in the African American community and other populations including immigrants of color is driven by an either-or approach to gender and race. Inequities related to gender and sexism are often obscured in the effort to highlight the injustices of racism. Brian Stevenson (2006) describes the connection between racism, domestic violence, and the plethora of black men on death row. He documents that many death row occupants experienced domestic violence for which neither they nor their parents received constructive intervention. We do not mean to suggest that alcoholism is unique to Native Americans, or domestic violence or incest is unique to African Americans. Of course people of all communities experience these problems. We suggest, instead, that these and other human problems be assessed with consideration for their larger contexts. Such problems within a white family therefore need to be considered within the "white" historical context of superiority, greed, instant gratification, pressure to succeed, and ownership. Other post-colonial scholars (Said, 2003; Spivak, 1990; Stoler, 1995) point to the significance of not elevating an ethnic, national, or racial identity over the politics of intersectionality. Romanticizing ethnicity or culture enforces a predefined and limited identity. Dismantling the ways in which colonized and enslaved cultures resisted domination provides the backdrop to liberation. For white families, the backdrop of imperialism and ongoing domination is the backdrop for problem inquiry.

Challenging the trajectory of privilege is as crucial as voicing the subjugation of oppression. Imagine consulting with a white husband and wife, both top executives at Fortune 500 firms, whose 13-year-old son has been caught stealing from classmates. Many therapists would help the family seek the origin of the boy's stealing by exploring intergenerational legacies of loss and displacement. Most therapists would not, however, initiate a conversation about the wave of corporate crime grabbing headlines these past several years, nor would they ask the parents to describe their own business practices. While the individual sense of responsibility must be balanced within the collective, these legacies are at least as likely as

multigenerational patterns to contribute to the presenting problem, and they need to be examined (Thandeka, 1999; Wise, 2001).

Exploitation and domination, cornerstones of colonialism, are part of all national, ethnic, and cultural legacies. Illuminating this reality broadens understanding of the ways that we replicate domination. An Irish male employer's mistreatment of his Puerto Rican employee can be placed alongside 500 years of British colonization in Ireland and numerous other countries. The invitation of Irish immigrants into "whiteness" in the United States in order to prevent their alliance with blacks and Native Americans is another important reference point. Raising these historical realities in conversation and bringing them into consciousness provides employers (and employees) with a more informed and compelling challenge: Will they choose to perpetuate or transform such legacies?

In the therapeutic setting, raising these historical realities in a matter-of-fact manner provides a framework for making sense of clients' present-day issues. Seeing the connection between individual problems and the broader context helps clients recognize that they are part of a network of domination. They can then envision being part of a framework for liberation. With more options, they are freed from the burden of individual pathology and empowered toward change through social action.

THE CULTURAL CONTEXT MODEL

The cultural context model, an approach to therapy originated by Rhea Almeida, links social justice to many aspects of intervention (see Chart 1.1 for a flowchart of the cultural context model).

The model revises the endeavor of family therapy to include the pursuit of justice at every level, using tools and techniques that:

- Invite clients' critical awareness of diversity and power.
- Emphasize how "normal" hierarchies of power, privilege, and oppression perpetuate suffering.
- Experientially demonstrate the link between fairness and relational healing.
- Expand the therapeutic encounter to include a community with **critical consciousness** rather than one family at a time.
- Define **empowerment** in collective rather than individual terms.
- Link social activism to therapy as a means for empowering communities, families, and self.
- Invite and embrace systems of **accountability** for all participants, including therapists.
- Create a basis for developing authentic relationships across diverse communities.
- Help people think about ways to connect past, present, and future legacies within the matrix of critical consciousness, empowerment, and accountability.

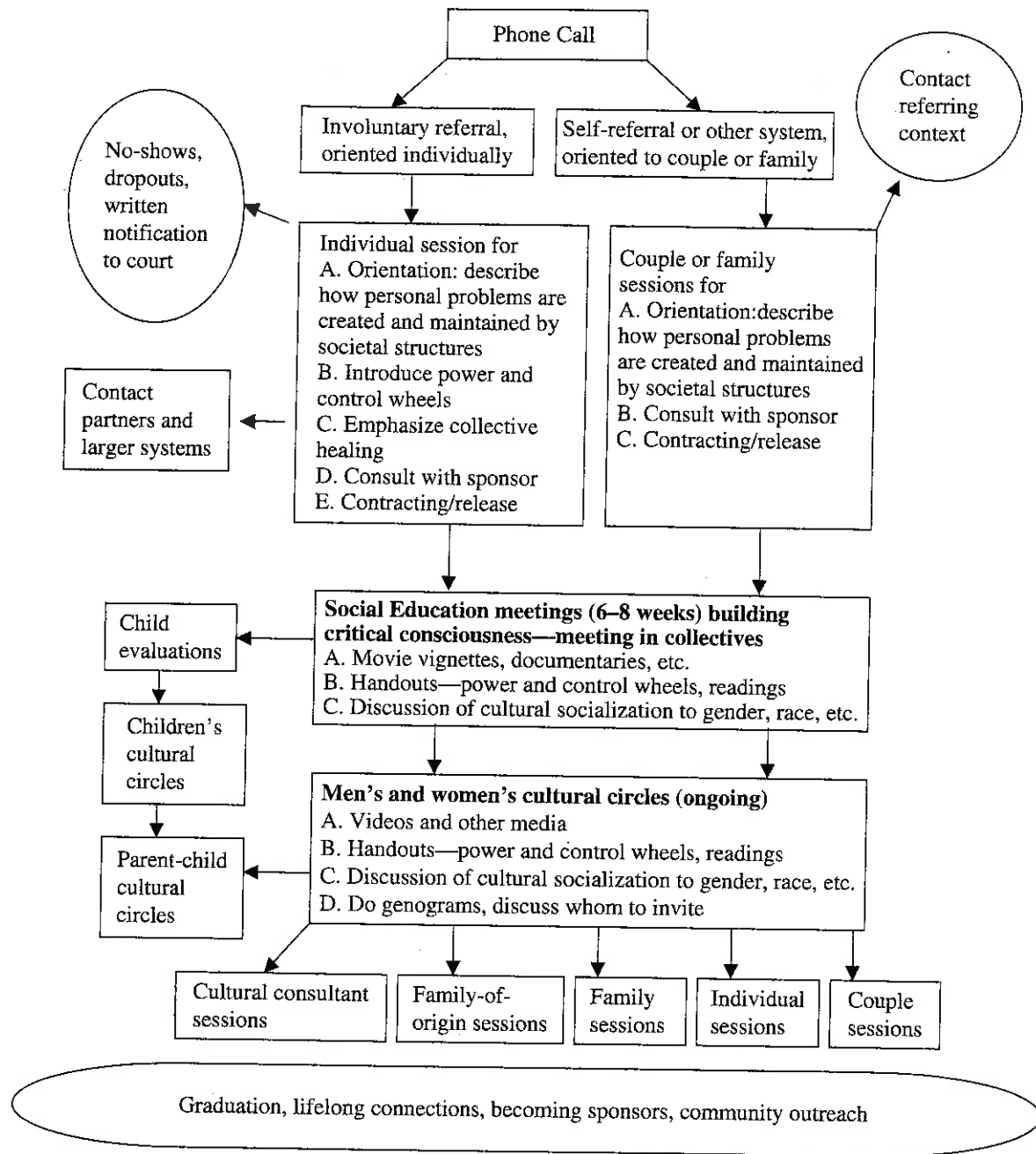


CHART 1.1 Cultural Context Model Flowchart

As you read the case that follows, notice the similarities and differences between therapy as it is usually practiced and therapy described in Case 1.1. In the following chapters, we clarify questions you may have regarding our approach, and we encourage you to consider ways to incorporate aspects of this model into your practice.

CASE 1.1

AFFAIRS: TRUTH TELLING AND INTIMACY

Tim and Mary, married 25 years, are a white, upper middle-class, heterosexual couple who entered treatment because of their daughter's recent hospitalization for anorexia nervosa and Tim's long history of extramarital affairs. The couple has two adult children, Kathy, 20, and Dan, 24. (See genogram figure 1.3A–1.3B.) The genogram is a family therapy tool used to track intergenerational patterns.

During the intake session, Tim complained that Mary had abandoned him sexually and emotionally. Mary was worried that Tim was having an affair with her best friend, Lauren, who lived down the street from them and was Kathy's godmother. Tim denied Mary's accusation, rebutting her "vivid fantasy life," saying that it was "working overtime." As a result of his affair with Mary's best friend, the relationship between the two families was severely ruptured. Tim also insisted that the recent death of Mary's mother had left Mary unable to nurture him.

To address issues of loss, both Tim and Mary were shown video clips from the movie *Steel Magnolias*. The partners viewed these clips separately, each within a small same-gender group that included other new clients. The groups, which we call **culture circles**, also included sponsors—volunteers who provide **support** in a variety of ways.

The conversations generated by *Steel Magnolias* explored how gender, culture, and class shape responses to loss.

The culture circles also viewed and discussed video clips from *Pretty Woman* and *Jungle Fever*. These movies were used to initiate conversations about the different forms of entitlement open to men from different race and class backgrounds and how men's actions create the oppression experienced by women. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 provide language to describe tactics of oppression.

Further discussions within Mary's culture circle revealed convincing evidence that Tim was in fact involved sexually with Mary's friend. The sponsors within Tim's culture circle helped him begin to explore the ways that he, like many men, placed his own desires over those of his partner and children. This admission was difficult for Tim, but it was made easier by the voices of other men who reminded him that this pattern resulted more from their shared socialization into manhood than from Tim's being a "bad" or "sick" individual.

At one point, Tim threatened to leave treatment and seek a "more responsible" therapist. His men's circle confronted him about his history of seeing many therapists in the past. They challenged him to consider the possibility that the real issue was his reluctance to confront issues openly and honestly. He decided to stay.

Therapists and sponsors began urging Tim to take responsibility for disregarding Mary on many levels. During this process, the truth emerged about his affair with her friend. The therapists encouraged Tim to do something that may surprise many readers: they asked him to claim full responsibility for his actions by informing Mary and their children of his affair. He balked initially, but then agreed. With support from the other men, he wrote and mailed a letter to the other woman, officially terminating their affair. Then, surrounded by members from both his and Mary's culture circles, Tim revealed the truth to his wife and children. Although understandably upset, Mary was also relieved to hear the truth, which confirmed that she wasn't crazy or overly suspicious.

Mary spent many hours in her culture circle discussing her confusion over her responsibilities within her marriage and at

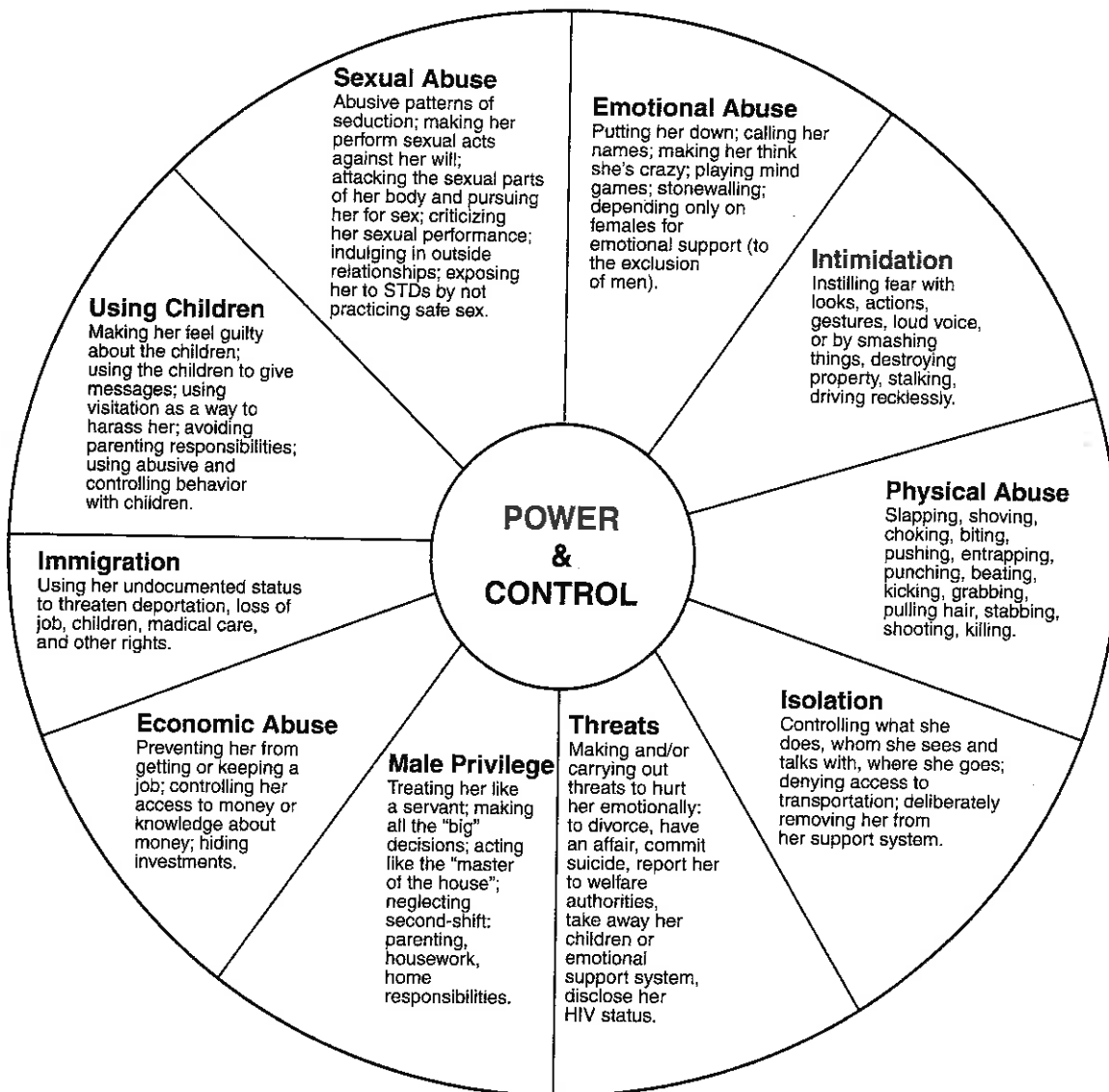


FIGURE 1.1 Private Context: The Misuse and Abuse of Power within Heterosexual Relationships

Adapted from Ellen Pence, founder of the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth, Minnesota: www.tamu.edu/wcenter/ruralfamilyviolence/pence.htm

work. She and Tim owned and operated a printing and office supply store, where Tim assumed responsibility over Mary and the staff. Slowly, Mary acknowledged the many ways in which Tim subordinated her at work

and at home. At work, he cut her off in staff meetings, overrode her decisions, and always second-guessed her investment choices. In the home, he helped with household duties only when invited. If he happened to be watching a

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CASE 1.1 CONTINUED

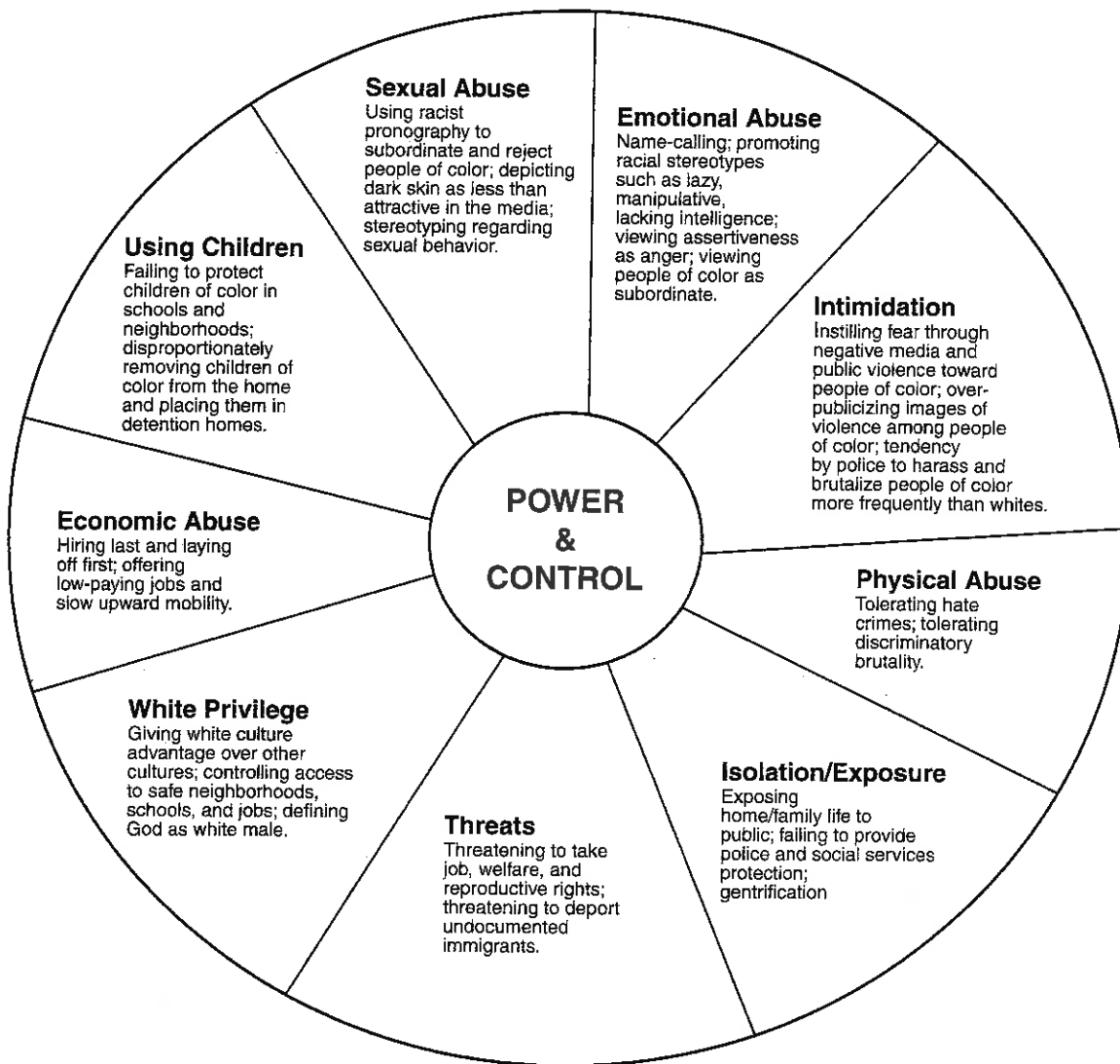


FIGURE 1.2 White Privilege/Public Context: The Misuse and Abuse of Power toward People of Color

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ball game and they were getting ready for invited guests, Tim felt no obligation to assist Mary in the dinner preparation. Within his culture circle, Tim was also becoming aware of the ways in which he abused his privileges,

assuming Mary would nurture him without the need for reciprocity.

Tim and Mary's children each participated in a series of sessions with their same-sex parent. In the initial session with Mary and her

daughter Kathy, which included female sponsors and Mary's culture circle, Kathy vented her anger toward Mary for choosing to stay with Tim despite the horrible way he treated Mary.

In later sessions, Kathy voiced understanding of her mother's choices and described the different choices she would make if she found herself in a similar predicament. Kathy's participation helped her develop a different perspective of her mother as woman. She became more compassionate toward her mother as she came to understand the complexities of her mother's choice. She was also able to confront her father about her sadness and disappointment with his choices. Her symptoms of anorexia nervosa dissipated as the secret of his affair was made public. Dan, Tim and Mary's son, was noncommittal. In Dan's circle, he was exposed to **social education** and conversation among the men regarding traditional

gender roles that often embrace a rigid sense of masculinity and homophobia.

Tim described feeling a new sense of freedom and calm, having relinquished the stress that comes with secrecy and a posture of domination. He began to love the camaraderie of the men's culture circles. Like many men, he had relinquished most of his friendships many years ago and was now rediscovering the joy such connections bring. Tim and Mary transitioned into more egalitarian marital and business partners. They organized the household responsibilities, sorting them into daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal jobs that are fairly negotiated. They met with a financial planner and redefined their roles as business partners, placing Mary as codirector with equal control over the finances. Tim and Mary continue their involvement with the therapeutic community but primarily as participants in social and community projects.

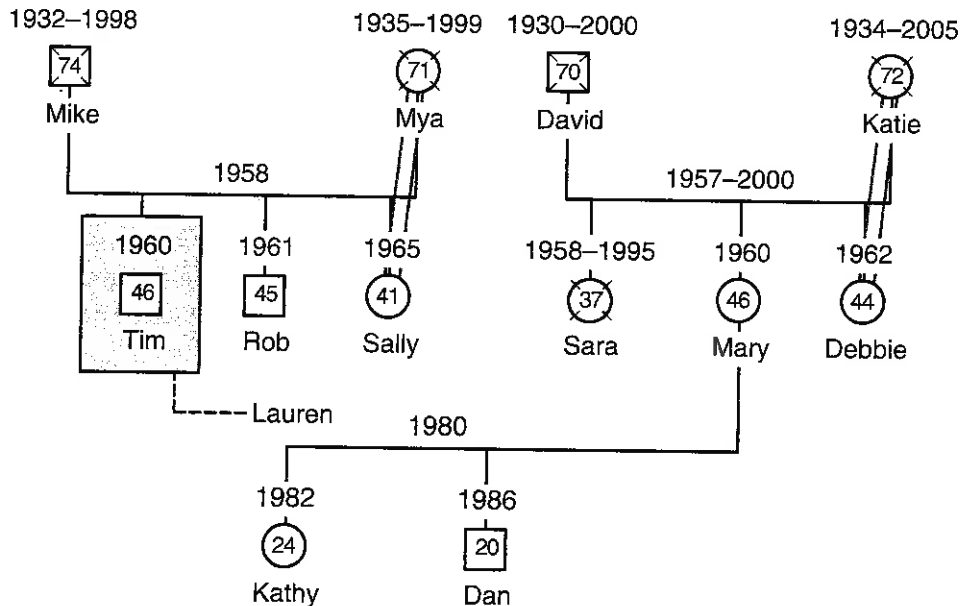


FIGURE 1.3A Tim and Mary Genogram

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CASE 1.1 CONTINUED

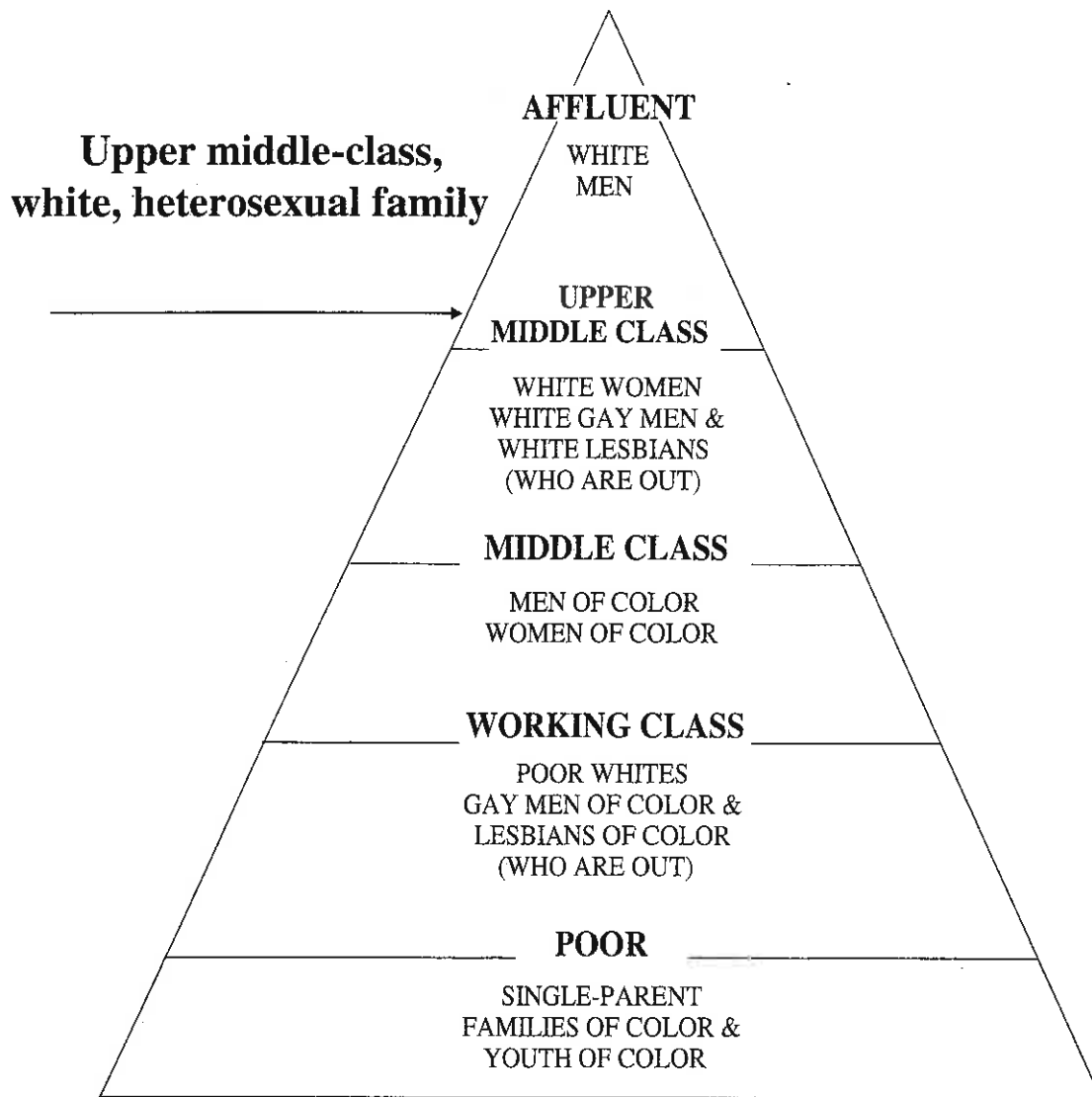


FIGURE 1.3B Hierarchy of Power, Privilege, and Oppression for Tim and Mary Genogram

We know that this case may raise more questions than it provides answers. For example, why involve the kids in a parent's affair? Isn't that an issue for adults? Are appropriate boundaries being set and respected? Is it healthy and constructive to be so honest? Why was a group approach used? Isn't privacy better?

Please note your questions and any initial discomfort you may feel with the approach. We hope that your questions will be answered as you read this book.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

Until the 1970s, it was considered highly unorthodox for a therapist to meet with more than one family member. The family therapy movement arose as a radically different mental health approach—a necessary expansion of the prevailing emphasis on the individual and intrapsychic dynamics. Borrowing heavily from early social work models, a variety of systemic approaches emerged, each offering unique conceptual and technical contributions. Multiculturalism began to influence writers and clinicians, though many did not know how to introduce the ideas into the therapeutic process.

Although activist approaches, such as feminist consciousness-raising groups, became part of some therapists' work in the 1970s and 1980s, activist practice has mostly disappeared from therapeutic models. Most therapeutic approaches today involve conversations between one therapist and a client or client family in which socially mandated hierarchies of power are rarely mentioned and even more rarely challenged.

For example, a heterosexual couple seeking assistance for a "communication problem" is typically engaged in an exploration that, in keeping with their expectations, locates their problem within the bounds of their dyad. The therapist proceeds as though only the emotional and behavioral dimensions of the couple's partnership are relevant. Consequently, the following questions are *not* routinely asked: Who manages the family money? Who handles second-shift responsibilities such as housework, child care, and maintenance of the couple's connections to family and friends? What are the couple's decision-making and conflict resolution patterns? How does the couple negotiate the fulfillment of each other's sexual needs?

When these questions are pursued, the answers are rarely challenged because of the therapist's pursuit of remaining neutral. Underlying gendered prescriptions are rarely explored. If one or both members of the couple are people of color, it is unlikely that the impact of racism both outside and within the couple's relationship will be investigated. Questions about this include: What does your support circle at work look like? If or when your children experience bias or discrimination in school, who handles it? Similarly, a therapist working with a same-gender couple will likely not inquire into the impact of homophobia on the couple's relationship either within extended families or with the outer world. The focus in each case often remains on verbal, behavioral, and emotional transactions that the couple describes and exhibits during therapy sessions.

The therapist is also likely to enforce mainstream societal prescriptions in many ways. For example, therapists often search for psychopathology in one or both members of the couple. Since most diagnoses were developed by men and about women, a female client is more likely than a male to be pathologized. Similarly, a woman's emotional response, and not the man's lack of one, is likely to be labeled problematic.

Solution-focused or strengths-based approaches avoid some of these pitfalls, yet they often fail to consider the broader contextual issues. Though often unintentionally, therapists regularly replicate and reinforce socially prescribed norms during therapy sessions, often to the serious detriment of their clients. The most

dangerous examples, of course, include those in which therapists hold women clients responsible for their own physical battering by abusive partners or strangers.

Transformative, social justice approaches not only acknowledge gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, and class as matters of significance, but also address the varying histories around issues of power, privilege, and oppression that accompany these factors. We do not address culture by focusing on ethnic enclaves. Instead, we bring culture into the therapy room through popular films, printed literary material, and other media. Clients learn and participate in sharing their knowledge about various cultures. We encourage therapists to merge this learning about culture in context with their readings from multiculturalism. More specifically, we ask them to consider a transformative versus an ameliorative approach when it comes to the unfairness often linked to cultural differences.

Transformative family therapy moves the focus away from simply searching for problems (or solutions) or navigating adaptation to existing systems. It includes a search for reciprocity and resilience and a demand for change in the current economic, social, and political structures. Transformative family therapy requires bold evaluation and revision of much that we professionals find comforting. We hope this book illuminates ways to accomplish this transformation, and we invite you to join us in this project.

The chapters that follow describe elements of the cultural context model in detail and discuss how you can adapt these elements to all practice settings. While theory is essential, the following chapters emphasize practical application. Over the years, we have witnessed the important link between social justice and relational healing as they become a reality in the lives of our clients and also in our lives as practitioners. We are eager for you and your clients to enjoy the same rewards.

ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

We provide below a list of terms that will prove useful as you read the book.

Accountability: Accountability begins with acceptance of responsibility for one's actions and the impact of those actions upon others. However, accountability moves beyond blame and guilt. It results in reparative action that demonstrates empathic concern for others by making changes that enhance the quality of life for all involved parties.

Critical consciousness: Critical consciousness is awareness of the political foundation of relationship patterns. Transformative family therapy works to develop critical consciousness as both a catalyst and map for positive change. In subsequent chapters, we extensively explore critical consciousness.

Paulo Freire (1978; 2000) originated the term *critical consciousness* to describe the awakening of his literacy students to the impact of social class dynamics on their life circumstances. As critical consciousness develops, we no longer see current realities as "the unquestioned and unchangeable nature of things." Instead, we see options for change. For example, those who view men as genetically

programmed for aggression also accept war and domestic violence as the natural order of things, whereas those who view men's aggression as a learned tactic of domination see the possibilities for peace on all systems levels.

Culture circle: Another term borrowed from Freire, culture circles are heterogeneous helping communities involving members of families who seek treatment, volunteer helpers from the community who work with the families, and a team of therapists. Within the cultural context model, culture circles provide the primary context for treatment. Culture circles, discussed in detail in subsequent chapters, promote healing through development of critical consciousness and resistance to norms that maintain hierarchies of power, privilege, and oppression.

Empowerment: Social justice-based empowerment promotes "power with" rather than "power over." For example, a woman gains empowerment by pursuing an education and employment that allows her to fulfill a lifelong dream while also financially supporting herself and her children. A man who has neglected his wife and child gains empowerment through his letter of accountability to them and through his subsequent reparative actions. He is empowered through just action—and so are those on the receiving end. This definition initially confuses some practitioners, whose patriarchal vision presumes that when a man takes responsibility for his actions, he experiences humility rather than empowerment.

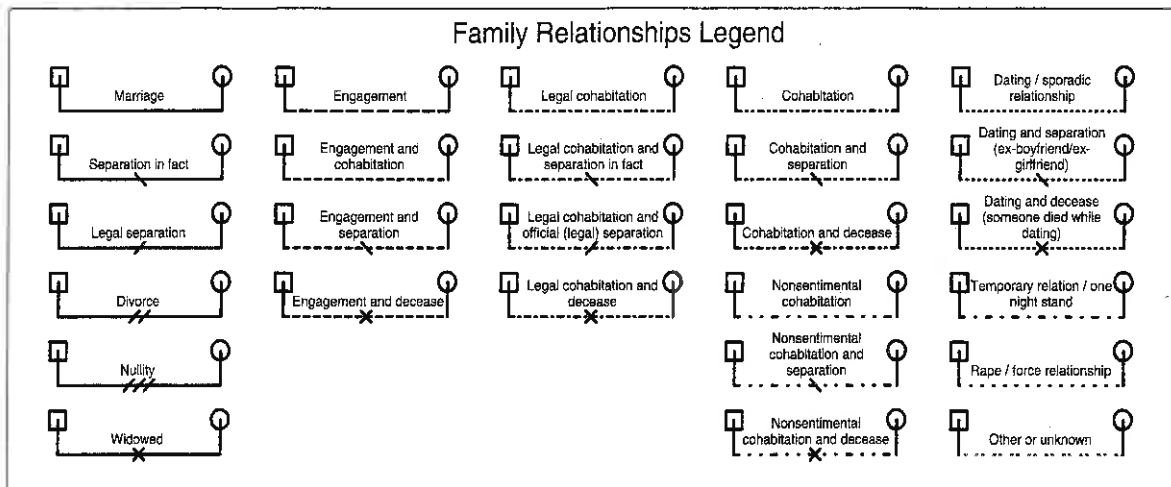
Genogram: The genogram is a tool used to gather information on family process and generational patterns. Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 explain the legends used in genograms.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is the dynamic interplay of gender, race, sexual orientation, social class, age, disability status, and other diversity markers in

TABLE 1.1 GenoPro Emotional Relationships Legend

Emotional Relationships Legend					
Indifferent / Apathetic 	Harmony 	Hostile 	Violence 	Abuse 	Manipulative
Distant / Poor 	Friendship / Close 	Distant-Hostile 	Distant-Violence 	Physical Abuse 	Controlling
Cutoff / Estranged 	Best Friends / Very Close 	Close-Hostile 	Close-Violence 	Emotional Abuse 	Focused On
Discord / Conflict 	Love 	Fused-Hostile 	Fused-Violence 	Sexual Abuse 	Fan / Admirer
Hate 	In Love 	Distrust 	Fused 	Neglect (abuse) 	Limerence

TABLE 1.2 GenoPro Family Relationships Legend

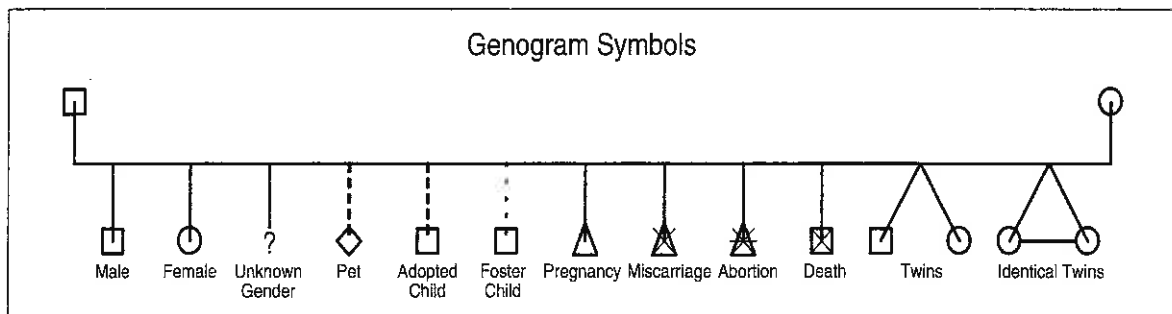


GenoPro Beta. Genogram Soft Wave www.genopro.com

an individual’s life circumstances. Intersectionality also includes the resources and lack of resources these identity aspects convey upon the individual. Mindfulness of intersectionality interrupts the usual pattern of discussing differences in a fragmented manner. More specifically, the impact of a person’s race cannot be evaluated apart from his or her gender, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability status. For a visual representation of a person’s social location, see Figure 1.4, which illustrates the way power, privilege, oppression situate us relative to one another.

We want you to become familiar with the concept of social location (intersectionality) when you consider family genograms. The family genogram depicted in red is an illustration of the family’s social location on this hierarchy. Each family member reflects a different nodal point experience: together they represent multiple intersections. Reggie, African American son of sharecroppers, moved to middle class via education, a stable job and income, and a small inheritance from the sale of his parents’ farm. He was able to purchase a home when he married (asset accumulation). He married Lily, a dark-skinned Latina whose single mother, a

TABLE 1.3 GenoPro Genogram Symbols Legend



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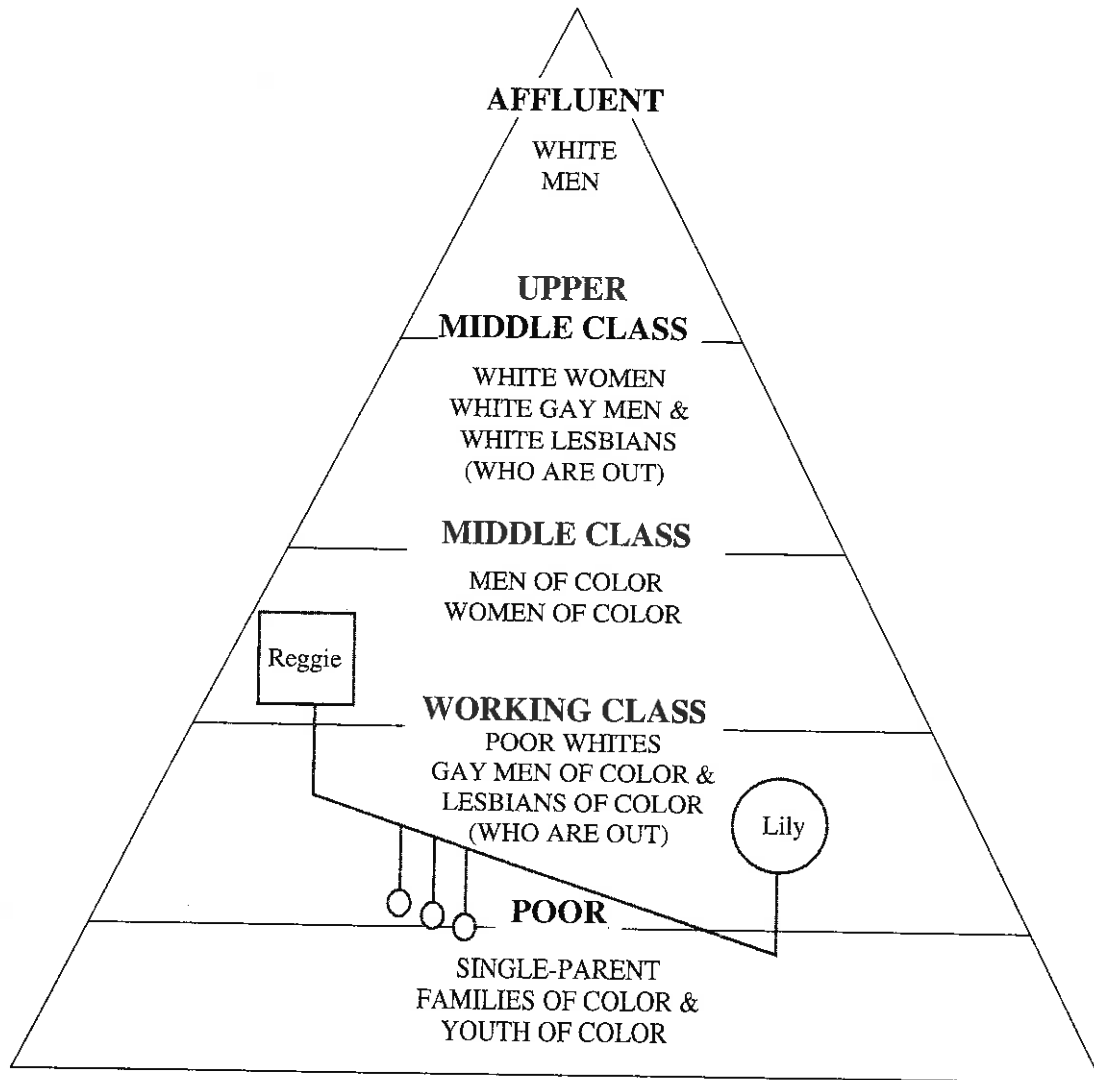


FIGURE 1.4 Hierarchy of Power, Privilege, and Oppression

Black Cuban working-class woman, experienced multiple oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism. Lily's mother struggled to support Lily and her brother on a stable but modest income working as a janitor in a hospital (stable working class but no asset accumulation to pass on to her children).

With Tim and Mary, whose case we examined earlier, asset accumulation was abundant in addition to race privilege. These points of intersection are not static but fluid. Consider the case of a poor white family who might occupy the same position as a poor family of color but simultaneously experiences race privilege as they interface with police, judicial system, teachers, bank representatives, realtors, and other "officials." Racial, cultural, and economic standards define inequality in this country. With a white, working class or poor family, many of the intersects would be different. Historically, wealth to all white families was passed on through GI bills, subsidized housing through the VA loans, no

discrimination with education, and work that included benefits and social security. Today, many adults of color whose parents were domestic workers or engaged in forms of employment that lacked a contribution into social security have to take care of elderly parents with no governmental support for basic needs (Lui, et. al., 2006).

While individuals within all races and genders can achieve wealth, the hierarchy is a depiction of collectives and their varying access to wealth. Why do hard-working Americans of all nationalities not participate equally in the accumulation of wealth? For centuries, laws, discriminatory practices, and violence restricted people of color from participating in wealth-building programs. Since this nation was founded, U.S. government policies that enabled white Americans to accumulate wealth were not accessible to people of color. For example, during the 1800s when Chinese American citizens attempted to purchase property, they were faced with the politics of identity: Were they white or immigrant? Congress hurriedly passed a law defining them as nonwhite citizens, rendering them unable to purchase property. Misogyny laws were enacted to ensure that Chinese men who married white women would not be allowed the legitimate purchase of property. Lui et al. (2006) telegraph the roots of economic divisions: "White Americans typically have assets more than ten times greater than Americans of color. This difference was created not only by government policies that impeded wealth building for people of color but also by policies that actually boosted white wealth—policies like land grant and homestead programs, low-cost mortgages, farm loans, and Social Security checks, all at times available mostly to white people" (p. 225).

Multiculturalism: Multiculturalism is a catchall term that usually refers to race but also commonly extends to other categories of diversity: socioeconomic class, gender, language, culture, sexual orientation, and disability. Writers in the field describe not one but several multiculturalisms. We make the distinction here between definitions of multiculturalism that focus on superficial valuing of differences and critical multiculturalism.

What we consider to be a superficial view of multiculturalism more often describes family patterns and historical legacies and promotes celebration of foods, traditional styles of dress, holiday rituals, and belief systems across the spectrum of diversity. By compartmentalizing various ethnic groups, this definition avoids acknowledging systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Moreover, whiteness is not deconstructed, nor are Eurocentric norms. These omissions bolster those with power to acknowledge and romanticize differences while denying their own relative power, privilege, and accountability for the oppression of others.

We instead embrace a critical multiculturalism based in postcolonial theory. Critical multiculturalism "is dedicated to the notion of egalitarianism and the elimination of human suffering" (Espin, 1999; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 24). It is concerned with issues of justice and social change: how domination occurs and how it shapes human relations in families, the workplace, the schools, and everyday life.

Patriarchy: Patriarchy is a worldwide, cross-cultural system of male domination—men over women and men over men. Patriarchy is a system that values power over life, control over pleasure, and dominance over happiness. As a foundation, patriarchal hierarchy relies on rigid categories of difference. Transgender people, for example, threaten patriarchy by obscuring the definitional boundary between those who rule (men) and those who serve (women). In ordaining power over rather than power with, patriarchy provides the structure for all other systems of privilege and oppression (racism, classism, and homophobia). Refer to Figure 1.4 to see the resulting matrix.

Postcolonial: The term *diaspora*, within postcolonial studies, suggests both a breakthrough in cultural politics and social justice. It interrogates the final stage in the ascendancy of migrant, “cosmopolitan,” and first-world metropolitan biases in representations of the “postcolonial experience.” The prefix *post* does not imply that colonialism is a past, historical phenomenon but rather an ongoing meta-perspective. A postcolonial analysis recommends that therapists consistently attend to both precolonial and postcolonial history because they inform identity through the intersectionalities of social location. A fundamental tenet of postcolonial analysis is that attention be paid to the standpoint and social location of the author scholarship (therapist) and the audience.

Privilege: An individual gains an advantage, or privilege, when he or she possesses certain identity characteristics such as white skin, maleness, heterosexuality, middle- or upper middle-class status, and able-bodied status. An individual loses an advantage, or privilege, when he or she possesses characteristics such as femaleness, queerness, skin of color, and low-income or poverty status (McIntosh 1990).

Queer: An umbrella term for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and others who do not identify themselves as heterosexual, *queer* is a “reclaimed” affirmation favored by activists for its inclusiveness. A growing number of “queer studies” programs at universities mark this usage as the term favored within academia. However, its historically pejorative meaning of “strange” continues to offend some within the GLTB (gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual) communities.

Reparations: Corrective actions that serve to restore equity after injustices have been committed, reparations include the gift of services, currency, property, or other assets. Social justice-based therapy includes these corrective exchanges as a means for rebalancing damaged relationships in a way that facilitates healing.

Social education: An integral part of social justice-based therapy, social education promotes critical consciousness. Popular movies, songs, magazine and newspaper articles, along with handouts that list norms of masculinity and femininity, patterns of power and control within relationships, and other social patterns (Figure 1.2 is an example of such a tool) can be used to initiate discussions with clients about contemporary sociopolitical realities.

Support: Support within the framework of social justice never serves to elevate one individual at the expense of another. Men, therefore, are encouraged to

support one another in a manner that values the needs of each man's partner and children equally with his own needs. Women are supported in valuing their own needs no less than their partner's needs. Whites are supported in their collective and personal ability to take responsibility for racism. People of color are encouraged to interrogate their own systems of internalized racism, power, and privilege.

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