



INTEGRATING CAREGIVERS INTO ADOLESCENT THERAPY: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELORS

2023 Counseling & Therapy Summit
Amanda Grieme Bradley, PhD, LMFT

Program Summary

Often avoided but frequently powerful, including caregivers in adolescent therapy can be a daunting task for counselors. This presentation focuses on practical ways to integrate the family into counseling work with adolescents. Participants will learn specific interventions to implement to strengthen the caregiver-adolescent bond, decrease negative communication patterns, and improve family functioning. Considerations to our own personal concerns and biases about integrating caregivers will also be explored.

Program Objectives

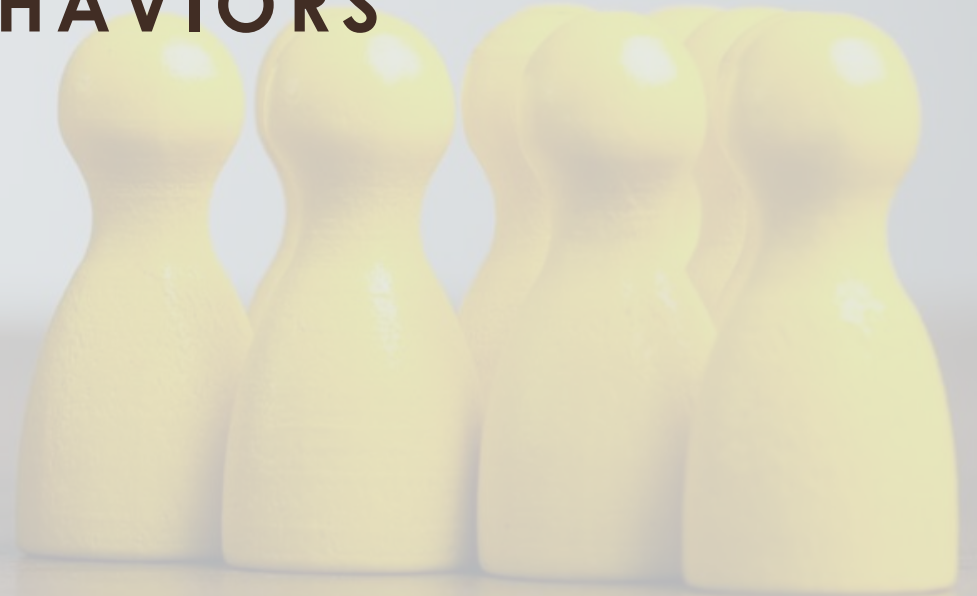
1. Following this presentation, participants will be able to utilize systems theory to conceptualize problem behaviors in their current adolescent clients.
2. Following this presentation, participants will be able to apply family-based interventions to their current adolescent clients.
3. Following this presentation, participants will be able to identify their personal barriers to including family members in adolescent counseling sessions.

Beginning Practice

Connect with a colleague to discuss:

- What draws you to this session.
- What are some of your concerns or hesitations with bringing caregivers into the counseling room.
- Brainstorm on positive and negative experiences with integrating caregivers into counseling sessions.

SYSTEMIC CONCEPTUALIZATION OF PROBLEM BEHAVIORS



Micucci's Symptomatic Cycle (2009, p.63)

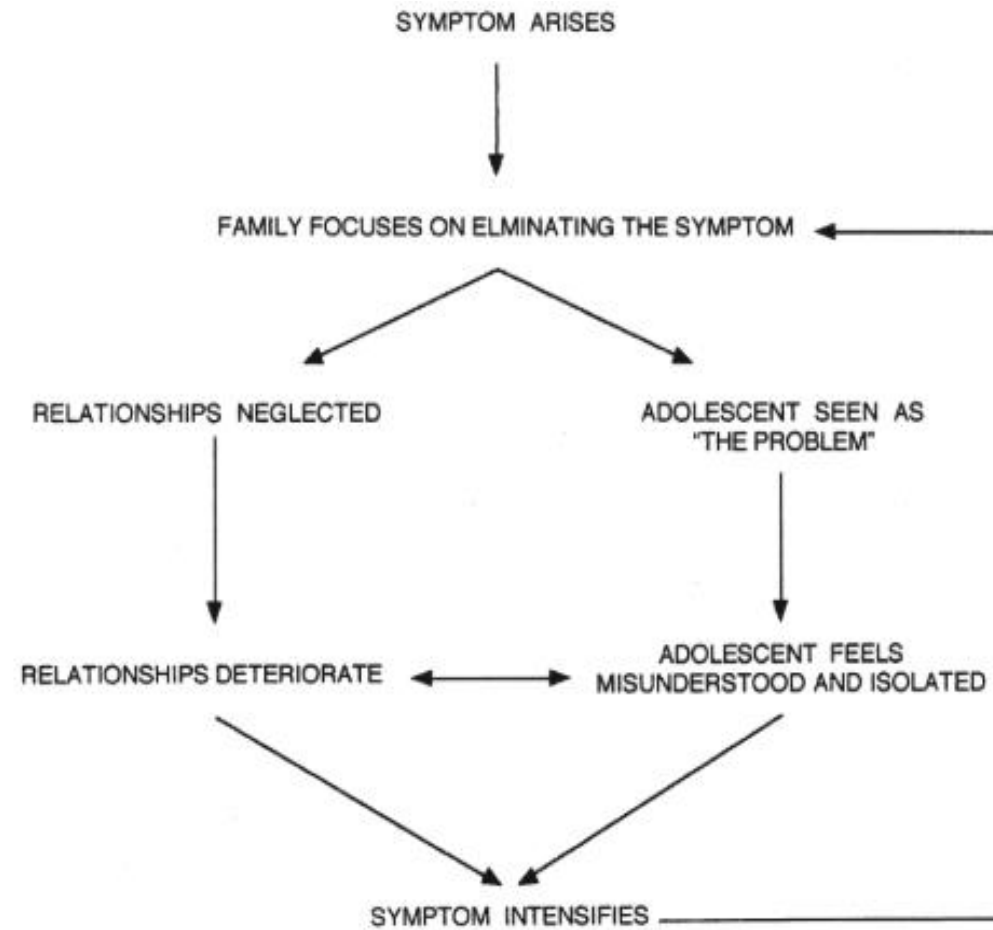
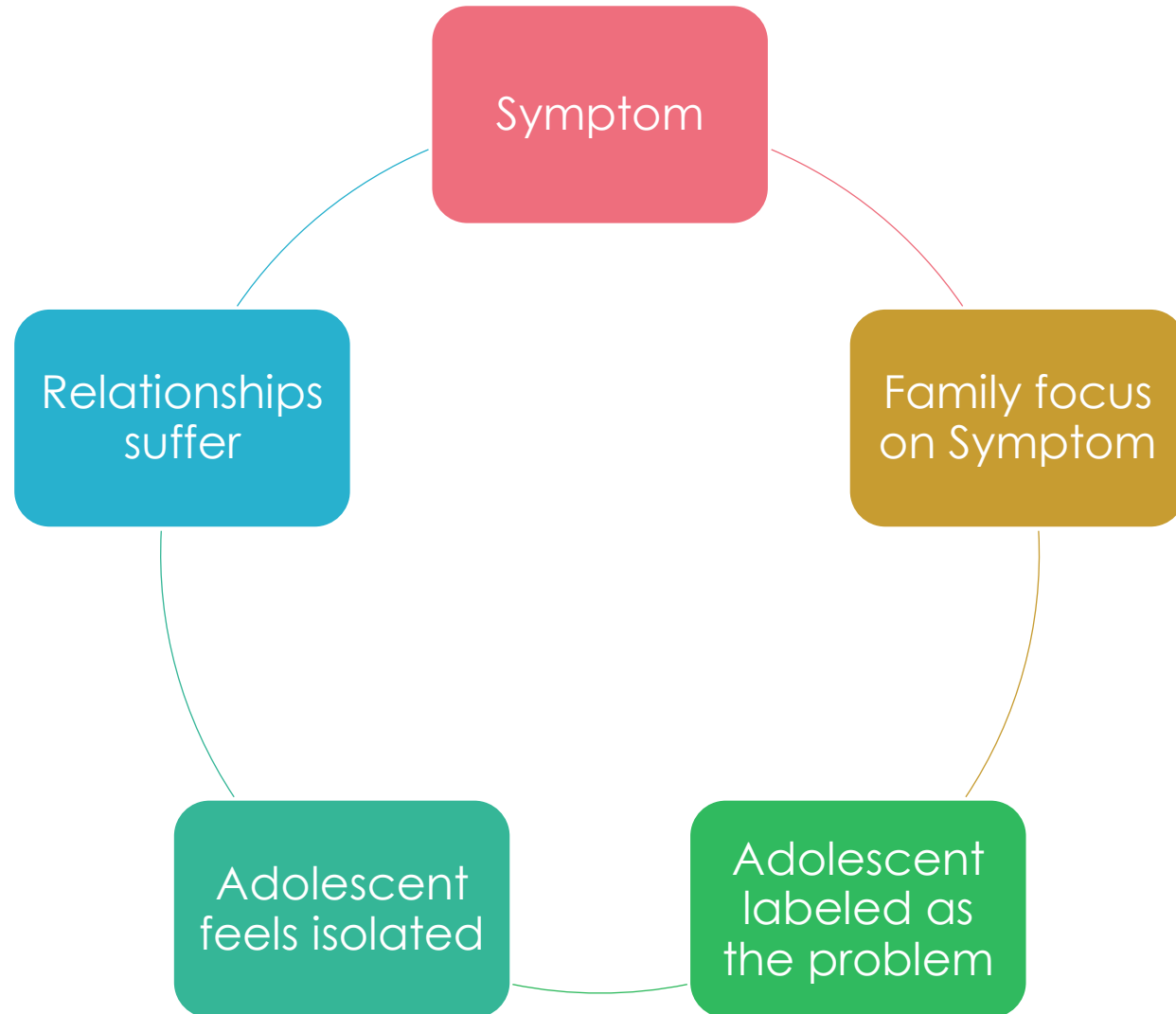


FIGURE 3.1. The symptomatic cycle.

Micucci's Symptomatic Cycle



Family Based Interventions: Attachment Focused

- ***Goal: Increase attachment security***
- Safe, seen, soothed to feel secure (Dan Siegel)
- Enactments
- Parent emotional disclosures
- Teen emotional disclosures
- Positive experiences outside of session

Family Based Interventions: Communication Focused

- ***Goal: Increase open communication***
- Active listening
- Scripting
- Self-compassion break (Kristen Neff)
- Family meetings outside of session

Family Based Interventions: Caregiver Focused

- ***Goal: Increase parental awareness***
- Work with parents separately to explore their own histories
- If two parents, assess their alliance as parents
- Attachment history with child
- Feelings about life cycle stage
- Parent coaching, if necessary

Counselor Barriers

- Discomfort with multiple people in the room
- Insecurity about assertive intervention with caregivers
- May not have personal experience with parental role
- Unresolved family of origin experiences
- **Antidotes: supervision AND experience!**

Resources

Diamond, G. S., Diamond, G. M., & Levy, S. A. (2014). *Attachment-based family therapy for depressed adolescents*. American Psychological Association.

Micucci, J. A. (2009). *The adolescent in family therapy: Breaking the cycle of conflict and control* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press