

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SUMMARY

In chapter I, a brief overview is given of the rise and development of family therapy. As an aim of this study, various approaches within the field of family therapy are studied, after which the systems approach is selected and discussed.

The systems approach's view of the symptom, and aim of therapy is illuminated. The symptom of an individual is viewed as an activity which fulfills a specific function within a family. An individual's activities cannot be separated from the contexts in which they occur.

A family is viewed within the context of broader systems, and an individual's problems are seen against the background of these various systems.

In accordance with this approach, a therapist joins the family to form a therapeutic unity.

The underlying premise of this family therapeutic approach represents a new paradigm, or orientation, and is not merely a new method.

It is within the family that the everyday reality of educating appears; the latter is the point of departure for pedagogical thinking.

In the dynamic of educating, where the essences of educating come into motion, a child's psychic life is actualized. A parent actualizes his/her own psychic life in terms of accompanying his/her child. When a disharmonious dynamic of educating and its correction are examined, the terrain of orthopedagogics is entered.

The convergence task of the orthopedagogue includes determining the connection of relevant findings of allied disciplines such as psychology, social work, and sociology, and the inadequate appearance and correction of the relevant educative essences.

In chapter II, the structural approach of Minuchin is described in terms of family diagnostics and therapeutic interventions. Through stating a hypothesis, and testing it by activating interactions among the members, a family structure is compiled. It is a visual representation of the family structure. The restructuring of a dysfunctional family structure, and organization are especially brought about by the following strategies:

- investigating the symptoms;
- investigating the family structure; and
- investigating the family reality.

In chapter III, the Strategic approach of Haley is briefly presented. Emphasis is placed on defining relationships, the control over defining relationships, and the role played by a confusing hierarchy in the origin of a problem. By observing the sequence of interactions, the organization and hierarchies of the family can be determined.

The following phases are differentiated during the first family conversation, i.e., a social phase, followed by a problem identification phase, an interaction phase, as well as a contract-entering, and aim-determining phase.

The Strategic approach is characterized by paradoxical interventions as a technique for bringing about change within a family.

In chapter IV, the approach and dynamic method of the Milan Group is described. Circular questioning, hypothesis forming, and the neutrality of the team during therapy are briefly explicated. The Milan Group has refined the paradoxical prescription, as well as giving a positive connotation to the symptom, and the use of family interaction, as therapeutic techniques.

In chapter V, there is a convergence of the relevant findings of the family therapeutic approach and the inadequate appearance and correction of relevant essences of educating. Thus, in family diagnostics, the connection is shown between a family's dynamic and a disharmonious educative dynamic. It became clear that there is a relationship between a family's hierarchical structure, and the structure of authority, and the distance existing among family members and the relationships of [pedagogical] understanding and trust.

In chapter VI, it is shown by an example how family therapy can be implemented to eliminate a disharmonious dynamic of educating.

2. FINDINGS

At the beginning of this study, a few problems are formulated. It is now possible to proceed to a discussion of the findings arrived at in the present study.

Family therapy can be applied in pedagogically accountable ways in orthopedagogic practice. It appears that a family dynamic can be related to a disharmonious dynamic of educating. Thus, in an orthopedagogic practice, a family diagnostic is accomplished where the mentioned relationship is shown within a specific family.

The essences of a family dynamic, i.e., hierarchy and distance, are related to the authority-, trust- and understanding-essences of the educative relationship. This connection is realized within the life phase of a specific family.

Observing family interactions serves as the medium by which a family dynamic, structure, and organization can be disclosed. In this way, the connection between the inadequate appearance of educative essences, and the specific family dynamic can be determined.

In the observing, special attention is given to the type of activity which occurs, the circumstances, and its direction, as well as the sequence of interactions.

During the restructuring of the family structure, there are changes in meaning by the child as well as the parents.

The family therapeutic approach offers a new possibility for observing how essences of educating are made operational. It offers a therapist a new orientation, and therapeutic way of intervening with a parent and child in a problematic situation of educating.

A family therapeutic approach differs from orthopedagogics in that the former emphasizes circular causality, and new dimensions of the relationships of educating enjoy attention.

It appears that family therapy can make a very valuable contribution to orthopedagogic practice, and can be implemented to eliminate a disharmonious dynamic of educating.

3. RECOMMENTATIONS

In accordance with the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

It seems to be urgently necessary that a study of family therapy must be incorporated into the contemporary training of students in orthopedagogics. The family therapeutic approach offers a wide field of research possibilities. The contributions which this can make to orthopedagogic practice must be further investigated. The design of an orthopedagogic program in family therapy also requires urgent attention.

With respect to practice, it is necessary that persons who offer help to parents and children with problems, because of the helping possibilities which family therapy provides, become acquainted with and can implement this approach. This is necessary because family therapy is a very efficient, effective, and meaningful way of providing help.