MARRIAGE & FAMILYDYNAMICS
Marital dynamics & family life

• What is marital / family dynamics
• Communications
• Family resource management
• Power & Decision making
• Household chores distributions & Gender role
• Conflict management
FACTS OF LIFE

• Everyone wants a peaceful life – if married, we desire for good & satisfactory marriage

• Basic unit of marriage (the husband-wife) subsystem is the individual persons (m&f)

• Intimate relationship is very complicated & difficult & highly emotional

• Tendency to blame OTHER contextual factors / people for marital break-ups / problems is rather high – being human.
• What do people want from marriage?
  – WHY DO PEOPLE GET MARRIED

• Why did some marriages end in divorce?
  – Why some ended really at the early stage of marriage i.e. less than 5 years?

• What are the keys for marital success?
  – HOW to have a HIGH quality marriage – happy, adjusted, harmony, satisfactory, stable, etc. etc.
Marital journey

• Who? - A man and a woman
• Aim? - Trying to build a relationship, home and family together.
• Basic “resources”? Individual hopes, dreams & expectations that aren't always shared with their partner., of course the LOVE that binds them (?)
• Along the journey, each partner can get busy with “own” life / children / work / family / others
• Stop communicating; lose touch, leads to misunderstandings, loneliness, regrets, looking for alternatives, reduced commitment
• If not handled well → marital dissolution
Marriage & family dynamics

- Family has 3 subsystems:
  - Husband-wife sub-system
  - Parent-child sub-system
  - Siblings sub-system
- There are on-going processes with and within the sub-systems
- Family dynamics are the patterns of relating, or interactions, between family members.
  - Each family system and its dynamics are unique, although there are some common patterns.
What is the meaning of family dynamics?

• Family dynamics is the way in which members of a family interact with each other in relation to their individual goals and preferences.

• Although the family is a unit, people are individuals (with variabilities).

• To be cohesive, all members must find some sort of balance between personal interests and the best interests of the unit. This is where family dynamics come into play.

Source:
https://www.reference.com/family/meaning-family-dynamics-43dc2afdad5ac883#
• When there is an imbalance in family dynamics → families are dysfunctional.

• Imbalances can be caused by:
  – a conflict of personal interests,
  – one or more family members feel that another member places too much, or perhaps not enough, emphasis on an interest or goal.

• Family dynamics are not completely powered by personal interests / motivations alone.

• Factors such as birth order, gender, natural disposition & perceived intelligence also play a role.

• The natural dispositions of family members do not always naturally mesh.
  – Considerable effort is required in order to attain a harmonious balance in the family dynamic.
Communication & M-F Dynamics

• An essence for M_F dynamics
• A process of “transferring information from one place to another”
• Involving 4 elements: Sender, recipient, medium & message
• Critical element – listening
• Aim – to reach understanding
• Misunderstanding can occur at any of the elements along the process
• An essence for M_F dynamics

Source: http://www.skillsyouneed.com/general/what-is-communication.html
Communication process is viewed as “a symbolic, transactional process of creating & sharing meanings”

- Words & behaviour are most commonly used symbols
  - includes both verbal & nonverbal behaviour
- Symbols represent things, feelings, ideas
  - Must be mutually understood for the meanings to be shared
  - Unshared meanings lead to confusions / conflicts
• Transactional = when people communicate, they have mutual impact on each other
  – Affecting & being affected simultaneously
• Focus is on the relationship; not the individual participants
• “Participation in intimate relationships transform fundamental reality definitions for both partners & in so doing transform the partners themselves” (Stephen & Enholm, 1987)
• Process = continuously changing
• Meanings & message = when people communicate, messages imply their visions of the nature of social & physical reality, values, beliefs & attitudes

• Involves negotiation of shared meanings; primarily for couple & family to co-create meaning or “meaning making” which requires regular communication

• When meanings are not held in common → confusion or misunderstanding occurs
Factors that motivate (general) communication

1. To show appreciation
2. To gain appreciation
3. To share thoughts, ideas & feelings
4. To hurt others
5. To control
Communication in intimate relationship

Source: Watzlawick, Bavelas, and Jackson (based on Gregory Bateson’s work in 1972)

• **One cannot not communicate**: Every behavior is a form of communication. Because behavior does not have a counterpart (there is no anti-behavior), it is impossible not to communicate.

• Even if communication is being avoided (such as the unconscious use of non-verbal or symptom strategy), that is a form of communication.
  – “Symptom strategy” is ascribing our silence to something beyond our control and makes i.e. sleepiness, headaches, and drunkenness
  – Even facial expressions, digital communication, and being silent can be analyzed as communication by a receiver.
Communication in intimate relationship

• Research findings: Couples who communicate effectively consistently report greater marital satisfaction,

• Satisfied couples are healthier and consequently live longer.

• Vicious cycle: Poor communication often contributes to marital dissatisfaction, which is exacerbated by the inability to successfully communicate; when not corrected -- degrades the relationship → dissolution.
Communication strategies to make marriage works

1) Make conscious effort to communicate (regularly / daily basis sharing of thoughts, ideas, feelings etc.)
2) Express commitment verbally
3) Behave with integrity
4) Show affection
5) Share companionship
6) Provide emotional support
7) Show respect
8) Create positive / conducive atmosphere
9) Celebrate relationships
10) Work through problems

Source: https://www.natcom.org/CommCurrentsArticle.aspx?id=923
Communication in “good marriage”

• Sharing of positive information on self, thoughts, ideas & feelings
• If & when conflict exists, they accept the fact that it does & manage it constructively
• Less conflict, & do not dwell on it
• Expressive – balance between partner in terms of expression of love, touch, intimacy
• Time allocation for companionship – activities together, discussions
• Messages sent & received are mutually understood
Effective Communication

• Focus on “I” message
• Focus on behaviour and not “the person”
• Focus on feedbacks to actual observation and not making inferences or judgement
• Focus on feedbacks based on continuum – do not use extremes such as NEVER or ALL THE TIME
• Focus on giving a well thought feedback. Do not respond in anger or rush
• Focus on feedbacks that are able to be processed by the recipient
• Focus on feedbacks that are in accord with time & context. Study the “mood”.
What hinders effective communication

- Cultural factor (socialization, preferences, words etc)
- Gender
- Indirect / double bind communication
- Selective perception
- Bias
- Monologue
- Self defence
• What is effective listening?
• What are the roles of ICT on marital & family communication?
  – Think of both positive & negative functions of ict aided communication
iPhone

iPod

iPad

iPad...!