

Bio-Psycho-Social History Paper

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Family Configuration

Junior is a 28 years old male. Rachel, his mother, is turning 50 years old in June, and Joey, his father is, 55 years old. Rachel and Joey have two kids. Junior is the oldest and his sister Lisa who is 26 years old, is the youngest. Junior is married to Ana who is 23 years old.

Rachel is a manager at Burger King. She has worked there for about 10 years. Rachel is married to Joey who is a plumber. Junior is a mechanic and he has been for several years. Now, he is currently enrolled in school to become a nurse. His sister Lisa is a Certified Nurse Assistant, and his wife Ana is an Office Assistant as well as a Psychology student.

Their family originates from Mexico except Ana who was born in New York. The family first arrived in Tennessee since they moved from Mexico. Once Junior turned 21 years old, he decided to move to Michigan. He lived there for four years and then decided to move back to Tennessee. Once he moved back to Tennessee he reconnected with Ana. They dated, got engaged, and consecutively got married. Once they thought about marriage they also thought about where they would like to begin their family, and that is when they decided to move to Florida. His parents and sister stayed behind and currently reside in Tennessee.

His family left Mexico because they were seeking a better life, “the American Dream” for their kids and themselves. They initially came with a tourist visa and then realized this was the place they wanted to live. As mentioned above, Junior left his family before he was married. He moved to a different state because he wanted to become independent and explore different places and aspects of life. Once he got married, he moved to Florida because him and his wife felt that Florida was where God wanted them to begin their life together.

Junior has a very big family, but out of all of them his inner circle family has a handful of people that they are close with. His maternal grandfather, his paternal grandparents, two of his uncles from his maternal side, and his mother's aunt. These are the people they are mostly in contact and communication with. Junior's parents (Rachel and Joey) try to keep in touch with these family members on regular basis. His family does not have anyone who is incredibly important outside of the family, but they do care a lot for their church family as a whole. No individual has ever lived with them outside of the family. They do not have a specific person that is of vital importance to them outside of the family. They care for their church family as a whole, but there is not an unbreakable bond. Their role is simply church members, not that it should be taken lightly to be a church member, but what is meant here is that they are not actively involved in church activities.

Individual Development

The normal developmental milestones serve as a baseline that can be used to observe and monitor the progress of a child. All children are different; therefore, they all develop at different speed and different intensities so it is necessary for us to have a baseline of what “normal” development should look like. The five normal developmental milestones include biological, psychological, emotional, intellectual, and social points of development that should take place in a person's life. (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior's parents indicated that around three or four months old Junior was able to hold up his head without additional support as well as beginning to smile and be aware of his surroundings. Rachel mentioned that Junior did not crawl, he simply began walking around seven or eight months of age. By age five Junior started pre-k in Mexico. During this time he became friendlier, social and loved to be around other kids.

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory is composed of eight stages. The first stage is "basic trust versus mistrust" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior has a strong sense of trust. His parents constantly provided him with love and affection. He knew that if he ever needed his parents, they would always be there. This experience has helped him be very trusting of others during his lifetime.

Erickson's second stage is "autonomy versus shame and doubt" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior's parents were always cheering him on. They would encourage him to try new things and to become independent. They would acclaim his achievements such as when he began to walk, read, write, and when he learned the alphabet. Rachel mentioned that Junior always loved to draw. He was constantly making drawings for her and she would praise him by sticking them on the fridge and showing them off. This constant support helped Junior become self-confident.

The third stage is "initiative versus guilt" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). This was a difficult stage because although Rachel and Joey encouraged Junior to become independent and try new things, they had a limit on what he could do. They never allowed Junior to explore as much as he wanted because of legal statuses or insurance. For example, Junior always wanted to play football, but they never allowed him to because they said if he broke something and he went to the hospital they would not be able to pay. In my opinion, this was confusing for Junior because it sounds like he would receive mixed signals. However, they were very encouraging when it came to church events. Rachel was always accompanying Junior and Lisa to their social events and encouraging them to make new friends.

The next stage of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory is "industry versus inferiority" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Because of his parent's push and support, Junior did well in school. Junior was not the best student but his parents always encouraged him to give it his best. When they moved to the United States, nobody in their family knew English. This made it very difficult for them as a family and for Junior and Lisa as students. Nonetheless, his parents always told them to seek help. They told him it was okay to ask for help when needed, but that he also had to put forth effort himself. This empowered Junior to develop as a very diligent, focused, and grateful individual.

Erikson suggests the fifth stage as "identity versus role confusion" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior struggled with this when they first moved from Mexico. He did not know what his role was as far as school, or in the community. He did not know anything about the culture or language in the United States. Once he settled in and started to adapt, he was able to develop a strong sense of identity. He knew his place in the community, school, etc. He developed a passion for sports, and tried to continue to develop his identity as an individual.

The next stage of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory is "intimacy versus isolation" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior is an introvert for the most part. He is friendly yet quiet and very cautious as to what he shares and says when speaking to others. He is not isolated; he is simply vigilant with his words. He is trusting of the people he feels are trustworthy, but he is careful to not sacrifice his identity or beliefs for a friendship.

The seventh stage is "generativity versus stagnation" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior's family has had a major impact in helping grow into a generative person. His mother is a very loving and giving person. If anyone should enter her home, they will not leave hungry. His

father is very reserved but develops strong friendships, and his sister is very tender and warm. Living in this environment allowed Junior to grow with a strong sense of giving, loving, and caring for others. He is very concerned with the future of others and what he is doing to contribute to their wellbeing.

Erikson's last stage is "ego integrity versus despair" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior doesn't have ego integrity or despair. He does not have ego integrity due to the fact that he feels he is not done yet. He still has goals he wants to reach and a life to live, and he is confident he will achieve a lot through Christ.

Piaget's suggests there are four stages that compose the cognitive development. The stages are as follows: the sensorimotor period, the preoperational period, the period of concrete operations, and the period of formal operations. The sensorimotor period takes place from birth to around two years old. During this stage of the person's life, there are three major developmental accomplishments that take place" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Rachel indicated that when Junior was around eight or nine months old, he began realizing he could hear and see his mom and dad simultaneously, this was his first accomplishment. The second accomplishment took place when Junior initiated playing with a letter game they had. He would try to match the letter with the color it corresponded to. The third accomplishment was when Junior realized that just because he couldn't see something didn't mean it disappeared. They would play with him and try to trick him into thinking his teddy bear was gone. They would hide it under a blanket, but Junior soon realized that it was not really gone; it was simply under the blanket.

The following stage is the preoperational stage. This stage ranges from ages two through seven (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). While in this stage Junior grew in his critical thinking skills. He began to use logical thinking as well. He developed the ability of remembering things and problem solving skills. He developed the ability to associate words with objects that were not present at the time and he was able to refer back to them when having a conversation.

The period of concrete operations is the third stage of cognitive development. This stage takes place during age seven to eleven or twelve years old (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior moved from Mexico during this stage. He learned to view things from many different points of view. He had to adapt to the new culture and environment. He had to think rationally before making a decision. He had to learn a new language so his understanding became more complex and his empathy toward other in the same situation increased.

The final stage according to Piaget is the period of formal operations. This stage takes place from about age eleven or twelve all the way to age sixteen" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). During this stage Junior was able to think before acting. He became aware of consequences to his actions. He also learned how to think of all the different variables that might affect a situation, and he realized he had to analyze those effects and the impact of the consequences.

Kohlberg's explains moral development through a theory that has three levels and six stages. First, he believes is the preconventional or premoral level. This level runs from age four through ten. According to Kohlberg, the first stage in this level is based on the child's avoidance of punishment. This is basically the idea that children do what they are told in order to avoid being punished (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior always helped around the house and

listened to his parents because he knew if he disobeyed or didn't help, he would be grounded. Following is the second stage, which focuses on rewards. It states that children do what they are told in hopes of receiving a reward. Junior would do well in school because he knew his parents would buy him the games he wanted if he received good grades.

Next is the conventional level. What this implies is that the moral thought is based on obeying the conventional roles. Most of the time this level ranges between the ages of 10-13. While going through this level there is a strong need to please others. The individual's actions are based on receiving approval from others instead of doing what they really want (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). During this level in Junior's life, he recalls listening to music he wasn't supposed to listen to and using language he shouldn't use. He did this because he did not want to be the outsider among his peers. Level two also encompasses stage three, which is the same idea of pleasing others in order to gain their approval (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Junior's relationships were very important to him while he was growing up. He had many friends and most of them were not from church. He did not want to lose those friendships so he would often do what seemed acceptable among her peers in order to maintain that friendship. Level two encompasses stage four as well. Stage four states that high authority figures are generally accepted, and it focuses on the need to obey the law (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Although Junior was inclined to do what his peers considered "cool" or what they accepted, he was also attentive to never break the law. He was especially cautious because of his legal status.

The last level according to Kohlberg is level three. This level is called the postconventional level (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). This level focuses on the change people make when they begin to decide what is right or wrong based on their own judgment, no one else's. As Junior matured, he started to realize that although what his peers did considered

“cool,” that did not deem it as good. He started to make changes and decided what activities he wanted to be involved in and be a part of and which activities he would avoid. Level three encompasses the fifth and sixth stage. The fifth stage includes following socially acceptable laws and principles. At this point a person’s behavior is based on principles rather than laws alone (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2015). Although Junior was cautious to follow the law, he also understood that laws are not always what is morally correct. Stage six is essentially the action of breaking loose from laws you disagree with and create a change such as Mohammed Gandhi. Junior hasn’t achieved such change, but he is optimistic to do so one day.

Family Organization

Rachel, Joey, Lisa, Junior, and Ana have a very close-knit bond. However, there are several differences due to the culture here and the culture in Mexico being so different. There is also an additional culture to consider which is Ana’s culture from Puerto Rico. However, the family still manages to be very close to each other. Junior and Lisa are very close to both of their parents and they love them very much. Ana has been welcomed into the family with open arms.

According to the information gained from Baumrind’s model of parenting styles, Rachel and Joey implemented a very authoritative parenting style. They set rules and they expected them to be followed. They were never abusive, but they had high expectations of their kids. They wanted to make sure their kids had a strong sense of ownership, that they would be responsible, and respectful of others.

Junior experienced a fair share of positive and negative reinforcement. When he would behave and receive good grades his father would use positive reinforcement and buy him video games or the shoes he wanted. An example of negative reinforcement would be when his mother

would repeatedly tell him to do his homework. His mother would not stop until the task was completed. Therefore, Junior would do his homework just to stop his mother from “bugging” him. Junior also received punishment in his life, if he was not well behaved, his mother would take away video games and time with friends.

Rachel also implemented classical and operant conditioning. An example of operant conditioning is when Junior mentioned that he knew he should come the first time his mother called because he had experienced what would happen if he didn’t. When Junior heard his dad whistling, he knew his mom was making his favorite food and he began to get hungry, this is an example of classical conditioning. In Junior’s family the parents always had the highest power and the children had the least. This correlates with their parenting style.

Marital Relationship

Rachel and Joey have been married for about 30 years. They have a good relationship. As all couples, Junior is sure they’ve had their fights, but they never fought in front of him or Lisa. This is his parent’s first and only marriage, and they are still currently married, therefore there has been no divorce. There has been no infidelity known of, no alcoholism, physical or psychological abuse, or serious conflict has arisen in the family. Rachel and Joey express love differently. Rachel is a “touch” person. She hugs his dad, kisses him, etc. She shows her love by touch and cooking. His dad is a little drier. He shows his love every once in a while by words or small gifts.

Rachel and Joey keep their problems to themselves. Therefore, no information could be gathered about problems in the family. Rachel expressed that she views men as the head of the household, protectors, and providers. Joey stated that he views women as equal to men in certain

areas. He cooks just as his wife does. He cleans just as she does. However, he feels he is responsible for taking care of the family, and Rachel agrees. Due to the fact that they are both from Mexico, and they have the same culture, they both learned similar lessons and had the same view of marriage at the beginning. They were taught that women stay home and take care of kids while the man goes out to work and brings in the money. However, after living here for many years their way of thinking has changed. Rachel works and cooks, but Joey helps as well.

Junior learned that arguments between a couple stay between the couple. He also learned that marriage is a lifetime commitment and you don't just leave when you have arguments. Additionally, he adopted the attitude of his parents as far as thinking the man is the breadwinner, and he ensures he is constantly providing a stable income in his household.

Family Communication Processes

Junior's close-knit family is very quiet. The most talkative one is his mother. Everyone within his immediate family talks to each other. They also communicate a lot with his uncles and grandparents. However, because there are a lot of members in his family, they do not communicate with every one of them.

This family does not communicate much in terms of personal issues. They tend to keep to themselves. There is no clear rule of emotions or thoughts that can't be expressed, but since they are so quiet, they usually don't express these emotions. Some taboo topics include: sex & drugs. These feelings are not dealt with; they usually just keep these feelings to themselves.

The Family Context

Junior's father has always worked as a plumber and his mother at burger king. Their children attended a public school, so they did not need to provide any financial assistance toward education. Once they were older, Junior paid for his school and his parents put his sister through school with their savings.

Junior's family doesn't have any negative conceptions of those individuals outside the family. They are very open and accepting of everyone. They are very accepting of people. They are very open-minded and they do not judge others. They accept those outside of the church as well as different racial groups. Sometimes language is a barrier, but if they can communicate, they will.

Rachel and Joey hold no special place in the community, church or business aside from attending church members. They are not very involved in church activities. They do not have any special privileges.

They experienced a major crisis about 10 years ago when Joey lost his job. He was jobless for quite a while and the family was worried because his job was the main source of income. Thankfully, they had saved up and were able to maintain while he gained employment. There are no major family stories, myths, heroes, or heroines in this family. There is a cut off from the maternal side, which is his mother's mom. She did not raise Rachel; therefore they are not very close. They speak, but it is not an actual relationship. There has been no emotional cut off from their paternal side. There are no serious unresolved intergenerational family issues. This family is definitely not perfect, but they manage obstacles together.

There were no outside events or influences draining the resources of this family. When the family struggled financially, they were able to pull from their savings to cover the needs. Joey and Rachel try to help their parents financially when possible, but they are wise with their

finances so they know when to pause. They did not use many community resources, mostly just Church moral support and fellowship.

Family Strengths

Love and support is what helps this family thrive and go on. Although they are very quiet, they are very close to each other. They are always looking out for one another and making sure they are all okay. When rough times come, they never abandon each other. They love each other very much. One of the environmental advantages of this family is that Junior and Lisa were able to learn English and became bilingual. This often times opens doors to different opportunities. This family is very resilient. They have learned to cope with many situations they have been through, such as adapting to a new culture, country, and life. Although it is difficult for them to demonstrate interpersonal skills, they motivate each other to do better and to go beyond.

Conclusions

Junior's family is a system. As many systems, their system also has subsystems. Rachel and Joey form one subsystem, Junior and Lisa form another subsystem, and Junior and Ana form a different subsystem. Among those there is also another subsystem, which is formed by all the women, and a different one by the two men. This family exhibits having homeostasis. As other families, they have problems as well, but they maintain a balance. This family also has boundaries, which means they have a similar pattern of behaviors. This characterizes them as a unique identity. For example, this family speaks Spanish, they are from Mexico, they laugh at past experiences, and they share the same values.

Junior's family is also open to receiving input and giving output, which can be in monetary form. This family tries to balance what they receive with what they give. Since they all currently attend church, they give their tithes and offerings. They are also open to receiving feedback or advice from professionals. There are various family seminars they attend in order to become a family unit. These seminars allow them to understand how the family should work from a biblical perspective, and what changes they can make to help their family grow. If anyone observes something the family is doing wrong they usually keep it in. However, they have been trying to learn to express what they see wrong. It is difficult for them because they do not communicate about deep problems or issues, but they try and are getting better.

An example of entropy in his family is that his parents are getting older and some unresolved problems may arise. However, the family a whole tries to focus more on negative entropy by mending broken relationships with extended family or friends, and trying to move ahead in life. An example of this is Rachel talking to her mother. Most members of this family experienced differentiation, they are mostly all married and they have experienced the simple to complex existence. Things may have seemed easier at the beginning but they later experience the difficult times in marriage.

Lastly, this family seems to strive through equifinality. They are all individual so they are different, but at the core, they all strive to reach their goals. This is exhibited by the plans of furthering education that have been discussed in the family. Rachel and Joey went to college in Mexico, right out of high school. Lisa, on the other hand, did not go until years later, and Junior finished college but is still trying to further his education. Overall, their collective goal is to have a better future for themselves and for their family.

References

Zastrow, C. H., & Kirst-Ashman, K. K. (2015). *Understanding human behavior and the social environment* (10th ed.). Canada: Cengage Learning.