



How families overcome challenges?



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我家小叔的故事 (Story of my brother-in-law)

- ▶ 56歲 未婚 (single)
- ▶ 中度智障伴隨強迫症 (mental challenge + compulsive behavior)
- ▶ 公婆 (father and mother-in-law) 1995 年過世 (passed away)
- ▶ 2016年中風 (stroke), 現在在安養中心 (respite care)
- ▶ 我先生與他的二哥每個月各自負擔新台幣 6 千元
(**RM 857 per month on his care and support**)

Topics to be covered

- .Challenges in special needs family (marriage, children/siblings, other family members, environment, etc.)
- .Family cohesion matters.

Family exists to ...

- raise and educate offspring .
- meet cognitive, social, emotional, and material needs of individuals.
- assure family well-being as a whole.

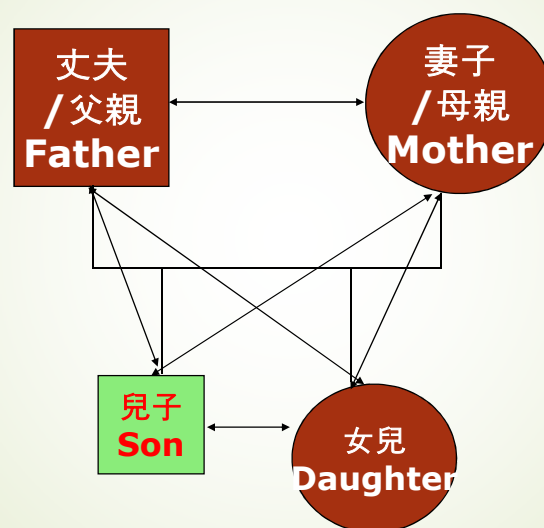


Family -Centered :ecological and systematic perspective

- The presence of a child with special needs affects the entire family: the parents, siblings, extended family members, and community.
- **Acknowledge:**
 - - Children are part of and influenced by their families.
 - - Families are part of and influenced by their communities.
 - - Communities are part of and influenced by our larger society.



家庭圖(family diagram/image)



←→
(互动跟互相依赖)

Challenges of Special Needs Family

- detrimental , marital problems, parental depression ,low family self-esteem, career disruption, isolated from social relationships, leisure-time activities deprivation,...(Ditchfield,1992; Hanline, 1994; Hu, 2008; Hanline,1991; Mallow, 1999).



Paradigm shift

- beneficial, empathy , independence, philanthropy, and benevolence, personal growth, better understanding of individual's differences, high self-confidence, accepting responsibility, communication skills, advocacy, more patience,and much more COHESION!
(Dyson,1996;Hu,2008; Johnsey, 2000; Pit-ten cate & Loots, 2000)
- **Challenges** can be opportunities / changes !



Definition of Family Cohesion

- Family cohesion has been defined as the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another and the degree of individual autonomy a person experiences in the family system (Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell, 1979).
- Note: Emotional bonding does not necessarily mean pleasant emotional bonding, but instead involves a realistic viewpoint that family life is not perfect.

Cohesion issues in Special needs Family

Parents are appropriately connected and involved	Parents are enmeshed or disengaged
Siblings' understanding and adaptation	Siblings' misunderstanding and/or inadaptation
Extended family members' acceptance	Extended family members' rejection



The Importance of Family Cohesion

- Helps us understand interactions among family members.
- A moderator on psychological distress.
- Generate family resilience.



Overcome challenges : practical and must

- Enrich couple/ marriage programs (Unfortunately, always neglected)
- Implement well-sibling camp/programs(I have been conducting well-sibling camp both in Taiwan and Malaysia for ten years)
- Implement family-centered/based interventions (Three projects)
- Advocate inclusion (I have been conducting volunteer work in Malaysia for six years)

BRIGHT strategies to enhance family cohesion

1. Balance emotional togetherness or separateness.
2. Respect family member's uniqueness.
3. Identify family assets (e.g., spiritual ,cultural...)
4. Gratify what a family have.
5. Honor each family member's effort (including special needs child)
6. Think positively .

Closure

-  The real demons are from our
HEART