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## Revisiting Bateson's Ideas : towards Bridging an Humanifying Family Therapy Practice and Training in Singapore

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**Maimunah Mosli**

PPIS FAMILY THERAPY INSTITUTE SINGAPORE

## **REVISITING BATESON'S IDEAS: TOWARDS BRIDGING AN HUMANIFYING FAMILY THERAPY PRACTICE AND TRAINING IN SINGAPORE**

“The major problem in the world are the results of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.” said Gregory Bateson, quoted by Jan van Boeckel in “When we find meaning in art, our thinking is most in sync with nature” A Review of An Ecology of Mind – The Gregory Bateson Documentary.<sup>1</sup>

### **OBVIOUSLY OBLIVIOUS MIND**

Where do I begin? Do I begin with what I have started or do I begin with the end in mind? Do I begin with what I want or do I begin with what I think I need? Who determines the need, the want? Is that even necessary? Who is family? What makes a family? How do families interact? When we say we work with families, what are we really working on? What if, someone finally say family therapy or the work with families have ‘facilitated’ families to live the life of a singularly prescribed way of being a family? Where lies the honor of our practice? Or where lies the dignity of family living? Is there even a need to include and think of such things? Is disconnection a call for more connection?

### **LET'S BEGIN AGAIN,**

How can I hold the family, its honor, its dignity and its being? Do I hold them and the content of their stories or do I hold their context? How can we facilitate to allow multiple way of being or knowing? Other than conversation, communication, can we begin to interact with larger ideas, larger patterns and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.naturearteducation.org/AnEcologyOfMind.html>.

include smaller ones too? Will wholeness of family living make way for individual need for space? Can family therapy talk about food, the trees and the sea? Have family therapy exclude science, art, poetry and biology, architecture, religion and history? If family therapy or work with family can begin again, what would it look like? What would it want to include? If systemic family therapy can begin again, would it consider, other context other than what we have been taught?

Have we single out families to live in isolation in the world of interconnectedness? Have we single out families and family therapy practice from the trans-contextual context it existed in? Have we not allowed families to appreciate the availability to learn from each other and one another, within sameness and within difference? If families were to adopt a multi description stance in living, what patterns can we eventually notice, learn and relearn? If mutuality or mutual learning is the invitation borrowed to every individual, couple and family members, how can it NOT offer families to want to begin, again?

If Bateson were to say something today, about family, family & therapy or systemic family therapy at large, I wonder if he is still keen for us to continue looking at patterns of interaction?

If so, do we include us, practitioners, to notice the pattern of our engaging, hypothesizing, questioning, intervention, our caring, our curiosity, our holding and our being with families, our relationship with larger or smaller ideas? Seriously, are we holding the family or is the family

'Holding' us.

## OUR BEGINNING

Incepted in November 2015, PPIS Family Therapy Institute (FTI) began a service to fill in the gaps for the community. We started conceptualizing the need for a psychotherapy service that can offer the community a more therapeutic help in addressing their familial issue.

The word Family, Therapy and Institute brings with it a whole different depth of meaning, value, aspiration and principles in guiding systemic and therapeutic work practiced at FTI. The word also conjures to the 3 main groups of stakeholders FTI directly engages with: families, professionals and the community, through its practice.

## THE FAMILY

We hope to address the family and the problems families are confronted with. Using “the problem is not the problem” a non-blaming stance, we invite families to look at their interaction and how their interaction can hold a useful conversation or perturbed an ongoing interaction. Every member of a family has an attitude or behavior. We are beginning to notice that behavior is an act that inter-act with layers of interacting interaction imminently arising from emotions, thoughts, belief system and many more. So as family members communicate, are they conversing or are they an act-OR inter-act-ting the myriads of ideas? Do we fault the Act-OR or actor?

## THE THERAPY

The second crux of our establishment was to see how we begin to develop and pay attention to the therapist doing the therapy and in particular, the therapeutic relationships we need to establish. We had wanted it to be a learning centre for therapist where they can be given an opportunity to be more attuned to cultural aspects of doing therapy. In the practice we began to notice that interactions has many crossroads. If an individual is in interaction with many layers of interactions, how many interacting patterns or crossroads are therapist journeying, holding, patterning and patterned by. How many of such intersectional conversation are they able to hold or bring out in therapy. The therapeutic crossroads are junctions that require useful pauses, truncating, shoveling in the minute-to-minute conversation for a period of 45-minute session. Who holds the therapist as the therapist holds the clients and their context?

## THE INSTITUTE

The third crux of our establishment is our envisioning of being an institute that can allow professionals who wish to learn about family and family therapy, can have the space to convene to a place where learning about doing family therapy within the Asian or Malay cultural context. It did not want to be another usual institution.<sup>2</sup> It wanted to be a useful holding space to institute learning and not producer of certificate gatherers.

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<sup>2</sup> Usual here refers to the current way of knowing and to change the way of knowing to emphasise the need for mutual and cross learning.

The three multifaceted facets of our work became so interconnectedly obvious as we set off into our practice. We had the space to look deeper and we began to question. Are we practicing to be a practitioner or should the question be how is our practice practiced in a way that allows us to meander the edges of complexity without compromising humanity or have we?

What is the use of teaching families about complexities and noticing patterns of interaction? How do we professionalize our work and yet maintain the need to humanify it. How can our institute be an institute that promotes mutual learning from and with families, from and with professionals together with other professionals outside of family therapy? How can this institute begin to be an institute that favors trans-contextual learning and teaching? How can the institute be the institute that learns and not just teach? How can the institute invite leaders to learn the teaching of learning? How do we even evaluate a practice that focuses on interaction patterns? This is so not ordinary.

These three main crux of our work is about creating space to allow interaction about lives and living, personal and professional, national agenda and cultural preservation, international yet local, success and failures, religion and science and many more forgotten aspects of living such as empowerment and vulnerability, man and women, love and compassion. We strive to bring forth difficult conversations, observed patterns that has patterned our thinking and our languaging, how we think our brain responds to what it used to know and what else it can and want to know, how we relate towards each other and for one another.

Our work involves working with complex systems and the only way to allow complex systems to exist is to pay attention to conversation that invites, invokes and challenges our epistemological frame of knowing, our practice and our professionalizing of family therapy practice. Chopping the interactional patterns that exist within the three crux we plan to notice, explore and learn, will not help us notice the epistemological error that can exist in the kind of knowing the world our families lived in needs today. Bateson have paved the way for us to study the epistemological nature of human interaction named family and how they interact with the larger world, in particular the epistemological error. As Lynn Hoffman wrote, "For Bateson, the subject of epistemology was an intensely moral concern. Epistemology for him meant the rules one uses for making sense out of the world" (p. 342).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://thefamilytherapyblog.com/2015/07/02/gregory-bateson-pioneer-of-family-systems-theory/> Quoted after The Family Therapy Blog. Gregory Bateson: Pioneer of

## RELATIONSHIP WITH BATESON'S IDEAS

As a graduate in the Master's program for Family Systemic Psychotherapy (Middlesex University, (UK), most students, are very familiar with Gregory Bateson's work. His name will appear in any book that whips systemic ideas, cybernetics and anthropology. His ideas have largely influence the development of ideas and exploration of an important aspect of family living as he points us to the 'essence' of a living system, which is pattern of interaction.

Anyone who was first introduced to Bateson's work in systemic thinking will run and cry reading his book *Steps to an ecology of mind* (1987 /1972/). Its small and convoluted yet, we all know how the book have perturbed not just our thinking but also the thinking about our thinking.

Was I interested in knowing what systemic thinking is all about, then? Or was I more keen on learning the method or approach that has been tried and tested in one context, proven effective so that I can apply it in my Asian context? Was I more interacting with systems thinking or was I more ready to emulate the approaches that can help develop a repertoire of skills to better help families in my context?

How do I contextualize the work done with families in the west to our local context? How would they respond? Is there even a need to begin to distinguish human experience through cultural difference? What is the difference between human culture from culturally lived experiences? Has cultural difference differentiate and further distinguish the cultural imperatives? Is it even permissible to talk about culture in this way?

The more I read Bateson's work on epistemology, following the elaboration of Bradford P. Keeney, (1981), and the introduction to Nora's work, it is making the revisiting of the work with family and our context a crucial and vital process to take. The reintroduction made me reevaluate the need to reconsider and recalibrate, what I know, what we know, how we know, what we need to know and how our knowing helps us to know more of the same or are we knowing something different to sustain the relationship? The video, *Ecology of mind* by Nora Bateson (2010), became a compulsory video for people to begin interacting about transcontextual aspects of living.

### I DECIDE TO BEGIN AGAIN

The beginning again, this time, made the noticing critical yet not too critical that it rejects. It opens the lens to observe larger patterns in society and how it informs smaller familial system. It opens up space for looking at patterns of interaction as interacting with local, regional and international aspects affecting family living. It broadens the look at interconnectedness and how things are mutually influencing. For example, how globalization not only affects MNCs but also local wet market and eventually the kind of fish we eat. How poor salmon farming in Norway, can affect the health and mood of a husband who loves eating salmon and not getting it here in Singapore.

### PERTURBING AND EXPANDING IDEAS AND WORK WITH COMMUNICATION

Firstly, I like to qualify that I am a Muslim, Malay Asian female family therapist. This is my context. As a Muslim I am aware of the importance and the encouragement to communicate. Yet, as far as I am concern I am aware that my learning to communicate is exposed using the frame set out for us in the school context. Home front, I learnt that communication is functional. I hear values behind communication and how it is a mode that communicates meaning etc. Harmony is essential. Respect has to be there. The illustration of a good communication is clear, but I wanted more. I had a question. Who sets the context for communication and what differentiate communication from conversation to interaction?

Bateson certainly has paved the work around human interaction. His work on communication invited me to look at my interaction and communication with culture, religion vis a vis the perceived modern Muslim community in Singapore. Culture is certainly one aspect that has great influence in this part of the world. Our cultural ideas about and around communication lie within the frame of expectation, rules and obligations. None taught and offered the meaning behind the need to communicate, how respect needs to be contextualized and that we can interact with these concepts rather than just assume the role to reap the function.

The current communication training packages further reinforces the layered quality of human communication as they go about the communication

between 'report' and 'command' (Olson, 1972). It too, forces me to look at what are we doing as therapist in helping couple 'better' or 'improve' their communication through packaged training modules. It made me noticed how the training packages only package something and remove an essential component of interaction, a process. How do we even package a process?

The illustration about communication in the context I am in can be easily polarizing and that is so easy. It is not very obvious how communication polarizes but yet one can experience the polarity-ness. Bateson offered a frame of looking at complexities in human interaction or perhaps the communicative expression that comes with any conversation. He offered me the ground to explore wonders of schismogenic interaction, double binds and how feedback is used. These ideas were useful ideas to be revisited by individuals, couples and families and especially family therapist today. In particular, the symmetrical and complementary schizogenesis have opened up more postulations about human interaction. The fact that it can facilitate relationality, it can and has equally been blamed to phase out a relationship. This invited me to further explore human interaction and the influence and subtle dominance of cultural and religious ideas in our daily interaction with multiple systems.

### EXEMPLI GRATIA

A Muslim husband is expected by the religion to be the leader of the family. As a non-Malay, he needs to be leading and guiding the family and the only way he knows how to is to use the cultural frame he is familiar with. While the wife agrees to be guided, she too is aware that her internal system wants a husband to guide through love and compassion. Husband's strict adherence to religious practice while right, is experienced as imposition of gender and cultural. The conflict then is not just communication but rather the differing ideas and cultural practices that can exist within the same religion.

In our work with families, we seem to pay attention to how couples and families are interacting and how we are noticing the interaction has somewhat obviously ceased by the time they come to us. Oh let me correct it. At times it's heated, brewing and blown out of proportion. There too exist more silence and more withdrawing. There is the lack of fluidity and insight in how people are interacting. Its robotic, its predictable.



## WE CONTINUE THINKING AND QUESTIONING

A thing call communication can cut like a knife. Communication moved the heart as much as it can confuse and convolute the mind. When will communication be done? If communication were to be interaction instead, can there be more exploration than expectation? When people expect to communicate are they also forcing a connection? When communication cease, does that necessarily connotes a death in interacting? Are families more familiar with double binds, or are double binds more familiar to families? When there is communication 'breakdown', do we resort to mechanistic way to resuscitate communication? How do you explore communication when the community is not conversant about communication in the first place? Could we get them to give us the narrative of what happened and what they hoped for? Should we invite differentiation in an already broken system? Who is prepared to see, sit and slide with communication? What would it take to help people see blind patterns of interactions? What would push the bar of exploration about communication to invite the noticing of double binds, pathogenesis, and paradoxes, schizogenesis that exist? Should paradox of communication be made available to others other than professionals?

## WHERE DO WE EVEN BEGIN? PERTURBING THE IDEA OF CULTURE

Culture: It is familiar, It is comforting, It is giving a sense of belonging and at times a reason for justification for one's behavior. Growing up, I must admit that I breathe and think culture. At least I am made to believe. Decisions are made based on culture; every part of our living is informed and moved by culture. How can we begin to step out of culture to look at what it is doing, what it has done to them and us? It sometimes is taboo-ish to think of questioning culture or religion.

Undoubtedly, We live in an era where culture is define by other and we have lived the era of living the life of being a person with culture as if culture is an antique trapped in a glass display case. If I am a cultural person, am I the antique? Am I the glass or am I the display case? Am I able to notice who is watching me.

I am intrigued by the anthropological work by Bateson (1953) with the Iatmul People. In fact I am very honored to know there is a field called anthro-

pology. Bateson's ideas invite us to have a less lazy relationship with culture. His ideas open spaces for enquiry about the obvious, about the experience of being and living in and within a culture. It offered clarity and also the opportunity for me to not rest on my laurels. What is comfortable and familiar does not necessary means it is right. What is uncomfortable and unfamiliar does not means its wrong either. Yet, what is right for one culture does not mean it is right for all. Is the imposition or demand of a single culture or a cultural right is an idea driven from the need to control others?

The art of observing a society and picking out the culture and yet being mindful about the way we see whilst ensuring the need to not penetrate the system with an outsiders lens is humbling to know. I experience the same when I was interacting and working with Nora Bateson. She is keen to know the/or my culture or cultural experiences and will offer observation of the culture. Yet there is no experience of acculturating me to her culture. This respectful way of interacting with my cultural identity and me once again, offered me the space and ability to look and begin looking at culture, yet again. It invited a certain relational risk taking about the relationship with culture. I find asking the question around culture made me equally aware of what I did not know and need to know. In fact it has allowed me to see the difference between cultural practices and religious practice and praxis. The interaction between culture and religion is pleated nicely that it sometimes confuses and makes it even harder to distinguish which of these are cultural or religion. The way to go about doing this, is to begin to look at the mutuality and to mutually learn again.

Is culture us  
 Is culture them  
 Is the them and us in itself a culture that began:  
 A distancing from nearness,  
 A distancing from closeness,  
 Can culture promote togetherness?  
 Can culture promote blindness?  
 Should culture be plural?  
 Should culture be singular?  
 A nearing of us,  
 A nearing of them,  
 Is culture in us?

Is culture in them?

When is culture singularly plural?

When is culture plurally single?

Can it even be possible?

What sets the context of culture?

How did culture become so morally sound yet it too can

Sanctions racism, discrimination and subjugation?

Using pattern of interaction and schismogenic ideas, I look to how culture has influenced family living and how culture is prevalent and at times posed a unique conundrum or even pose a challenge to the idea of living.

By looking at the patterns of how culture have influenced, guided, and 'held' us, it further broadens the space to re-examine to allow more room for interacting with culture as compared to just being informed by culture. Culture seems to justify classical right to practice life in certain way. As an example, kissing the hands of an elderly Malay Muslim person. It is culturally accepted and expected. To deviate from the cultural practice can be deemed as inappropriate for a young person. It can also translate into the justifiably blameworthy of the parent's lack of parenting. Blind communication can blind culture and our acculturation.

From an agency point of view, taking schizogenesis further in our family therapy practice, we became more attracted and lazy with questioning the obvious. It pushes and questions normalcy but does it necessarily mean that culture is bad? or is the perception around cultural representation the real culprit when dealing with interaction around culture. It is interesting that sometimes, as family therapist working with similar culture has and can offer blindness to cultural practices and norms. Who sets the context of culture in families and family living? The representation of a single culture by others from a different culture seems to connote that culture exist within frame of demonic hegemony.

Again is the problem the culture or is the problem how and who is representing the culture?

Bateson's ideas and work allowed me to question how culture is used and how using culture is and can, unfortunately, be limiting the human potential from learning together. It too has moved. Culture has moved with people movement and migration. This not so new phenomena, is needing a different or a more useful way of interacting with culture.

## FAMILY THERAPY EAST & WEST

As therapist we learn to do the work from the West. We rely largely from their observation, intervention and policies. We deliberate on the ideas and adopt it to our local context.

As an Asian therapist and as an Institute, we are not questioning the knowledge and approaches from the west. We often wonder how the approaches have been received by professionals and families or otherwise. The readiness to do this is not about negating the knowledge from the west but rather, how do we begin to appropriate the knowledge to suit the context. How can we learn about dealing with divorce, yet being mindful about the cultural aspects related to divorce or grief. Much of the West is also available in the east vice versa. Do we really want to specialize in one way of doing therapy? Can the need for specialization leads to only de-specializing of the professional from the current existing phenomena of globalizing practice? Are there are anyone looking at global phenomena and globalizing efforts minus the usual tag of preferred method but look at how we can humanify our work with the people of the globe.

## THE ART OF MINDFUL HOLDING SPACE

Like nature, Family therapy practice by PPIS Family Therapy Institute (FTI) Singapore, aspire to use the “fitrah” concept to invite, invoke and interact in our work with families. We use an art piece nestled at our waiting area, to better explain the holding space FTI hopes to work on, our approaches and our stance. Unlike the usual use of the word *fitrah*, it is not an arrival, it is a process and a journey where nature and us will continue to find a way relate in ways that can foster mutual learning.

*The art of mindful holding space* is a narrative piece of artwork that leverage on the power of a visual image to invite and evoke emotions, ignite realization, spark conversations and aspirations of the viewer across all culture. The emblem like a family, is an ecology and its dialogical.

Made up of 3 different elements, wood, plastic and metal, the emblem signifies that a single piece of wood on its own is unique. No two grains are the same, even though they are from the same tree. While some wood maybe stronger than others, some are less common than others. However, when the

different woods are held together, the woods bond together, forming a solid base and in turn be a source of support for each other and others.

On the wood pieces are verbs contextualized for the various relationship and interactions. Carefully selected, these verbs serve not only as a reminder to anyone of the various elements their relationship entails, but to also evoke emotional senses of what could be missing and also as a philosophical guide to practitioners at FTI, to acknowledge and appreciate process, content and the context while paying attention to the uniqueness of each and every circumstance.

Like the wood pieces, each individual and relationship is unique. They can be different and indifferent, similar but not the same. FTI plays the part of a string that binds and holds the space for individuals, couples and families to witness and experience the connection of emotions with others while being mindful of non-physical cues and manoeuvring in their interaction with others.

The objective of integrating holding space with mindfulness in daily life aims to allow one to observe, be aware, interact, reconnect and appreciate relationship as well as emotions with empathy.

The art of mindful holding space is a complex piece of art that hopes to highlight the complexities involved in any relationship yet FTI believe these complex interaction can be bridged through useful dialogue. The art piece also holds the space in between.

FTI wants people to know that each one of us has a physiological brain. We want to know that we are using the brain yet we are unsure if we are excessing the brain to its full potential? We wonder if we can have an opportunity to interact with the brain, could a different epistemology be permissioned for us and others to notice and experience.

### **WAY FORWARD – FAMILY THERAPY**

With the lens borrowed from Bateson, Gregory (1987 /1972/), I am keen to see how family therapy can and need to move beyond diagnosis but instead use the concept of meandering the edges of life and living to working with families.

The current practice from personal to professional sphere is in defining the problem and developing a problem centric definition in order to solve the problem.

For example, an 8 years old child who only feels safe enough to leave her parents and for the first time, agreed to follow her grandmothers to the shopping mall. The 8 years old child was superbly clingy. She was labeled as not confident and has developed an anti-social behavior. She has developed her parent's quiet traits. Whenever we talk about families, we are so familiar with finding the problem, identifying it and zooming in towards developing a solution or a perception about solving the problem.

With the thought comes the language of blame and accusation and could end up making the child retreated back to her normal self. Such familial double bind! In my thinking, I thought to myself how the child was being aware of her environment. She is equally aware of her emotions. This includes insecurity, need for protection, need for comfort and that she too can ask to be comforted. How such ideas when juxtaposed with ideas around discipline became devalued. This is the nature of family living that we have been dealing with. We live in a world of ideas. These ideas are ideas that may or needed to work in one context but may work for some but not all.

The idea of generalizing observation and approach across context is really inviting my practice as a therapist to pay attention to the person making sense of the context that they are making. This context making aimed at developing an awareness towards trans-contextuality has helped me with the need to allow others to borrow the lens of trans-contextuality yet not contextualize it for them.

We hope for our work to embrace the work of our predecessors. We too hope to be able to document the work at FTI particularly in looking and expanding the use of context and the use of patterns of interaction, schisogenesis, paradox and double binds. Needing to include the concept of young and old, gender, religion and culture, ideology to biology, strive towards humanity and humanifying. Family Therapy thinking should go back to the family and not be kept only to professionals.

### **WAY FORWARD – SYSTEMIC TRAINING AND SUPERVISING**

This is a crucial aspect. Therapist and supervisors are aware of its importance and the possibilities the work can have on an individual worker. Our training and supervision currently focus a lot on idea of effectiveness and efficiency and especially ensuring that confidentiality is observed. The current supervision practice focus on doing and being.

## DEVELOPING MUTUAL LEARNING

FTI saw the need to allow practitioners to move beyond content digging session and pay attention to the process of thinking and the talking about their thinking and how their thinking can allow them to develop a useful way of talking and being with client. Picture below indicate the learning the 1st year systemic therapist can develop in a period of 6 months. The in house training at FTI have developed the practitioners a holding space for them to learn, experience, learn again and learn together through training and supervision.

Mutual learning or *symmathesy* (Bateson, N :2016) offers systemic practitioner a learning with and a learning from clients and their different context. The combine holding space further offered us the lens to notice how other patterns are learning. In particular we noted how clients too, can mutually learn. They too have learnt from their context and they too can learn about their context. This highly dialogical way of thinking creates readiness to zoom in and zoom out of the multiple context we are interacting with. At FTI, the mutual pattern of learning is helping us develop a pattern that can offer a way to witness the change, to offer with-ness and about-ness in learning and changing.

Moving forward, FTI hopes to have supervision session that can allow supervisee access a different kind of thinking. It should take a transcontextual stance. A systemic supervisor will be keen to share the theoretical orientation including the exploration of mental health of the worker, social religious aspect of their work with families and many more. FTI hopes to produce therapists and supervisors who is capable, reflexive, collaborative and has the muscle to think and perform systemic state of art clinical supervision. We need training and platform that can offer practitioners the training to think systemically and develop art of mutual learning (Bateson, N: 2016) amongst practitioners as well as families. The agency adopts a way of thinking that allows us to think about how our thinking is thinking about the thinking.

Another key component of systemic training is to be able to vigorously look at expanding the idea of vulnerability in relation to complexities and the idea of interdependencies whilst toning the muscle of our mind to develop multiple descriptions. This seemingly processual component of supervision is crucial as this can allow workers to work near the edges of complexities and develop mindful practice where double binds usually reside. The tenacity to

hold the complex context is important to allow transfer of skills to families and individuals to take place.

FTI hopes to develop multi layered training to facilitate the development of thinking about the thinking about training and supervision. In other words, the training and supervision will have to develop workers repertoire of knowledge and sensory that can foster mastery in systemic thinking in their personal and professional spaces. I too hope for the work to be developed where families to can learn to develop a supervisory relationship with self.

The parameters of systemic training can be further thrust to help workers develop an aptitude and an attitude towards double binds and paradoxes in professional exchange internally and/ or externally. The double binds that can exist in organizational processes and language does and can have implication on the future direction of collaboration, integration and exploration.

Systemic training should not be left with the professional. It needs to be lived in the homes where family resides. This will depend greatly on the systemic leadership an organization has where dynamism and humanity of serving the society is encouraged.

### WAY FORWARD: RESEARCH

The first research done as a team was to bravely look at our work with divorcing couples. While we had the numbers to offer a quantitative study, a qualitative practice research was chosen as it seems to reflect the ideas and systemic orientation the team has develop keen relationship with. The research entitled, "Practitioners' experience of Malay Muslim divorcing couples' decision-making process: Challenging our practice in working with couples."

The team embarked on this research keen to look at practice context. Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature*, Bantam Books, 1988, p. 15:

'Without context, words and actions have no meaning at all. This is true not only of human communication in words but also of all communication whatsoever, of all mental process, of all mind, including that which tells the sea anemone how to grow and the amoeba what he should do next.'

Critical ethnographical / linguistic discourse analysis using reflexivity informs the research method that allowed exploration of different context. Giving voice to the professional observation, input and processes, the research methodology hopes to discuss the different context that matter and this includes language, hierarchy, power, culture and even religion.



The finding highlighted interplay of context. while the hierarchical context existed the weaving in and out of context was more prevalent. The need for transcontextual stance was deemed necessary in working with a single presented context. The research allowed the team to experience and develop an appreciation of transcontextual practice context where the work of therapist is not just about 'fixing' the client and their context. Rather, the therapist personal and professional context too is in attendance with client and how these context can mutually influence the work, words, wonders and meander at the edges of complexities.

This allowed us to study, the clients, practice and worker's context. The research and presentation we have embarked on till to date have created an excitement to want to look at practice issues even deeper offering the practice fraternity the mutual learning space for client and us to learn together. To develop a learning that offers a look at minute to minute interaction and its relationship to hourly, or OUR social world usefully, paying attention to the interaction we make verbally, mentally, emotionally and psychologically. This includes the use of silence.

Professionals are family members. If professionals can learn and develop systemic lens, does that mean that families too can learn to develop the lens? Arent we learners and doers as much as we are thinkers and researchers who research the thinking about the doing as much as the learning? We can and are, a part of an ecology.

(Mosli, 2017)

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