

Human Behavior and the Social Environment I: ~~101~~
Assignment: Biopsychosocial spiritual assessment

Instructions: Read the case and complete the assignment following the outline provided.

The Case of Regina

Problem Situation

Regina is a 38-year-old Latina mother of 2 children, Amanda, 7, Mary, 9. Regina has left her children alone, unsupervised, at home on several occasions while she out cleaning homes for a living. Amanda is very shy and has not been doing well academically in the second grade. One day while the class aide was giving her special instruction, Amanda was having an especially difficult time concentrating. When the aide gently asked what was wrong, Amanda began to cry and said she was scared that someone was going to break into their apartment when she was home alone with her sister and kill them. The aide reported this to the teacher who then told the social worker and principal. The social worker reported this to the New York State Central Registry and the mother is now under investigation for child neglect. The specific allegations are inadequate guardianship.

Background/Relevant History

Regina was born in Honduras where she lived until the age of 19 when she immigrated, illegally, to the U.S. Regina's family was very poor but, until the age of 12, they were a close knit family. Regina's mother had her own small empanada business. Regina and her two younger siblings often helped make them and sell them with their mom in town. But, when she was 12, her mother became very sick and died suddenly from what appeared to be a stroke. Regina's father began to drink heavily after that and often left her to care for the two younger siblings. Regina took care of them with the help of her mother's sister. However, her aunt's involvement was minimal because she had her own children to care for. As Regina got older she was given even more responsibility. She had cook, clean, care for the children and was now being pressured to help financially. With all these responsibilities, Regina missed school often and her grades dropped. The drug cartel in her small town was increasingly putting pressure on her and other children to sell drugs. They even began to threaten to hurt her if she did not agree. One day, Armando, a local handyman, told her that he could help her get passage way to the U.S. He told her that other Honduran women have done this and it has worked out great for them. He said they get jobs in the U.S. and send money back to their families in Honduras; "It results in everyone having a better life." Regina knows of some Honduran women living in the U.S., one of whom is her Aunt Gloria. She writes to Aunt Gloria who agrees to take her in if she makes it as far as NY. Regina agrees to leave her family and come to the U.S. Her aunt agrees to keep an eye on her younger siblings who are now 13 and 14 years old. Armando introduces Regina to Miguel who brings her by train through Central America to Mexico. The trip was extremely dangerous;; they rode the top of the trains, endured extreme cold and hot weather conditions, and were in constant fear of being robbed and abused by the bandits.

Once in the U.S., Regina made it to her Aunt Gloria's house in Denver Co. where they made the agreement that Regina would work as a nanny for Gloria's young children (2 and 3 year old boys) in return for room and board. Gloria worked for the past 8 years at the Marriott Hotel as a waitress and hostess. She met many people, one of whom is an immigration lawyer who she has been friends with

for the past 5 years. He helped her and others to gain citizenship. Gloria introduced Regina to the attorney.

Over the next 10 years Regina worked as a nanny and lived with Gloria. The attorney, with the help of a non-profit refugee program, helped Regina through the long and arduous process to become a legal alien. Also during this time, Regina met Juan through a friend she met at the refugee program. Regina and Juan hit it off immediately. Juan worked as a day laborer and Regina began to clean homes in the evening as a part time job off the books. They both saved their money and the two married (Regina now 29 and Juan 35.) The couple lived with Gloria and her family to save more money. This did not last long, however, because Regina got pregnant and they needed a larger home. The couple found a studio apartment and moved out of Gloria's house when they were 8 months pregnant. The couple had a baby girl, Mary, and 13 months later, another girl, Amanda. When the girls were 2 and 3 years old, Juan lost his job as a day laborer. Regina went back to work "off the books" cleaning homes. Her business grew rather rapidly through word of mouth. Juan did not go back to work but, instead, drove Regina to all her jobs (she did not drive) and took care of the girls. This arrangement worked for the family however, they never had enough money to move to a bigger home and endured the stress of tight living conditions and a noisy neighborhood (the neighbors often stayed up late at night keeping their children up until 12am.)

Two years later, Juan began to experience frequent stomach pain. He did not have insurance so he only went to the doctor when he was very sick. (Regina suffered from high blood pressure but she and the kids had Medicaid and used this for their ongoing medical needs.) Juan endured the pain for several months, however, when it became unbearable, he finally went to the clinic. The visit cost \$150. The doctor referred Juan to a gastroenterologist. Juan put off going to the gastroenterologist because the visit cost \$200. After another couple of months of excruciating pain, he went to the specialist. That doctor referred him for an MRI which showed that he had stomach cancer. Juan was admitted to the community hospital and the social worker gave Regina forms to complete for Medicaid. Juan died 6 months later when the kids were 6 and 7.

Recent Past and Current

For the last two years, since Juan's death, Regina has continued to work but has been feeling the stress of single parenting. While Regina did not have a lot of patience for the girls before Juan passed, she has little to none now. She finds the girls to be "a hassle" and must always get along with each other. She is often impatient with them and has slapped them on several occasions for not "listening." She puts little effort and time into ensuring that their homework gets done and has not responded to the schools efforts to engage her in their education (e.g. extra help for Amanda.) She believes that it should be easier to raise the girls; that they should be able to take better care of themselves and not bother her. When they do ask for things, or forget to clean their room or do the dishes she gets extremely angry. Regina blames them for making her angry and her unhappy life. She feels that if they would just listen better she would not be so unhappy and sometimes shares that they purposely do things wrong because they do not like her and want to make her angry. Regina also leaves the girls alone frequently in the afternoon and early evening while she works. A friend in her building has encouraged her for the last couple of years to enroll the girls in the after school program which she follow-up on only after the child welfare agency became involved.

She complains about her customers indicating they are too fussy and demanding. She thinks they should be satisfied and grateful. Several years back she lost a very good customer, one who had referred many people to her, because one of the girls she hired to work with her stole from the home. When confronted about this Regina became very angry and defensive. There was some question as to whether or not Regina had known about the theft and did not do anything about it.

Regina has always taken the children to church on Sundays where they spend half the day and reports being "religious" for most of her life. She believes in prayer and speaks openly about her faith in God from time to time. She believes in spirits and has chosen to not go places where she feels there are bad spirits. For example, she reported seeing and feeling the presence of a ghost in one of the homes she cleans. She refused to clean the rooms of the house where she experienced this. There were other similar incidents in the homes of relatives as well.

Child welfare is currently investigating the allegations of child neglect. Regina denies the allegations, however, it is true that she leaves the children alone.

Assignment: Complete a biopsychosocial spiritual assessment (Part 1) and use the ecosystems perspective to understand how the systems (biopsychosocial spiritual) interact and shape one another in Regina's life. Regina is the client. (Part 2)

Part 1: — This section requires identification and explanation of the biological, psychological, social, spiritual, culture, social dimensions of the individual Regina. The purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of who Regina is and the factors that influence her behavior.

1) Biological Dimension (1/2 to 1 page)

A) What are the relevant biological factors that help you to understand Regina?

- 1) Explain the biological factors/characteristics that help you understand Regina?
- 2) Is there a known physical illness? If so, how can she manage this?

2) Psychological Dimension (1.5 page)

A) What are the relevant psychological factors, according to the theories listed below, that will help you understand Regina?

- 1) Cognitive theorists propose that what we think and believe about ourselves and others and the world around us directly influences our emotions and behaviors. What are some beliefs about herself and others? What are some of her "thinking errors" or "irrational beliefs?" How are these beliefs influencing her emotions, behavior, and social functioning?

2) How does the research on the impact of early nurturing help you to understand Regina?

3) Likewise, how does your knowledge of crisis and stress help to understand this person?

3) Spiritual Dimension (1 page):

A) Describe the relevant spiritual beliefs and practices.

- 1) What do you know about this person's spirituality from the case summary?
- 2) Identify spiritual themes that are most relevant to this individual based on the 20 symbolic themes of spirituality identified by Patrick O'Brien, 1992. (page 130)

4) Culture and the Physical Environment (1 to 1.5 page)

A) Culture is a complex concept.

- 1) What do you know about the individual's culture? 2) How does this knowledge help you to better understand this person and her behavior?

B) Describe the physical environment.

1) What concepts best describe the relationship between this person and the physical environment? Refer to the concepts presented on page 172.

5) Social Structure and Social Institutions (1 page)

- A) What are the relevant social systems (from government institutions and policy to family, friends, and local community?) 1) Describe evidence of social inequality.
2) Describe barriers to services and how that influences behavior and well-being.

Part II: ~ (2 pages)

Based on what you know about Regina from the information presented in Part 1, identify how the systems biological, psychological, spiritual, social and physical interact and influence/shape one another. Also, describe the transactions between the focal system (Regina) and the environmental systems and resources.