

Values in postmodern times: a challenge for the family therapist.

Vansteenwegen, A, Meregalli, R., Relvas, A.P., Hahn, K. Traube, R.

1.

Hopelessness, no future, no meaning, crisis, no sense. Modern thinking was characterised by the idea of progress. In postmodern thinking the loss of all values is typical. We are free from every rule. All values became gray. We live in a gray world. We have no absolute referent anymore!

Rules are a necessary frame to have relationships. Being totally free means being totally alone.

We are free from..., but free... towards what? How do we survive our freedom? We think we are free towards: belonging, participate, invest, dedicate, devote to a cause, engage oneself in a relationship.

Young people do not marry any more...

Every agreement between two is only possible with a 'belonging to a third party'.

Being an European is a form of belonging. Belonging has as a consequence to include some and to exclude others. Some beliefs as the Islam or the Jewish people manifest by their clothes a form of belonging.

2.

Why do we complain now about meaninglessness? We are connected to a family. We are beings with a positive outlook at resources (ex. Child psychiatry) Some think we are already far from the individualism of the sixties. New values are present.

To belong to is a restriction, but we have a need for stability in the many changes in society.

3.

Changes in the society. Everything changes : this has consequences. How do we educate our children well? Young mothers have to choose : earning more money or spending time with talking to their children. The question is : consumerism or (old style) values?

We see some solidarity movements within young people. We see that the Erasmus program creates a lot of mobility in the European youngsters.

Youngsters are more mobile. They change also more frequently of jobs and work. We are in a transition period : time for change. Change as an individual, as a couple, as a family, as a society. But the changes on these different levels have not the same speed!

4.

Therapist's role. Therapists help to identify new values. What values can promote the wellbeing of families? It is not our role to impose values, we co-construct them with our clients. We have a supportive viewpoint. How can the therapist help people to change their viewpoint and behaviour?

As a 'teacher' the therapist is always giving different viewpoints and s/he reframes negative things. As a therapist my role is not to say ' it is like that'. I can make them think in a different way. I can stimulate some creativity in life coming from their own experience. I am an expert on the method, not about the content. The family has to formulate and choose the content, the therapist helps thereby.

(Report of the subgroup about VALUES)

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