

# Family Life Cycle Stages

Developmental Theory

# Individual Development

- As we all grow and enter different phases in our lives, we go through various challenges and conquer milestones unique to that phase.



- For example, in the first few years of life, a baby is dealing with learning to trust his or her caregivers,

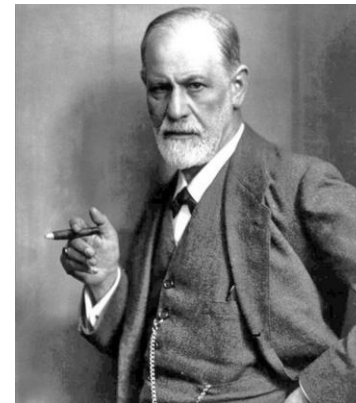


- whereas the main task of a teen is the need to figure out their own identity.



# Developmental Steps

- The developmental steps that we go through have been explained by theorists like Erik Erikson,
  - who proposed the previous examples of the psychosocial growth of children and teens,
- and other theorists who have studied brain development, or psychological maturation and so on.



- But the stages an individual goes through during life are not the only type that counselors should pay attention to.
- for family therapists and those who study the family , it is also important to understand that **the family itself** has its own stages of development.
- This can be described by the **family life cycle theory**, or the theory that there are a series of developmental stages a family moves through over time.

# Family Life Cycle Theory Key Ideas

- Families, like individuals go through predictable stages.
  - Example: marriage-first child-child goes to school- leaving home
- At each stage there is a key principle of transition.
  - Example: commitment to new system
- At each stage there are 2<sup>nd</sup> order changes otherwise known as tasks or challenges that must be solved in order to move on to next phase.
  - Example: form new partner system, adjust other family relationships and friendships to accommodate new partner

For  
example

<b>Table 1.1 The Stages of the Family Life Cycle</b>		
<b><i>Family Life Cycle Stage</i></b>	<b><i>Emotional Process of Transition: Key Principles</i></b>	<b><i>2nd Order Changes in Family Status Required to Proceed Developmentally</i></b>
<b>Leaving Home: Emerging Young Adults</b>	Accepting emotional and financial responsibility for self	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Differentiation of self in relation to family of origin</li><li>Development of intimate peer relationships</li><li>Establishment of self in respect to work and financial independence</li><li>Establishment of self in community and larger society</li><li>Spirituality?</li></ol>
<b>Joining of Families Through Marriage/ Union</b>	Commitment to new system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Formation of partner systems</li><li>Realignment of relationships with extended family, friends, and larger community and social system to include new partners</li></ol>
<b>Families with Young Children</b>	Accepting new members into the system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adjustment of couple system to make space for children</li><li>Collaboration in child-rearing, financial and housekeeping tasks</li><li>Realignment of relationships with extended family to include parenting and grandparenting roles</li><li>Realignment of relationships with community and larger social system to include new family structure and relationships</li></ol>



- As families develop, they should ideally try to accomplish these changes or tasks for success, so these are areas that therapists often focus to see if they can lend support and make recommendations for areas that can be worked on by members of the family.



- Just like there are challenges specific to each stage, there are also unique joys as well



# Your Assignment

- Get into 7 small groups,
  - Select a stage, first come first serve – sign up with teacher
- Begin to research specifically for that stage,
  1. the key transition principle
  2. the 2<sup>nd</sup> order changes or tasks
  3. unique challenges
  4. unique joys
- Plan your family stage box,
  - what types of articles will you include to communicate your findings in each of those four areas?
  - Who can bring what and so on, exchange contact information
- Plan an interactive activity,
  - that you will use with the other visiting groups, [round robin rotation like a science fair] to enhance their understanding of your particular stage