

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEMIC THERAPY

- ➔ **Definition:** A therapeutic approach that views psychological issues within the context of relationships, social systems, and family dynamics rather than focusing solely on the individual.
- ➔ **Core Principles:**
 - **Interconnectedness** → Psychological distress arises within relational systems, not just individuals.
 - **Patterns Over Problems** → Focus on relationship dynamics rather than isolated symptoms.
 - **Circular Causality** → Behaviors influence and are influenced by others within a system.
 - **Collaboration** → Therapists and clients work together to understand relational influences.
 - **Context Matters** → Cultural, social, and familial contexts shape behaviors and emotions.

CORE CONCEPTS OF SYSTEMIC THERAPY

- ◆ **Family Systems Theory** → Individuals are deeply connected to their family systems.
- ◆ **Homeostasis & Change** → Families maintain balance but also need to adapt to new challenges.
- ◆ **Circular Causality vs. Linear Thinking** → Behaviors are reciprocal rather than one-directional.
- ◆ **Subsystems & Boundaries** → Examining relationships between partners, parents, and children.
- ◆ **Roles & Rules** → Identifying unspoken family roles and expectations that shape behavior.
- ◆ **Communication Patterns** → Addressing misunderstandings, conflicts, and emotional expression.

COMMON ISSUES ADDRESSED BY SYSTEMIC THERAPY

- ◆ **Family Conflict** → Improving relationships and resolving generational disputes.
- ◆ **Couples Therapy** → Addressing communication, trust, and emotional connection.
- ◆ **Parenting Challenges** → Strengthening parenting skills and family cohesion.
- ◆ **Behavioral Issues in Children & Teens** → Understanding family dynamics that contribute to struggles.
- ◆ **Trauma & Loss** → Processing grief and change within the family system.
- ◆ **Cultural & Identity Struggles** → Navigating societal and intergenerational expectations.

THERAPEUTIC GOALS IN SYSTEMIC THERAPY

- ✓ Improve communication and emotional expression within relationships.
- ✓ Identify and modify unhelpful patterns of interaction.
- ✓ Strengthen problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.
- ✓ Promote healthy boundaries while maintaining connection.
- ✓ Foster adaptability and resilience within family or relationship systems.
- ✓ Enhance understanding of each person's role in maintaining or resolving issues.

SYSTEMIC THERAPY TECHNIQUES & INTERVENTIONS

- ◆ **Genogram Mapping** → Visualizing family relationships and history.
- ◆ **Reframing** → Shifting perspectives to change emotional responses.
- ◆ **Circular Questioning** → Exploring different viewpoints within a system.
- ◆ **Structural Family Therapy** → Identifying and restructuring family hierarchies.
- ◆ **Narrative Therapy Techniques** → Helping clients rewrite unhelpful family stories.
- ◆ **Experiential Family Therapy** → Using role-playing and emotional expression exercises.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SYSTEMIC THERAPISTS

- ◆ Focus on relationship dynamics rather than blaming individuals.
- ◆ Encourage flexibility in roles and expectations within the family system.
- ◆ Address power imbalances that contribute to relational distress.
- ◆ Explore multigenerational influences on behaviors and beliefs.
- ◆ Recognize cultural and societal factors shaping family structures.
- ◆ Empower clients to create healthier relational patterns moving forward.