

P-550 - MULTIPLE FAMILY THERAPY: TOGETHER AGAINST THE PROBLEM

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The psychosomatic family model, developed by Minuchin hypothesizes that the prerequisite for the development of Anorexia Nervosa (AN) was a family process characterized by rigidity, enmeshment, over-involvement and conflict avoidance, which occurs alongside a physiological vulnerability in the child, but did not place blame on the parents, highlighting the evolving, interactive nature of this process and emphasizing that the psychosomatic model was more than an account of a familial origin for AN.

Nowadays there is growing empirical evidence that family therapy is an effective treatment for AN, particularly in adolescence.

Multiple family therapy (MFT), originally pioneered by Laqueur in the treatment of schizophrenia as a way to utilize the combined resources of families to improve family communication, learn by analogy, and expand their social repertoires, has been adapted for work with eating disorders.

The authors describe two experiences of MFT - day programme organized in a Portuguese hospital with 25 families of patients with AN.

Bringing several families together is a powerful therapeutic resource which helps to reduce the sense of isolation, diminishes stigmatisation, enhances opportunities to create new perspectives and addresses the pervasive sense of helplessness which families experience when trying to deal with the AN.

The intensity of multiple-family day treatment leads to a strong sense of group cohesion and a highly collaborative relationship between the families and the clinical staff.

In this process, many families regain their belief that they can find a way of conquering the problem, even if this may take some time.