

Theory Application: Context and Stress and Resilience

APA Reference:

ABC News. (Producer). (2009). *Hidden America: Children of the Mountains* [Video file]. Retrieved from: <http://proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/login?url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=103311&xtid=52813>

Allen, K. R., & Henderson, A. C. (2016). *Family theories: Foundations and applications*. Wiley.

PART A: Consider the context of functioning and development for the families shown in the film and answer the following questions. Answers to the next four questions need to be your own thoughts and understanding of context and *do not require APA citation, unless specified*. At the same time, this implies you are answering these questions using your own brain and contextualizing the information from a place where you have understood it and can apply the idea of context to families.

A. How does geography impact the way families function in this documentary?

Geography impacts the families in many ways, but the main impact was lack of access. By living where it is considered “the middle of nowhere”, these people lack access to education, jobs, and common resources, which leads to disadvantages throughout their lifespan.

B. How have intergenerational patterns influenced the families in this video? What are the legacies of the families? (cite the Anderson & Sabatelli and/or Allen & Henderson textbook and/or class materials in this response)

Lack of access to jobs is an intergenerational pattern that has influenced families as this affects the health and wellbeing of children being raised in these conditions. Anderson and Sabatelli (2011) explain this idea in their work explaining how the experiences of the family of origin impact the development of individual family members, creating patterns among generations of shared or similar experiences. The continuous lack of access to jobs creates a pattern to reliance on welfare and food stamps, which decreases the amount of access families have to food. This impacts the overall health of the younger individuals which reinforces and encourages the younger members in families to withhold from getting jobs, furthermore, creating a pattern. Mining is another intergenerational pattern as many of the men in Appalachia do not go to college and will more typically follow their fathers into working in the mines, as this does not require an education. This creates a pattern seen between father and son, leading to legacies of miners in family systems.

- C. What are some strengths of these families? Provide at least three. (Articulate and clear bullet points are fine for this response)

Strength One: Parental Resilience is an important strength that these families have as many of the parents of the children overcame issues with drugs and are avidly working to encourage their kids to prioritize their education. This can be seen when looking at Erica's mother as she is working to fight her addiction by entering rehab, so she can better support her child.

Strength Two: School Encouragement is a strength as the school systems really worked with and poured encouragement into its students to graduate and try to continue their education. An example of this can be seen with Sean as the coach and teachers supported him, ultimately leading him to getting a college scholarship.

Strength Three: Familial Support can be seen when looking at the mining example. When Jeremy found out his girlfriend had gotten pregnant, he took steps to get a job so he could support his family. He was supported in this by his father in-law who helped him get a job in the mines.

- D. What are some risk factors these families face? Provide at least three. They may not be the opposite of your answer to question C. (Articulate and clear bullet points are fine).

Risk Factor One: Addiction/Drug Trade: Addiction is something that plagues the Appalachian area, causing parents to lose the opportunity to get jobs and the ability to care for their children. This adds stress to the family system and increases stress on children which can harm their ability to obtain an education, be healthy, and have a stable home.

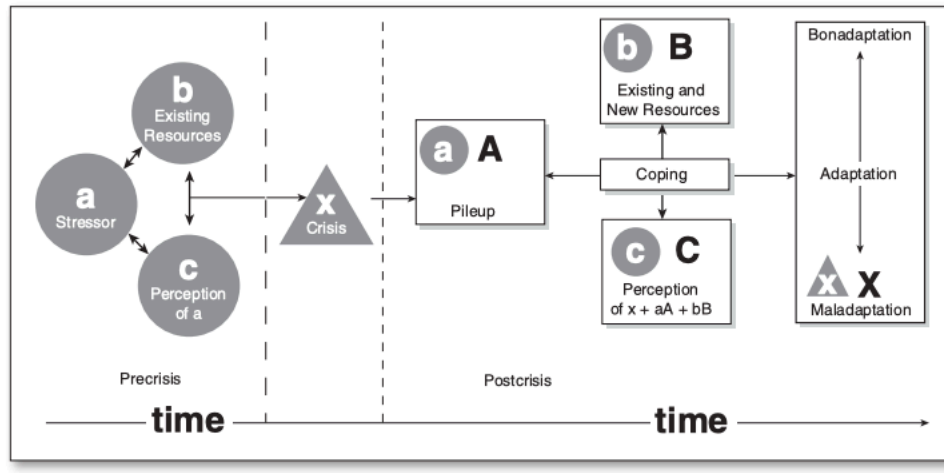
Risk Factor Two: Low levels of income have a drastic effect on these people as available jobs are risky and other jobs are too far, requiring a car, which many people don't have access to. Low incomes make eating healthy more difficult, often leaving families with little to no food and no access to healthy options like fruits and vegetables.

Risk Factor Three: Lack of access to healthcare also impacts these people as many individuals and families do not have access to basic health needs like dentistry and family health practices. This puts individuals at greater risk of infection and disease. An example of this can be seen during the dentistry scenes where the kids were talking about how they had never been to a dentist before.

PART B: Choose a family and crisis in the film to demonstrate your understanding and knowledge of the Double ABC-X Model. Refer to chapter 11 of your Allen & Henderson textbook and the Anderson & Sabatelli reading (Reading Set E) to include APA citations where required (i.e., when you reference/define a part of the model, when you explain a term/concept) and include citations for the film where required.

Family Chosen: Sean Grim

Figure 4.1 The Double ABCX Model



Source: McCubbin & Patterson (1983a).

Consider the family you chose and address each part of the Double ABC-X Model. **Each part** (meaning a, b, c, x, aA, bB, cC, coping, and xX) of the model should include the following in your answers:

1. A definition of the component (ie., a – stressor – In the context of the Double ABC-X model a stressor is considered...)
2. Evidence from the film that addresses the component (ie, Sean and his family experienced several stressors, including ____, ____, and ____.)

A. Stressor: This is something that occurs prior to a crisis that impacts a family's stress and ability to cope (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

Sean experiences stress from living out of his car, homeless, not knowing where he would sleep at night. He also experienced stress at his "home" which suffered due to lack of income which resulted in uncleanliness, lack of access to food, and more.

B. Existing Resources: These are resources that help families and individuals during stress to avoid feeling like their stressors are a crisis (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

Sean experienced resources at school as Sean was a member of his high school football team, and the coaches encouraged him to focus on school/athletics and his teammates often helped him if he did not have a place to sleep at night.

C. Perception: This is how someone views their situation, or how the family perceives their situation (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

He perceived his homelessness to be a challenge that he could work to get out of. Sean showed and expressed that he was hopeful to graduate high school and go to college in order to get out of Appalachia.

X. Crisis: This is a crisis event that has an impact on the individual or family system that changes or alters function (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

Sean hurt his knee playing football, which caused him to feel stressed about going to play college football after an injury.

AA. Pileup: This is a pileup or accumulation of stress over time (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

When Sean went off to college, he found that the expenses were too much, and quickly wound up overwhelmed and stressed.

BB. Existing/New Resources: These are both resources from pre-crisis and new resources that help the individual or family system (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

Sean did not have the same resources and found his teammates to be less supportive in college as they were in high school. He found that he had money to attend classes and football practices but did not have money for the additional costs of college and lacked resources he needed.

CC. Perception: Double C Perception is the meaning that individuals draw from their stress (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

He perceives this stress as overwhelming and has feelings that he should give up because of his inability to pay for college.

XX. This is how an individual copes with stress and crisis (Allen and Henderson, 2016).

Sean drops out of college and comes back home to help support and be with his family.

Write your adaptation component as a short conclusion to address why and how you believe the family achieved bonadaptation, adaptation, or maladaptation. Include evidence of strategies and course terms to explain your conclusion.

This is difficult to classify as Sean's achievement of his high school diploma was a massive triumph for him, being the first person in his family to graduate high school. However, Sean stopped his forward momentum when he dropped out of college and moved back home, unemployed. Based on Sean's flip from forward momentum to moving backwards into the life he was trying to leave, I would say that this was maladaptation as he no longer has a clear plan for his life and lacks the enthusiasm to grow that he had in the beginning. It should be noted, however, Sean did experience a bonadaptation by graduating high school, and going to college. The maladaptation comes from his current presence (where the show left him) which showed no positive direction or life goals, and him illegally obtaining coal to care for his family.

Unfortunately, Sean, when the show left him, was not able to accomplish the goals that he set for himself to graduate college and get a job.