

SECTION III. MEZZO LEVEL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

SOCIAL WORK THEORIES – MEZZO LEVEL SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

Readers should focus on the role of social workers with and in formal and informal groups and organizations. This may include leading, coordinating, or facilitating a formal or informal team or being a team member within a group context.

Section III requires foundation students to apply General Systems Theory and advanced students to apply Assimilation Theory and Conflict Theory to the Maynor Castillo scenario. According to the 5 Phases of Theory Application by Gentle-Genitty (2011), through the embracing of theory as both a lens and an experience we can apply theory to clients and clients situations to help us build rapport, listen and organize their stories, determine patterns, conduct assessment, formulate a plan of action, and still monitor progress and move towards termination. It is with this view then that as student social workers or practitioners that we must understand what we do and learn about how theory can inform this practice.

General Systems Theory	General Systems Theory is a conceptual orientation that attempts to explain holistic behavior of people and societies by identifying the interacting components of the system and the controls that keep these components, stable and in a state of equilibrium. It is concerned with the boundaries, roles, relationships, and flow of information between people. General Systems Theory is a subset of systems theories that focuses on living entities, from microorganisms to societies. Another attractive feature of General Systems Theory has been its explication of a framework conceptualizing the person-in-environment perspective, which has long characterized social work (Gallant & Thyer, 1991).
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FOUNDATION LEVEL ACTIVITY: Compare and contrast how each component of Systems Theory manifests itself in Maynor's scenario when he lived in Guatemala and now that he is living in the U.S.

Focal System	In Guatemala	
	In the US	
Organization(s)	In Guatemala	
	In the US	
Hierarchy	In Guatemala	
	In the US	
Communication	In Guatemala	
	In the US	

Assimilation Theory	Assimilation, sometimes known as integration or incorporation, is the process by which the characteristics of members of immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble one another. That process, which has both economic and sociocultural dimensions, begins with the immigrant generation and continues through the second generation and beyond. In general, classic assimilation theory sees immigrant/ethnic and majority groups following a "straight-line" convergence, becoming more similar over time in norms, values, behaviors, and characteristics. This theory expects those immigrants residing the longest in the host society, as well as the members of later generations, to show greater similarities with the majority group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host society (Brown & Frank, 2006).
Conflict Theory	<p>Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, race, gender, and other factors. Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society. This theory emphasizes that different groups in society have different interests stemming from their different social positions. Conflict theory emphasizes that the various parts of society such as conflict arising from unequal positions held by members of society contributes to ongoing inequality (Social Problems, 2010).</p> <p>In society, groups are fiercely fighting for scarce resources. People may appear cooperative on the surface, but underneath, they fight for power. However, conflict ensues as they struggle for wealth and power (Schriver, 2015).</p>

ADVANCED LEVEL ACTIVITY: One day, in the waiting room at the psychological services center, you overhear another student say, "Mexicans need to go back to where they came from or speak English in the United States". You have been tasked with lead a psychosocial support group for students and realize the student who made the comment is in your group. Before the group convenes, you want to meet with the student to clear the air about his statement and his willingness to participate in the group while being respectful to all group members.

Write two sentences, using components of Assimilation Theory, to explain to the student that immigrant students have every legal right to live and go to college in the US and assimilation is a choice.

Write two sentences, using components of Conflict Theory, to explain to the student that immigrant students have every legal right to partake in resources allotted by the US government.
