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Family therapy based on DMM for an adolescent with psychosomatic problems : a case report.

Shiqin Shen (China)

sh0706@163.com

Topic: Clinical Practice

In this case, the identity patient was a 17 years old student in year 11. He came to my clinic with insomnia headache and stomachache. He had been to the general hospital to see the psychiatrist and was diagnosed depression and was prescribed anti-depressants. As the parents refused to give medication to the boy, the doctor refers them to receive family therapy.

According to the symptoms, I used the regular systemic family therapy to the boy, his symptoms relieve after 4 sessions. When the therapy interval was prolonged to 2 weeks, the boy's symptoms recurred.

According to my reassessment, I found that the emotional bonding between the boy and parents was still not established. Then I spent 1 session to do PI and 2 sessions to do AAI to both father and mother individually to explore the attachment strategies of the parents. After that I spent 1 session to explain the attachment strategies to the boy and his parents based on the DMM and taught them about the importance of attachment and how to establish emotional bonding between parents and the boy.

Six months later, when the boy came to my clinic to follow up, the symptoms were all relieved. Besides, he told me that his attention, memory have all been improved.

How it used the DMM

I used the DMM to explain the attachment strategy to the boy, and parents together. When we reviewed the parenting history of the boy, we found the boy was parented by paternal grandparents since birth to 5years old, and he never got help and comfort from parents after he came back home to stay with parents. According to Parents' AAI, I supposed that the mother was type A and father was type B. As the father was absent most of time, the boy developed type A strategy under the interaction with mother.

What it can contribute to the DMM

After this case, I almost use DMM to assess and understand every family in my clinical work. It was found that the DMM is very useful to help Chinese family while combined with systemic family therapy.