



Family Intervention Sessions – One Useful Tool for School Nurses to Improve School girls' Mental Health

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Schoolchildren's health

Psychosomatic complaints and increasing emotions of depression, were common especially among girls in higher ages.



Family factors

- ✓ Having a tough situation at home
- ✓ Bad relations
- ✓ Communication problems with parents



Viktor 8 years old



Kristianstad University

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Aim

To examine the significance of family sessions held by school nurses in alleviating health complaints, among adolescent schoolgirls



Design and methods

Design – Kvasi experimental, pre-post design using Family nursing models from Canada

Setting and Subjects

- ✓ Compulsory schools in middle-class areas, grades 6-8, southern part of Sweden
- ✓ Four adolescent girls with recurrent health complaints and their families
- ✓ Two school nurses



Description of the participating families in the intervention study

	Family Tilde	Family Ida	Family Jenny	Family Linda
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	14	13	12	14
Health complaints				
Recurrent headache	X		X	
Recurrent stomach pain	X	X	X	
Sleeping problems	X		X	
Other complaints/health problems		Anxiety	Tiredness	Worries, overweight
Health status in the family				
Life threatening illness	X		X	
Chronic illness	X		X	X
Other illness		Psychiatric disorders - extended family		



Calgary Family Assessment (CFAM) and Intervention (CFIM) Models



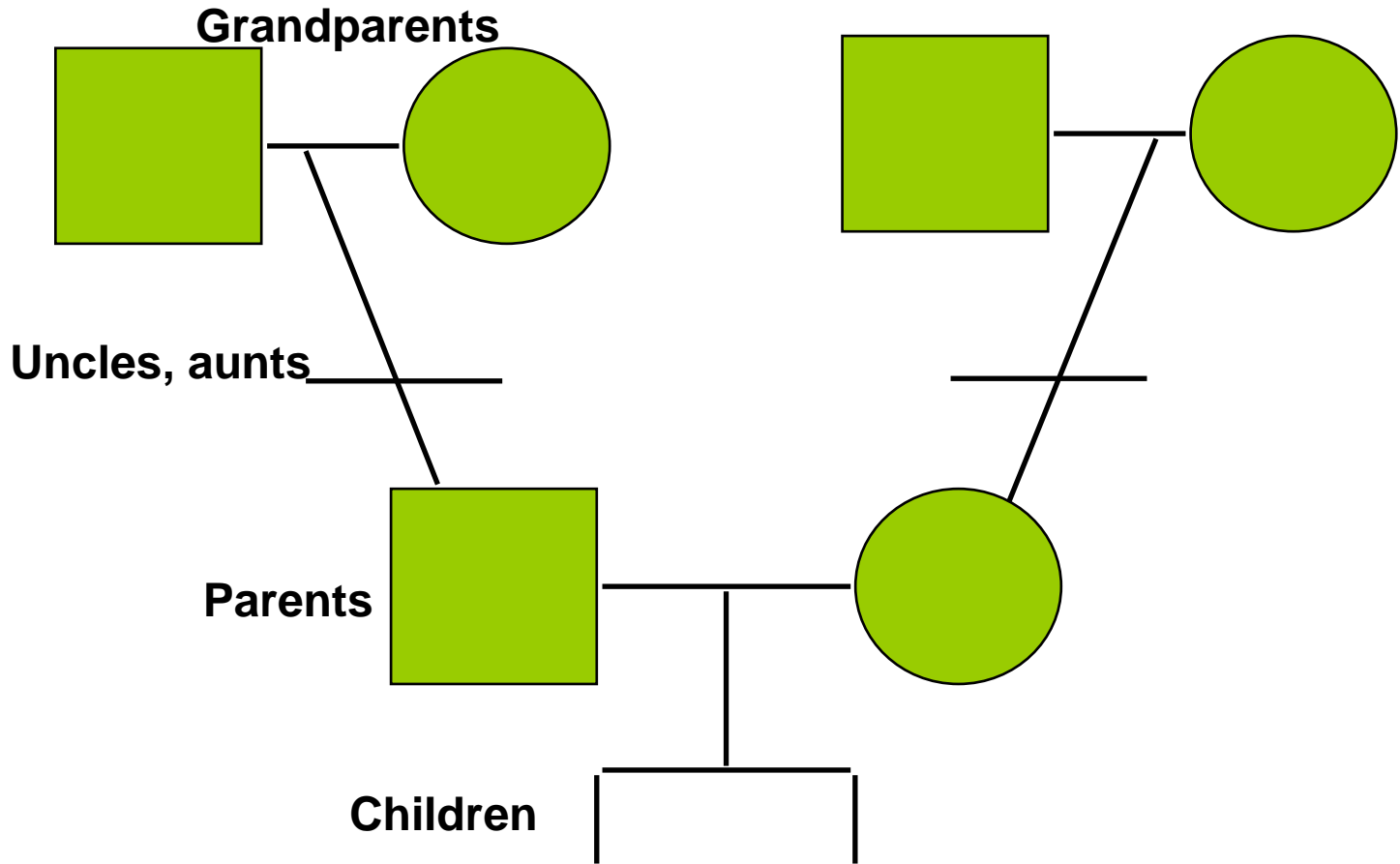


Family Intervention

Three family sessions: (CFAM o CFIM)

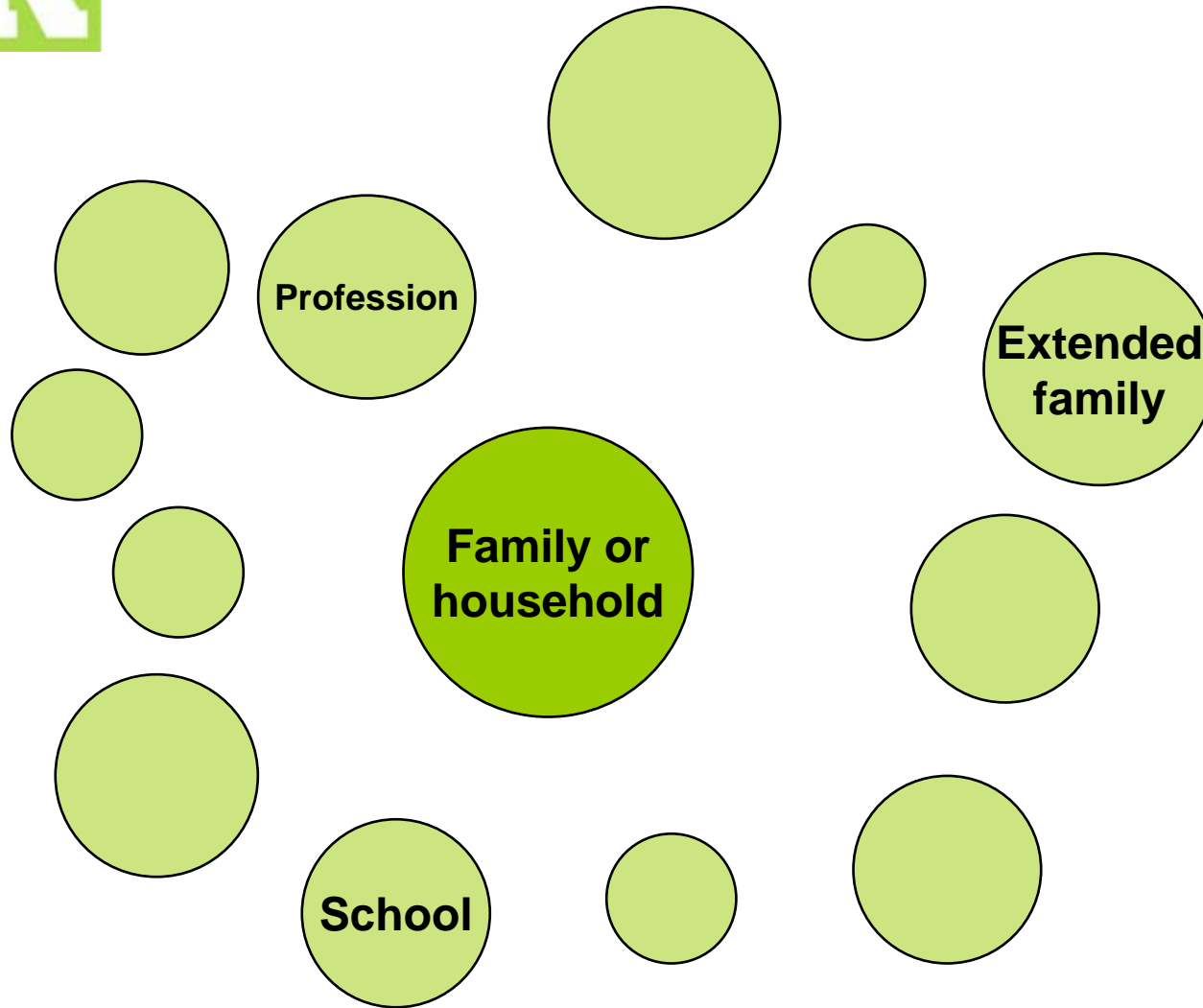
1. The illness story and the family history (genogram)
 2. The present status (ecomap)
 3. The future
- Closing (therapeutic) letter

Genogram





Ekomap





Evaluation

Questionnaires and interviews

- ✓ Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) - pre and post test
- ✓ Evaluation interviews (the families and the school nurses separately)



The family sessions' significance for the families

To tell the illness story and being confirmed in feelings and reactions	To become aware of one's own strengths and resources	To change communication patterns, find their own solutions, and ways to handle the situation
<i>When out in the air - the problem became small</i>	<i>I have noticed myself, even more now, how strong our family is together</i>	<i>The most important thing is that we can talk more openly about the problem</i>
<i>I understood that there is nothing strange about me feeling bad</i>	<i>I think I underestimated myself before – when I saw what they had written about me, such good things – I felt good</i>	<i>If I see it in a longer perspective – I think this is a change-over nature</i>



The family sessions' significance for the school nurses

Working tools	Family sessions – Taking a new nurse role as a collaborator	Closing letters – a possibility to commend/affirm the family
<i>The ecomap – that's one of the models I feel I can easily use in a practical way</i>	<i>Maybe it's not about 'here we have a problem and now we have to plan and how do we do this?' – it's about giving it time and space, to talk about it and then find the solutions</i>	<i>You can not take in everything directly – I think you ought to add pieces of what you find</i>
<i>I feel they're useful – I too use the maps in conversations with the pupils</i>	<i>This way of working confirms what we already know – this is what we should emphasize – not weighing and measuring</i>	<i>This is something I want to work more with – to commend</i>



SDQ Strengths and Health Questionnaire, pre and post test

	Family – Tilde		Family - Ida		Family Jenny		Family Linda	
	Self report	Parent form	Self report	Parent form	Self report	Parent form	Self report	Parent form
Pre-test ¹	19 (0-40)	10 (0-40)	8 (0-40)	8 (0-40)	7 (0-40)	15 (0-40)	missing ⁴	missing
Impact score ²	8 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	missing	missing	0 (0-10)	1 (0-10)	missing	missing
Post-test ¹	11 (0-40)	5 (0-40)	7 (0-40)	2 (0-40)	9 (0-40)	8 (0-40)	missing	missing
Impact score ²	2 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	0 (0-10)	missing	missing

¹ High score = more difficulties

² 0=normal, 1=borderline, >2 = abnormal

³ Missing Family Ida – Error

⁴ Missing – Family Linda – declined to fill in



Summary of the findings

- ✓ The families felt relief and recognised their feelings and reactions as normal
- ✓ Positive affective, behavioural and cognitive changes as a consequence of the intervention were also described
- ✓ The SDQ showed an increased well-being
- ✓ The school nurses experienced the sessions as time-saving and easy-to-use tools in their work



Conclusion and clinical implications

- ✓ Incorporating the family in cases of schoolchildren's mental health problems may diminish future suffering
- ✓ Family focused nursing in school health service meant a new role for the school nurses as a health promoting collaborator



Schoolchildren's health is an issue for the school, the family and for the whole society