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Invigorate

What is a Family?



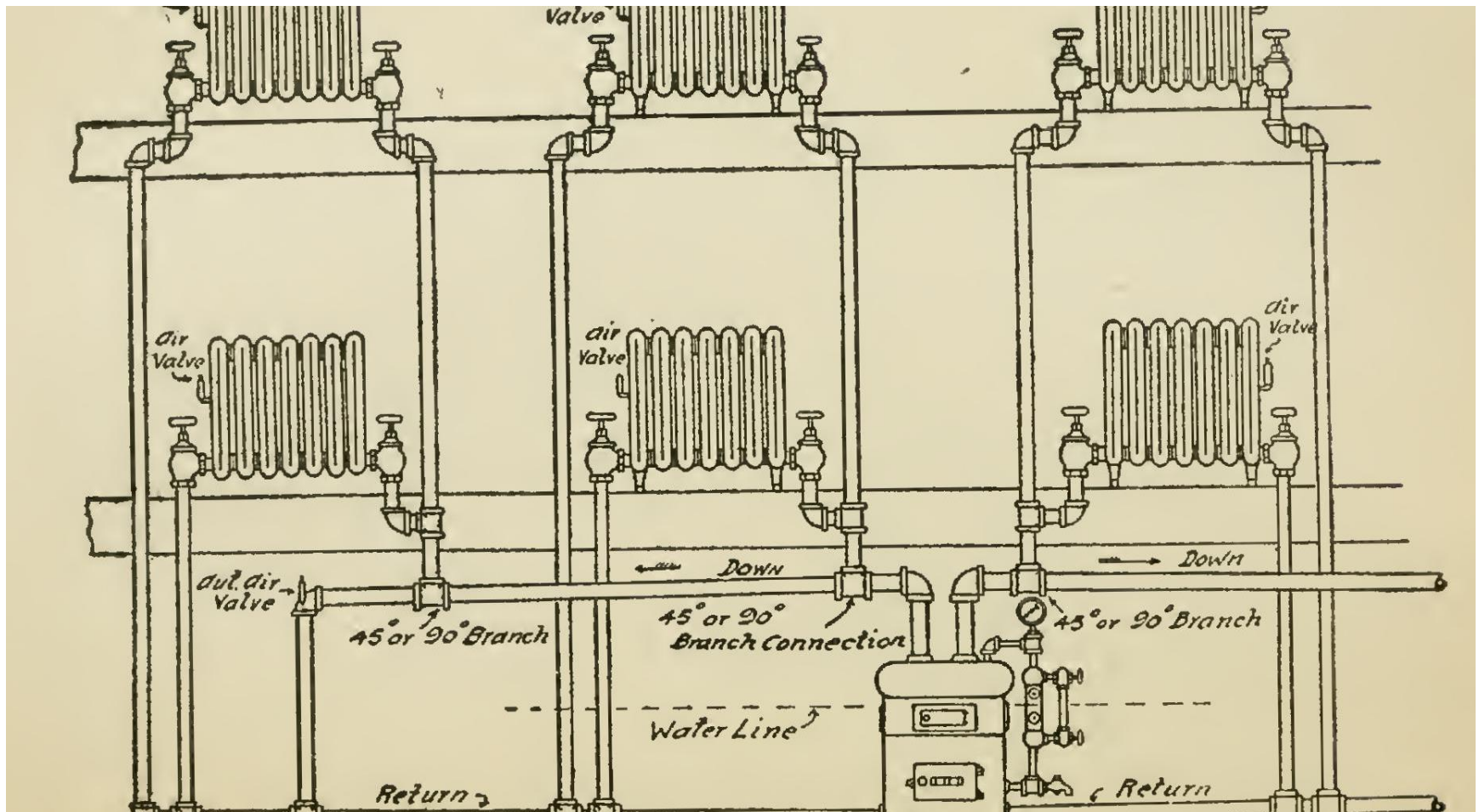
Families are small and unique communities with different beliefs, cultures, contexts and life experiences



Each Family System and each individual within the System is unique

- How do members in your family like to celebrate success?
- How do members of your family respond when faced with a challenge?
- What does each person in your family like you to do when they are stressed, sad or upset?
- How do you forgive each other, or apologise, in your family?

Family as a System



Families are not closed systems

- Other relationships/experiences influence the individuals within the family system which can impact/create difficulties for the family.
- Sometimes relationships within the family system can impact/create difficulties outside of the family system e.g; within schools or friendships.
- Individuals are constantly bumping into other systems such as school, other families and friendships and this increases as the children become older.

Family Life Cycle





Family members can resolve the 'difficulty'.

- Families can be a great resource during these times and are often able to find solutions to these 'difficulties' themselves.
- Family members know each other well, understand how their family functions and they often have past experience of resolving 'difficulties' together.

Sometimes families can maintain/create a 'difficulty' by

- trying to repeat solutions that have worked in the past.
- trying to prevent the developmental change that is taking place for a family member.
- trying a new solution to the 'difficulty' without agreement from another within the system.

Fixed Perspectives

- Family members can stop listening to each other, perspectives can become fixed, communication can break down and more negative emotions can arise such as frustration, anger, blame.



New Perspectives

- New perspectives will change the way we understand what is happening for each other and therefore change the way we respond to each other.
- To do this we need to find ways of hearing each other's points of view (positive communication).

How best to achieve positive communication?

- When are the best times for your family to talk?
- What has to be in place for this to be successful?
- When is it a good time that you can listen?
- Who needs to be part of these conversations?
- (parents, grandparents, school)

What Questions Might Help?

- What other times have we felt like this and what did we do that helped us to get through it? Will this work again?
- What is different about our family now that means it is no longer working?
- When are things going a little bit better? What are we doing at these times that is helping?
- What am I doing, what is my partner doing, what is my child doing, what is school doing when things are going better?

Getting Help External to the System

- Getting an objective view on what is happening for family members might be helpful.
- Help is often sought for one individual within the family. This can be useful in order to express difficult emotions, learn new strategies.
- However, this may not take into account the impact on relationships and other family members.
- It may not take into account how the other family members can best support the individual.

Family Therapy

- Family Therapists can provide a safe environment to enable family members to express and explore difficult thoughts and emotions safely in order to move forward in a constructive way.



What do Family Therapists focus on?

- Family Therapists are interested in relationships and communication.
- The Family Therapist does not take sides, blame, or provide simple answers.
- They aim to engage family members in sharing understandings and exploring ways forward that work for them

Who can Family Therapy be useful for?

- Couple relationship difficulties
- Child, adolescent and adult behaviour/emotional difficulties
- Parenting issues
- Illness and disability in the family
- Separation, divorce and step-family life
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- The effects of trauma
- Difficulties related to ageing and other life cycle changes.