**Assessment of the D’Angelo Family**

Gracie Wiseman

Longwood University

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Professor Danielsen

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The D’Angelo family case study depicts a blended family that is stressed and having problems adjusting to the new family dynamic. The family includes Mr. D’Angelo who has three children from his first marriage, Mrs. D’Angelo who has one child from her first marriage, and Mrs. D’Angelo’s mother. Many of the family’s problems are due to Mr. D’Angelo’s daughter who is against her father’s marriage and verbally attacks Mrs. D’Angelo’s family (Hancock & Miller, 1993). The assessment of the family helps identify areas of conflict and potential solutions, but more information is needed to have a comprehensive assessment of the family.

The case study provides some identifying information for the family members. This information includes that Mr. D’Angelo, Antonio or Tony, is 41-years-old. Mr. D’Angelo’s three children include Mariana who is 16, Paul who is 13, and Tony who is 10. Mrs. D’Angelo, Selma, is 36-years-old and her child, Benedetta, is 14. Mrs. D’Angelo’s mother, Mrs. Solie Guilietto, is 68-years-old and has a degenerative kidney disease which is related to her Type II Diabetes. Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo have been married for four months and Mrs. Guilietto moved from Italy to live with them after they were married (Hancock & Miller, 1993). The case study does not provide specific information about the family members’ religion, class, ethnicity, and race. It is not specifically said, but it is assumed from the information provided that Mrs. D’Angelo, Benedetta, and Mrs. Guilietto identify as having an Italian ethnic background (Hancock & Miller, 1993).

The presenting problem reported by Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo is that Mariana’s behavior and attitude are negatively affecting the family and making it difficult to find a new normal as a blended family. Mariana is seemingly resistant to the change in family dynamics; specifically the addition of Mrs. D’Angelo, Benedetta, and Mrs. Guilietto to the family. The problem began when Mr. D’Angelo told Mariana about his relationship with Mrs. D’Angelo, which was when they both felt their relationship was serious. Mariana was not happy with the relationship and managed to interrupt dates and their honeymoon by acting out and being “sick”. Mariana’s current behaviors and attitudes are affecting the whole family as she is sullen, she refuses to complete her housework, and she is verbally hurtful towards Mrs. D’Angelo (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Other ways her actions are affecting the family, include being verbally hurtful to her brothers when they go against Mariana, being unkind to Benedetta, and rude to Mrs. Guilietto. Mariana’s actions and the tension in the household is making other family members unhappy so much so that Benedetta has threatened to run away, Mrs. D’Angelo is second guessing her marriage, and it is adding stress to the family as a whole. There is further conflict when there is discord between Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo, as Mr. D’Angelo does not discipline Mariana and Mrs. D’Angelo is hurt because she is not supported (Hancock & Miller, 1993). An additional part of the presenting problem is Mrs. Guilietto’s health problems which require four hours of dialysis three times a week at a Kidney Dialysis Center that is 45 minutes away from their home. Mrs. D’Angelo commented that these trips and caring for her mother leads to exhaustion and adds further stress in addition to the problems with Mariana (Hancock & Miller, 1993).

The case study discusses Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo’s point of view only, but the willingness or investment of each family member in the family therapy process can be assumed. Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo were concerned about having all of the family members participating in the family therapy process, but were willing to agree because they admit they need help (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Therefore, Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo seem to be willing to participate and invest time and energy into family therapy. From the discussion of Mariana’s behavior, it is assumed that she will not be willing to participate in family therapy. It is assumed that Paul and Tony will be willing to participate in therapy, because they have started defending Mrs. D’Angelo, Benedetta, and Mrs. Guilietto when Mariana is verbally insulting them and additionally because their father is willing to participate in therapy (Hancock & Miller, 1993). It is difficult to assume Benedetta and Mrs. Guilietto’s willingness to participate in therapy. It is difficult because though one would assume they would want to resolve the family problems, but it is also acknowledged that they may not want to be around Mariana or they may not feel physically or emotionally able to participate.

From the case study, only Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo’s perceptions of the presenting problem and what is needed to resolve the problem can be accurately mentioned. Both Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo seem to think that the problem is Mariana’s behavior and attitude. Mr. D’Angelo seems to think that therapy is only needed for Mrs. D’Angelo and Mariana to resolve their problems. Mrs. D’Angelo seems to be okay with all of the family participating in therapy except for concerns for Mrs. Guilietto’s stress levels and health if arguments were to occur with Mariana (Hancock & Miller, 1993). It can be assumed that Mariana probably thinks that her father’s marriage is the problem and that a divorce would be a potential idea for resolution. More information is needed about the rest of the family members’ points of view to know what their perceptions of the problem are and their ideas about what is needed for resolution.

The case study provides some information that is useful to make assumptions about the family members’ levels of functioning, strengths, and limitations. Mrs. Guilietto seems to have a high level of mental and emotional functioning, but low levels of physical and communication functioning. This is seen in Mrs. Guilietto’s health problems and her need for her daughter to take her places as well as her strong accent that causes some difficulties in communication (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Therefore, Mrs. Guilietto seems to have limitations concerning mobility and communication and strengths of resiliency and authenticity. Mrs. Guilietto’s strengths are seen in her capacity to handle her sickness and Mariana’s hostility and her staying true to her ethnicity. Mrs. D’Angelo seems to have an overall high level of functioning with possibly some difficulties with interpersonal relationships. Currently Mrs. D’Angelo does not have much time or energy for friends and there is difficulty with maintaining social relationships with some of her family (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Mrs. D’Angelo’s strengths include a willingness to receive help and resilience to handle the different conflicts in her life, which includes Mariana’s behavior. Mrs. D’Angelo’s limitations include a willingness to give up on her marriage and a lack of support from friends and family. Benedetta seems to have a high level of functioning, which is assumed from the minimal amount of available information about her. Benedetta seems to be resilient and able to voice her feelings even though it is in the form of tears and threatening to run away. Benedetta’s limitations possibly include an inability to stand up for herself against Mariana (Hancock & Miller, 1993).

Mr. D’Angelo seems to have a high level of functioning. Some of Mr. D’Angelo’s strengths include a willingness to participate in services, dedication to his family, and love for his family. Some of Mr. D’Angelo’s limitations include an inability to effectively discipline Mariana and an inability to adequately show support for Mrs. D’Angelo. Mariana seems to have a high level of functioning with some interpersonal relationship conflict (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Her strengths include family loyalty, intelligence, and dedication. Mariana’s strengths are seen in her continuous resistance to Mrs. D’Angelo and her family and how dedicated she is to her cause. Mariana’s limitations include resistance to change, stubbornness, and manipulation**.** Mariana’shysterics andsuspicious sicknesses are believed to be attempts to interrupt her father and Mrs. D’Angelo’s time together (Hancock & Miller, 1993). There is not much information on Paul and Tony, but it can be assumed they have a high level of functioning. Some strengths Paul and Tony present include being willing to stand up for Mrs. D’Angelo, Benedetta, and Mrs. Guilietto and against Mariana, as well as their ability to thrive in their home environment (Hancock & Miller, 1993). There is not enough information to make assumptions about Paul and Tony’s limitations.

Relevant family history for the D’Angelo family includes the death of the former Mrs. D’Angelo. Mr. D’Angelo’s former wife passed away from cancer four years ago. The former Mrs. D’Angelo’s sickness could have resulted in her chidren and Mr. D’Angelo experiencing some trauma and grief. The intake form mentioned that Mr. D’Angelo’s sister stayed with the family for about a year until she left because it was too demanding. After that, Mr. D’Angelo and Mariana worked together to run the household for about two years (Hancock & Miller, 1993). This information is relevant to Mariana’s behavior because it needs to be considered that she has experienced multiple losses in her life. She lost her mother to cancer, her aunt left, and she has recently lost the family dynamic she has had for two years. It is also relevant because it explains Mr. D’Angelo’s possible reasoning for being so lenient with Mariana (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Relevant family history for Mrs. D’Angelo includes the recent immigration of Mrs. Guiliett and the semi-recent immigration of Mrs. D’Angelo and Benedetta four years ago. More revlant family history for Mrs. D’Angelo’s family includes Mrs. Guilietto illness and its toll on the family and possibly the death of Mrs. D’Angelo’s father (Hancock & Miller, 1993).

According to Crosson-Tower, the family would most likely be in the third stage of the McGoldrick and Shibusawa family life cycle. This stage includes children further adjusting to new family members following marriage (Crosson-Tower, 2018). However, since the families have experienced a breakdown which can be caused by trauma like death or divorce, the family will most likely not follow this family life cycle (Crosson-Tower, 2018). Herbert and Harper-Dorton’s stages of transition are an alternative family life cycle process that would probably better fit the family. In this life cycle, the D’Angelo family is most likely in the initial development stage which involves realigning relationships to help the family function better (Crosson-Tower, 2018). When considering the family within the Blended Family Life Cycle, the family would most likely be in the changing parent agreements or defining boundaries and roles of the children stage (Kumar, 2017).

The family’s overall cultural values or norms are unknown. The intake form did not provide each family member’s ethnicity, race, locale, socioeconomic status, and religious affiliation. It is assumed there are no physical or mental disabilities, because none are mentioned in the intake form. The family’s socioeconomic status is unknown, but it is assumed from the intake form that Mr. D’Angelo is the only parent working (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Ethnicity is not explicitly identified, but it is mentioned that Mrs. D’Angelo and Mrs. Mrs. Guilietto are from Italy. This would therefore mean that Benedetta is from Italy as well, and that they most likely ethnically identify as Italian (Hancock & Miller, 1993). This may affect the family as a whole if there are conflicts between Mrs. D’Angelo’s family’s norms and Mr. D’Angelo’s family norms or with societal norms.

The dynamics of the D’Angelo family relationships are not explicitly stated in the case study, but some aspects can be assumed. It can be assumed that the parent subsystem is made up of Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo and the sibling subsystem is made up Mariana, Benedetta, Paul, and Tony (Hancock & Miller, 1993). Additionally, it can be assumed that Mariana is experiencing some role conflict or role-assignment issues, as she has gone from helping her father run the household and performing parental duties to being “replaced” and downgraded to the sibling subsystem (Crosson-Tower, 2018). Some family rules seem to include that the children should complete their chores, should listen to the parents, and should be respectful and supportive of family members. These seem to be some of the family’s rules, but they are not being followed by Mariana and Mariana is not receiving any clarification or consequences (Hancock & Miller, 1993). There seems to be a parental role conflict in the parent subsystem involving differences in opinion between Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo concerning how Mariana’s behavior should be handled. Mrs. D’Angelo wants support from Mr. D’Angelo and most likely some kind of discipline for Mariana, but Mr. D’Angelo is sympathetic towards Mariana and wants Mrs. D’Angelo to accept Mariana’s behavior (Hancock & Miller, 1993). The conflict between Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo seems to be adding additional stress to their relationship. It may be beneficial to define what each family member’s role is and what is expected of them. The family seems to have a negative emotional climate in general which is assumed by the minimal family support between members of the family and amount of strain the family is experiencing (Woods et. al, 2020). Additionally, it is difficult to identify the amount of affection between family members, so that may be an area to gain further information.

One system outside of the family that may be impacting the family’s functioning is the healthcare system. Since Mrs. Guilietto suffers from Type II Diabetes and a degenerative Kidney disease, the family is involved with the healthcare system through financial, emotional, and time resources. The family’s involvement with the healthcare system is possibly putting strain on relationships, in particular Mrs. D’Angelo’s relationship with her husband and mother. Another system that may be impacting the family is the school system. The practitioner would need to know more information, but the school system could be impacting the family if any of the children are being bullied, are struggling with their work, are not getting along with their peers, or other possible reasons. Involvement with the school system could potentially strain family functioning in different ways depending on the type of involvement. Any type of involvement would most likely increase Mr. and Mrs. D’Angelo’s stress levels and lead to further strain on the family’s home life. One other larger system that may impact the family’s functioning is the child welfare system. If Benedetta runs away, then the child welfare system will most likely need to intervene which would lead to further emotional stress on the family and possibly the separation of Mr. and Mrs, D’Angelo (Crosson-Tower, 2018).

There is a variety of unknown information needed to develop a comprehensive assessment of the D’Angelo family. Most of the unknown information concerns family members that were not present for the intake interview, so it would probably be beneficial to meet with all of the family members in some form. It would be beneficial to know more information about Mrs. D’Angelo’s family, like her father and Benedetta’s father. This information would help the practitioner know more about Mrs. D’Angelo’s family and their past, as there may be past trauma or difficulties. More information is needed about the family’s cultural norms and larger systems effects on the family. That information could be found by asking open ended questions during the next session. This information would help in identifying any other problems or conflicts the family may be experiencing with larger systems. The practitioner can learn more about the amount of affection between family members by watching interactions during family sessions.

In conclusion, the D’Angelo family is a blended family that is experiencing stress and conflict. The family is dealing with Mariana’s behavior and attitude as well as Mrs. Guilietto’s illness. Additionally, the family has not explicitly established each family member’s roles and expectations which has negatively affected the family and has led to role conflicts. Some relevant child and family welfare policies that may affect the family’s current or future level of functioning include the assistance of supplementary and substitute services, policies concerning children who runaway, and policies concerning the level of assistance that can be offered to the family (Crosson-Tower, 2018).

**References**

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**Appendix A FINISH**

**D’Angelo Family Genogram**

**?**

Mr. Guilietto

Antonio D’Angelo - 41

**?**

Key:

= Male

= Female

= Marriage

= Death

**?**  = Unknown identity

= Conflict

= Occasional Conflict

= In Love

Paul - 13

Tony - 10