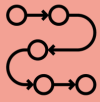




PROBLEM CHAIN ANALYSIS

Understanding problematic
behavior as a chain of
events, from vulnerability to
consequences



problem chain analysis

In psychological practice, a powerful tool for deep understanding of problems is called a Chain Analysis. By breaking down all of the different components leading up to a mental health concern and examining all of the consequences, we can gain insight into key leverage points for change. While original use of a chain analysis is focused on mental health behaviors and symptoms, it is a wonderfully flexible tool to understand the broader context.

By completing these 5 steps, you should have a deeper understanding of the key links in the chain that might be targeted for change. As you complete the ecological systems theory exercise, feel free to return to this exercise to understand the problem in the broader context of the full system. Utilizing the chain analysis from this perspective can help identify key change points in the system that will support change for your participant (particularly when it comes to vulnerabilities).

instructions

Feel free to use this process as many times as is helpful. For the first iteration, start with analysis of the mental health problem you have already identified in the problem definition. Furthermore, narrow it down to understanding the problem as experienced by the participant in the empathy exercise.

Step 1: When you think of the problem, what is the most Problematic Behavior that results (drug misuse, violence, social withdrawal, etc.)? Fill in the Problematic Behavior link.

Step 2: For this participant, what is the typical circumstance or situation that prompts (triggers) the problematic behavior before it happens (family arguments, work stress, etc.)? Fill in Prompting Event.

Step 3: What experience makes the participant more vulnerable to this prompting event? Fill in Vulnerability.

Step 4: Now it is time to fill in the gaps. What are the links in the chain that connect the Vulnerability to the Prompting Event and ultimately to the Problem Behavior? Links can be Actions, Body sensations, Cognitions/thoughts, Environmental Events, or Feelings. In other words, what are the specific thoughts, feelings, small actions, and changes that lead to the problem behavior?

Step 5: Once the Problem Behavior occurs, what are the Consequences that the participant experiences for themselves, their social connections, their vocation and their overall wellbeing? Are there any more links that turn the problem behavior into more problems in these areas? Fill in Consequences link.



related tools: ecological systems analysis, evaluation planning workbook, problem chain analysis



problem chain analysis

