

Is it always better for people requiring care to be cared for at home?

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A

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A 15 year old girl called Emma was born with the illness Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) after her Mother drank alcohol excessively throughout her pregnancy. She was brought up by her single Mother after her Father left shortly after she was born. Emma's complications as a result of FAS include difficulty speaking and behavioural problems. She requires to be seen by a speech and language therapist and a social worker, who she goes to see at the hospital. However, as Emma is getting older, her behaviour is getting worse both at home and in school, and her Mother has stated that she can no longer handle her on her own and has resorted to drinking again after being on and off throughout Emma's life.

A 72 year old man named Peter has recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Until recently, he lived with his Wife Adele, who passed away 6 months ago. Of late, Peter had a fall at his home and requires assistance walking. The Occupational Therapist noticed that he was also starting to become forgetful – doing things like leaving the taps running and the oven on. Additionally, he is forgetting to eat regularly and is losing weight. Peter has now moved into a Care Home but is struggling in this new environment which is reflected in his behaviour. He is aggressive and angry at the care workers and he keeps shouting out for his Wife to come and help him.

Peter has various needs that can be met by being cared for in his care home. One need is Friendship/Companionship which is one of his Social needs. Social needs include the need to have friendships, relationships and interactions with others. Peter lost his Wife, meaning that he also lost interaction with someone close to him. Human beings don't do very well when they are isolated from human contact. So the need for Peter to make a friend is important. Peter's aggressive behaviour could be linked to the fact that he no longer has a sense of belonging and he may feel like he doesn't fit in. As Peter doesn't have any children or close friends, the care home is a good place for him to interact with others and make friends and companionships as he is surrounded by other people, every day. If he was at home, he would be stuck by himself. The care givers in the home can ensure that Peter interacts with other residents, this would help him to keep occupied and feel included. By

interacting with the other residents, Peter will make friends. To meet this need of Peter's, it is better for him to be cared for at the home.

An Emotional need of Peter's is Love. Emotional needs are concerned with the way in which we feel about ourselves. We need to feel good about ourselves, but we don't always experience this. Peter doesn't feel good about himself after losing his Wife as he's lonely and angry and isn't enjoying his new Care Home environment. He is also experiencing great sadness. As human beings, we need to be able to deal with our emotions and Peter isn't dealing with his very well. His anger is a reaction from losing his Wife and he needs to learn to keep it under control. A way in which this need could be met is through anger management in order to stop him feeling frustrated all the time, and counselling to deal with his sadness. If he isn't angry, then he is more likely to feel better about himself and may allow himself to start to settle into the home instead of resenting being there. If he speaks to a councillor, they can help him properly grieve the loss of his Wife. If the anger management and counselling helps, then he will also be in a better frame of mind to make friendships, so meeting his emotional needs will also help meet his social needs. Then, if Peter manages to make a friend in the home, he will then be able to confide in them when he is feeling sad and upset. Until Peter was in the care home, he hadn't considered getting help to deal with his emotions. His anger management and counselling both happen in the home, meaning that he can't miss any appointments, whereas at his own home he may have forgot to attend these sessions because he is becoming forgetful. For these reasons, it is better for Peter to be cared for in the care home so that he can meet this need.

Physical needs include food, water and air, and food is another need of Peter's. Our Physical needs contribute to the wellbeing of our body. Peter had been forgetting to eat regularly when he was living by himself, which was causing him to lose weight and he needs help to remember meal times. Being in the care home is important for him to stay healthy and nourished. A way in which he could help to meet the need could be for himself and a carer to make a chart with meal times (breakfast, lunch and tea), that he could stick a sticker on after he has ate each one. This way, he can always see himself when he has eaten and when he hasn't, and it will help to remind him to eat his meals if he learns to check it regularly. The carers can monitor this and make sure that he doesn't mark that he has ate a meal which he hasn't. Therefore, to meet this need, Peter is better off in care.

B


Human Development is a lifelong process of social, physical, emotional, cognitive and cultural development across different stages of life. It can be understood as an increase in complexity including change and movement. Where there is change, there is also transition, which involves passing through one stage/situation to another. Connected to change is also loss and gain.

The changes which we go through affect our development and behaviour, and Adams et al. (1977) created a seven stage model that explains the impact of transition and how it may affect an individual's self-esteem. These seven stages include Immobilisation, Minimisation, Depression, Acceptance of Reality/Letting Go, Testing, Search for Meaning and Internalisation.

Cultural development consists of developing an understanding of our own culture, in relation to our thoughts, beliefs, values and behaviours, specific to the groups and institutions within society that we belong to. We also have to develop respect for the beliefs and values of other cultures.

It's in Emma's best interest to not be cared for at home, this is because the values and behaviours which she is learning there include that binge drinking is a way of life, and this could have a major impact on how she develops, culturally. Like her Mother, Emma has problems which could cause her stress and she is more likely to also turn to alcohol because her Mother has made her think that this is the norm. Emma needs a Family who can help to address her beliefs and values and support her with a positive shift in culture, teaching her to be a responsible person in society. Emma moving from her home into foster care would be a huge change for her and she will have to go through the stages of the Lifespan Theory. Immobilisation is the first stage which is initially a state of shock. This stage also involves disbelief and Emma may think that what is happening can't really be happening to her, as she is still quite young, so being taken away from her Mother would be initially appalling for her. She may lose her sense of self and with it experience a decrease in her self-esteem. Despite this, she will transition through the other stages and it is still better for her to be in care.

Murray Parkes believed that grief is a natural and beneficial process. He said that emotions and behaviours are natural responses to the difficult changes that happen in certain circumstances. He created a four stage model of loss called "The Four Stages of Grieving". This includes Shock and Numbness, Searching and Pinning, Depression and Recovery.



Social development includes interacting and building friendships/relationships with others. It's about acceptance, belonging and learning the behaviours and norms of the society in which we live in. Peter lost his Wife, and also interaction with someone close to him. In the Searching and Pinning stage of Parkes model, the individual adopts searching behaviours to try and locate what has been lost. They will experience extreme grief and pine for the person who they've lost. This is the stage which Peter is currently in. He is longing for his Wife and often shouts out for her. This fact is made even worse by not having any interactions or bonds. Although Parkes says that's it is normal to go through this stage, people don't do good when they don't have human contact and it's a social need of Peter's to have interactions with others. Being cared for in the care home is the best for Peter in this situation. As Peter doesn't have any Family or friends at home, it would have been more difficult for him to develop socially in this sense if he wasn't in the care home.

C

John Bowlby's theory of attachment is based on the relationships and bonds between two people, usually long-term, including those between a parent and a child. Bowlby was fascinated by the separation anxiety that children experience if they are separated from their primary caregivers. Early behavioural theorists suggest that attachment is a learned behaviour, claiming that attachment was only the result of the child being fed by the caregiver. They said that because the caregiver provides the child with nourishment, the child becomes attached. However, Bowlby observed that children experienced intense distress when separated from their Mothers, even when the child was being fed by another caregiver. Children look for their primary caregiver (usually their Mother) when they want to receive comfort and care. He stressed that forming a special attachment to specifically their Mother is very important. Attachments must be continued throughout life and failure to initiate or the breakdown of an attachment could lead to serious consequences.

The relationship between the parent and child does not become less important during adolescence and onwards, the person just becomes less dependent on the parents. Bowlby said that secure attachments are required throughout life and not just infancy and early childhood.

A criticism of Bowlby's Attachment Theory is linked to the Nature Nurture debate. It is assumed that parents who are kind, honest, and respectful will have children who are kind, honest, and respectful.

However, this is not always the case. Some people believe that parents do not shape their child's personality or character, and it is more down to their peers.

In Emma's case, although she has an attachment to her Mum, it is not secure and not necessarily reciprocated. Although having behavioural problems as a result of her FAS, her behaviour has been worsening as she has gotten older. This could be a consequence of the relationship with her Mother not being secure due to her being more attached to alcohol than her child. If her Mother can no longer cope with Emma, she would be more suited to be taken care of in Foster care. There is a lack of communication and affection in her home. The advantage of Foster care for Emma would help her to feel safe and secure with a stable Family, instead of being uncertain day to day as to if her Mother can take care of her or not.

Another weakness of Bowlby's theory is that the theory focuses too much on the role of the Mother. Although it is obvious that problems have been caused because of her Mother, it should also be considered that she could be affected by growing up without a Father. If a councillor uses Bowlby's theory while working with Emma, they may not place any emphasis on the fact that she was abandoned by her Father. A councillor using this theory may lead Emma to believe that because she is dealing with the problems stemming from her Primary care giver that, that is where all of his problems are stemming from, when actually, some could be coming from being disowned by her Dad. There is evidence that where a child has two Parents, the quality of attachment to the Father can also have a huge effect. Infants can make multiple attachments which undermine this theory because these attachments can be equal, whereas Bowlby says that a hierarchy exists – with the Mother on top. Although some psychologists have tried to undermine this theory and it does have some weaknesses, Bowlby is still the psychologist who developed the most influential theory of attachment.

According to Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages, there are eight stages of development throughout one's life (five up to the age of eighteen, and three after the age of eighteen). Erikson believes that a crisis occurs at each stage of development, which means that each stage needs to be completed successfully in order to gain a healthy personality and have a good sense of self.

Stage number five – Identity VS. Role Confusion (ages 12 to 18 years) is the transition from childhood to adulthood and the child looks to the future for what they want as a career, their relationships, Family etc. The child also wants to fit in. During this stage, the child will try to find out who they are

and failure to do so leads to confusion. Role Confusion is when the individual is not 100% sure about their place in society, and in this case, it is becoming obvious that Emma hasn't completed this stage successfully yet, her behaviour is becoming too much to handle as a result of not receiving encouragement and reinforcement from her Mother. She does not have a sense of where she belongs at home or in society (at school), and not being sure where she stands at home or at school will lead to role confusion. This shows that Emma would be better cared for in a Foster home, with a Family who can give her guidance.

B. F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning is a process of learning that occurs through either punishing or rewarding certain behaviours. Through operant conditioning, an association is made between a behaviour and either consequence or reward for that behaviour. Skinner suggested that we only needed to look at the external and observable causes of human behaviour, instead of our internal thoughts. At home, Emma's Mother hasn't used Skinner's theory in bringing up her child. She hasn't been set boundaries and hasn't received any punishments or rewards for any of her actions. Emma's Mother turns to drink when Emma is misbehaving, instead of teaching her when she is doing wrong. If Emma was placed into Foster care, maybe with other children where the Parents have used this theory and taught their children well, then her behaviour would improve. If she learned to behave and attend school then she can be rewarded by being treated to something that she enjoys.

D

Social Influences are where the actions, reactions and thoughts of individuals are influenced by other individuals or groups. Agents of Socialisation are our Primary and Secondary Social Influences. Our Primary and most influential agent is our Family. Since we spend the most time with our families, they are the people who will influence our values and expectations for ourselves the most. When we are born, we are born without a set of values and expectations. These are things which we learn from our Parents/Primary care givers. There are two ways in which we can learn from our Parents, through them teaching us and through watching and observing them. If Parents drink, smoke, take drugs and gamble, through observation, their children will be influenced to do the same. In Emma's case, because her Mother is a drinker, and she could be influenced to do this, especially if she sees that her Mother is using alcohol to deal with stress, she may use it to deal with her stress too. Emma would be

better suited in a Foster home where she can copy the good values and expectations of adults instead of the behaviours of her Mother.

Another Social Influence is our peers. Our peers are a group of people who we see to be similar to ourselves. As Emma's connection to her Mother isn't strong, she might feel more connected to her friends than her Family. Emma struggles to make friends, so any friends that she does have, she really wants to impress. Therefore, she is more likely to conform to the ideas of the group in order to fit in. As Emma already suffers with her own behavioural problems, she has no difficulty misbehaving with the group. She's started skipping classes and talking back to her teachers. Emma's Mother has been informed but she does not do anything to interfere with this negative behaviour. Emma needs a Family whom she can feel connected to, so that she doesn't seek the replacement connection from badly behaved peers at school. If she was disciplined when doing wrong, she might not want to do wrong anymore and may make friends with a better group. Through good behaviour and attitude, she may even find it easier to make friends than she has in the past.

The impact of the media these days on an individual and groups is massive. This may be because people have a much greater access to the internet, social media, magazines, etc. Social Media is something that is happily taking up a lot of people's time. Even though it plays a vital role in increasing social connections, social media platforms are a target place for bullying to happen. Young people especially are more exposed to peer pressure, and even depression. Emma uses social media a lot with no supervision from her Mother and has been the victim of bullying due to her speech problems in the past. Seeing this type of negativity on the internet will not only lower Emma's self-esteem, but make her think that it is okay to lower others self-esteem like that in return.

E

Functionalism says that society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance for the whole. Emile Durkheim – considered the "Father" of Sociology, was one of the first to explain different parts of society by reference to what function they served in keeping society healthy and balanced. Or human behaviours are controlled by society's norms and values. Norms define appropriate and acceptable behaviour, and the "norm" in society is that women shouldn't drink while pregnant, if they do, then this is not considered appropriate behaviour. In

Emma's case, due to her Mother drinking while pregnant, she was left with FAS. The functionalist theory notes that in order for a Family to work together appropriately, they must take on the correct roles, e.g. if a parent mistreated their child when they were younger (drinking while pregnant) which lead to mental health problems, this could lead to the whole Family being dysfunctional. Emma's Family is dysfunctional as her Father left and her Mother cannot cope. The functionalist theory also says, regarding the concept of dysfunctionality, that just like broken parts of machinery, dysfunctional parts of society need to be repaired or removed. Taking this into consideration, it would be functional to remove Emma from the dysfunctional situation that is living with her Mother, and try to repair some of her mental health problems. This could be helped to be achieved by being in the care of a totally functional Family.

The Conflict Theory has similar views to Functionalism in the sense that it believes that society operates as a whole, however, it views that society operates that through constant tensions and conflicts which permits constant change. According to Karl Marx, society is divided into two groups – the Ruling Class and the Subordinate Class. The Ruling Class own and control the means of production e.g. businesses and factories and the Subordinate Class supplies labour, and is exploited and oppressed by the Ruling Class. This means, that those who are wealthier and require care, will receive a higher level of care compared to those who are poor, who may receive inferior care. The wealthier can afford private health care and bring in specialist doctors etc. and can also stay very well nourished. Poverty increases the chance of poor health. In Peter's case, he is lucky enough to be able to pay for himself to stay in a good care home, whereas poorer individuals or families may not be able to pay the fees for this.

Symbolic Interactionism is another sociological theory that can be used to explain behaviour within society. This theory looks at individual behaviour to get an idea of society as a whole. Symbolic Interactionist perspectives tend to concentrate on moderately small scale levels of social interaction (between two individuals or small groups). It's alleged that people will behave based on what they believe, not on what is actually true. This could relate to Emma, where she could be led to believe that alcohol is a way of coping with stress. As she may experience a lot of stress due to her FAS related problems, she may be more likely to turn to alcohol, even though the truth is that it is not the case to use alcohol as a coping mechanism.



F

Positive Care Practice ensures that health and social care workers meet the specific needs of their clients. It includes always considering the principles of the National Care Standards which include treating individuals with dignity, privacy and equality amongst other things.

A care home is a care service which provides positive care practice. Peter is living in a care home and it is positive care practice that he is treated with dignity. Treating someone with dignity consists of showing an individual honour and respect at all times, regardless of any disability that they have. The care workers have to ensure that the individual feels accepted and happy in their care environment. Peter needs assistance walking after a fall at his home and he may need a wheelchair, despite this, he still needs to be treated equally to the other residents who can walk by themselves. It's important to involve him in all activities and not leave him out because of this disadvantage to him. Legislation which would have to back this up would be The Equality Act 2010. It has nine protected characteristics and discrimination that happens due to one or more of these characteristics is unlawful. Discrimination is when you're being treated unfairly or with prejudice because of who you are, and some of these things are protected under the Act. One of the nine protected characteristics is disability, and since it covers this, Peter can't be discriminated against because he can't walk by himself.

Another service which would be of use could be a support service which is offered from a school or place of education, such as a student counselling service. Emma's school provides this service and students can go there to deal with stress from issues from their assessments and exams to personal problems. Emma could take advantage of this service to deal with her personal problems and she can be sure that what is spoken about in the counselling is private. The student counselling promotes positive care practice by abiding by the Data Protection Act 1998. This act protects the rights of individuals in relation to certain data about an individual. The act ensures that the appropriate security measures are undertaken against unauthorised access to personal data which has been obtained, stored, processed or supplied about an individual. In relation to Emma being better cared for in foster care, another advantage of this service is that it could help her deal with the emotions of having to leave her Mother to live in foster care.

A district nurse is a nurse who visits and treats patients in their own homes, operating in a specific area. This is another care service which provides positive care practice. This is proved by the fact that to become a district nurse, you must be registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) by having a NMC approved degree, and also between one and two years of professional experience as a qualified adult nurse. The NMC has a certain degree of professional standards that nurses must sustain in order to be registered to practise. They must practice the National Care Standards at a high standard. Along with this, a district nurse would have to be PVG registered. A PVG ensures that those who have consistent contact with children and protected adults do not have a known history of harmful behaviour. Having a PVG shows that they are trustworthy and safe to be around vulnerable people. Should anyone fall victim to bad care practice, they have the right to report it to the NMC where they can take appropriate action. This provides positive care practice because it prevents the same situation from happening again. Due to these points and that district nurses aren't understaffed or overworked, they are less likely to give bad care. For Perer, this would be a good service for him to use if the district nurse came to visit him in the home when needed.

Conclusion

There is no general yes or no answer as to if it is better for a person requiring care to be cared for at home or not. Every person is an individual and their situation is unique, which means that what works for one person may not work for another. In the two case studies that I've used, both individuals are better cared for in a care environment, however, it is specific to their circumstances and it isn't always the case that a person is better cared for in a care environment as opposed to at home. Person centred care is greatly important in the health care profession and only by assessing the unique needs of an individual could the answer to the question be determined.

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