

Pastoral Care and Theology

Chapter Seven Reflection Paper

Presented to Dr. D. Hembree`



Reflections
“Systemic Assessments”
The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach
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When a caregiver listens to a care seeker’s story, systematic assessments occur based on the caregiver’s social systems. Care seekers can have various issues related to relationships, family dynamics, community, culture, and religion. The caregiver may be far removed from the experiences and concerns of the care seeker and have no background knowledge. This is especially true when the caregiver and care seeker come from different social societies. The intersecting social systems that can shape a person's life and theology include racism, classism, sexism, and prejudices. Care seekers are sometimes unaware of their underlying feelings and thoughts about situations.

In Chapter 7, the author tells the story of Yadira, an undocumented immigrant. She has many struggles navigating the American world without the proper paperwork for citizenship or a green card. The experiences of such a person could be foreign to the caregiver. The caregiver could have no point of reference and no idea about how the care seeker feels or how the care seeker copes with the different things in their lives. This is also true of between Black Americans and White Americans, the privileged and the disadvantaged, or heterosexuals and homosexuals. The caregiver may have no idea about the challenges the care seeker has experienced. They have no idea about the things that have shaped the care seeker’s emotions, values, beliefs, or coping systems.

It is important for the caregiver to recognize that he or she may not understand the concerns and needs of the care seeker. The caregiver should listen to the care seeker’s story without unkind judgment. In some cases, I have found it very hard to believe or understand the extent of coping and adjustments a care seeker has to make in order to survive. I feel that I live a relatively normal everyday life where money, housing, safety, and employment are not issues. Sometimes it is hard to understand why some people seem to have such a hard time keeping things together when they appear to have the same opportunities and resources that others have. I feel that generational practices, cultural traditions, or the way families have handled certain situations over time, have a direct effect on how well the individual manages resources and copes with issues and situations. Yadira’s story illustrates how and why certain decisions were made. She understands that to gain her ultimate goal while living under the restraints of her citizenship, she must make certain decisions that may not align with her family, community, or culture. Yadira put herself first. Such a decision can cause disquiet within a family or the person making the decision. Her story shows what must be done for self-preservation.

I think what Yadira did to overcome obstacles is remarkable. She was determined to have a better life despite not having the appropriate paperwork to qualify for citizenship. At the same time, I think Yadira should work to receive a green card/ Although she may feel overwhelmed with the pressure from her embodied lived theology, Yadira has illustrated that she has the willpower to overcome obstacles. Yadira overcoming the obstacles is evident when she takes a leap of faith to educate herself and help make life better for herself and her siblings. Although Yadira didn’t honor her parent's request to care for her sibling, Yadira learned from her past struggle, to have a better future for herself by going to college.