



Systems Theory in Action: Applications to Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy

By Shelly Smith-Acuña

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"Smith-Acuña illuminates the structural hierarchy, roles, and boundaries that give a system structure. The relationship between parts and wholes is both simple and profound, and particularly important in looking at systems structure. These morsels of wisdom are good examples of Smith-Acuña's grace as a systems theory tour guide: one moment she's digging deeper into the nuances among the theories, the next moment she's simplifying without dumbing down, but in a manner that is enormously liberating. We enjoy the fun, full, and informed journey with her." —Frank S. Pittman III, MD

A practical presentation of systems theory as

a fundamental model for clinical practice

Valuable for seasoned mental health professionals as well as those in training, *Systems Theory in Action* presents systems theory—the unifying principles surrounding the organization and functioning of systems—as it applies to individual, couples, and family therapy.

This innovative book explores systems theory as an effective model for general mental health practice. It examines the role systems theory can play, specifically in understanding clients' presenting problems in context, within the various systems and subsystems in which the problems are embedded.

Filled with realistic clinical stories illustrating relevant concepts that tie theory to technique, *Systems Theory in Action* takes an in-depth look at:

- Systems theory as a solid guide through the dynamic process of psychotherapy
- The multilayered value of observing human interactions through a systems view
- Systemic thinking, its core components, and how it serves to reveal a "big picture" view of clients and their presenting problems

Systems Theory in Action is a unique contribution to the field, translating the technical terminology of general systems thinking into common, everyday

language.

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Editorial Review

Review

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Frank S. Pittman, III, MD

Author of *Turning Points*, *Private Lies*, *Man Enough*, and *Grow Up!*

About the Author

Shelly Smith-Acuña, PhD, is the Director of the Doctoral Program in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver. She teaches systems theory, family therapy, and couples therapy. In addition, she maintains a successful private practice.

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