Gender Responsive Care-Gender Role Analysis

**David Stanley** 00:00

So that leads, which leads us into the gender role analysis component, which is digging into some of these in a systematic way to help men's treatment and recovery move forward and not be hindered. Or at least if it's being hindered, you know where to put your effort, you know where to put the ladder or to place the ladder, so the men can at least surmount some of those challenges. So gender role analysis is a systematic methodology for examining the differences in roles and norms for women and men, girls and boys, the different levels of power they hold, their differing needs, constraints and opportunities and the impacts of these differences in their lives. So it's just looking at what kind of what I've done this morning. And all of these gender norms and expectations, what did they mean for men? And what did they mean for women? Again, you know, I think that one of the challenges that I have been talking about this topic too, is that our culture, you know, kind of makes everything binary. So we talked about men and women, but we also think if we think it's not just men and women, there's other folks who may not fit into that neat category. But a lot of times, even our language is coded with, it's either men or women, it's female or masculine. But we do know, and I'm acknowledging that a lot of folks don't fit into those neat little categories. But our language is so structured around them oftentimes. So the methods for general analysis are psycho educational, experiential, and relational. And I'll break down in detail. So psychoeducational is, the goal of psycho educational role in general analysis for facilitating an awareness and developing hope. The interventions are acknowledging the courage it takes to enter counseling, especially for men. I kind of touched on that on that slide previous to this one, saying that wow, look at, you've been, you know, it takes a lot to go into treatment, especially for men, if you know, you've grown up and you've been told that you shouldn't do this or being grown up either grew up in you didn't have the emotional language, well, it takes courage. So acknowledging that. Normalizing the situation within the larger framework of life, kind of like I did on the other slide saying, No wonder you're struggling, look what you've been taught all your life. And we're asking you to go against what you've been taught, and what you've sort of been operating under. And we also consider issues of control, fear and dependency. So much like I was kind of talking about, a lot of men feel like their life is out of control. So they need to start controlling other people. But that sense of being out of control is rooted in not being able to manage one's own emotions, and not having that symptoms of trauma where it feels like control is taking away from you. So we kind of talk in general analysis around what did these things mean in relation to those things that you've experienced. The traumas that you've experienced, and the messages that you've received your entire life. It's also about identifying masculine gender messages. So you know, working individually to say, what, what have you been told a man should be. Like when you think this is what society tells me a man should be, what are those messages you receive. And you begin to explore that. So you're kind of digging in, you're kind of just raising and facilitating the awareness of how gender norms and expectations might impact treatment.

**David Stanley** 03:12

And lastly, defining differences between the masculine and feminine models of the world. So saying, you know, think about what you're going through, and then think about the other side of the spectrum. And think about what sort of the feminine models of the world might be? And what are the challenges of that. So you're not just focusing on, you know, oh, it's so hard to be a man. But you're also saying, you know, it's also really difficult to be a woman in our culture, given some of these expectations that they have. So we're kind of developing that sense of men struggle, but women struggle too in their own way, so that we're increasing an under the man's understanding not just of what it means to be a man, but also to have some compassion for people who might identify as female. So the next part is the experiential part of gender role analysis. And that's looking at facilitating the experience of long denied feelings, developing responsibility, and resilience. So that's digging in and doing some of those, getting in touch with one's feelings, experiencing some of those emotions and allowing oneself to experience them. Some of the interventions are analyzing masculinity messages to say, so let's take one of those messages that you said that you've received, men / boys should not cry. Do you think that's true? Do you think boys have feelings? Do you think there's times when boys need to cry? Do you think, you know, crying is a human thing and maybe not a feminine thing? And you begin to break them down, I kind of think of as structured and in this part of it, at least just sort of like a CBT, that is bordering on challenging some of those automatic thoughts that people have around masculinity, you know, is it true that only men can do such and such? Is it true that only women can and that's that this is the experiential component. Also digging in and understanding the connection between beliefs about gender and problematic behaviors. So you're saying then that, do you see how this might get in the way of your recovery, that if you're trying to adhere to this masculine norm of not showing any emotions, can kind of connect how that might be problematic when you're going through therapy, or you're going through treatment or recovery in general, that might just see how that might get in the way. So exploring not just those messages, but how those messages may impact their ability to move forward. And constructing a functional redefinition of it. So saying, here's all the things that you've been taught all your life, but that's what other people have told you about being a man is about, what do you think being a man is about for you? Not anybody else? What does it mean for you? So you begin to say, here's what it means to me, here's what I think I should be as a man. And you begin to determine that and that puts the man back into the driver's seat of how he's defining himself. It's also recognizing emotional needs and accepting them as basic. So we have this idea that, you know, and I see this when I watch horror movies, I'm a huge horror movie fan, I don't know why, but I love them. And I, there's always like five characters, right? You got two alpha males, you've got the clown who goes along, those are generally the male, then you've usually got one female who is either struggling with mental illness, or she's kind of the girlfriend, the sort of virgin, the virgin girlfriend of the other one who always makes it through somehow, because she's not tainted. But you've watched the movies, and you watch how people act when there's a trauma or something, a crisis happening. And these women are always portrayed as becoming so overly emotional, that they can't function, that the men have to jump in and take over, protect the women, and jump in there and be the ones to rescue everybody from the terrible, you know, demon, or whatever it is, that's coming after people. So there's this idea that women are, and it's reinforced in popular culture that women are the emotional ones and men are the physical ones. Part of general analysis, when you get to the experiential part is recognizing those emotional needs as basic human, not something that's masculine or feminine, but that's just a basic human need. We all need someone to let us know it's okay. We all need someone to give us a big hug every once in a while, we all need to cry about things every once in a while. Those things aren't feminine or masculine, those are human traits. That's just a basic human need. So we kind of come at it from that perspective, de, I would say degenderizing some of the human needs that we all have. I don't care what gender you are, you do or don't identify with. Those are basic human needs that should be met. And when they're not met, we try to meet them and other ways and those other ways might lead us back to drugs and alcohol.

**David Stanley** 07:51

So finally, the goal of relational again, furthering emotional connections with significant others, developing individual definitions of gender socialization and recovery. So now we're moving from the some the sort of the internal realm and moving towards external relationships that men have. Some of the interventions here developed an understanding of the need for connectedness and find healthy ways to connect, you notice that a lot of men, you know, you get them drinking, when they're sitting with each other watching a football game. They're like, Yeah, buddy, you know, yeah, you'd all this. Yeah, screw that, you know, it's always kind of superficial. But you'll notice sometimes when men get really drunk, that suddenly they're like, I love you, man, you're my best buddy. I don't know what I do without you, you know, they tend to because they're drinking and letting down their inhibitions, they find themselves more willing to express some of those needed, the need for connection that they have with their friends, some that often isn't. So a lot of men actually go and use alcohol in order to facilitate some of those connections. But then wake up the next day with a with a hangover and a sense of shame that they told all their buddies that they loved them last night. You know, that kind of thing. But we think about men, we do need as men, all of us identify as men have a need for connectedness. If we look at some of the recent studies that were shown and looking at men in the US, middle aged men, everybody else life expectancy went up. But for middle aged men in our country actually went down for the first time. For many folks, it's been going up suddenly, it's like down. And I think a lot of this has to do with the sense that a lot of men in our culture are very disconnected from other people in really meaningful ways. And I think that this gets even worse as you get older, that your circle of connection becomes smaller and smaller. And for some men, it ends up relying on their either the male or female partner with their partner, to be their one and everything emotional connection, and that puts a lot of burden on that other, that individual. But I think that we expect that you know, men are just yeah, they're not they don't need relationships. I had many people tell me that women are relational, men are not. And I'm like, that is such BS, that is not true. We're all human beings, we all have a need for connection with other people. It's not a male thing, it's not a female thing, it's a human thing. And so we developed that need, that human connectedness in all these different ways is really, really important. Also develop an understanding of the influences of family origin. So looking back, and what was, how did you grow up and how did that influence your relationships that you have today? So a lot of times when we dig into this, we're digging into things like attachment issues, what was your attachment style as a child? And does that carry over into your relationships today, especially relationships with your intimate partners. So stage one trauma interventions for men, again, established physical and emotional safety, that is paramount, you need to do that before you can do anything else. And a lot of that is doing the very things that we talked about, acknowledging that it can be difficult for men in recovery, creating a space that feels safe for men, all of that is going to lay the foundation. Then as that foundation is there, then you can start building self awareness, self regulation, self soothing, and especially healthy relationship. I do want to acknowledge that masculinity is not the problem. It's not that masculinity is bad and femininity is good. No, that's not, that's not the issue. It's just how we hold it. There's both positive and negative aspects to "masculinity", just as there is with "femininity", so acknowledging the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of masculinity, and that cultivating adaptive aspects of masculinity, such as success, dedication, has the potential to improve treatment outcome. So we're not saying to the man, masculinity is bad, you need to stop being masculine, we're saying, No, you just need to hold this idea of masculinity differently. So think about masculinity as an idea as a sort of constructs. And a lot of men hold it so tight that, you know, how am I going to write with this thing. And if I take this thing, and I'm holding it like this, it could easily become a weapon, and it could hurt myself, and it could hurt other people. But if I, if somebody says masculinity is bad, you need to change the way then it feels like I've let go of everything, and I don't have anything now. And that makes me feel unsafe. So I often say to the men, have you ever tried just holding it like this and not holding on it so tightly? Because from here, I can do different things with it, I have a lot more options open to me. And I'm not clinging to it so hard that it's now stuck in my hand. And that's really how we're trying to shift our thinking around some of these gender norms and expectations. There's really good things about being a man and about masculinity that we can harness and use to move a man's recovery forward.

**David Stanley** 12:49

So the goals of gender role analysis is number one for a man to discover what being a man means to him. So what does it mean to you? I don't care what society, what Tom Brady says, I don't care who, whatever all these people say. I want you to tell me and tell yourself who, what does it mean to be a man to you, then to develop stage two Trauma Recovery skills, and develop the skills necessary for long term recovery from a substance use disorder. So that's really the goal is that we're using this to help facilitate all of these other things.

**David Stanley** 13:25

And lastly, before I open it up for conversation and questions, and I do have a quick poll, this is a poem by some people may be familiar with Charles Bukowski, Charles Bukowski was a famous poet during the beat era of the 1960s. I don't know if you can kind of say this was like the nicest person on the world. And he was kind of brutish and drank a lot. I think he was a, could have had a substance use disorder, probably alcoholism dependent, gambling, its a gambling addiction. All his relationships with his female partners ended up in abuse where he was abusing his female partners. But I want to show you this poem that he wrote because I think it really summarizes everything that I've been talking about here in a nice sort of way. So I'm going to play this.