



Native American family systems : applications of the circumplex model of families
by Amy L Griffith

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Health and Human Development
Montana State University
© Copyright by Amy L Griffith (1998)

Abstract:

The Circumplex Model of Families (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989) has been used extensively with populations including Anglo-American, European-American, and Mexican-American families. However, there appears to be no research in the literature assessing the use of the Circumplex Model with Native American families. In the current study, FACES II (Olson, Bell, & Fortner, 1995) was used to assess levels of cohesion and adaptability, as well as family typology, according to the Circumplex Model with a sample of women residing on the Sioux-Assiniboine Fort Peck reservation in Poplar, Montana. The data were compared with the normative, baseline data for the Circumplex Model (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1983) using chi square tests for difference. Results indicated no statistically significant differences on the dimension of cohesion or on family typology outcome. Significant differences were found on the dimension of adaptability, specifically in outcome scores for the category of rigid. This study indicates the need to assess cohesion and adaptability among Native American populations, especially related to individual perceptions of cohesion and adaptability and levels of functioning. Further research is recommended to expand the sample beyond female members of families, include measures of acculturation, and assess perceptions of individual items on FACES II.

NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILY SYSTEMS:
APPLICATION OF THE CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF FAMILIES

by
Amy L. Griffith

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Science

in

Health and Human Development

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY- BOZEMAN

August, 1998

N378
68749

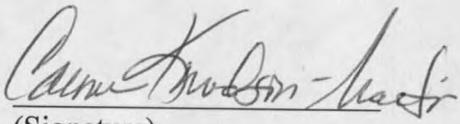
APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Amy Larissa Griffith

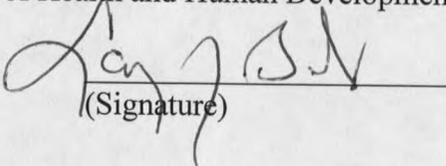
This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Carmen Knudson-Martin


(Signature) 7/14/98
Date

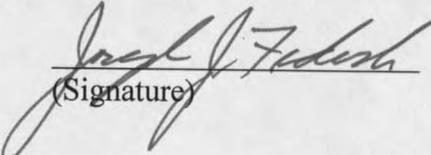
Approved for the Department of Health and Human Development

Dr. Ellen Kreighbaum


(Signature) 7/16/98
Date

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Dr. Joseph Fedock

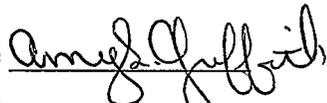

(Signature) 7/22/98
Date

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University-Bozeman, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in parts may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Signature



Date

7-21-98

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	2
Research Questions.....	2
Definition of Terms.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Assumptions and Limitations.....	5
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	7
The Circumplex Model of Families as a Measure of Family System Functioning.....	7
Cohesion and Family Functioning.....	8
Adaptability and Family Functioning.....	9
Communication and Family Functioning.....	9
Classification within the Circumplex Model.....	10
The Circumplex Model and Family Functioning.....	12
Theoretical Change and the Circumplex Model.....	13
Research Hypotheses Supporting the Circumplex Model.....	13
Test of the Circumplex Model of Families.....	15
The Circumplex Model with Ethnically Diverse Families.....	18
Native American Families.....	22
Native American Family System Characteristics.....	23
Native American Characteristics.....	26
Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Native Americans.....	29
3. METHOD.....	33
Population and Sample.....	33
Instrument.....	34
Procedure.....	37
Data Analysis.....	38

4. RESULTS.....	41
Distribution of Scores on Cohesion and Adaptability.....	41
Test of Family Typology.....	46
Overview of Family Types.....	47
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	50
Discussion of Results and Theory.....	50
Conclusions and Implications for Practice.....	54
Recommendations for Research and Practice.....	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	59
APPENDIX	63

LIST OF TABLES

1. Anglo-American and Native American Cohesion and Adaptability Scores.....	42
2. Percent of Anglo-American and Native American Cohesion Scores.....	43
3. Percent of Anglo-American and Native American Adaptability Scores.....	43
4. Frequency Distributions for Cohesion	44
5. Frequency Distributions for Adaptability.....	45
6. Frequency Distribution for Family Types.....	47
7. Anglo-American and Native American Groups by the Dimensions of Cohesion and Adaptability on the Circumplex Model of Families.....	48
8. Frequency Distributions of Family types on the Circumplex Model.....	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. The Circumplex Model of Families.....	11
2. Normative Families in the Circumplex Model.....	16

ABSTRACT

The Circumplex Model of Families (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989) has been used extensively with populations including Anglo-American, European-American, and Mexican-American families. However, there appears to be no research in the literature assessing the use of the Circumplex Model with Native American families. In the current study, FACES II (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1995) was used to assess levels of cohesion and adaptability, as well as family typology, according to the Circumplex Model with a sample of women residing on the Sioux-Assiniboine Fort Peck reservation in Poplar, Montana. The data were compared with the normative, baseline data for the Circumplex Model (Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1983) using chi square tests for difference. Results indicated no statistically significant differences on the dimension of cohesion or on family typology outcome. Significant differences were found on the dimension of adaptability, specifically in outcome scores for the category of rigid. This study indicates the need to assess cohesion and adaptability among Native American populations, especially related to individual perceptions of cohesion and adaptability and levels of functioning. Further research is recommended to expand the sample beyond female members of families, include measures of acculturation, and assess perceptions of individual items on FACES II.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Family therapists often approach theoretical change in families from a perspective involving communication and structure within the system (Haley, 1963; Lewis & Ho, 1975; Beavers, 1977; cited in Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxen, & Wilson, 1983). When conceptualizing about families, diagnostic tools can be utilized to assess the level of functioning within a systemic framework. A well-studied and validated model for conceptualizing family functioning is the Circumplex Model of Families (Olson et al., 1983). This model has gained wide-spread acceptance in the field of family therapy.

The Circumplex Model is used to assess family functioning according to the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, with communication as a facilitative dimension. As a classification system it yields three basic family typologies: Balanced, Midrange, and Extreme. According to the developers (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1989), "the ultimate purpose of the Circumplex Model is to facilitate bridging the gaps that often exist among theorists, researchers, and practitioners" (cited in Olson et al., 1983, p.47).

Statement of the Problem

A number of studies have tested the validity of the Circumplex Model for use with clinical and non-clinical families (Olson, 1993; Thomas & Olson, 1993; Anderson, 1986). Intact nuclear and extended families were studied by the developers and serve as normative

data for the Circumplex Model (Olson et al., 1983). Additional research has been conducted to assess the use of this model with ethnic and culturally diverse families (Vega, Patterson, Sallis, Nader, Atkins, & Abramson, 1986; Woehrer, 1989; Flores & Sprenkle, 1989), but these studies have not included the Native American population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the applicability and utility of the Circumplex Model of Families with Native American family systems. It addresses the assumption that normative data can be used to generalize about people who represent a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. When therapists communicate and conceptualize about families in a uniform fashion, clarity among practitioners increases. However, caution is in order when diverse families are categorized according to standard theoretical models, there is a possibility that relevance of the applicability may be lost (Draper & Marcos, 1990). Such assessments must be relevant among populations which vary according to culture, family structure, socioeconomic status and community (Dilworth-Anderson, Burton, & Turner, 1993). The lack of research related to Native Americans according to existing models of family assessment suggests the need to examine the applicability of the Circumplex Model for use with a sample of Native American parents.

Research Questions

Currently, there appears to be no published research evaluating the effectiveness of describing family types among Native American populations using the Circumplex Model of

Families. This study presents a preliminary examination of the applicability of the Circumplex Model with a sample of Sioux-Assiniboine parents in a reservation setting. Specifically this study examines whether the basic structure and typology of the Native American family (as measured by the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability) is substantially different from normative Anglo-American outcome measures. Based on the outcome measures of a sample of Native Americans according to the Circumplex Model, the appropriateness of using this model to define family typology for clinical and non-clinical purposes among Native American populations will be examined within historical, social, and cultural contexts.

Definition of Terms

Adaptability refers to the ability of members of a system to flexibly negotiate changes in structure to accommodate developmental or environmental factors (Olson et al., 1983).

Cohesion refers to the ability of a system to maintain connection and closeness among members while accommodating structural changes (Olson et al., 1983).

Communication refers to the ability of members of a system to use established means of information exchange to convey shifts in structure (Olson et al., 1983).

Normative family refers to the baseline data compiled by the researchers of the Circumplex Model (Olson et al., 1983) to describe family typology among families.

Intact family refers to a system with two parents who are married to each other and parent their children together.

Extended family refers to a system in which several generations share the responsibilities of parenting the children, including non-biological members.

Clinical refers to individuals and families involved in counseling for the purposes of improving functioning and experiencing greater satisfaction among members.

Non-clinical refers to individuals and families not involved in counseling related to presenting difficulties in functioning or satisfaction among members.

Significance of the Study

According to Red Horse (1980), the "extended family systems that are characteristic among American Indians are often misunderstood within the human service professions" (p. 462). By not seeking to understand these families within a cultural context, counselors risk misinterpreting therapeutic signs of healthy and unhealthy functioning. For example, in many Native American extended family systems there exists a cycle of 1) being cared for by others, 2) preparing to care for others and 3) assuming care for others (Red Horse, 1980). For non-Native American therapists this may represent a lack of "healthy" differentiation within the family and can lead to potentially damaging misinterpretations of client behavior. Thus it is important to address the role of the extended family as it affects perceptions about cohesion and adaptability. This study examines Native American family systems and addresses possible cultural effects on their family typologies in relation to the Circumplex Model. This information will help therapists working with Native American clients appropriately apply the Circumplex Model in their assessment.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study is based on the assumption that families function adequately when members can flexibly adapt to developmental and situational changes. Adequate functioning requires that families maintain a sense of structure and stability as they experience inevitable internal and external stressors (Olson et al., 1983). This study also assumes that the Circumplex Model of Families generally provides an appropriate framework for classifying systems within the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, as evidenced by considerable research supporting the use of this model for use with both clinical and non-clinical families.

The assumptions in this study related to Native American families are focused on aspects of structure and functioning that may be different than those in Anglo-American families. This study assumes that the extended kinship system of Native American families may impact their scores on measures of cohesion and adaptability that were developed according to two-parent, intact families. In addition, the unique characteristics and oppressive history of Native Americans separates this population from the dominant Anglo-American population. Finally, it is assumed that coping styles and family strengths among Native Americans will reflect cultural, historical and environmental issues, and that these factors differ from those experienced by the dominant culture. These assumptions will be the conceptual basis for explaining differences in family typology among Native American and Anglo-American samples according to the Circumplex Model of Families.

Though the small sample size of the study limits the ability to generalize about the way people of Sioux-Assiniboine heritage will measure on the model, as well as generalizations

related to the larger Native American population, the study presents a preliminary examination of the differences between the scores of a sample Sioux Assiniboine individuals and those of the normative sample. By examining these differences, practitioners gain increased awareness of the effects of ethnic differences on the assessment of family functioning. Lack of detailed demographic information also limits the integration of economic issues, marital status, education level, and cultural identity into a conceptualization about classification within the Circumplex Model. In addition, without a measure of acculturation, this study is not able to ascertain the degree to which participants see themselves as connected to traditional versus dominant culture norms. However, this study reports scores from a sample of Native American families living in a rural, reservation setting which indicates a level of geographic isolation and cultural homogeneity.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review presents literature related to the study of the Circumplex Model of Families and its application to ethnically diverse families. In addition, literature describing the Native American family system, its structure, values, and sociocultural factors will also be presented. The review is divided into three parts:

- 1) A description of the Circumplex Model of Families and support for the use of this model to classify family types;
- 2) A presentation of research that assesses the application of the Circumplex Model among ethnic families;
- 3) A description of Native American families according to the available research.

The Circumplex Model of Families As a Measure of Family System Functioning

Olson et al. (1989) developed the Circumplex Model of Families to describe family typology within dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, indicating levels of overall familial communication. The development of this model was inspired by Hill's (1949) research on family stress and coping strategies. From Hill's research came the terms cohesion and adaptability in family systems. In addition, Hill (1949) described the interface between these concepts and familial communication as a facilitative component for movement along the lines of cohesion and adaptability.

The purpose of the Circumplex Model is to study family functioning and strengths across the life cycle in the course of "normal" (non-clinical) family development. It was developed as a means of assessing families along the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability. Olson et al. (1983) proposed that by understanding the ways non-clinical families cope with stress, and by accommodating shifts in levels of cohesion and adaptability, a description of non-clinical family strengths is facilitated. Adequate functioning in families is marked by levels of high resources, low stress, high coping skills and high reports of satisfaction (Olson et al., 1983). By understanding adequate family functioning, therapists can conceptualize and assess systemic change among clinical populations. Therefore, the clinical purpose of understanding healthy family functioning is the implementation of programs focused on helping families develop systemic strengths and coping styles that accommodate life cycle changes.

Cohesion and Family Functioning

Cohesion is defined as "the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 48). It represents the degree of closeness experienced by each person in a family to other members and is expected to change somewhat over the life cycle of a family. Cohesion is measured by elements within the family including time spent together and apart, physical and emotional distance between members, type of friendships experienced and allowed outside of the family system, and the rigidity of boundaries between members and sub-systems. In the Circumplex Model cohesion is defined within a nonlinear continuum of disengaged, separated, connected and enmeshed. Optimal family functioning occurs in the

middle categories of separated and connected, while the disengaged and enmeshed categories are considered less conducive to adequate functioning.

Adaptability and Family Functioning

Adaptability is defined as “the ability of a marital or family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress” (Olson et al., 1983, p. 48). Adaptability is characterized as a family’s ability to flexibly negotiate life cycle changes related to power, roles and rules within a normal developmental context. These changes occur during the development of a new family through marriage and childbirth, adolescent identity formation and differentiation from the family of origin, and the realignment of the couple after the children leave the household. In the Circumplex Model adaptability is measured as rigid, structured, flexible and chaotic. Theoretically, structured and flexible families will experience greater satisfaction, while the extreme types of rigid and chaotic families will have greater difficulty negotiating developmental changes (Olson et al., 1983).

Communication and Family Functioning

Communication between family members involves the exchange of information “within and between family systems utilizing established channels of communication” (Olson et al., 1983, p. 64). As members of the system inform each other and respond to structural changes within the system, cohesion and adaptability will shift to accommodate changes. The ability of members to communicate about shifts in cohesion and adaptability will positively affect family functioning. Communication within the family promotes systemic growth over the life

cycle and enables families to change in the areas of cohesion and adaptability. With a focus on developmental growth, positive communication is viewed as enabling change in systems, while negative communication limits healthy change. Positive communication between family members includes clear messages and congruent meanings and actions. Negative communication is marked by unclear, paradoxical messages, and by incongruent meanings and behaviors. With positive communication between members and sub-systems, families can more adequately negotiate the shifts in cohesion and adaptability that accompany developmental growth.

Classification within the Circumplex Model

The Circumplex Model uses a curvilinear framework of four levels of cohesion and four levels of adaptability, creating sixteen family types (Figure 1). The family types are defined as Balanced, with cohesion and adaptability both falling into a central area (e.g., flexibly connected); Mid-Range, with placement in one central area and one extreme area (e.g., flexibly disengaged); and Extreme, with both cohesion and adaptability in extreme areas (e.g., chaotically enmeshed). Balanced families are considered representative of non-clinical, "normal" families, and utilize positive communication and experience greater satisfaction, related to their strengths, coping strategies, and stress levels. Extreme families are likely to experience greater difficulty negotiating developmental changes, rely more on negative communication styles, and are more common among clinical families.

Figure 1
Circumplex Model of Family Systems

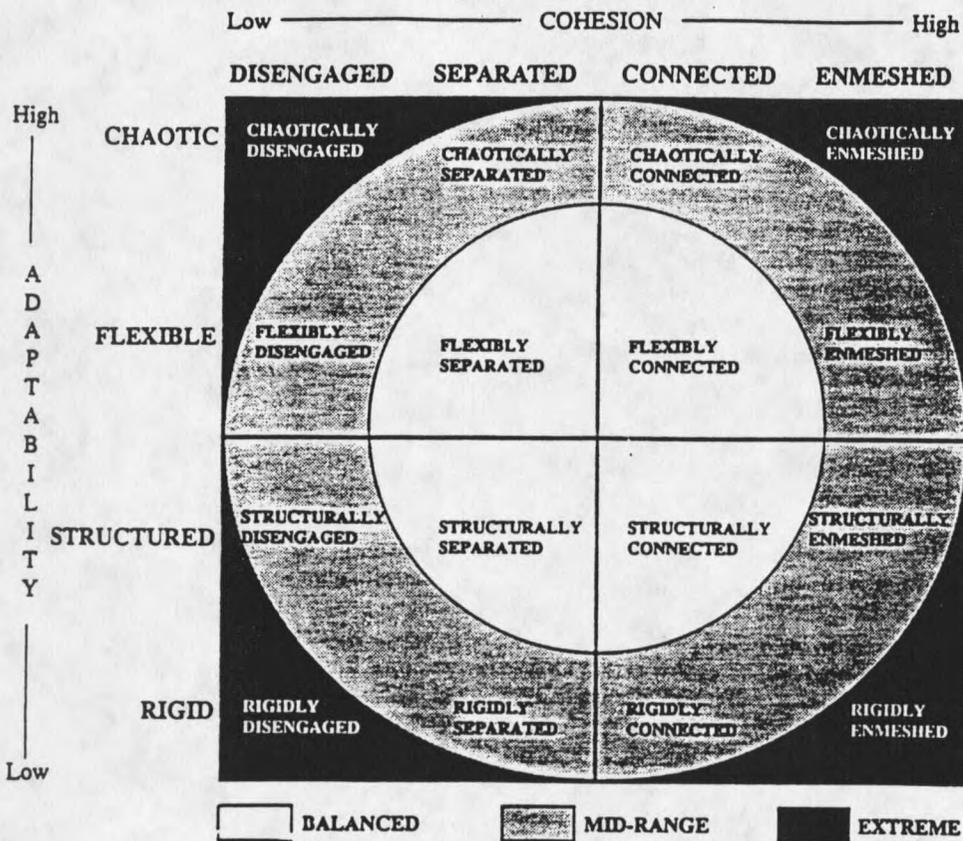


FIGURE 1. The Circumplex Model of Families
(reprinted with permission from Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1995)

The Circumplex Model and Family Functioning

By examining Balanced families, researchers attempt to understand the strengths that many clinical families lack. Families in the balanced areas of cohesion cope more effectively with stress and change by remaining connected to each other and experiencing a level of personal autonomy. Families labeled as enmeshed may experience low autonomy between members while those labeled disengaged may experience low bonding within the system. "Because of differences in cultural norms, it is possible for some families to operate at these extremes without problems" (Olson et al., 1983, p. 54). The effects of ethnicity on family functioning become less problematic when all members of the system are in agreement about the structure of roles, rules, and boundaries. This structure may become blurred as culturally diverse families experience generational differences in levels of acculturation.

The interface between the Circumplex Model and general family systems theory relies on the concepts of morphogenesis, the ability to negotiate change, and morphostasis, the inability to change (Olson et al., 1983). As family members communicate and offer positive feedback, morphogenesis facilitates systemic change throughout the life cycle. With negative communication and feedback, the system will experience a state of morphostasis and the inability to accommodate developmental changes. In normal families the system balances morphostasis and morphogenesis, allowing for closeness and continuity or adaptation and change when necessary. In clinical families problems or identified patients often serve to maintain the system as it is and preserve the current level of functioning, to the detriment of developmental changes.

Theoretical Change and the Circumplex Model

Implicit in the Circumplex Model are the concepts of first and second order change. The curvilinear nature of the model allows for therapeutic change along two dimensions (Olson, 1993). First order change describes difference within the current family system specifically related to flexibility. No shift occurs in the structure of the system according to first order change, but instead occurs within the existing systemic framework. Systemic functioning becomes problematic when there is too much or too little flexibility. Second order change relies on change in the system itself. This type of change occurs over time and is often precipitated by stress within the current system (e.g. divorce, birth). In systems with balanced levels of cohesion, change occurs to accommodate positive and negative stressors. With low levels of adaptability the system resists necessary, developmental changes and becomes unbalanced in the event of stressors. An understanding of first and second order change according to the Circumplex Model enables therapists to design interventions towards appropriate systemic processes.

Research Hypotheses Supporting the Circumplex Model

Several hypotheses were proposed by the researchers of the Circumplex Model which address issues related to cohesion, adaptability, communication, and the interface of these concepts with family functioning (Olson, 1993; Olson et al., 1983). The first three hypotheses describe the theory that Balanced families will function more adequately than Extreme families, utilizing skills and coping strategies which enable them to change more easily than extreme families. Families that function well in extreme areas tend to have agreement

between the members as to the rules, roles, and boundaries of the system. The next two hypotheses propose that Balanced families will experience more positive communication than Extreme families and that the positive communication that facilitates changes over the life span will be accomplished more easily by Balanced families than Extreme ones. Finally, the researchers hypothesize that Balanced families will experience change over the life span, while Extreme families will resist developmental change.

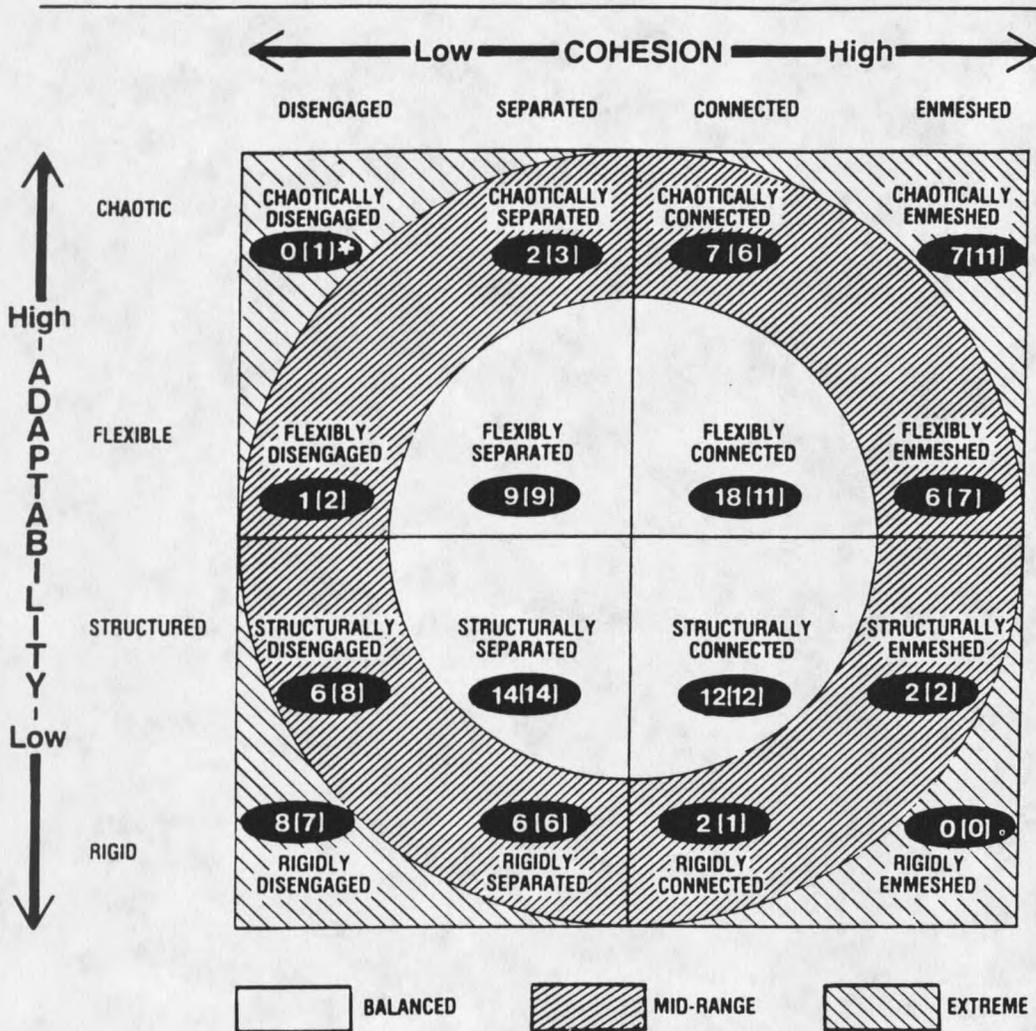
In the current study of the Circumplex Model with Native American families the researcher provides an expanded context within which culturally diverse families can be understood. Studying the Circumplex Model of Families as a classification tool with ethnic families supports the evaluation of traditional counseling paradigms according to a diverse population. By identifying the similarities and differences among Native American and Anglo-American families practitioners have access to an increased body of knowledge related to family strengths and coping styles. An expanded view of the differences and similarities among ethnically diverse families better prepares therapists to assess the issues of their clinical families in light of identified culturally specific styles and strengths. It is important to study the Native American extended family system according to the concepts of cohesion and adaptability since ethnic influences may impact individual and systemic perceptions of these concepts. By assessing Native American families according to the Circumplex Model without examining the ways they might score differently than the normative sample within the dimensions of cohesion and adaptability, therapists risk labeling pathology where there is none.

Test of the Circumplex Model of Families

The research related to use of the Circumplex Model for assessment of family functioning supports the use of this model for understanding the interface between cohesion and adaptability and the relationship between these variables and family communication. In addition, research supports the ability of this model to discriminate between clinical and non-clinical levels of family functioning.

An extensive study by Olson et al. (1983) developed normative information about the Circumplex Model using a random sample of 2,692 upper to middle-class intact families. The families represented 31 states and were predominantly European-American. Participants represented different stages of the family life-cycle, included a husband, a wife, and averaged three children. Approximately 64% represented nuclear family systems and 36% included extended family. The study captured intact families at their current developmental stage.

In the sample of non-clinical, intact families, scores were predominately Balanced (53%), with one ideal and one mid-range area on the Circumplex Model. Fifteen percent of these families scored within two of four extreme regions (Figure 2). The researchers indicated on the dimension of adaptability, 63% of the families were structured and 37% were flexible, while on the dimension of cohesion, 37% were separated, and 63% were connected (results equal more than 100% due to rounding) (Olson, 1993).



Parents: N = 2224; adolescents: N = 421.

*Adolescent percentages in parentheses.

FIGURE 2. Normative Families in the Circumplex Model (reprinted with permission from Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1995)

The researchers attributed these percentages to the intact and non-clinical nature of the participants.

Thomas and Olson (1993) used the Clinical Rating Scale (CRS) for the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (Olson & Killoran, 1985) to test the hypothesis that non-clinical families were more balanced on the Circumplex Model than clinical families, and used more positive communication within the system. The CRS was developed to provide observational assessment of families for classification within the model. The researchers tested all members of the family systems using a self-report measure and the CRS observational instrument. The majority of the sample of 182 families were white, intact, and middle class and the sub-samples were comprised of two clinical and two non-clinical groups. The results showed a significant difference between the clinical and non-clinical samples, with no difference within sub-samples. Of the intact, non-clinical families, 85.9% scored as Balanced and 6.4% as Extreme on the Circumplex Model. Intact, clinical families scored as 20.4% Balanced and 34.1% Extreme. These results indicated the ability of the Circumplex Model to discriminate between most clinical and non-clinical families.

Examination of communication between members resulted in significant differences between groups. Clinical families demonstrated poorer communication patterns than did non-clinical families. Those with poor communication scored as Extreme to Midrange, while families with very good communication patterns scored as Balanced.

Anderson (1986) assessed the applicability of the Circumplex Model by testing the curvilinear hypothesis using alternate measures for cohesion, adaptability and communication. Specifically, the study measured emotional involvement, shared family activities and marital

consensus within families experiencing stressors related to the first child entering school. The results of Anderson's study supported the hypothesis that application of the curvilinear model to dimensions of cohesion and adaptability significantly predicted differences in communication styles. In addition, the results supported the hypothesis that Balanced families experienced more positive communication within the system than did Extreme families.

The Circumplex Model of Families consistently discriminates between adequate and poor family functioning. For counselors, this reliability permits use of the model for family assessment purposes to help determine the clinical nature of their clients. In addition, the systemic nature of the model facilitates conceptualization and change related to overall family functioning, expanding the utility of the model to include placing the presenting problem within a larger context. It is important, however, to examine how the constructs of cohesion and adaptability as measures of family functioning apply to diverse, ethnic systems.

The Circumplex Model with Ethnically Diverse Families

The literature related to assessment of culturally diverse families indicated the appropriateness of using the Circumplex Model of Families for this purpose. For accurate assessment, issues such as socioeconomic status and level of acculturation were often included. By integrating social variables and family functioning, counselors can conceptualize about systemic change with ethnically diverse families.

Vega et al. (1986) administered the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales II (FACES II) (Olson, Bell & Portner, 1995) to distinguish between Mexican-American and Anglo-American families on the Circumplex Model. An acculturation measure

was applied to the Mexican-American cohort to determine each family's level of integration into the dominant culture. Acculturation was defined as a synthesis of ethnic values within the current U.S. social environment (Vega et al., 1986). There were no significant differences between groups on measures of cohesion and adaptability. Mexican-American families with both high and low levels of acculturation scored within normal ranges on cohesion and adaptability. Mean scores on cohesion were 62.8 for Anglo-Americans and 63.7 for Mexican-Americans compared to the national norm of 64.9, indicating a balanced score of connected. Mean scores for adaptability were 49.5 for Anglo-Americans and 50.4 for Mexican-Americans compared to the national norm of 49.9, indicating a balanced score of flexible. The higher scores of Extreme by Mexican-American families (24% compared to Anglo-American Extreme scores of 20%) were attributed to families of lower acculturation. These results suggested that, despite the impact of culture on cohesion and adaptability, Mexican-American families scored predominately within the range of well-functioning systems.

Flores and Sprenkle (1989) used the updated FACES III as well as a measure of acculturation to assess Mexican-American families from different economic strata. Results indicated significantly more Mexican-American families scored as Extreme (16.7%) and fewer scored as Balanced (40.0%) when compared to the national norms of Extreme (11.3%) and Balanced (48.5%) (Olson et al., 1983). The Mexican-American sample consisted of non-clinical families and was controlled for effects of acculturation. The difference in means was attributed to socioeconomic status, with more extreme Mexican-American family types comprised of families with lower income levels. The researchers noted that despite the modest differences between the scores of the Mexican-American sample and the national

