

Together alone?

Trends in families & relationships toward 2050.

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Justin M D Harrison PhD MAPS (Psychology)

Director/Principal Couples and Family Counsellor - Nudge Psychological Assessment & Consulting

Adjunct Lecturer in Psychology – Charles Sturt University

Sessional Lecturer – Edith Cowan University



Overview

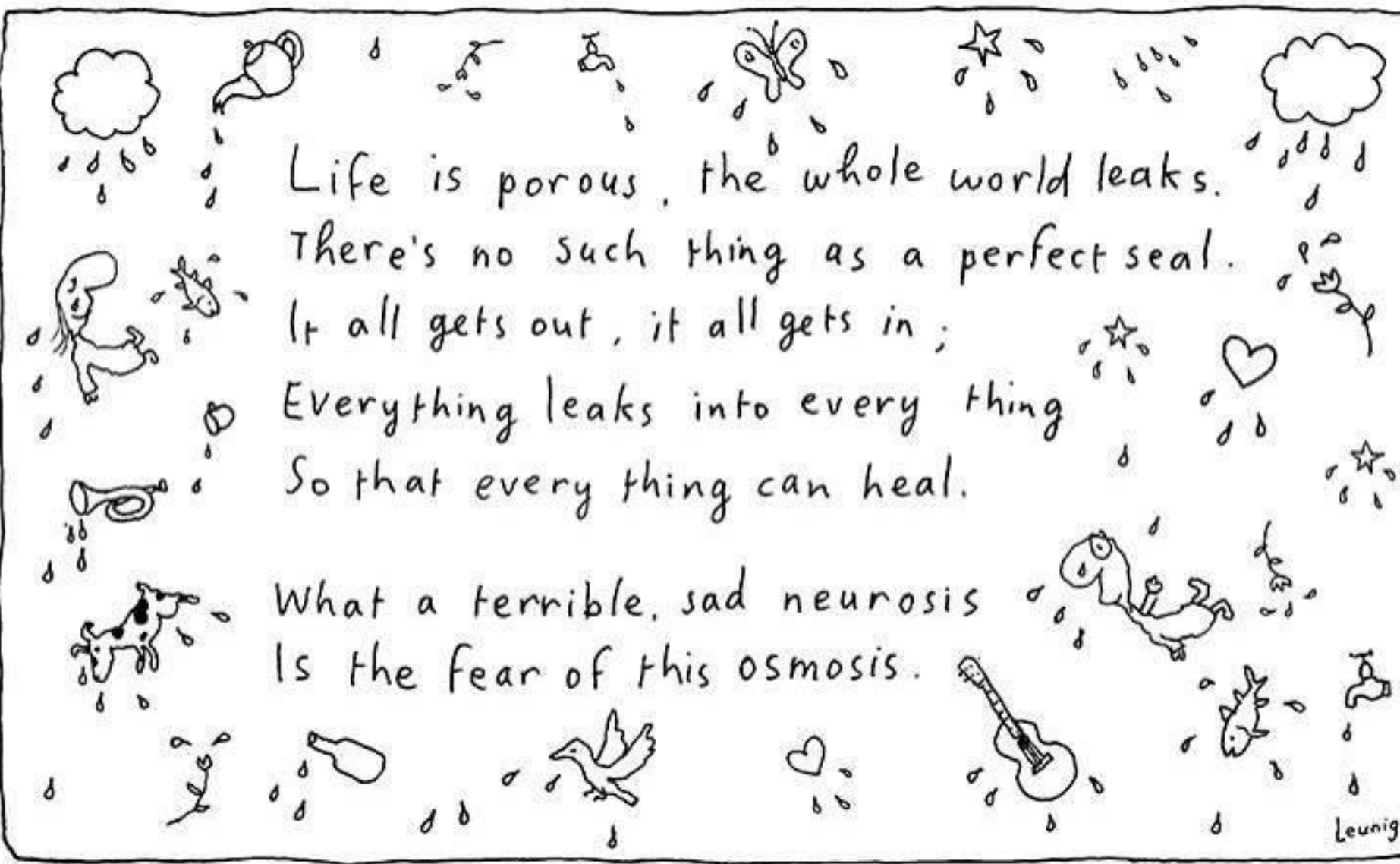
Back to the future

Demographic trends and changes

Projecting into the future

Effects on family and relationships

What should we do?



Life is porous, the whole world leaks.

There's no such thing as a perfect seal.

It all gets out, it all gets in;

Everything leaks into every thing

So that every thing can heal.

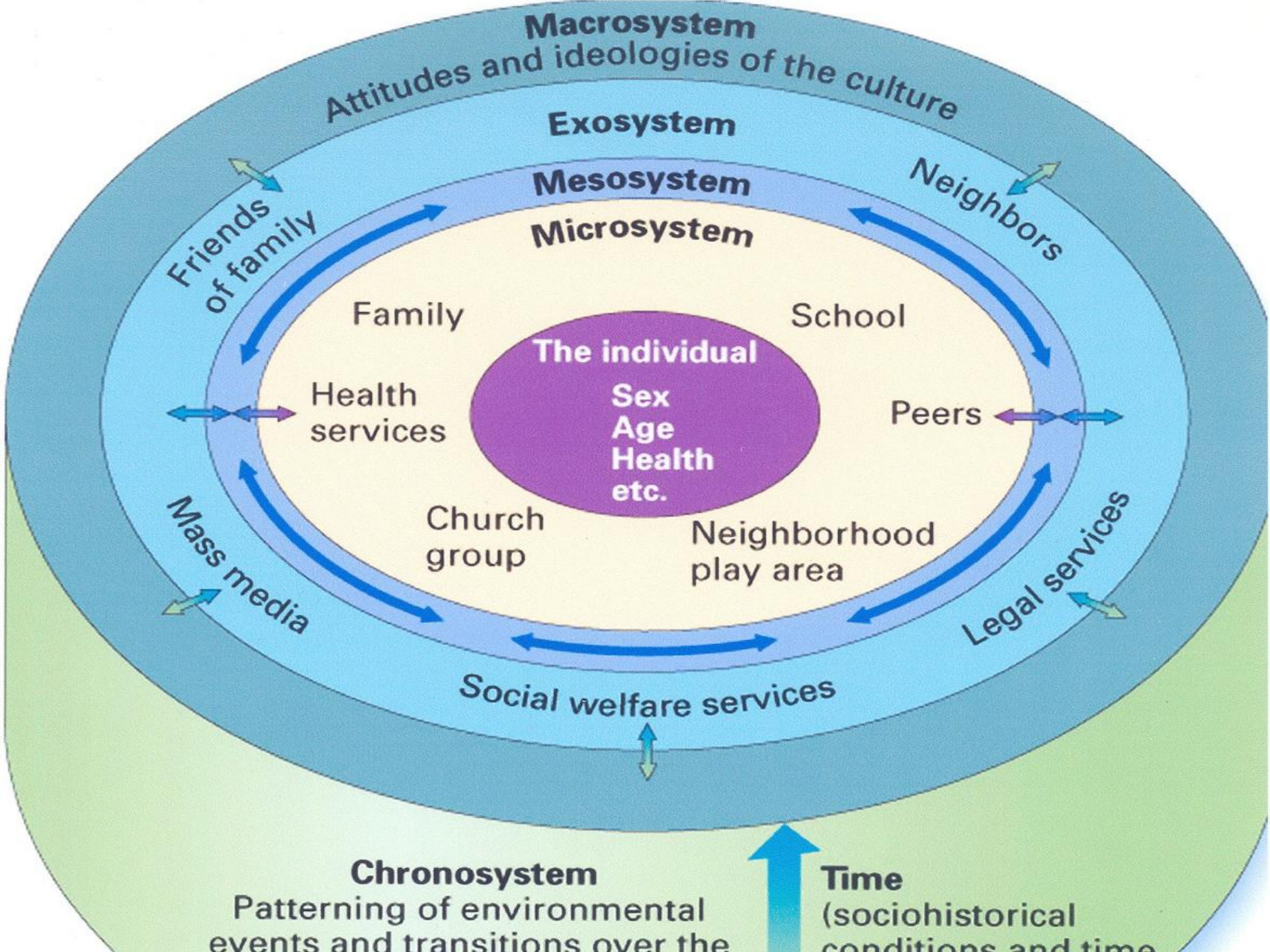
What a terrible, sad neurosis

Is the fear of this osmosis.

Leunig



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1800 – 1900 RELATIVELY LITTLE CHANGE

- Male income provider – low input into running of the household/parenting chores
- More than three children
- Start early – finish early
- Married women did not work
- Houses were often crowded – depended on one another for diversion



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1960 – 1980 RAPID DIVERSIFICATION OF FAMILIES

- Contraception more easily available
- No fault divorce laws (1975 Family Law act) Divorce rates up
- Beginning of women's emancipation (unfinished process)
- Improving infant survival
- Increasing income
- TV, electronic entertainment - together



- House sizes increasing
- Reduction in the number of 'traditional family households' until 2006
- Beginning (unfinished process) of acceptance of diverse sexual orientations
- Emergence of individualised/electronic entertainment options
- Starting with children starting to get later
- Children staying home longer

1980 - 1990 FAMILY



THE FUTURISTIC 2014 FAMILY RE-IMAGINED

Speculations about the future family range from the super high tech but socially similar to the apocalyptic/anarchistic.

Moral panic about loss of the family unit as unit of moral and social development.



WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO FAMILIES?

Many of the family changing trends have stabilized.

Number of family households and young adults living at home stable since 2006.

Couple only homes now the most common family structure in Aus. (SW 42.2%)

Couples with dependent children close second (SW 42.2%)

Social networking technology large part of social interactions

1.9 children on average in SW (falling)



PART II

SO WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

Fly in Fly out – pressure on families during and after.

Larger houses, many sedentary/individual entertainment and social options

Do it all drudges – the downside of flexible work and telecommuting

RA Study – biggest threats ‘Poor Communication’ & ‘Financial Stress’

BOOM² (*noun*) 'Period of prosperity or rapid economic growth' (Oxford dictionary)

During the FIFO period

- Loss of both parents from community participation

- Relationship stress

- Higher likelihood of substance use

- Compensate with 'honeymoon' spending (work hard-play hard)

- Absence of male parental figure

ALONE TOGETHER: FAMILIES AND FIFO

After the FIFO period

- Re-negotiation of family roles

- Financial stress, reduction in income

- Reconnecting with the community

- Families need assistance/counselling to plan for the management of these issues.
- See increased income as a windfall, rather than stable/long term.
- Explicitly discuss and negotiate family roles prior
- Greater evidence base required around what works.
- Flexibility in club and community org membership vital

ALONE TOGETHER: FAMILIES AND FIFO



In last 40 years, families have shrunk, houses have exploded in size.

Little or no backyard, everyone gets their own room, ipad, iphone, ipod, TV and playstation!! We are richer, children's outcomes are getting worse.

Reduced opportunity for children (and adults) to tolerate frustration, negotiation and interpersonal skills. 31% of married people report feeling lonely!

Fewer nearby opportunities for spontaneous outdoor interaction with peers.

Over-reporting of crime 'Cotton wool parenting'.

TOGETHER ALONE: BIG HOUSES LITTLE CONNECTION



- Sporting clubs in WA relatively healthy & may play a larger role in socialisation. Need our support.
- Kids need footpaths, backyards & parks.
- Family rituals, rules & culture need to support interaction and diversity of activity



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• SINGLE •



• IN A RELATIONSHIP •



DATING FACT: The best part about being in a relationship is getting to be **alone** with **someone else**.



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While Australia is being a bit slow to take it up – telecommuting is on the rise. Around 25% of individuals in the service industries working from home at least one day per week. Casualization is also on the rise – less security.

Telecommuters tend to start earlier, work longer, and get more done.

This trend is likely to mean that more homes will have parents who are present, but not present as they are trying to work with partners or children around. This can be deleterious.

The leakage of work into the home space can make it hard to ‘change gears’. Telecommuting does not guarantee work/life balance.

WHO IS FLEXING WHO? FLEXIBLE WORK NEEDS RIGID DISCIPLINE.

- Employees need to negotiate their own work hours within the context of family duties and commitments. Bookable public office spaces.
- Set clear boundaries and ‘signals’ that indicate when working versus not working.
- Develop realistic expectation with regards to multitasking.

Relax (Sen. Benardi) – the family is here to stay, but lots of them won't have kids. Implications for the definition and stated purpose of marriage and family.

Development of community facilities and sporting clubs very important in light of their increasing role in the development and socialisation of children and families.

Property development must take into account needs of children and families, govt' departments must enforce.

FIFO families provide great economic stimulus, and deserve support readjusting into and out of the FIFO role. The cost of not doing so is quite large and borne by everyone.

KEY POINTS FOR THE FUTURE

Changing work roles will mean employers will share employees, employees will have multiple worksites. This flexibility is great but discipline and support are needed to manage the work/life balance.

Public office facilities can help.





MANY THANKS – QUESTIONS?