

## Assignment 2: Case Study (1)

### Nick's Struggles with Family Roles and Emotional Disconnection

Nick was a 25-year-old man when he sought therapy feeling overwhelmed and disconnected. He had been struggling with “blackouts,” in which he could not think clearly and felt like he could not continue his studies in university. During the first few sessions, Nick appeared tense and talked very fast, but would abruptly stop and stare into the void, seemingly unable to find the right words. He often felt like he was alone in his struggles and did not know how to connect with others.

Nick's parents had recently divorced after decades of conflict and infidelity on his father's side. Nick had been used by both parents as a confidante and an ambassador, keeping secrets and acting as a mediator. At the age of 12, he discovered his father's affairs and was asked to keep them secret. His father confided in him frequently, expressing dissatisfaction with his mother, whom he described as emotionally distant, intrusive, and no longer sexually attractive. Nick kept the secret for years, until his mother discovered the affairs. Nick blamed himself for not being able to fix his parents' problems and felt like he had failed his mother. Soon before therapy, Nick's father left home and asked for divorce.

#### Case study analysis questions:

1. Compare and contrast how Freud and Jung would describe the role of the unconscious in Nick's situation.
2. In what ways are Nick's id, ego, and superego interacting?
3. Which defense mechanisms is Nick using? How can you tell?
4. From Jung's Analytical Psychology, which principles (opposites, equivalence, and entropy) are driving Nick's psychic energy?
5. Which archetypes are being expressed and suppressed?
6. From Adler, what evidence is there for Nick having an inferiority or superiority complex?
7. What is Nick's style of life? How do you know?
8. Based on Nick's description, where do you think he is in regard to his family constellation?
9. What could be a suitable goal for fictional finalism for Nick (do not choose perfection)? How might this goal change his behaviours and what would that look like for him?
10. From Horney, postulate how Nick's basic anxiety developed.
11. Which neurotic trend is most evident in Nick's life? Which behaviours are described that support that neurotic trend?
12. Speculate as to how Horney would describe how Nick's father treated his mother in front of him.

13. What “should” seem to be acting like tyrants in Nick’s life and how is he externalizing them?
14. Which theorists approach (from Freud, Jung, Adler, or Horney) do you think most adequately and accurately promotes understanding regarding Nick’s situation? How come (provide three to five reasons for your response)?