

FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY: FIVE BASIC CONCEPTS

1. The Identified Patient - the one exhibiting symptoms.
2. Homeostasis - Why has the symptom surfaced now?
3. Differentiation of Self - capacity to define self and remain connected.
4. Extended Family Field - being aware of impact of family of origin.
5. Emotional Triangle - formed by any three persons of issue.

TEN RULES (LAWS) OF FAMILY PROCESS

1. Emotional Distance - when a person uses geographical distance to solve problems fusion occurs in other relationships.
2. Loss and Replacement - replacing a lost member will lessen immediate pain but will also reduce change(s).
3. Chronic Conditions - to relieve "reactive" or "adaptive feed back" one has to become "emotionally flexible" and non reactive.
4. Pain and Responsibility - if a person can "stick" another or allow that person to assume the anxiety of their own pain it will become more so. *Clarity better than empathy*
5. The Paradox of Seriousness and The Playfulness of Paradox - the antidote for too much seriousness is the capacity to reverse directions and be playful.
6. Secrets and Systems - secrets create and perpetrate triangles.
7. Sibling Position - a persons sibling placement in their family of origin can often indicate how a person will function in relationships.
8. Diagnosis - anxious systems diagnosis people instead of their relationships.
9. Symmetry - the more polarized and extreme things seem to be in families, the more likely they are somehow connected.
10. Survival in Families - a person needs challenge to survive. The trick is to help them move from a victim position to a response to the challenge by becoming resourceful and realistic.