

Important Information About Family Therapy

Your relationship is our client.

Of course each of you is a unique individual. But our focus will be on the ways in which you interact, what works and what doesn't work well among you, and what might work better for your family. We are interested in encouraging teamwork that includes integrity for all family members and effective communication among you.

Our focus is on what can work better from here forward.

Talking about the past may be important in understanding and healing some of what is difficult now, but our main orientation is on how to move ahead together in a different and more constructive way. We look at patterns and influences, and work together with clients to determine new options.

Win-Win Model

When one person or a faction within a family wins a "battle" at others' expense, everyone loses because the relationships lose. The only effective resolutions to family problems are ones that all involved can feel good about and that all are willing to commit to and act on with integrity.

We cannot make or break your relationships.

That is for you to do. We can teach skills, make observations, share ideas, ask questions that we hope will be helpful, offer support, and provide a place for sharing and for trying new things. You will decide how open to be in our sessions, how much to try suggested ideas and techniques, and ultimately what kinds of family relationships you continue or change.

Skills and styles can be learned and un-learned

Sometimes small tweaks in listening or speaking or other interactions make a big difference in a relationship. Even lifelong patterns are not in your chromosomes, are not "you," though they may feel that way. When even one person changes a pattern, it may influence others in a family to change, too. The more you practice, the easier and more comfortable these new changes become.

We cannot know what ultimately is right or possible for you and for your family.

We may share opinions about what might make things better or worse, or easier or harder for you to be a healthier or more effective family. We will offer assistance in pattern changes that might improve things. But we would not presume to predict what will or should happen among you in the future.

We are not detectives.

When disagreements arise about historical events, we will not try to determine who is right or wrong. We were not present at those events and cannot judge the facts from your current arguments. What we can do is help family members figure out how to get closure on those incidents and move on into something better, if they are ready and willing to do that.

We cannot read your minds.

It is always your choice about how much or little you share with us. At the same time, we cannot know what you do not tell us. In general, the more specific and informative you can be with us about your situation, patterns and concerns, the more we can be of assistance to you.