

Family Regeneration Networking

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A workshop conducted on behalf of
NEIAS 2019

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A Family Therapist's Definition of Chemical Dependency

- ◆ For a family, chemical dependency is experienced as serial crises that are progressive. They are progressive in that they come more frequently and trend toward greater and greater intensity. What do the crises have in common? A chemical or addiction is the organizing principle.

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Jack wakes up with a huge hangover after attending his company's Christmas Party. Jack is not normally a drinker, but the drinks didn't taste like alcohol at all. He didn't even remember how he got home from the party.

As bad as he was feeling, he wondered if he did something wrong. Jack had to force himself to open his eyes, and the first thing he sees is a couple of aspirins next to a glass of water on the side table. And, next to them, a single red rose!!

Jack sits up and sees his clothing in front of him, all clean and pressed. He looks around the room and sees that it is in perfect order, spotlessly clean. So is the rest of the house. He takes the aspirins, cringes when he sees a huge black eye staring back at him in the bathroom mirror. Then he notices a note hanging on the corner of the mirror written in red with little hearts on it and a kiss mark from his wife in lipstick: 'Darling, breakfast is on the stove, I left early to get groceries to make you your favourite dinner tonight. I love you, darling!'

Love, Jillian'

He stumbles to the kitchen and sure enough, there is hot breakfast, steaming hot coffee and the morning newspaper. His 16 year old son is also at the table, eating. Jack asks, 'Son...what happened last night?'

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His son replies, You came home drunk last night, fell down and broke the coffee table, threw up, and walked into a door.

⊕ So why is mum being so kind, Jack asked?

'Oh THAT... Mum dragged you to the bedroom, and when she tried to take your trousers and pants off, you screamed,

'Leave me alone, I'm married!!'

Broken Coffee Table \$239.99

Hot Breakfast \$4.20

Two Aspirins 38 cents

Saying the right thing, at the right time:

Priceless

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⊕ **Family Adaptation to the Serial Crises of Chemical Dependency**

6

Adaptive and Reactive

7

Progressive

8

Slow and Incremental

Which Leads to.....

9

**“Normalizing” as a
result of reacting
to serial crisis.**

and..

10

Tenuous Homeostasis

The family engages in desperate attempts to maintain the status quo. Ultimately the best they can achieve is to stand still. Most of the time they try to minimize losing ground.

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Dissonance

◆ Drives adaptation. Induces efforts to reduce anxiety and reduces opportunities for growthful change in individuals or the system

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Border and Boundary Corruption

Boundaries and borders become rock wall impenetrable, porous or nonexistent.

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◆ The drug becomes the organizing principle for the family. Behaviors and defense mechanisms acquire the function of supporting/defending the family and the chemical.

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Change can happen when:

- ◆ The borders, boundaries and supra-system in which the family exists are returned to normal, more functional forms.

◆ **This does not require that the addict/alcoholic changes!!!!**

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Change can happen when:

- ◆ Natural, organic forces for health are reengaged.
 - Personal plans for personal growth are implemented
 - Connection within the system and with elements of the super-system are established, re-established, or repaired.
 - Each works a program of personal growth to the degree possible

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Family Regeneration Networking Criteria for Use

1. The Degree of Family Anxiety
2. Previous Unsuccessful Attempts to Solve
3. The Nature and Severity of the Crisis
4. Sufficient Members
5. Willingness to Call for Help. To reach out.

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Stages of Change

- ◆ Reduce or manage anxiety
- ◆ Development of objective awareness
- ◆ Coaching
- ◆ Differentiation

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Selected Techniques

- ◆ Ideal relationship/family is....
- ◆ Detriangling
- ◆ Ownership
- ◆ Communication ("I" statements)
- ◆ The 5 to 1 rule exercise
- ◆ Psycho-education to reduce dissonance

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More Selected Techniques

- ◆ Boundary work with each member taking responsibility
- ◆ Act as if rather than "fonley"
- ◆ Define "normal" and have that become the organizing principle

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Why Bother?

- ◆ Remember our definition. We treat people who suffer from the use, misuse or abuse of substances. Family members qualify.
- ◆ We don't have to wait for the "index client" to move
- ◆ Wonderful case finding tool.

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Why Bother?

- ◆ Prevention. Reduces cross-generational transmission of the pathology.
- ◆ Reduces admissions for psychological problems among family members

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That's All Folks

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Retribalization (Attneave)

Family members reconnect or call together former or potential network members. Each individual refines and redefines their socio-emotional support system. First order family members are invited to join in the process by the deputized representatives who showed up in your office.

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Polarization

Each of the capable family members presents the problems as seen and experienced by each of them. Ex. "I have not been able to see my friends after school". Not "My mom is a drunk" Individual ownership.

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Mobilization

Development of small task groups to develop and implement possible solutions to the articulated problems.

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Depression

Family and small groups become discouraged because they have not experienced “quick fixes. Counselors and coaches offer support and reinforce ties between members of the small groups.

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Breakthrough

Plans coalesce here and contingency plans are made. Sets of resources supports and plans are defined. Action begins here.

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Phases of Family Regeneration Networking

Elation, Euphoria, Exhaustion

Celebrations occur in this phase. Future connections are planned here. Care is taken not to rest too long on good feelings. Trigger next cycle.