



#### **Part IV**

Create a Family Plan of Action

#### **Seminar # 23**

#### Roles and Responsibilities in the Family Plan of Action

##### **Learning Objectives:**

- 1: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Characteristics
- 2: Treatment Strategies for Family Members
- 3: Triangulation Relationships



Issues the Family Faces

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*Practical Exercise One: Family Plan of Action, Issue Role Assignment and Responsibility Description*

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12 Key Issues	Role Assignment: Who.	Responsibility Description for this Role: Will do What.
Enabling		
Addiction Behavior		
Family Intervention		
Police Intervention		
Emergency Medical Services		
Legal Court Intervention		
Treatment Centers		
Community Mapping		
Relapse		
Successful Lifelong Recovery		
Bereavement		
Spirituality, Faith Practices		

To create a list of resources needed to successfully complete a task.

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***RESOURCE REQUIREMENT WORKSHEET***

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The required resource:

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The source of this resource:

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The steps or criteria for receiving the resource:

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The budget needed for this resource:

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The timeline for secure:

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Who needs to be involved in this project:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



**An Obstacle is the time it takes for a family to meet.**

## Triangles

A triangle is a three-person relationship system. It is considered the building block or “molecule” of larger emotional systems because a triangle is the smallest stable relationship system. A two-person system is unstable because it tolerates little tension before involving a third person. A triangle can contain much more tension without involving another person because the tension can shift around three relationships. If the tension is too high for one triangle to contain, it spreads to a series of “interlocking” triangles. Spreading the tension can stabilize a system, but nothing gets resolved.

People’s actions in a triangle reflect their efforts to assure their emotional attachments to important others, their reactions to too much intensity in the attachments, and their taking sides in others’ conflicts. Paradoxically, a triangle is more stable than a dyad, but a triangle creates an odd man out, which is an exceedingly difficult position for individuals to tolerate. Anxiety generated by anticipating being or by being the odd man out is a potent force in triangles.

The patterns in a triangle change with increasing tension. In calm periods, two people are comfortably close “insiders”, and the third person is an uncomfortable “outsider.” The insiders actively exclude the outsider, and the outsider works to get closer to one of them. Someone is always uncomfortable in a triangle and pushing for change. The insiders solidify their bond by choosing each other in preference to the less desirable outsider. When someone chooses another person over oneself, it arouses particularly intense feelings of rejection.

If mild to moderate tension develops between the insiders, the most uncomfortable one will move closer to the outsider. One of the original insiders now becomes the new outsider and the original outsider is now an insider. The new outsider will make predictable moves to restore closeness with one of the insiders. At moderate tension levels, triangles usually have one side in conflict and two harmonious sides. The conflict is not inherent in the relationship in which it exists but reflects the overall functioning of the triangle.

At a high level of tension, the outside position becomes the most desirable. If severe conflict erupts between the insiders, one insider opts for the outside position by getting the current outsider fighting with the other insider. If the maneuvering insider is successful, he gains the more comfortable position of watching the other two people fight. When the tension and conflict subside, the outsider will try to regain an inside position.

Triangles contribute significantly to the development of clinical problems. For example, getting pushed from an inside to an outside position can trigger a depression or perhaps even a physical illness, or two parents intensely focusing on what is wrong with a child can trigger serious rebellion in the child.

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***NUCLEAR FAMILY TRIANGULATION SCALE FOR CHILDREN***

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For each of the questions, please choose one of the following answers that best describes your family. There are no right or wrong answers.

(0) never (1) rarely (2) sometimes (3) often (4) very often

\_\_\_\_ 1. When your parents disagree, how often do you feel “caught in the middle” between them?

\_\_\_\_ 2. How often does your mother “butt in” to disagreements between you and your father?

- \_\_\_3. Do you ever do things to try to keep your parents apart?
- \_\_\_4. Does your father share secret with you that he does not share with your mother?
- \_\_\_5. Do your parents ever try to involve you in their fights or problems?
- \_\_\_6. Do you ever think that your father would rather spend time with you than with your mother?
- \_\_\_7. When your parents are fighting or are unhappy with each other, do you tend to misbehave?
- \_\_\_8. How often do you feel the need to take sides when your parents disagree?
- \_\_\_9. When you are spending time with both of your parents, do you wish your father would not be there?
- \_\_\_10. Do you find it difficult to feel close to both of your parents at the same time?
- \_\_\_11. Do you ever feel that your mother cares more about you than she cares about your father?
- \_\_\_12. Do you feel your parents need your help to get along with each other?
- \_\_\_13. How often are your parents' discussions about you?
- \_\_\_14. When your parents are fighting or are unhappy with each other, do you tend to get sick (stomach aches, headaches, etc.)?
- \_\_\_15. Do you ever think that your mother would rather spend time with you than with your father?
- \_\_\_16. How often does your father "butt in" to disagreements between you and your mother?

- \_\_\_17. Is it ever difficult to feel friendly toward both of your parents at the same time?
- \_\_\_18. Does your mother share secret with you that she does not share with your father?
- \_\_\_19. Do you try to solve your parents' problems when they are not getting along with each other?
- \_\_\_20. Do you ever feel that your father cares more about you than he cares about your mother?
- \_\_\_21. When you are spending time with both of your parents, do you wish your mother would not be there?

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed.). Washington, DC: authors. Beck, A.T., Emery, G., & Greenberg, R.L. (1985). Anxiety disorders and phobias: A cognitive perspective. USA: Basic Books. Black, B. (1995). Separation anxiety disorder and panic disorder. In J.S. March (Ed.), Anxiety disorders in Children and Adolescents (pp. 212-234). New York: The Guilford Press. Bowen, M. (1978). Family therapy in clinical practice. New Jersey: Jason Aronson. Bowlby, J. (1988). A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development. USA: Basic Books. Bray, J.H., Harvey, D.M., & Williamson, D.S. (1987). Intergenerational family relationships: An evaluation of theory and measurement. *Psychotherapy* 24(35): 516-529. Compton, S.N., Nelson, A.H., & March, J.S. (2000). Social phobia and separation anxiety symptoms in community and clinical samples of children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 39(8): 1040-1046. Guerin, P.J., Fogarty, T.F., Fay, L.F., & Kautto J.G. (1996). Working with relationship triangles: The one-two-three of psychotherapy. New York: The Guilford Press. Jellinek, M.S., & Kearns, M.E. (1995). Separation anxiety. *Pediatrics in Review* 16(2): 57-61. Johnson, P., & Nelson, M.D. (1998). Parental divorce, family



**Solutions to Issues & Obstacles**

**VIDEO ONE:**



**ASSIGNMENT VIDEO:** On [www.youtube.com/](http://www.youtube.com/)

**Search Title:** Family Roles in Addiction

Families for Depression Awareness

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***FAMILY PLAN OF ACTION***

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**The Issue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT SITUATION**

Describe what has happened or is likely to happen:

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**COMPLETE A FAMILY TRANSFORMATIONAL RESPONSE (F.T.R.)**

State the Solution from the F.T.R. worksheet:

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**COMPLETE A FAMILY DECISION MAKING MODEL**

State the Decision to be Acted Upon from the Family Decision Making Model:

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