

Family Therapy

After an initial assessment or diagnostic interview with a therapist, sometimes following some individual therapy, family therapy may be very helpful and an opportunity for individuals to practice new communication skills to address learned dysfunctional communication patterns in the family system that have become obstacles to family life.

The average number of family sessions may range from 5 to 20 sessions. It's helpful in the therapy setting for family members to gain new perspectives about themselves and one another. Interventions focus on identifying communication patterns that may be obstacles to effective communication within the family unit. There may be specific situations, losses, or life adjustments that the family may be able to better understand and cope with in family therapy also.

Sometimes family history is explored through the development of a genogram that enables family members to better identify communication patterns or issues passed down from one generation to another.

Family therapists are relational therapists: They are generally more interested in what goes on *between* individuals rather than *within* one or more individuals and how certain problems may be maintained by the family system as a whole. Generally, each member of the family learns to adopt a specific adaptive role that maintains ineffective communication.

Conflicts are identified, processed for the first time or reprocessed and specific resolution or new behaviors identified and practiced. Family members are encouraged to communicate more openly and honestly than they may be used to without using personal attacks or other obstacles to effective communication. New, more positive ways of relating and collaborating can be identified rather than allocating blame to one or more individuals.