



Turning Points For Families

TURNING POINTS FOR FAMILIES (TPFF)

**Reunification therapy for severe Parental
Alienation or for the unreasonable,
senseless disruption of a parent-child
relationship**

with

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Turning Points for Families

- a four-day, transitional program to “jump-start” the healing of an unjustifiably damaged parent-child relationship
- a symbolic-experiential intervention that merges **Family Systems Therapy (FST)** with psycho-education.

**Brief overview of
FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY
(FST)**

Philosophical Underpinnings of FST:

Experience produces change

Insight does not produce change

Utilization of the here and now experience as opposed to interpreting the subjective recounting of the there and then memory of events

Views dysfunction to be within the family relationships

Not within the individual

The dysfunctional family relationship that led to the birth of the **Family Therapy Movement**

**Murray Bowen, MD, coined it the
“pathological triangle”**

**Jay Haley coined it the
“perverse triangle”**

The birth of the family therapy movement

Triangulation was first observed in the 1950's on the psychiatric ward during visits between the child patient and their families

“Triangulation” became the target of
intervention for the founders of family
systems therapy

“Triangulation” is the family dynamic we see in alienation

Salvador Minuchin, MD

**founder of structural family therapy
(SFT)**

(one school of family systems therapy)

Cornerstone of Minuchin's SFT is the concept of **"complementarity"**

there is a reciprocity of behaviors among the family members

people in intimate relationships with each other change and co-create each other.

“Complementarity”

**People are more likely to change
for those whom they love and
those who love them.**

**Family therapists
maintain that:**

**The truth is somewhere in the
middle**

relationships are 50/50

It takes two to tango

Elephants don't marry giraffes

**AND, the argument in alienation cases
generally goes:**

**Each parent contributes
50/50
to the rejection**

Therefore, most cases are hybrids

WRONG!

*Hybrid cases are very, very, very, very,
very, very, very very rare.*

*In case I did not make
myself very clear,
Hybrid cases are very,
very, very, very
rare!*

Family Therapy

got “50/50” wrong

in cases of

alienation

The exception to 50/50 is when your spouse is a **personality disorder!**



**Who thinks that the
previous picture reflects
someone with a personality
disorder
rather than**

reflecting the **effects** that
those with a personality
disorder have on everyone
with whom they come in
contact?

It is probably both!!

**RESEARCH ON THE
PERSONALITY OF
THE SEVERE
ALIENATOR:**

The clinical literature documents that severe alienators generally suffer profound psychopathology and exhibit one or more personality disorders—borderline, narcissistic, and/or antisocial.

Some of those who affirm this are:

Baker, Bone & Ludmer, 2014; Baker & Sauber, 2013; Bernet, 2010; Deutsch, Judge, & Fiddler, 2017; Fiddler & Ward, 2017; Gardner, 1998; Gottlieb, 2012, 2013; Heard & Linehan, 1993; Kelly & Johnston, 2001; Judge & Ward, 2017; Macfie, 2009; Miller, 2013; Polak & Moran, 2017; Reay, 2015; Siegel & Langford, 1998; Warshak, 2010, 2013).

**Clawar and Rivlin (2013)
opined that, when frustrated,
programming-brainwashing
parents will resort to
“increasing the pressure on
children” (P. 276).**

Clawar and Rivlin further declared that programming-brainwashing parents will employ a “**shotgun approach**” to “cause all parties extensive outlays of money, time, energy, and anxiety.... It is part of their socially abusive (and, at times, **sociopathic**) *[bold print mine]* style of operation” (P. 275).

Minuchin would not have held that the two parents are equally culpable for the triangulation:

“The only reason a child will disrespect a parent is when the child is standing on the shoulders of the other parent”

**Minuchin would have elevated the
alienated parent into the position
of co-therapist and healer of the
child.**

Gottlieb, The Parental Alienation Syndrome:

No quantity or quality of words between the child and the therapist—who is nonetheless a stranger—can possibly have as powerful and as meaningful an impact on the child as does a parent.

The crucial player to assume the **healing role** of the alienated child must be the **"formerly" loved and loving alienated parent**, who is not only the holder of the family's truths but who has had the loving relationship with the child.

The role then for the **therapist is to serve as a **catalyst**, who encourages and guides the creation of healthy, corrective interactions between the alienated parent and the child.**

The therapist provides an environment in which emotions and healing experiences are released among family members.

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA FOR TPDF

Stipulations of the Court Order:

Transfer of at least temporary, sole legal and physical custody to the alienated parent.

No-contact of any kind for least 90 days between the child and alienating parent—must be reviewed for restoration of contact.

Stipulations of the Court Order (cont.)

The alienating parent must be assessed for a personality disorder and/or other diagnosis and accept appropriate treatment.

TPFF must approve of the alienating parent's therapist.

Stipulations of the Court Order (cont.)

Alienating parent must accept parent education services from TPFF—not a therapeutic relationship—due to role conflict.

The alienating parent must write a letter to the child—TPFF must approve of the letter's content.

Requirements of the letter:

Expresses support for the reunification with reasons **why**.

Identifies qualities the alienated parent has to offer the child.

Expresses why it is important for the alienated parent to be meaningfully in the child's life

The
Scarlet
Letter



**What is the real importance of
the letter?**

Importance of the no-contact period

- **Child Protection**
- **Frees the child from the loyalty conflict**
- **Allows the child to freely invest in the alienated parent**
- **Challenges the pathological enmeshment**

Importance of the no-contact period

- **Preservation and enrichment of the reconnection**
- **Prevent relapse—a virtual certainty with premature contact with an unreformed alienator**
- **Compensatory time**

What are the goals of TPDFF?

- Restores a loving, essential relationship with a parent
- Teaches children critical reasoning skills
- Helps children to assess relationships realistically—**ALL RELATIONSHIPS**

What are the goals of TPDF?

- **Inoculates the child against further brainwashing and manipulation**
- **Relapse is a virtually certainty with even minimal contact with offending parent**

Day 1

**The Memorabilia
intervention**

Day 2

“Welcome Back Pluto”

Day 3

- **Fallibility of memory**
- **Susceptibility of children to suggestion**
- **Implanting false memories**
- **Videos of Ryan Thomas—an alienated child**
- **Story of Hannah's mother—an alienated mother**

Day 4

- **Summation**
- **Going Forward**

Questions