



# 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