



TYPES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY IN PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Growing up in a dysfunctional family can leave you emotionally scarred and set you up for a lifetime of issues. Not all dysfunctional families are the same though, and each type can create specific problems that carry on into adulthood. This article shows types of dysfunctional family.

Key words: the substance abuse family, the conflict-driven family, The violent family ,the authoritarian family, the emotionally detached family

Introduction

Over 8 million children under the age of 18 live with a parent who has a substance use disorder, according to research in *Social Work in Public Health*. When one or more parents abuse drugs or alcohol, it can lead to chaotic family life. Children of alcoholics or drug addicts may not have their basic needs met. The addicted parent may forget to pick up the kids from school, neglect to fix lunch or dinner, and skip important health checks. Unreliable and inconsistent parenting causes children to feel insecure and leads to issues with trust and pent-up anger that may linger for decades. Living in constant fear, being blamed for problems the parent creates and feeling ashamed impact the ability to form healthy relationships later on in life. Children of alcoholics are prone to develop overactivity in the amygdala, the brain's fear center, and can contribute to mental health conditions, such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression. And research in *Drug and Alcohol Dependences* shows they are at heightened risk of developing substance use disorders.





Is your family life filled with heated arguments, hurtful disputes, and long-running feuds? When family members are constantly picking fights or pressing each other's buttons to create conflict, it creates a highly stressful environment. When one family member feels threatened, they may retaliate with even more hateful actions. It doesn't really matter what the conflicts are about—money, personal style, where to go to dinner, or what to watch on TV—it's the inability to communicate and resolve issues peacefully that causes lasting damage. Children in conflict-oriented families often develop stress disorders and have trouble with attachment.

Methods

Whichever form of family dysfunction affects your home life, understand that you can overcome these issues. You don't need to let them ruin your life. Here are some powerful steps that can help you heal from a dysfunctional upbringing.

- **Adopt brain healthy habits.** Even if your brain bears the emotional scars of childhood abuse, you can improve your brain function, which will enhance every area of your life.
- **Find a support network.** If your family unit isn't there for you, find friends, a church group, a support group, or a therapist who can be a good listener and be there for you when you need help.
- **Work on relationship skills.** Even though you didn't grow up with healthy relationships, you can learn to develop strong bonds with others.
- **Stop being a victim.** When you are a victim, you are powerless to change anything. Only when you take responsibility for your own behaviors can you gain the power to make changes.

Results

- A dysfunctional family is when there exist unfavourable behaviours between family members, such as a lack of empathy, and unhealthy interactions between





parents and their children. If left unacknowledged, symptoms of schizophrenia (such as paranoia and delusions) may emerge.

- Family dysfunctions aid in the development and maintenance of schizophrenia, and often contribute to relapses after treatment.
- The ‘schizophrenogenic mother’ is a term used to describe common traits in a patient’s parents, namely characteristics such as being cold and uncaring, suspicious, hostile, and controlling.
- The Double Bind Theory was coined by Bateson et al. (1956) to describe the contradictory messages children with schizophrenia received from their parents. These were shown to correlate with the development and symptoms of schizophrenia.
- Expressed Emotions (EE) is a style of communication that can increase the likelihood of schizophrenic patients relapsing into their behaviours after receiving treatment, and it is marked by high levels of hostility and criticism within the household.

Discussion

Recognizing that you grew up in a dysfunctional family is an important first step, but just acknowledging this truth is not enough to stop the pattern. You can work with a licensed mental healthcare provider or join a support group to help you work through any unresolved trauma related to your upbringing. Therapy can also teach you how to use healthy coping skills to regulate uncomfortable emotions rather than develop addictions or destructive behaviors. A mental healthcare provider can also help you set boundaries, which you will need if you are still in regular contact with your dysfunctional family members. Simply doing the opposite of what your caregivers did can create new and unforeseen problems for your children,³ so if you’d like to pursue parenthood, make sure the decision is an informed and intentional one. By planning to become a parent, addressing your past trauma, and developing healthy coping skills, you’ll be in a much better position to form secure attachments with your children and guide them into a healthy adulthood.





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