

Characteristics of a Functional Family

1. Problems are acknowledged and resolved
2. All members are supported in expressing their feelings, thoughts, perspectives, desires and imagination.
3. All relationships are dialogical (“two-way”) and each person has equal value.
4. Communication is direct and congruent; the communication matches the behavior.
5. Family members get their needs met.
6. Family members can be different.
7. Parents do what they say, and they are self-disciplined disciplinarians.
8. Roles are flexible and chosen; no one person “always” has the same “job.”
9. Rules require accountability.
10. Violation of healthy family values leads to guilt.
11. Mistakes are forgiven and viewed as learning tools.
12. Parents are aware of not being God; they have healthy shame.

In healthy relationships six general principles create a foundation for generative emotional, spiritual, and relational development:

1. I can talk openly about things that are important to me.
2. I can name my feelings, values, beliefs, and keep my behaviors consistent with them
3. I can define the limits of what I can comfortably do or give.
4. I can clarify what is acceptable or tolerable in a relationship.
5. I can share my vulnerabilities and competencies with others.
6. I can give others permission to do the same things.