

Integrity Counseling Inc.

Rules of Healthy and Unhealthy Families

Rules of Unhealthy Families

1. Don't talk about problems; if you must talk about problems never talk about the real problems.
2. Don't express feelings.
3. Never talk to another family member directly; always go through another person.
4. Be strong, be good, be right, be perfect.
5. Make us proud.
6. Don't be selfish.
7. Do as I say, not as I do.
8. It's not O.K. to play or to be playful.
9. Don't rock the boat.
10. Rigid roles.
11. Rigid rules.
12. Family secrets.
13. Resist outsiders from entering the system.
14. No personal privacy; unclear personal boundaries.
15. False loyalty to the family; members never free to leave the system.
16. Family resists change.
17. There is no unity; the family is fragmented.

Rules of Healthy Families

1. Talk about family problems openly and honestly, and deal with the real problems.
2. Express feelings freely, including sadness, fear, and anger.
3. Communicate directly.
4. Be human; it's O.K. to make mistakes.
5. Do your best.
6. Have a sense of self.
7. Own your own actions.
8. It's O.K. to play and laugh.
9. Conflict is allowed and resolved.
10. No rigid roles.
11. No rigid rules.
12. No family secrets.
13. Invite help from the outside when needed.
14. Members have a right to personal privacy in order to develop a sense of self.
15. Members have a sense of family and are permitted to leave the system.
16. Family continually changes.
17. There is a sense of wholeness in the family.