

Jan Ford Mustin, Ph.D.

Psychologist

4407 Bee Caves Road, Suite 411 • Austin, Texas 78746 • (512) 347-8100 • Fax: 347-8200 • www.peakinstitute.com
A Professional Corporation

THE FAMILY SYSTEMS APPROACH

THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

It has long been recognized that within a family system, stressors that affect one family member, have an unmistakable impact on the other members of the family as well. Similarly, the family system organizes itself around both internal and external stressors and often tends to balance itself in reaction to problems. For example, the family may react or “balance” itself in response to stress related to a medical condition, attention deficit disorder, behavioral or learning problems, or other situational or developmental conditions of one of the family members.

In the case of a child or teenager who comes to therapy as the “identified patient,” we know that the family system has been stressed in a number of ways, sometimes for an extended period of time. This family system is going to be a key focus in the therapy process in order that we address the youngster’s problems in the most effective manner possible. *Therefore, we will engage this youngster’s family members to assist in the successful treatment of the “identified patient’s” by participating in an appropriate amount of both formal evaluation and family-related therapy.*

We realize that parents are usually the most important individuals in a youngster’s life, and *we work with parents as the “therapists in residence” who extend the work that we are doing with a young person into the home and beyond.* Our “family without patient” sessions with relatives of a child or teen are designed to assist with problem solving as well as to encourage parents to proceed with appropriate interventions at home with confidence and conviction. Similarly, family therapy sessions that include the family members as well as the “identified patient,” provide important opportunities to help the family system adjust to accommodate the positive changes in the child.

Studies show that the family that participates fully in this flexible, family systems approach will enjoy significantly greater therapy success than families in which

only the “identified patient” receives professional attention. The reason is simple. The engaged and participating families provide the “identified patient” with the motivation for positive change as well as the environment within which to sustain that change. ***Simply put, a family’s willingness to participate in this therapy is a key ingredient to a successful intervention. In our practice, therefore, we require this participation as a key ingredient to a successful outcome.*** We believe in this “no fault,” systems approach in which excellent communication and teamwork will assist in ensuring the best possible outcome for all involved.

Frequently, it becomes apparent that the therapy process would be most effective if the “identified patient’s” family members referred to professionals outside our practice for related therapy or counseling. We are quite familiar with the specializations of a variety of professionals and will make referrals to other professionals, if necessary, as well as to coordinate the transition to other professionals.

Typically, once a family has brought a child or teenager to our practice for professional attention, the presenting concern may have existed for quite a few years. Understandably, by the time we first meet the parents and the child, a high level of frustration and even hopelessness may have built up and everyone involved is quite eager to receive an accurate and precise diagnosis that will lead directly to treatment recommendations that will provide the desired result in a short period of time. We share in this desire to provide the most efficient and timely diagnostic services possible and take a very proactive approach to evaluation as well as treatment.

Since we know that clear communication facilitates a successful intervention, we have very carefully and thoughtfully prepared information material for our web site as well as our orientation appointments. We offer this at no charge and no obligation to our prospective clients and encourage them to ask any and all questions they might have as they arise. In fact, ***we welcome questions at every stage of the therapeutic process,*** as they indicate that the prospective client is thinking through ahead of time all the variables that might become problematic, thereby making treatment more likely to succeed.

We are looking forward to meeting with you to discuss your particular issues and concerns and to providing you with the professional services that help you and your child reach your evaluation and therapy goals.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read this information:

Signature

Date

Witness

Date

Please sign below to indicate that you have read this information, that you understand this family systems approach and that you agree to participate in a family systems approach that acknowledges the role of the parents in the child's life as "the therapists in residence" to ensure the most successful therapy outcome.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Witness

Date