

## **Characteristics Of Dysfunctional Families**

### **DON'T TALK**

1. Talking: Don't talk openly and directly about shameful, abusive or compulsive behaviors.
2. Incompleteness: Don't bring transactions a resolution or completion

### **DON'T TRUST**

1. Control: Be in control of all behavior and interaction at all times.
2. Perfection: Always be "right" and do the "right" thing. Never make a mistake because it will remind you that you are a mistake.
3. Blame: If something does not happen as you planned, blame someone or something else.
4. Unreliability: Don't expect reliability or consistency in relationships. Watch for the unpredictable. Surprises mean pain.

### **DON'T FEEL**

1. Denial: Deny feelings, especially the negative or vulnerable ones like anxiety, fear, loneliness, grief, rejection, need.
2. Disqualification: When disrespectful, shameful, abusive or compulsive behavior occurs, disqualify it, deny it (to yourself as well as others) or disguise it.

## **Characteristics of Functional Families**

**Provide Safety**: Provision for safe expression of feelings and thoughts with secure limits; parents to model a secure relationship.

**Provide Security**: Provision of confidence that parents can resolve conflict with respect and honesty; children are allowed to be children and parents provide support, structure, modeling and teaching.

**Provide Stability**: Parents are reasonably consistent with their communication, expectations and consequences. Parenting skills develop with age appropriateness.

## **Characteristics of Respectful Relationships**

1. Mutual respect
2. Mutual trust
3. Unconditional love
4. Mutual honesty
5. Realistic expectations
6. Open communication
7. Social networks
8. Prompt forgiveness
9. Increasing intimacy