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