

Healthy Family Functioning: Clinical Interventions through the Lens of Well-Functioning Families.

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Much of our academic orientation, theoretical and clinical literature, clinical training, and counseling experiences have been skewed toward pathology. We have become experts in identifying weaknesses, and exploring the multiple pathways to individual and family pathology. If we are not intentionally careful, our perspective of healthy relational functioning can be defined as simply “asymptomatic relationships” without any valid underpinnings of actual healthy family processes and structures. Though our clinical practice may not provide obvious evidence, many families are indeed healthy, well-functioning, satisfied, and even optimal. What could these healthy families teach us about our profession as counselors? What specific structures or processes distinguish healthy families from dysfunctional families? Can clinicians draw from an emerging body of literature on family wellness and apply these insights to disturbed families and individuals? From research of over 400 families, the presenter has identified 14 predictors of family success. These healthy family processes have application to the clinical family. Through both video and didactic presentations, participants in this seminar will learn the 14 characteristics of family health, identify the predictive power of each, learn specific behaviors which discriminate between healthy and unhealthy families, and identify specific interventions drawn from optimal families which have applications to our clinical cases.

Bio:

Philip Coyle serves as the Academic Dean of Richmond Graduate University and the Director of the Richmond School of Counseling based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Dr. Coyle previously served as the Department Chair and Professor of Psychology and Counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been a lead developer in 6 graduate degree programs and has taught master’s and doctoral level students since 1987. He has maintained a private counseling practice since 1984 and has accumulated over 35,000 hours of direct counseling experience. Among his academic credentials, he holds the Ph.D. degree in Psychology and Counseling, the Ed.D. and M.A. degrees in Marriage and Family Counseling, a Master of Religious Education with specialization in Social Work. He is an approved supervisor for AAMFT and has provided over 20 years of supervision of graduates pursuing licensure. His primary clinical work is with couples and families and his research interest during the past 10 years has been in the area of healthy family functioning. Philip is married to Judi, who is herself a marriage and family counselor and directs a large church-based counseling center in Chattanooga. They have two sons: Chris and Andrew.