

Characteristics That Promote Unhealthy Lifestyles in Our Families

- A serious problem exists and it is kept a secret, rather than dealt with appropriately
- Family members are expected to deny the truth and keep secrets too
- Family members are expected to suppress their feelings
- Family members start communicating in triangles of gossip, rather than dealing with the problem
- Family members are expected to live up to unrealistic standards, such as “be perfect” , “always be strong” , “never show weakness,” “always be right” so that no one will think we have any problems
- Family members who do not play by the rules are punished, blamed, shamed, and become the scapegoat
- Family members cast blaming statements such as “you are selfish” , “you are bad”
- Family members give inconsistent messages such as “Do as I say, not as I do”
- Family members are expected to not “rock the boat”
- Family members will adopt rigid roles to cope
- Family members have great difficulty developing a healthy identity as they try to cope
- Family members may easily repeat these patterns over and over in their relationships
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