

Sibling relationships are a tad complex and confusing !

A workshop to explore the patterns in sibling relationships

This workshop is a component part of the overall conference as such it will focus more specifically on an exploration of the driving force behind the patterns in order to assist in identifying suitable intervention in the family system or in fact determine whether siblings should be placed together or apart.

- In order to understand the pattern of relationship that forms between children in a sibling group whether this is a formed sibling group or a birth sibling group it is useful to determine the meaning of 'pattern'.
- The Collins dictionary states that: A pattern is the repeated or regular way in which something happens or is done. The Cambridge English Dictionary states that: A pattern is a particular way in which something is done, is organized or happens.
- In general literature, there is reference to sibling rivalry and conflict between siblings. However, there is a difference between siblings who act this out and siblings who move further along the continuum of normal sibling relationships towards an unhealthy pattern of sibling relationship.
- How do we determine the difference between sibling rivalry or sibling abuse?
- The observer of the relational interaction between siblings could consider if the questionable behavior being seen in the outside world is age appropriate: e.g., children use different conflict-resolution tactics during various developmental stages.
- A determination could be made as to whether the behavior is an isolated incident or part of an enduring pattern: abuse is, by definition, a long-term pattern rather than occasional disagreements.
- A determination needs to be made with regard to whether there is an aspect of victimization to the behavior: rivalry tends to be incident-

specific, reciprocal and obvious to others, while abuse is characterized by secrecy and an imbalance of power.

- None of the above will determine how this can be resolved, as the most important factor for this workshop is to determine the goal of the questionable behavior and its origins. All of the other factors are discernible in the outside world, the goal or the driver behind the pattern is not so clear and is indeed a TAD (trauma.attachment.dissociation) complicated.
- The formation of patterns in relationship in children is achieved through the process of being parented. It is not possible to ascertain whether children can be assisted in the family system as a group, or whether in order to break the pattern the children need to be separated, unless the relational experience of the child is analyzed thoroughly.
- The exploration will also raise an important question about sibling patterns.
- The sibling pattern belongs to the child and if a child is separated from their original sibling group but placed with other children will this trigger the original pattern?
- If the child is placed as a single child within the family, will the pattern trigger with other children outside the family? Information will be offered to reflect on the sibling relational dilemma which is indeed a TAD complex.

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