

The FUTURE Series - XIV

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Family Unification Techniques: Unique Relationship Enhancement (FUTURE)

THE CHILD'S BELIEF STRUCTURE: THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES

This section was just being written when the decision was made to place the first 13 FUTURE chapters on our web-site. The section is being presented in outline form only. Watch the site for the soon-to-appear completed version, along with some exciting information on work being done in this area by some of our colleagues.

1. When a MHP enters a case, the child's belief structure will consist of a complicated mixture of attitudes, perceptions and memories some of which are totally true, some of which are true but highly selective, some partially true and many others that will be based on distorted information or patently false information. Finding a therapeutic way to navigate through this complicated matrix is not easy.

2. Here are some strategies that will almost never be effective. (1) Explain to the child that he or she is alienated because of the AP's witting or unwitting malevolent campaign, or explain to the child that he or she has taken on the job of protecting a parent seen as hurt or impaired. (2) Argue with the child when the child rejects your explanation.

3. The following strategies are better. Relate stories of the research which show how intelligent people can be led to believe events that are false. Do not cite divorce or custody research. There are countless studies on false memories.

4. Relate research how once a person forms an expectation, that expectation will shape the person's actual perception of reality. A favorite of ours is the research that began with a fraternity hazing party. Two boys were to be initiated. (As usual, the "hazing" was quasi-sadistic.) The boys to be initiated were told they were going to be branded with a hot branding iron, so their bodies would carry the logo of the fraternity. The boys actually saw a branding iron glowing on a blazing fire. Then, the boys shirts were removed, and they were blindfolded. They were then touched on their arms WITH STICKS OF ICE. Each howled in pain. They *expected* to be hurt badly and hence *perceived the ice* as creating tremendous pain. An unexpected result was that both boys actually *blistered from the ice*. This is how powerfully an expectation can affect the mind/body's reaction. (This procedure was replicated via experiment. All of the subjects in the experiment screamed in pain. One third of them blistered.)