

Families and Substance Use Disorder

A Relational Paradigm in Addiction Treatment

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Agenda

1. Introduction & Context
2. Overview of Programming
3. Approaches to Family Work
4. Relational/Systemic Thinking
5. Case Example
6. Results
7. Q & A

Freedom Institute

- 40+ years in New York City
- Not-for-profit, independently run
- Educated, outwardly successful clientele
- Clinical Team all have advanced degrees
- Variety of theoretical approaches



Freedom Institute
Treatment Offerings specific
to Substance Use Disorder



Intensive
Outpatient
Program

Abstinence

DBT modality

Minimum 8 weeks

Random drug testing

10 hours/week

Sober Support
Group

Ambivalence

Motivational
Interviewing

10-week commitment

Recovery Groups

Early Recovery (< 3
mos.)

Advanced Recovery
(3 mos. to 1 yr.)

Extended Recovery
(> 1 yr.)

Psychodrama

DBT Groups



Freedom Institute Other Offerings

Care Coordination

Interventions

Assessments

Treatment Planning

Referrals

Family Services

Family Therapy

Couples' Therapy

Parent Group

Significant Other
Group

Multi-Family Groups

Hallways

School-Based
Prevention

Social-Emotional
Wellness

Prevention of
Substance Use &
Other High-Risk
Behaviors

if you met my
family

you would
understand



Family Programs in Traditional SUD Treatment

**Individual
Treatment**

**Family
Treatment**

Not even considered
“Toxic”
“Must let go”

Education focus
“Codependent”

Individual has to be “ready”

**Individual
Treatment**

**Family
Treatment**

Spectrum of Family Responses

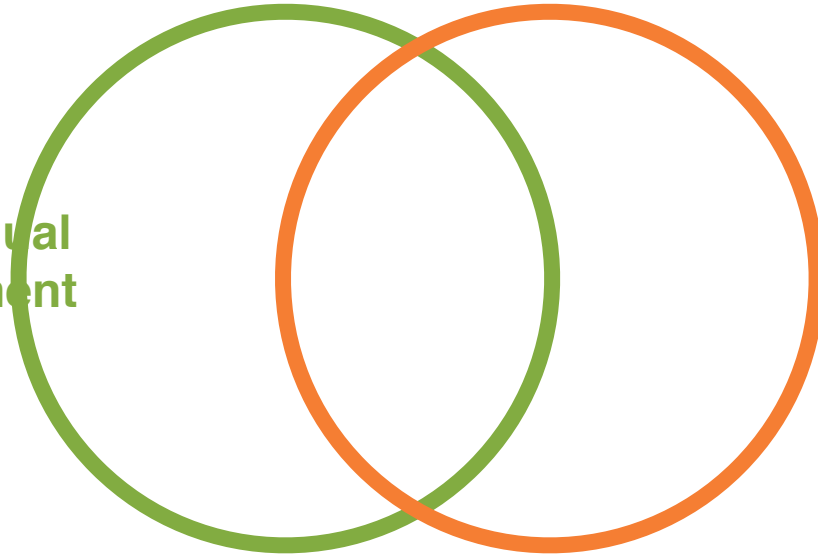
Ignore
Deny

Focus
Obsess



Family Programming at Freedom Institute

Individual
Treatment



Family
Treatment



Architects of Freedom Institute's Family Programming



Ackerman Institute

- Since 1950's
- Nathan Ackerman
- Relational/systemic model
- Elements from Bowen, Minuchin, Milan, Satir, etc.
- 3+ years of post-grad training



Family Integration into Treatment

- Family Therapists distinct from Individual Therapists
 - Entire family usually included
- Joint Assessments
 - Young Adults required
- Family Session in IOP Package
- Multi-Family Group



Family Work throughout the Treatment Process

Assessment

**Initial Treatment
(first 2-3 mos.)**

**Ongoing
Treatment
(until 1 year)**

**Mid-Afternoon Slump
Prevention**

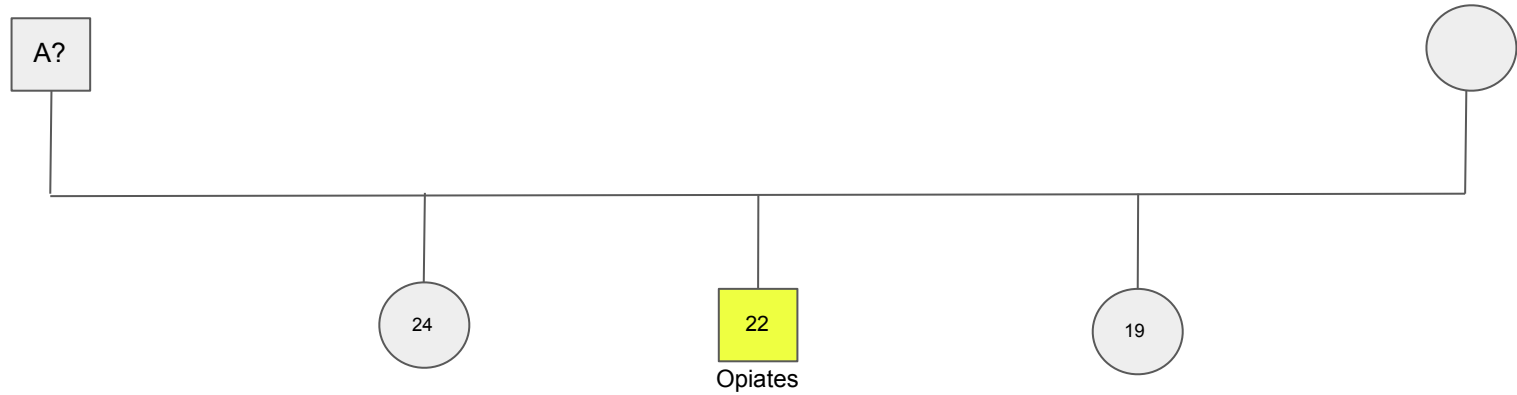
**Questions or
comments so
far?**

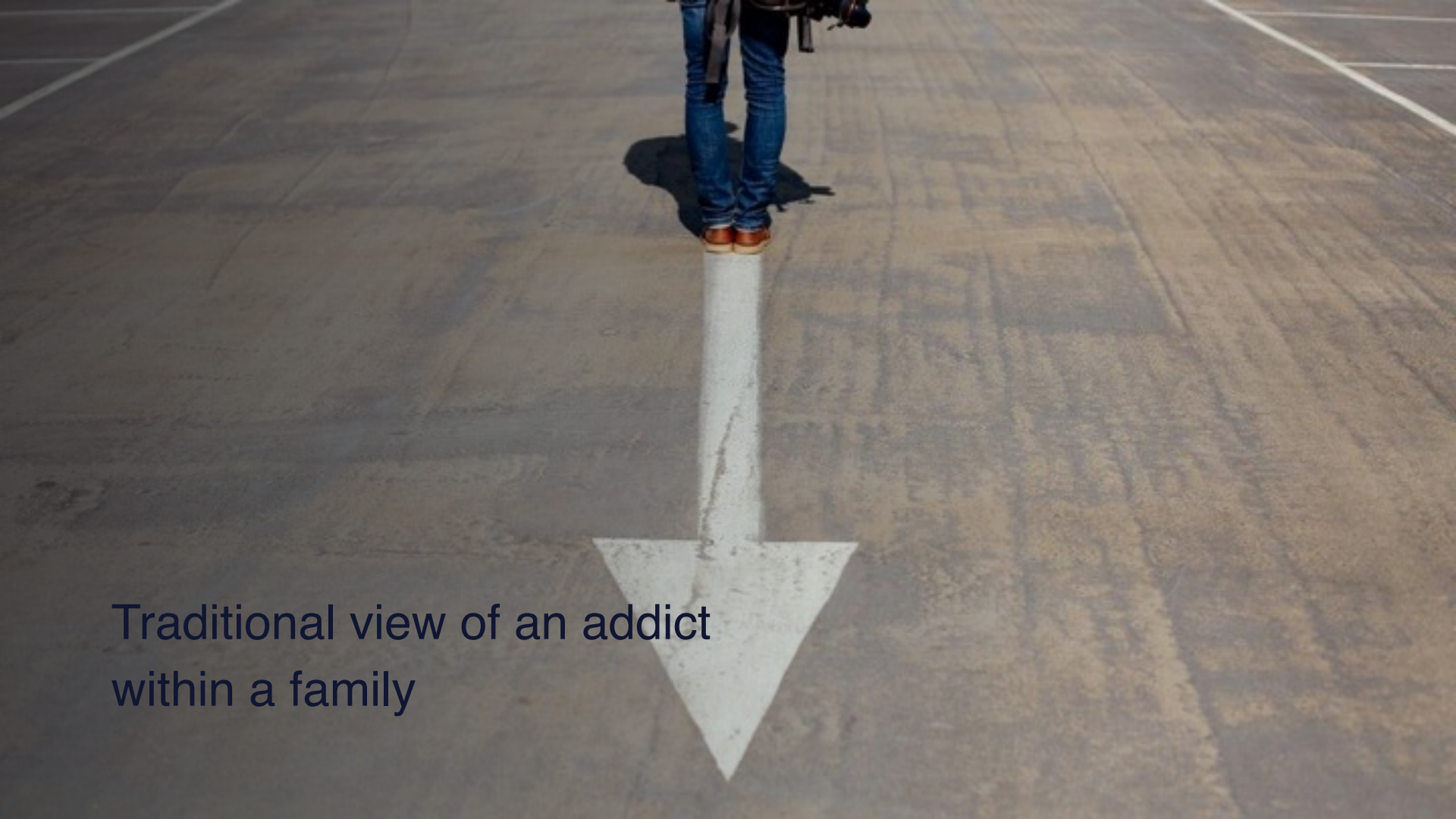


Systemic/Relational Approach

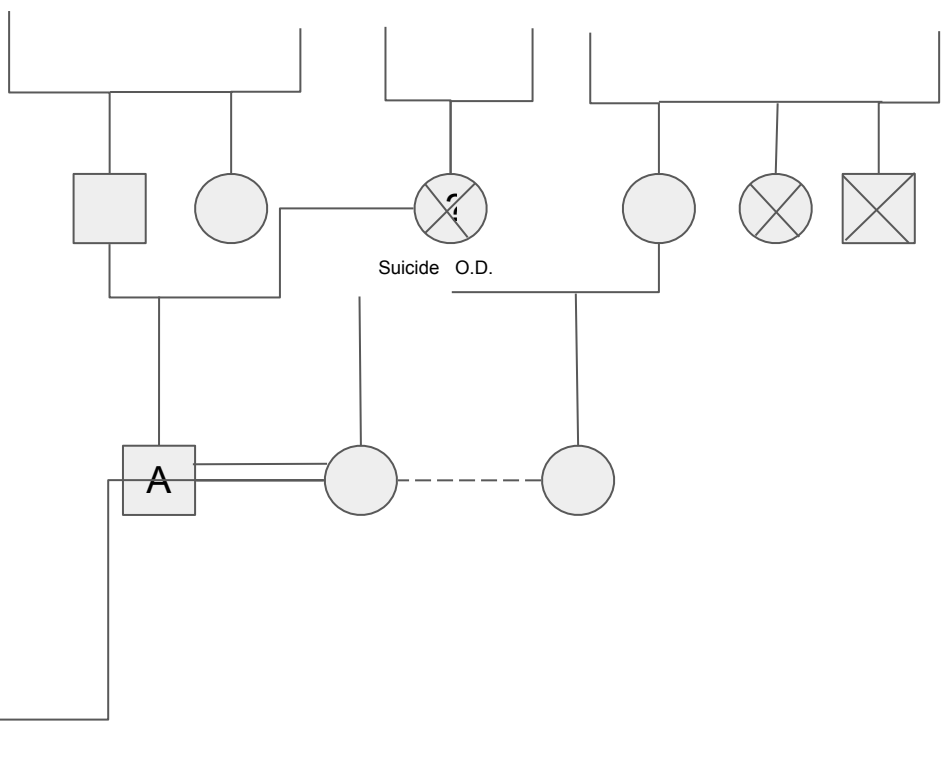
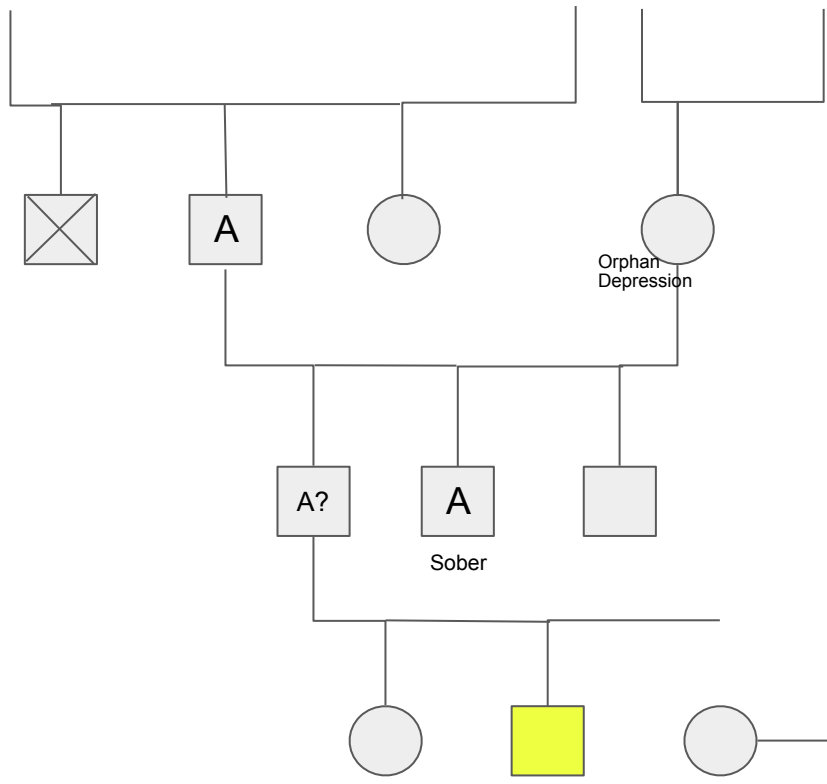
Restore the “We”
Expand Competence

Smith Family





Traditional view of an addict
within a family



Common Scenarios

“Fix my [child]”

“Over-anxious” mother

Distant/”nonchalant” father

Rageful parent

Resentful siblings

“Perfect” siblings

Substance abusing parent

Parent with undiagnosed mental health issues

Adoption

Divorced parents, with animosity



Relational Techniques

- Be transparent
- Collaborate, recognize family expertise
- Go up a generation
- Reframe/track/externalize problem
- Examine beliefs and themes
- Ask circular questions
- Move the locus of the problem
- Track other dynamics besides the presenting problem
- Normalize and depathologize
- Both/And...



Family Work throughout the Treatment Process

Assessment

**Initial Treatment
(first 2-3 mos.)**

**Ongoing
Treatment
(until 1 year)**

Assessment

- Observe family dynamics
- Get multiple perspectives on the presenting issue
- Begin psychoeducation about substance use disorder
- Create space for family members to be open about their concerns
- Get information on family history of addiction, mental health issues, trauma, etc.
- Get information about family strengths and resources

Initial Treatment

- Balance individual treatment and concerns of family with redefining problem more systemically
- Negotiate practical matters, such as how information will be shared (slip/relapse, attendance, pre-lapse behavior, etc.)
- Expand family resources (internal and external)
- Primary client is the family as a whole

Ongoing Treatment

- Identify ways family gets stuck focusing on 'addict'
- Expand the conversation
- Make room for multiple perspectives
- Revisit problem definition so that blame is neither on the addict nor on family members -- move the locus of the problem
- Look at family boundaries
- Help the family find ways to connect even in times of stress
- Identify and help reclaim parts of family relationships that have gone missing because worry (or substance abuse) has gotten in the way

Multi-Family Group

MFG Format



GOALS

- Normalize how substance abuse impacts families
- Highlight importance of connecting as a family
- Begin to make room for multiple perspectives without blame or conflict
- Begin to reclaim parts of family relationships that have gone missing because of worry/ substance abuse

INTROS

- Who is in your family, including anyone not here today
- What drug(s) brought you here
- What is one of your family's strengths?

PSYCH-ED

- Substance abuse hijacks the family
- Investigator/detective, scrutiny
- Blame, history of blame
- Avoidance, fear of triggering
- Mixed messages about connection vs detachment
- Lack of acknowledgment
- Other family problems get ignored
- Family no longer has fun together

GROUP WITHIN A GROUP

What do you feel your family members don't see or understand about you because substance abuse has gotten in the way? This could be related to the substance abuse or just about you as a person.



Multi-Family Group

Group within a Group:

- In what ways do you struggle with wanting or not wanting family support?
- In what ways do you struggle with whether or not to step in?



EVERYTHING IS PERFECT UNTIL IT'S NOT.





