The Family in Early Recovery:

The Pitfalls & The Hazards
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My Story (Abbreviated Version)
A Little Experiential

• Think about your favorite family member
• Now your least favorite
• Ask them to join you for the next ninety minutes
• They’ll sit right there with you
• You’re safe / but it’s them
• Think about why you picked them
• Good or bad, feel their presence in your body; their energy
Case Presentation

• Steve 32 y.o.
• Pro Athlete
• Married (8 years)
• Children (one girl age 6 & one boy age 9)
• His parents despise her
• She despises his parents
• Her parents despise them all, except their perfect daughter
Continued

• His process / Drank in Tx / played role in death of another female pt
• Family was demanding of counselor’s time
• Family members, on all sides, took advantage of Steve being gone
• All about them and their stuff, rarely about healing
• Constant focus on others, the pt, and resentments, couldn’t get the insight
• He left early, ended up at BT, divorce
• Couldn’t stay sober partly because the family is in shambles and they have a vested interest his staying sick so they can care-take and rescue to punish others
• Today
• It wasn’t about his inability to get step one
EPIC WIN
When bullets dodge YOU.
The Family System
When faced with change, the system can only do one of two things...

1) Accommodate for the change
2) Resist the change

If not addressed the preceeduralized behavioral and emotional responses will not extinguish, they will return

What does this mean? The family will go back to the homeostatic state prior to recovery
Change

• AA Saying: “The only thing you have to change in sobriety is everything.”

• How can the recovering person maintain the level of change required if their family system resists the change?

• There is no step for this

• Families need to hear this information

• Clients and patients also need to be aware of the pitfalls and hazards their family can potentially create
The Internal Family System
Experience

• Remember those people you had join you?
• Did you feel their presence in your body?
• That’s a part of your internal family system
• IFS drives internal dialogue about self and others
• It too can either accept or resist change
Worthy of addressing in post-acute phases of substance abuse treatment

- Family sculpting
- Corrective experiences
- Role plays
- Family program
- Family coaching
- Genograms
- Time-Lines
- Couples, family, & child counseling
So when you leave here today

- When you start talking to yourselves, and we all will
- That’s your internal family system
- That’s your family, good, bad, ugly, or indifferent
- Ask yourself
  - “Who is that?”
  - “What’s the message?”
  - “Is it true?”
  - “If not true, can I replace it with my very own thought?”
Thank You

• Questions?
• Feedback?

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