

# FAMILY ROLES IN RECOVERY

Can you relate your own childhood  
experiences?

What about your current family  
situation?

# The Addict

The “world” revolves around this person, as others unconsciously take on the rest of the roles....



## **Family Role 1- The Addict**

**The person with the addiction is the center, and though the key to alcohol and drug addiction recovery**

**- not necessarily the most important in family recovery.**

**The "world" revolves around this person, causing the addict to become the center of attention.**

**- As the roles are defined, the others unconsciously take on the rest of the roles to complete the balance after the problem has been introduced.**

# Chief Enabler/ Caretaker

- ▣ Juggles to make all other roles possible;
- ▣ Keeps the family in balance; void of the issue
- ▣ Makes excuses for all behaviors and actions
- ▣ Underlying feelings are inadequacy, fear, and helplessness

# The HERO

- ▣ Perfectionist; usually firstborn, the “Golden Child”, can do no wrong.
- ▣ Needs to make the family look good at all costs.
- ▣ Underlying feelings are fear, guilt and shame

# Family Role- The Hero

The Hero is the one who needs to make the family, and role players, look good. They ignore the problem and present things in a positive manner as if the roles within the family did not exist. The Hero is the perfectionist. If they overcome this role they can

play an important part in the addiction recovery process.

The underlying feelings are fear, guilt, and shame.

# The LOST CHILD

- ▣ Silent, “invisible” family member
- ▣ Careful not to make problems
- ▣ Gives up self needs and avoids conversations regarding the underlying roles
  
- ▣ Underlying feelings of guilt, neglect, loneliness and anger

# The SCAPEGOAT

- ▣ Acts out in front of others
- ▣ Rebels, diverts attention away from the main character, creates a diversion for the family
- ▣ Underlying feelings of shame, guilt and emptiness



# The MASCOT

- ▣ The “Jester”, often makes inappropriate jokes about all of the others
- ▣ Their role is to bring humor into a dark situation, “lightens up” the family moodiness
- ▣ Underlying feelings of shame, embarrassment, and anger

# Rules in a dependent or addicted family:

- ▣ Dependents use of drug is the most important thing in a family life.
- ▣ Drug use is not the cause of family problems, it is denial which is the root.
- ▣ Blaming others, don't make mention of it, covering up, alibis, loyalty of family enables.
- ▣ Nobody may discuss problem outside the family.
- ▣ Nobody says what they feel or think.

# What does the healthy family look like?

- ▣ Self worth is high.
- ▣ Communication is direct, clear, specific and honest and feelings are expressed.
- ▣ Rules are human, flexible and appropriate to change.
- ▣ It is natural to link and be open to society.
- ▣ Each person has goals and plans to get there, and should be supported by the family.