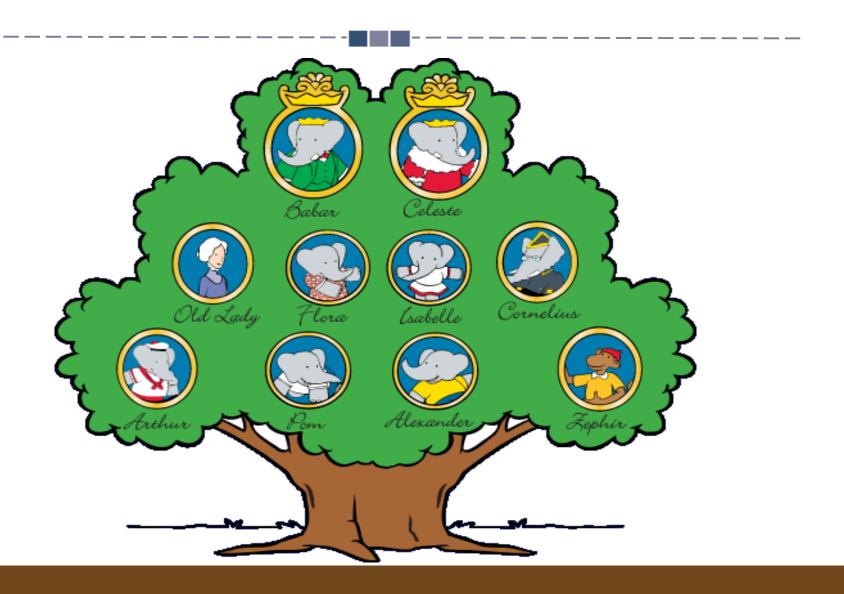
Courtney Elder Law Associates

Dealing with the Dys/func/shun'l and Di-vi-ded Family

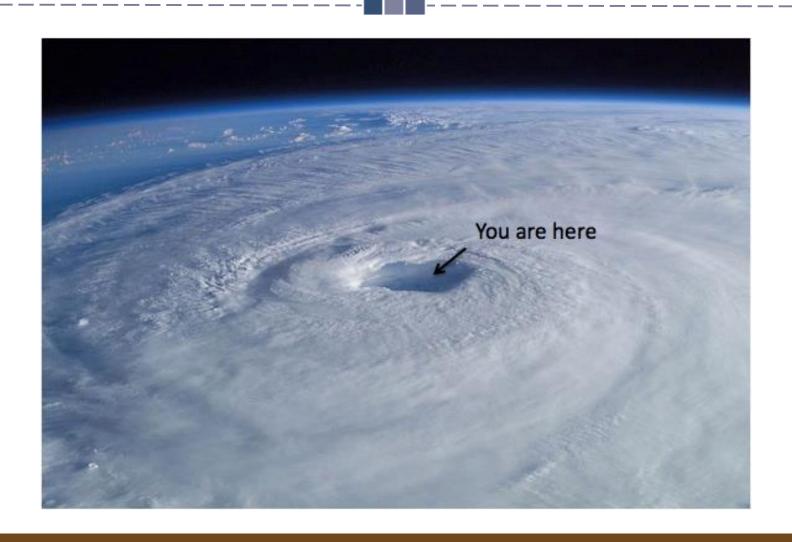
Your Nice, Happy Family



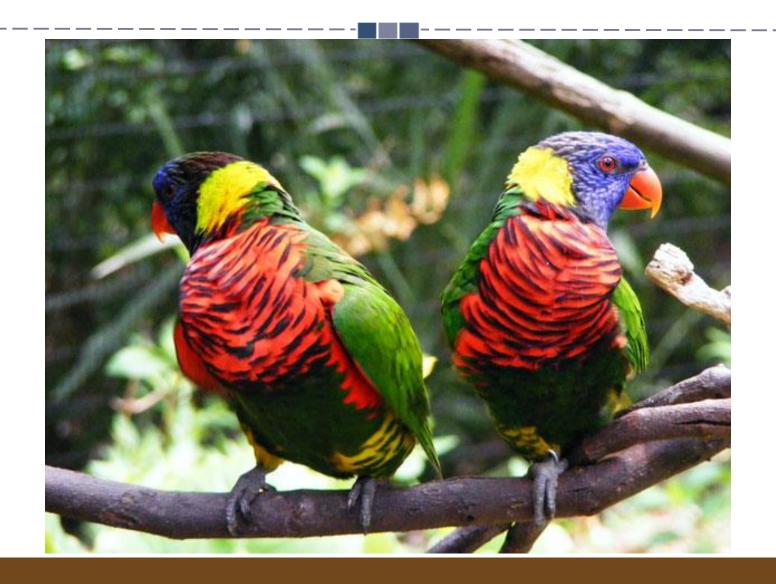
The World As We Know It



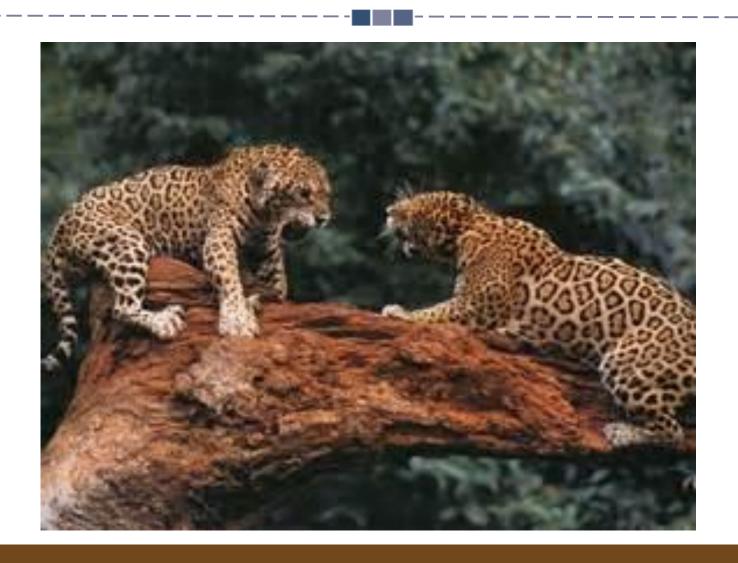
Working With Families In Chaos



Family Communication – Not!



Too Much Communication



Sources of Family Stress

External Events

Financial Stress



Guilt & Regret

Family Dynamics

SOURCES OF STRESS



Accidents and crazy drivers

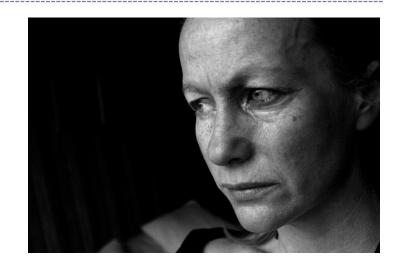
Chronic health problems



CATASTROPHIC EVENT STRESSORS

Grief

- Loss of person
- Loss of relationship
- Loss of our own immortality



Helplessness

- Riots, demonstrations
- Terrorism
- Economy Breakdown
- Governmental Despair



CATASTROPHIC EVENT STRESSORS

Financial

- Loss of income
- Cost of medical care
- Cost of caregiving



- "Bump in the night"
- Uncharted territory





Fear is only temporary. Regret lasts forever!

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Parent-child

- "Powdered butt" syndrome
- "My oldest daughter"

Birth order

• "Little" sister

Intergenerational

- "They just don't understand"
- "They're always moving too [slow / fast]"



FAMILY DYNAMICS

- Second families
 - Dad's "new wife"

- Geographic distance
 - "Sea gull relatives"



- Stages of grief

- · Denial · Anger · Bargaining
- · Depression ·Acceptance

CONFLICT

- Litigious western civilization generally equates conflict with negative connotations.
- Words associated with conflict such as anger, fear, hate, intimidation, and fighting reflect western thought of adversarial confrontation and represent a "zero sum" (win-lose) mindset.

CONFLICT

• Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) approaches, such as mediation or "family meetings", seek "winwin" outcomes, where all parties come to acknowledge their different points of view and are satisfied with the compromise agreement.

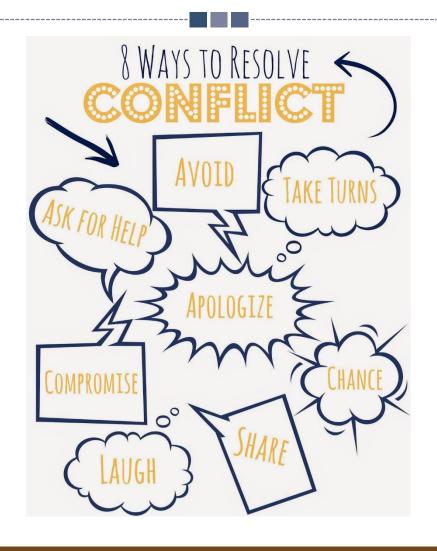
 Try to direct statements and actions toward mutually beneficial <u>outcomes</u> and away from personal <u>position</u> (I, my, mine)

FIVE MECHANISMS TO DEAL WITH CONFLICT

Blends of assertiveness with cooperation:

- **Competition** Might makes right Samson approach
- **Compromise** Split the difference Solomon approach
- **Collaboration** Two heads are better than one four men with paralytic approach
- **Avoidance** Leave well enough alone Jonah approach
- 5. <u>Accommodation</u> Kill your enemies with kindness Joseph approach

EIGHT WAYS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT



IMPROVING CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

- **C** Creative problem-solving
- O Open-minded
- **M** Master emotions
- **M** Mirror what has been said
- U Use "I feel" rather than "you are" language
- Non-inflammatory language
- I Interests rather than position
- **C** Common positives
- A Allow person to vent
- T Tough on problem, not the person
- E Empathetic listening

GETTING OUTSIDE HELP

- Pastor
- Respected Friend
- Family Counselor
- Trained mediator
- Attorney

Shirley J. Semple, PhD., The Gerontologist, Vol. 32, No. 5, pp.648-655 (The Gerontological Society, 1992)

- Two-thirds of dementia patients cared for at home
- Family support is important factor in delayed institutionalization
- Strain between aging parents and child increases child's negative feelings re providing assistance
- Family conflict may be potent stressor behind caregiver depression and anger of family toward patient

Developed "Family Conflict Scales" – conflict around:

- Definitions of illness and care strategies
 - Type or level care needed; judgments re extent of impairment
- Family attitudes & actions toward PWD
 - Appropriateness of others' interactions, time spent with PWD, respect & sensitivity to PWD, "doing their share"
- Family attitudes & actions toward caregiver
 - Attitudes re caregiver's performance; disagreement re not calling/visiting/helping enough; not enough appreciation; unwanted advice

Only 55% of spousal caregivers reported any conflict

Mostly with children

BUT - 82% of adult children reported conflict

Mostly with siblings

CONCLUSIONS:

- Conflict re attitudes & behavior toward Caregiver is most associated with DEPRESSION of caregiver
 - Reflected in negative self-evaluation, feeling of failure
- Conflict re attitudes & behavior toward PWD is most associated with ANGER
 - Other attitudes re proper treatment, etc. are a challenge to my expectations of what is right

[Kramer, Betty J., PhD, MSSW, Kavanaugh, Melinda, MSW, Trentham-Dietz, Amy, MPH, and Yonker, James A., MS, Gastroenterology, 4/28/2010 (© 2010 AGA Institute) (http://222.medscape.com/viewarticle/719126)]

Definition of "Conflict": interpersonal tension or struggle among two or more persons whose opinions, values, needs or expectations are opposing or incompatible

Summary: Significant predictors of family conflict include prior family conflict, race, communications constraints, and family members asserting control

Common factors:

- 70% of persons with lung cancer 65+ years old
- Families play important role in diagnosis and treatment decision-making
- Symptoms of disease difficult to witness
- High comorbidity of chronic aging conditions
- Demands and challenges on family members are many

Three Domains Studied

- Family Context prior relationships
 - National Comorbidity Survey: <u>higher</u> rates of family conflict and violence among younger, less educated, poorer female respondents, <u>lower</u> rates of conflict among non-Hispanic Whites compared to Hispanic and African-American respondents
 - Concluded conflict is higher among younger and African-American respondents (but noted the relatively small number of African-American respondents)

Three Domains Studied (cont'd)

Conditions

- Patient's clinical care needs from declining health, and awareness of approaching death
- Cited finding that doctors often failed to communicate clearly re intent of treatment and prognosis, and that most patients overestimated their probability of a cure

Three Domains Studied (cont'd)

- Contributing Factors "Intended or unintended interactions ... impelled by ... conditions" that contribute to family conflict
 - Death anxiety or emotional difficulty of accepting illness causes insensitive behavior (e.g. insisting on aggressive treatments not favored by others)
 - Asserting control (e.g. Dr. son changed meds w/o knowledge of father's spouse or Dr.)
 - Ineffective communication among family members

THANK YOU

CELA

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