

Healthy Family Characteristics:

(From Karen Duncan's book: *Healing from the Trauma of Childhood Sexual Abuse: The Journey for Women*)

- Define, teach, and respect each other's boundaries.
- Talk and share openly with each other.
- Do not tease and cause intentional pain to other family members.
- Understand that good humor is shared. They are able to laugh at situations and not at each other.
- Express anger and disagreement without losing control or acting in a defensive manner. Respect individual feelings and welcome the sharing of emotions without labeling what someone else is feeling.
- Do not intrude on one another.
- Delight in each other's differences while sharing the common bond of being in a family with a shared history.
- Trust each other. They realize that when trust is broken that amends need to be made for trust to be regained.
- Apologize and take responsibility for their behavior.
- Share in the responsibilities of the family. Each member joins in and shares appropriate household duties.
- Have parents who teach and model what being in a healthy family means.
- Show courtesy to each other.
- Have parents who grow in their own development as adults.
- Recognize what children need in order to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Devote time to play and fun. They recognize that leisure and hobbies are important for individual growth.
- Show flexibility and consistency rather than adhering to arbitrary and authoritarian rules.
- Seek and are open to new information. They are not threatened by change or new ideas.
- Teach morals and values. They do so without judging and condemning each other or other people.
- Share their spirituality and enhance each other's growth as spiritual people who believe in a divine influence in their lives.
- Develop and practice positive and meaningful traditions that are passed onto each generation.
- Respect privacy and model behavior that affirms the right to privacy in the home.
- Help each other in a supportive and caring manner.

- Admit to problems and seek help to solve problems when needed.
- Promote outside friendships.
- Strike a balance between joyful work and relaxing leisure.
- Compliment each other and affirm the uniqueness of each family member.
- Allow natural consequences to occur that teach through life experiences.
- Do not punish in a harsh and destructive manner.
- Seek new opportunities to promote diversity among the family members.



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