

## Family Patterns

Family patterns are routine ways in which we interact with our family. For example, when children were little, they would run and hide when Dad came home. He would walk in the door and yell “Where is everybody?” The kids giggled from their hiding places then ran out to say, “Here I am!” In the SUD family, there are patterned interactions that regularly occur. One client shared “There was this air of foreboding when my dad walked in the door. Would he be angry Daddy or funny Daddy?” This is a common experience for families that experience substance use disorder. Even after the substance use ends, families carry those feelings of expectation and fear into other interactions. To change patterns, we need to recognize and rewire them.

Name three negative patterns of interaction in your family.

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What feelings are created by these interactions? (Ex. Sadness, anger, fear, etc.)

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What would be an ideal outcome? (“We could stop having the same argument.”)

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Negative family interactions create expectations that become routine when reinforced over time. Each time we engage in the same pattern, we create the likelihood we will repeat the pattern. Interrupting the pattern repeatedly creates the circumstances for wiring our responses.

Use your examples from above to create a new response. Think about the potential opportunities to interrupt the pattern.

1. Change the thoughts
2. Change the response
3. Choose a behavior (as a family) to interrupt the pattern
4. Reframe negative thoughts with positive or neutral thoughts
5. Choose a different action

Describe how this might look for you.

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