

Murray Bowen's Family Theory

Family Hero

*Role: To not add any additional stress to the family
To defuse stress by "fixing" what needs to be fixed
To monitor and fulfill the needs of the parents*

*Behaviors: "Parentified" child
Perfectionistic
Controlling and interventional
Hypervigilance*

Lost Child

*Role: To not add any additional stress to the family
To defuse stress by distancing from it
To monitor stress levels and avoid confrontation
To self-soothe*

*Behaviors: Quiet participant
Dominated by other siblings
Finds comfort in books, computers, outside friends, etc*

Scapegoat

*Role: To take the blame for the family's stress
To defuse stress by redirecting it to him/herself and absorbing the stress
To monitor stress levels*

*Behaviors: "not good enough"; "it's always my fault"
Instigator
At times, assumes the role*

Family Mascot

*Role: To not add any additional stress to family
To defuse stress by using humor or assuming the role of the "cute" one
Needs to be taken care of*

*Behaviors: helplessness
Class clown/comedian
Often has name to match*

Family characteristics:

--Rigid roles

--Triangles

--Alliances

--Black and white thinking

--Progressive anger with lack of resolution and episodic crises

--Frequent cut-offs and enmeshment

--Lack of Boundaries

--Fear of abandonment

--Frequent occurrences of addiction