

## Family Therapy: You are worth it!

Living with a family member that is struggling—whether from trauma, depression, anxiety, cognitive delays, or anything else—takes a toll. It can feel like a hopeless situation. This is where family therapy comes in.

Family therapy isn't about getting blamed or identifying the problem person. It's not about finding a scapegoat or finding an ally to prove a point. It is about learning how to communicate with each other, accept each other's feelings and experience, and developing the skills to support each other. It is about learning that, contrary to the cliché, we do often live on islands but strive to keep them close together and need to work to keep those connections.



When the islands separate, the counselor's job is to help you connect and bring those islands together or at least build bridges and ferries back and forth. And like so many other things, our children need us to lead the way because they don't know how. They don't know how to be vulnerable until they see us do it. They don't know how to manage their anger in a healthy way until they see us do it. And if we aren't sure how to do it, then we need to experience it too and let the therapy relationship teach us. Family therapy is the safe place to do it. It will be hard, there will be tears, there may be anger and yelling, and hurt and sadness will almost certainly come out. But in the midst of that hard work, there will be laughter, joy, and a closeness your family longs for.

If there is something I can guarantee, *it will be worth it*. It will bring you closer together, even though you may want to push away at times. When all is said and done the islands will be connected by bridges, boats, planes, and smoke signals and the family will enjoy these connections. There will still be arguments and frustrations and hurt, but there will also be the skills and willingness to heal, to open up, and repair.

If your family is struggling, or even certain relationships within the family, it is time to consider family therapy. It is time to bring the islands back together, to find your path to your family's happiness. Family therapy will undoubtedly be hard and uncomfortable at times, but... *You are worth it*.

- Phillip Quinn, M.Ed., LCPC  
Intermountain's Family-based services

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