

In the Name of Family – The Impact of Family on Mental Health

Workshop with Caroline Raphael (Registered Psychologist, BPsych, MAPS, FDRP)

Family can be one of our greatest supports and it can also be one of our greatest harms.

As a psychologist, I see almost daily the negative impact family can have on a person's sense of self and on their physical and emotional well-being. Studies have shown that poor quality- and non-supportive familial interactions cause both physical and mental harm. (1) An Australian study found that family violence is the leading contributor to preventable death, disability, and illness among Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years. (2) This statistic would be similar across Australia and globally. And in certain parts of the world, it is considered acceptable to kill in the name of family.

We live in a world that says:

Family comes first
Blood is thicker than water
I would die for my family
I would kill for my family ...

Have these sayings become so embedded in our cultures that we do not stop to consider what they really mean and what impact they have on us and on our societies?

According to dictionary definitions of family, family means a group of people related by blood or ancestry. This definition is simple enough in its explanation, however when family is associated with a group of people it comes with a list of rules and conditions that is distinct. Each family has its own unique set of rules and conditions, made up of any number of inherited morals, including religion, culture, race, hierarchical structure and rules.

The one subscribed to condition that remains the same all over the world is that you can leave a group, but you cannot leave family.

In some circles, many people believe family has nothing to do with genes and ancestry, and everything to do with shared values and standards. So, what happens when not everyone subscribes to the same beliefs, values or standards of the family group they were born into?

Growing up in a family where you feel at odds or different to the family standards, values and beliefs can be confusing and demoralising.

Feeling at odds with your family can have very serious and long-term consequences on your psychological and emotional wellbeing, impacting on our self-esteem and self-worth, on your confidence with self and others, the ability to express and communicate, resulting in increased anxiety and self-doubt, feelings of worthlessness and depression, to name just a few.

“Like clothing, when it comes to our values and standards, there is no ‘one size fits all’. Each of us is unique and special and we should not be defined by the family we have been born into. Families are at their best when they provide love and space for each person to be honoured for their own uniqueness and from this, allowing each person to bring their personal and unique strengths and weaknesses that all can learn and grow from.” Caroline Raphael

This workshop will support you to understand:

- how families can positively or negatively impact on your physical and mental health
- how family beliefs and ideals influence how we act and feel
- the impact of family beliefs, standards and values on you, your relationships and your overall sense of well-being
- and explore why we are more likely to accept abuse from family and not others
- how to maintain your standards in your family and remain true to who you are.

Details: Bundoora, Melbourne; 10 to 12pm Sunday 15th May 2021 – with a one hour follow up Zoom meeting, at a date to be decided

Investment: \$90.00 including GST

Bookings: caroline@unifiedpsychology.com

