

# workshop

repairing damaged parent-child relationships



## Family Ties

Other things may change us,  
but we start and end with the family.

Anthony Brandt

### goals

- Facilitate, repair and strengthen the child's ability to maintain healthy and balanced relationships with both parents
- Strengthen children's critical thinking skills. Preventing children from unreasonably rejecting parent in the future
- Help children to avoid being caught in the middle of their parents' conflicts
- Help the family members to develop compassionate views of each other's actions instead of critical or harsh views
- Enhance communication and conflict resolution skills so that conflict can be managed in a more productive manner
- Enhance parents' skills in nurturing their children by limit setting and by avoiding psychologically intrusive parenting.

### contact

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**Family Ties Workshop** is a ground breaking educational and experiential program that helps to repair seriously damaged parent-child relationships post-divorce.

Children's rejection of a parent or refusal or resistance to contact with that parent post divorce, is a worrisome and challenging problem for divorced parents, mental health practitioners, legal representatives as well as the courts.

Research and clinical experience has shown that success with traditional therapeutic intervention with such children is very poor. The **Family Ties Workshop** has been designed to help families where post divorce contact resistance and refusal is problematic and especially designed for families whom therapists and courts have considered to be beyond help.

**Family Ties Workshop** is also appropriate for families in which a child's view of a parent and other relatives is unrealistic, the child refuses contact with that parent or shows great reluctance to spend time with that parent.

**Family Ties Workshop** is appropriate for families where a child's relationship with a parent is damaged to a less severe degree, but the child's negative attitudes and behaviour towards that parent is unreasonable and is a disproportionate to that parent's behaviour toward the child.

Led by a team of two highly skilled professionals, **The Family Ties Workshop** provides a psychologically safe environment for the family to engage in with one another. Participants work for three consecutive days on various skills they need to repair the damaged parent-child relationship. More than reconnecting children with their parents, children are taught how to think critically and how to maintain balanced, realistic and empathic views of both parents. They are also helped to develop skills to help them resist outside pressures which could lead them to act against their better judgement-a valuable tool for all teenagers.

## Who Should Attend?

This workshop is designed for families where contact between a parent and child has been severed or compromised. The family must participate in a screening to establish eligibility for the workshop.

Indicators of suitability should include the following:

- A prior established relatively healthy relationship between the non-preferred parent and child
- A distinct irrationality regarding the reasons given by the child for the resistance
- Overt actions on the part of the favoured parent to limit or interfere with contact.

## Location, Dates, Time and Cost

Out of office location is determined in consultation with parents. Usually a location is chosen that allows the family plenty of opportunities for fun and recreational interactions.

Dates and times are determined in consultation with the participants, possibly court ordered.

**Families Ties Workshop** is run with one family at a time. This allows us to tailor the program to each family's unique needs and circumstances. Cost is therefore determined on a case-by-case basis, as the program differs for each family.

Parents are taught how to sensitively manage their children's behaviour, and how to effectively communicate and manage conflicts between one another.



## Follow-Up

Facilitators will meet with the family over a three-month period after the programme has been completed and thereafter at the facilitator's discretion. Facilitators will also be available for telephonic discussion.

## What Participants said

“An excellent review of the alienation process and attempts to break it down. Everyone gave 110%. Great compassion.”

“My major aims for doing this workshop were to figure out the problems with my dad. We came to a compromise on times of seeing each other.”

Family Ties