

VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT  
SYSTEM AS APPLIED TO FAMILY ASSESSMENT

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Family interactions are looked at from a PAS perspective. It is felt that communication patterns within the family are influenced by the PAS orientation of its members, and that from these patterns, behaviors which lead to a malfunctioning of the family can be predicted. --RG

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The areas which I will address in this article concern whether or not we can predict from PAS types which are known, what type of communication will occur in a family, and whether communication malfunction and a subsequent breakdown of the family unit will occur.

In Family Systems Theory, the symptomatic family member is strongly dictated by his position within the family. If the emotional functioning of the system is placed on one family member, he will become vulnerable to becoming dysfunctional. From what we know about the Personality Assessment System, it should be possible to make some sound predictions about which family member is likely to be stressed within the orientation of that particular unit. For example, in a family consisting of members who have both a basic and surface E orientation, a family member with a basic I and surface E, is going to react differently from the others when stressed. To go one step further, if this family also has difficulties in communicating with each other and handling family stress, this may indeed reflect itself in our basic I.

According to Family Systems Theory, a symptom that develops in a family is frequently a complication or exaggeration of the mechanism that has been used to preserve the system balance in the first place. (Kerr, Michael 1981). I believe that it is PAS types of behaviors which we will see exaggerated.

The power structure of a family is seen as being crucial to the healthy functioning of a family. This structure may be defined in three ways, (Skynner, Robin 1981): chaotic, which leads to severe dysfunction; structured/rigid, leading to neurotic functioning; and structured/flexible, leading to healthy functioning. In chaotic functioning, a parent - child coalition is

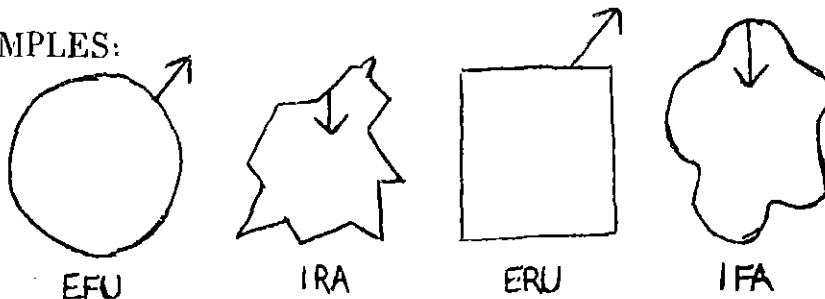
formed, leaving other family members helpless and ineffective. In structured/rigid the parents compete for dominance leaving little room for growth amongst the children. In structured/flexible, all family members are involved in the decision making process via negotiation. There is a well defined family hierarchy which incorporates mutual respect. If these areas do indeed correspond with the R-F dimension, a system for determining family structure and for predicting behaviors could be developed based on the PAS types of the family members.

The Visual Representation System for the Personality Assessment System, developed by Martin Kapp, has the advantage of being able to depict a family system as they are actually functioning in relation to each other.

The Visual Representation system developed by Martin Kapp provides a concrete and comprehensive means for viewing individual differences in interactional patterns among several personalities. This visual translation of the PAS lends itself well to the study of familial interaction. It may be described as follows:

- Role Uniform (U) qualities are represented via a stereotyped figure such as a circle or square
- Role Adaptive (A) qualities are portrayed by the use of an unstructured, amorphous form
- Flexible (F) qualities are visually described via "roundness" of the overall form
- Regulated (R) qualities are shown in sharp corners in the overall form
- Externalizing (E) qualities are depicted by use of an arrow pointing outward
- Internalizing (I) qualities are portrayed through an arrow directed inward
- Activity Level may be expressed via utilization of the E-I arrows, by variation of their length, a high, low or in-between activity level may be visually represented

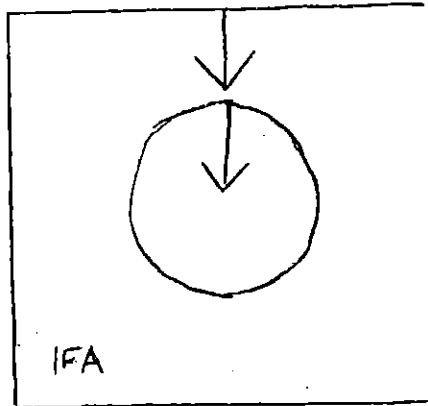
EXAMPLES:



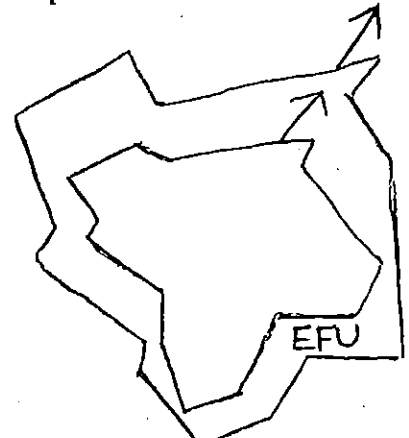
In order to express the various developmental levels, Kapp suggests that

the visual representation of the basic level be drawn inside the larger form, which represents the surface, or contact level. If the addition of the primitive level is desired, he suggests that the traditional capital letters be utilized.

EXAMPLES:

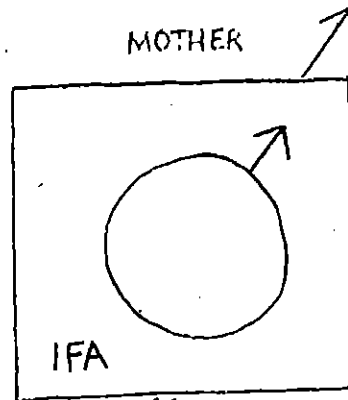


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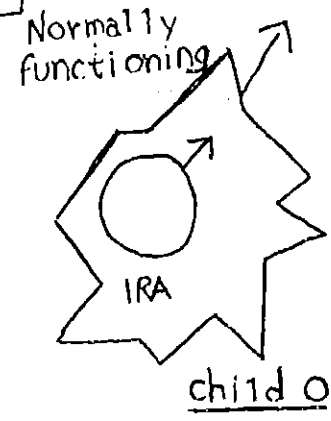
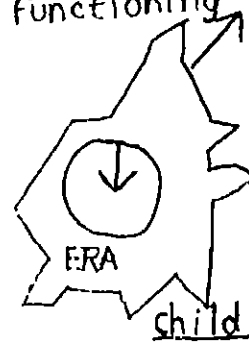
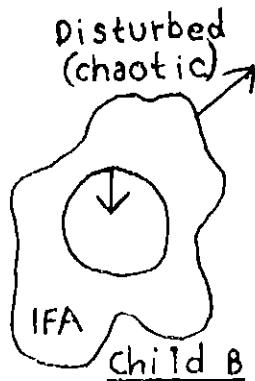


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CASE:



Normally functioning



The system held here is structured/rigid. The mother, who is divorced, makes all the decisions concerning the children. Any input which is attempted on their parts is usually disregarded. The father, although absent, is also authoritarian. Strong acting out and deep confusion is expressed by the disturbed child. I am also calling him the chaotic child because of the symbiotic bond which he maintains with his mother, who also shares his primitive orientation. Disturbed child B is protected by normal child T. They share the

same Basic orientation. Guidance through the external world is provided to B by T. Their relationship is highly encouraged by the mother as it fosters dependence in B. Child O is on the periphery of this family but does maintain a normal adjustment pattern. The ability of children T and O to insulate themselves from the aggressive dominance of their mother seems to have contributed to their normal development. Within the family system, little sympathy is given to the confusional states of child B.

Kapp, Martin; A Visual Representation of the Personality Assessment System; P.A.S.F.; Hyannis, Ma.; Fall, 1981; presentation.