

THE CHILD AS THE FAMILY GUIDE: THE BOTTOM-UP APPROACH IN MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILY THERAPY

Maurizio Andolfi, MD



Date: August 26, 2024 (Monday)

Time*: 6pm – 7pm (AWST/ HKT) / 7pm – 8pm (JST/ KST)

* Post-lecture discussion will be held from 7pm to 8pm (AWST/ HKT)/ 8pm – 9pm (JST/ KST)

The idea of the child as a therapeutic resource has been absent from the main theoretical models and in family therapy, the child has been seen mainly as a problem to be labeled or as a victim of different forms of abuse. In this presentation, the main factors that led to the “betrayal of the child” will be explained and a pathway to move from child protection to child respect will be outlined. Seeing the problem-child as a main resource in family therapy has been an idea that Maurizio Andolfi and his school developed from the 90’s and his role as a consultant was well described in the book “Please Help me With This Family” (1994). To establish a special alliance with the child, it is necessary to reframe his symptoms instead of labeling them and to find a relational meaning for his problems as soon as possible. Once his voice is heard and his relational competence appreciated, the child can become a special guide to enter the emotional world of his family. With his genuine help, it is possible to explore relevant family events such as losses, hostile divorces, betrayals, secrets, abuses, cut-offs, forced migrations, chronic diseases, gambling, additions, and more. The genogram is the map of the family world and provides a wonderful platform to start this therapeutic journey.

In this online zoom lecture, Andolfi will use a multigenerational lens to describe how the therapist can explore family development with a “bottom-up approach”, asking the child “intergenerational questions” which refer to adversities experienced by parents or grandparents in their history. The results of this intimate journey with the family are evaluated according to two principles: the resolution of children’s symptoms/disorders and a deep transformation of family emotional bonds. Both principles need to be satisfied at the end of treatment and checked in follows-up sessions.

Maurizio Andolfi

Maurizio Andolfi, MD, is a highly regarded Master Family Therapist and Child Psychiatrist who completed his fellowship in Social and Community Psychiatry at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. He has studied with esteemed therapists such as Salvador Minuchin, Jay Haley, and Carl Whitaker. Andolfi is the director of the Accademia di Psicoterapia della Famiglia, the President of the Silvano Andolfi Foundation and a founding member of the European Family Therapy Association. He has received several awards for his outstanding contributions to family therapy, including the AAMFT award in 1999 and a Lifetime Achievement Award from AFTA in 2016. He has been recognized by the Australian Government and the Australian Association of Family Therapy for his work and was awarded the title of Distinguished Talent in 2012. Andolfi is an Honorary Member of the Asian Academy of Family Therapy and has published numerous books in various languages, including “Teen Voices: Tales of Family Therapy” (2013), “Multigenerational Family Therapy” (2017), “Intergenerational Couple Therapy” (2021), and “The Gift of Truth” (2022). His work has significantly impacted the field of family therapy and continues to shape how therapists approach treating families.

