

A difference that makes a difference

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LANGUAGE: English

Background: For three years now our team has developed a structured evaluation and research method built on Tom Andersen´s reflective team. We invite families who have been in therapy to be our consultants; to evaluate the treatment and the relationship between the therapists and the family. The purpose is to develop our work as family therapists within a Social Services context.

Results: We will present the results of 30 interviews with families including parents, relatives and children. There were several themes that came up consistently during the interviews. One such theme we will discuss is *alliance building* in terms of the power relationship between family/therapist and the importance of what we call *“the small gestures-importance”*. The families describe the process of how alliances and confidence is built with the therapist; for example how they read the facial expressions of the therapist. Another theme is the often broken dialogue between the families and the schools of their children. A lot of the parents felt accused by the schools as bad parents. We will discuss the feedback families have given us in trying to *open the dialog between families and schools*. A third theme is about *the voices of the children*. It was important for the children to feel that the therapist listened to them. The children also appreciated the feeling that their parents were getting help and that they saw the therapist treated their parents with respect.

We will be using several short films to illustrate the results. A conclusion of our presentation will be the importance of the systemic view within mental health and social services. Society today has more focus on the individuals and their diagnosis and do not always invite families and the extended network around the families and see them as resources.