

MEET THE SPEAKER



WHO: Andrew Roffman, LCSW

WHEN: PA meeting on Thursday December 15th, 2016, 7:00pm

WHAT: Turning Conflict into Closeness

Andrew Roffman, LCSW, director of the Child Study Center's Family Studies Program Conflict at NYU believes that conflict in relationships is inevitable, but contrary to conventional wisdom, it is also a necessary pathway to greater emotional connection. This workshop will provide methods for transforming destructive arguments into constructive dialogue. The skills and concepts discussed will apply not only to parent-child relationships, but to couples and any other meaningful relationships.

We asked him five questions that will help you get to know him:

1. Please tell us who you are and let us know a little about your qualifications and experience.

I am the director of the Family Studies Program at NYU Child Studies Center. I am a licensed clinical social worker in practice for 28 years. I have advanced training in family and couples therapy as well as other modalities of individual therapy. Over the course of my professional career I've worked with a variety of people from many different cultures in community mental health, hospital, and private practice settings. I have trained and supervised other mental health professionals for much of my career, and in the past 5 years have been teaching an undergraduate class at NYU in family systems theory

2. What do you do? Why?

My current job is a mix of clinical, administrative and teaching. As a clinician I see individuals, couples and families as part of the faculty group practice at the NYU Child Study Center. I also run the Family Studies Program, a training program for psychiatry residents/fellows and psychology interns in family and couples therapy. I teach and supervise in family/couples therapy at both NYU and Bellevue, and teach at an undergraduate level.

3. Most people have a negative association with the concept of conflict, yet the title of your presentation - Turning Conflict into Closeness - suggests that conflict can be positive. Please explain a little and tell us what got you interested in the subject.

Working with couples and families over the years has made it crystal clear that conflict is a normal, unavoidable part of relationships and that it represents an essential pathway to growth, connection, and emotional intimacy.

4. From what we're told, conflict between teens and parents is an important part of the process of separating and becoming an adult. Do you have any particular advice for parents of teenagers?

Family therapists don't use the word 'separation' as we don't believe anyone really gets to separate from their families. Instead, we use the term 'differentiation' as that indicates that the process of growth and emotional maturation involves learning how to be oneself and stay emotionally connected at the same time. This is a big part of adolescence - and not just for teens but for parents as well. Advice? Yes - a lot has to do with reducing reactivity. Hopefully I'll impart some useful ideas about this at the talk.

5. What do you hope parents will take away from your presentation at BxSci?

First, that having conflict isn't a problem - what can become problematic is how conflict is approached and managed. I advocate a shift from 'argument' as a mode of relating to 'dialogue'. I hope parents will come away with a clear understanding of the difference both conceptually and pragmatically, and learn some tools for shifting out of stuck arguments into more constructive dialogues, both with their kids and with each other.