

Identified Patient



The concept of the **Identified Patient** (IP) describes an individual (usually a child or symptom-bearing, acting-out adult) in a dysfunctional family in whom the family's symptom has emerged or is most obvious.

The Identified Patient:

1. Gets scapegoated and blamed for a family's problems
2. Has emotional problems that are not a psychological or emotional illness, but a normal response to the stress of dealing with an unhealthy family in denial
3. Blows the whistle on a dysfunctional family's problems by drawing attention to the fact that all is not right.

When the dynamic of the IP is present the person identified as “the patient” is not necessarily the one who is sick, but rather, manifests symptoms. The same dynamic occurs in organizational relationship systems when a group or committee or individual becomes the focus of the organization.

The focus of conflict is often a role — it can be filled by anyone.