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Signs of Family Tension After a Traumatic Event

1. Children display tension related symptoms:
 - Nail biting
 - Bed wetting (beyond age 6)
 - Stuttering
 - Frequent school problems
 - Tantrums
2. Parents and children argue often with no resolution.
3. Parents and children "never" argue/fight.
4. The family cannot discuss certain topics:
 - Sex
 - Violence
 - Religion
 - Feelings
 - Politics
5. Conflict and disagreement produce long silences; topics are buried.
6. The family seems threatened by what outsiders think.
7. There is an unspoken rule that anger is not allowed. Family members suffer from backaches, migraine headaches, ulcers, etc.
8. Family members don't seem to listen to what is said during disagreements.
9. Disagreements become battles over "who is right."
10. Decisions seem never to be made by any *one* person.
11. Disagreements/resentments cause ongoing alienation, e.g. disappearance, silent treatment, etc.
12. Conversations stray off the subject never allowing resolution.
13. The household is rarely quiet; seems chaotic.

14. Individual family members have minimal interaction.
15. The family must always function as group with little tolerance for independent activity.
16. Children are seldom included in decision-making.
17. Spouses are having affairs with others, with work, or with a hobby.
18. Spouses have un-satisfying sex relationships.
19. Extreme tension prevails at meals and at bedtime.
20. Affection and physical contact are seldom, if ever communicated.
21. Family members often have unexplainable illnesses, e.g. headaches, stomach aches, etc.

(Adapted from "Life After Stress" by Martin Shaffer)