SUSIE SARKOZY

A PLAIN-LANGUAGE INTRODUCTION

Understanding FRC

Forced Relational Conditioning (FRC) examines how belonging in coercive families becomes tied to an assigned role. Expectations shape what a person feels able to perceive, express and choose. The framework follows how these adaptations organize family life and how the family responds when someone moves beyond their role.

01 Scripting

A person learns the expectations that preserve closeness and begins anticipating others' reactions. Family life may appear calm while belonging depends on continued role performance.

02 Enforcement

Movement beyond an assigned role draws coercive consequences intended to restore it. The focus shifts to what the pressure accomplishes and whose authority it preserves.

03 Catastrophic Script Collapse

Repeated enforcement fails to restore the governing order. Attempts to preserve that order may become acutely dangerous, bringing safety concerns to the foreground.

The tiers describe how the family responds to movement beyond an assigned role. Individual safety concerns deserve attention at every tier, alongside established safety and clinical procedures.

THE SOURCE PAPER

Sarkozy, S. (2026). Forced relational conditioning: A three-tier framework. Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology. Accepted for publication.

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susiesarkozy.com/forced-relational-conditioning/

susie@susiesarkozy.com

An original educational summary by Susie Sarkozy, independent of APA. FRC is a provisional theoretical framework requiring empirical investigation.

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FOUR STRUCTURAL POSITIONS

Roles within the family

The positions describe different functions within the family and the adaptations formed around them. They help explain how family members become connected to the governing order and to one another.

The Systems Architect

Establishes the governing order and holds the authority around which family relationships become organized. Other family members learn which roles and choices that order will accept.

The Formless Center

Sustains family functioning around the governing order. This position may accommodate the Systems Architect while also exercising coercive authority over other family members.

The Tethered Child

Secures a more dependable place through usefulness, responsiveness and meeting a caregiver’s needs. Belonging becomes tied to continuing to fulfill that function.

The Banished Child

Encounters shifting acceptance and rejection and may become the person blamed for conflict within the wider family. Their place in the family can remain uncertain.

These are relational positions, with varied developmental pathways and possible adult outcomes. Positions can change. People of any sex or gender may occupy the adult positions.