



FTA Newsletter



A new documentary exploring the past and present of family therapy while opening pathways toward its future

by **Lorena Cavalieri**, *Clinical Psychologist, Family Therapist, and Director of the Silvano Andolfi Foundation*



It is with great pride that I like to announce the release of *Andolfi, the Globetrotter of Family Therapy*, a documentary directed by Dutch filmmaker Philip Besamusca. The project was born from the desire to portray, through a contemporary and international lens, the vitality and relevance of family therapy in today's world.

An international group of family therapists from different countries — Lorena Cavalieri, Antonello D'Elia, Vincenzo Di Nicola, Francesca Ferraguzzi, Evelyne Fournier-Meissirel, Mary Hotvedt, Mustafa Qossoqsi, and Cor Vreugdenhil — joined Maurizio Andolfi in reflecting on ideas, clinical experiences, and personal journeys to create content addressed not only to mental health professionals, but also to a wider audience. The

group worked on the documentary for over a year through online meetings, interviews, and ongoing dialogue, culminating in a three-day gathering in Italy during the summer of 2025.

The original aim of the documentary was to offer an updated vision of family therapy while remaining deeply connected to its history, cultural roots, and the revolutionary movement that shaped its beginnings. Even today, many within the mental health field still view family therapy primarily as a phenomenon of the 1970s — an approach born in the United States that gradually faded over time. The reality is quite different.

Family therapy remains alive, dynamic, creative, and profoundly necessary. In many parts of the world, it continues to represent one of the most innovative and humane clinical models, capable of understanding suffering not simply as an individual problem, but as something that emerges within relationships, family histories, and social contexts.

This documentary was created precisely to make this reality more visible. Through images, testimonies, international encounters, and clinical clips, the film portrays a therapeutic approach that continues to evolve without losing its deepest identity: placing human relationships at the center.



The documentary also represents an important milestone in a journey that began many years ago through the vision of Maurizio Andolfi and developed through the work of the Family Therapy Academy, its collaborators, and an international network of professionals committed to reflecting on the meaning and future of family therapy. One particularly significant moment in this journey was the 2023 Assisi Conference, *Family Therapy: The Road that Connects Individual and Social Resources*, which brought together more than one thousand psychotherapists from over fifty countries worldwide. The conference celebrated the vitality of family therapy, its impact across cultures, and its capacity to generate both human and social values. Out of that experience emerged the *Assisi Manifesto*, a document reaffirming the therapeutic value of families, and community as essential places of care, growth, and transformation.

One of the central ideas emerging from the documentary is that every family has resources, competencies, and healing potential often invisible when suffering is viewed exclusively through individual diagnostic categories. Family therapy does not focus solely on symptoms; it looks at the person within their relational system, emotional bonds, intergenerational legacies, and that can themselves become places of healing.

At the same time, the documentary highlights another essential dimension: family therapy is not only a clinical model. It is also a social and cultural vision of the human being.

From its very origins, this approach has carried a deeply political dimension, the belief that no individual can be understood outside their life context; that psychological suffering cannot be separated from social, cultural, and economic conditions; and that therapeutic work must always engage with the exclusion, isolation, and fragmentation shaping contemporary society.

At a historical moment in which many people experience loneliness, disconnection, and a loss of belonging, family therapy continues to remind us of something essential: healing does not arise solely from the narrow technical interventions, but also creating authentic connections, dialogue, listening, and participation.

This is where one of the most revolutionary intuitions of family therapy resides.



In family therapy, the clinician is not the “expert” who interprets the family from a position of power. Rather, the therapist recognizes the family itself as the greatest expert on its own history, wounds, and possibilities for change.

Therapeutic work therefore becomes a collaborative process, built together, where professional knowledge meets the experiential wisdom of the people in the session. No one is excluded from this process. In particular, the documentary gives significant space to children through excerpts of therapy sessions in which they become active

protagonists in the therapeutic process. From a bottom-up perspective — starting with the child to explore family relationships — children are not passive presences in the therapy room, but rather expert guides to their own family systems.

This shift in perspective profoundly transforms the therapeutic relationship: it is no longer about someone “treating” people in a hierarchical way, but about working together to understand, create meaning, and open new developmental possibilities.

Another important theme highlighted throughout the documentary is the therapist’s own personal work — the work on the self of the therapist — which is essential in order to truly meet families without becoming entangled in relational dynamics that mirror those potentially blocking the family’s own developmental process.

The documentary also portrays the social commitment that continues to characterize the work of many family therapists around the world today. This commitment is visible in working with migrant families, marginalized communities, and situations shaped by cultural and social conflicts. Family therapy continues to move within the spaces of human complexity, seeking to build bridges across generations, cultures, and life stories.



The title *Globetrotter of Family Therapy* reflects precisely this international and intercultural dimension of Maurizio Andolfi’s journey: a human and professional voyage across countries, languages, and diverse contexts, always grounded in the belief that family relationships represent a universal resource and a powerful force for transformation. In many ways, Andolfi has become the thread connecting professionals from different countries around the world — people who, through him, have had the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, and create networks. Yet at the center always remains family therapy itself.

This documentary aims not only to be as a historical testimony, but also as an invitation to new generations of therapists, social workers, and mental health professionals: to continue believing in the idea that values human dignity, the strength of relationships, and the shared construction of care.

In an increasingly individualistic world, family therapy continues to reflect on a simple yet fundamental question: what happens when people no longer feel alone in their suffering?

Perhaps it is precisely this question that makes Family Therapy so remarkably relevant today.

The group of professionals involved in the project that led to the making of the documentary:

Maurizio Andolfi, Neuropsychiatrist, Director of the Family Therapy Academy and of the Journal "Terapia Familiare", Australia, Italy.

Lorena Cavalieri, Clinical Psychologist and Family Therapist, Director of the Silvano Andolfi Foundation for studies on migration and refugees, Australia, Italy.

Antonello D'Elia, Psychiatrist, Family Therapist, Professor at the Family Therapy Academy. Deputy Director of the Journal "Terapia Familiare", Italy

Vincenzo Di Nicola, President, World Association of Social Psychiatry (WASP). Works at the intersection of children, families and culture. Focused on trauma-informed care for immigrants and refugees, Canada

Francesca Ferraguzzi, Psychologist, Family Therapist, Deputy Director of the Family Therapy Academy, Italy.

Evelyne Fournier-Meissirel, Family Therapist, Founder O.M.A. International Mediation Center, Specialist in the field of group conflict resolution and prevention, Belgium.

Mary Hotvedt, Ph.D., Anthropologist, Marriage & Family Therapist supervisor. Former President of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, USA.

Mustafa Qossoqsi, Senior clinical psychologist, psychotherapist, poet. Former chief psychologist of the psychiatric department at EMMS Hospital in Nazareth, Israel.

Cor Vreugdenhil, Multigenerational family psychotherapist, Pesso movement and supervisor (Association of the Dutch couple and family therapy NVRG). In 1991, he founded the "Rotterdam Circle", Holland.



**Andolfi, the Globetrotter
of Family Therapy**
Available on USB and
on Vimeo On Demand

[Find it in our shop](#)

A documentary by
Philip Besamusca

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Family Therapy Academy



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