

Using Family Circles to Promote and Understand Family Connections

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NACSW 2013 Convention
Atlanta, GA



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Bases For Using Family Circles

- **Competent social workers must be able to engage, assess, and intervene with individuals and families (CSWE, 2008).**
- **Family is with us wherever we go (Bowen, 1978).**



Created to Connect

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” Matt 25:34-36, NIV



Created to Connect

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” Rom 12:15, NIV



Family Circle Diagram Overview

- ▶ A brief graphic method of gathering, disclosing, and assessing family information
- ▶ Based upon Moreno's (1934) sociogram
 - A subjective map of interpersonal relationships
 - Similar to other family systems sociograms (genogram and ecomap)
 - Not synonymous to other sociograms
- ▶ Incorporates family systems perspective
 - Family structure (subsystems, dyads, triangles)
 - Family boundaries (open, closed, rigid, flexible, clear, or diffused)

Family Circle Diagram Overview (Con't)

- ▶ Created in 3 to 5 minutes
- ▶ One or more perceptions
- ▶ Viewing from three different perspectives (past, present, future desires)
- ▶ Experiment with family dynamics
 - Relationship impacts
 - Phenomena affects
 - Time influence

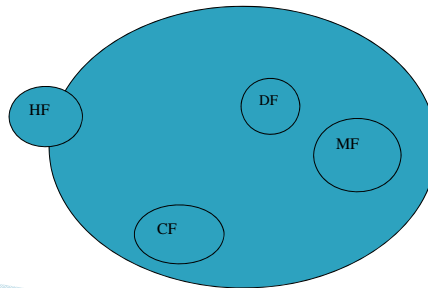
Constructing Family Circles

- ▶ Explain what a family circle is (see handout)
- ▶ Describe the purpose
- ▶ Explain the rules
- ▶ Now let's begin



Constructing Family Circles

- ▶ Draw a circle (family)
- ▶ Label circles
- ▶ Members can be inside or outside
- ▶ Members may be anyone or anything



Report and Discussion Time

- Present family
- Clarify circle
- Differs from past
- Desired changes





Family Circle Instruction Survey Questions

- ▶ Does instrument increase awareness of family dynamics and/or structure?
- ▶ Does instrument and process help with discussion?
- ▶ What is most helpful about instrument and process?
- ▶ What is least helpful about instrument and process?
- ▶ Causes of discomfort, if any?
- ▶ Does training enhance client empathy?

Family Circle Survey Results

Frequency Distribution (n=93)

Variable	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
Perception of family structure	84.9	5.4	9.7
Open my eyes to family	43.1	32.3	24.7
Helped family discussion	49.5	29	20.4
Recognize family boundaries	49.5	26.9	23.7
Help with future family assessments	85	2.2	9.7
Recognize family subsystems	72.1	11.8	15.1
Easy to use	85	1.1	14

Family Circle Instruction Most Helpful

Qualitative Results (n=93)

Perceptions	Percentage
Allow one to see family dynamics	11.8
Instruction provided facilitator	10.8
Seeing and assessing other families	9.7
Tool helpful overall	9.7
Personal insights	8.6
Simple instrument	8.6
Shows family structure	7.5

Family Circle Instruction Least Helpful

Qualitative Results (n=93)

Perceptions	Percentage
Everything was helpful	19.4
Unsure	19.4
Instruction and guidance unclear	11.8
Broad interpretation of circle	5.4
Not enough time	4.3
More family system information	3.2
Other family members not involved	3.2

Family Circle Instruction Discomforts

Qualitative Results (n=93)

Perceptions	Percentage
Discussing family circle with others	48.4
No discomforts	21.5
Determining who to exclude or include	4.3
Instruction	4.3
Hearing others discuss their families	3.2
Seeing my family on paper	3.2
Talking to others about their family	2.2

Family Circle Instruction : A Confidence Booster

- ▶ 93 students received instruction between 2008 – 2011
- ▶ 89 students responded to question
 - Yes – 92.1%
 - No – 7.9%

QUESTIONS???