FAMILY SCULPTING

Introductory remarks about the exercise should be as brief as possible to allow creativity and client initiative take the lead. By letting clients have creative control, some surprising and deeply meaningful representations can occur. Asking them what they think is a ‘sculptor’ and using their answers to begin the exercise is a good way to begin. However, when demonstrating the instructions, the therapist can model sculpting by guiding persons to a particular spot. The therapist should not attempt to lead or interpret during the sculpting.

1. Choose a family member to lead the sculpt as they see their existing family. This can be the primary youth or another family member.

2. Allow all family members that would like to participate to do so.

3. It is a good idea to give each family member a chance to lead the sculpt.

4. Have the sculptor arrange the participating family members where they would like them to stand or sit.

5. The therapist should mentally take note of the arrangement – who is standing where and in proximity to what other family member, has anyone been omitted. Eco-map diagrams can be used to note who is where, distance between, who is facing who, who is standing behind etc.

6. The therapist should be sure to remove himself or herself from the “stage” by moving to one side of the sculpted area.

7. Once the sculpt has been completed, the therapist appearing curious can take note by mentioning where people are standing etc. – also asking how each family member feels about where they are in the picture or if they are comfortable.

8. The therapist can also ask if anyone wants to change positions.

9. The therapist can also ask the identified sculptor to interpret their work.

10. If desired, each family member can have a turn recreating the sculpt in the way they would want their family to look like, or how they would want to it to be.

11. When asking children how they feel and what they want to change it is important to be sensitive to the parents responsible, central role concerning their children.

12. The therapist can also lead a sculpt to explore relationship intensity once themes begin to emerge.