

# STRUCTURAL FAMILY SYSTEMS FAMILY MAPPING



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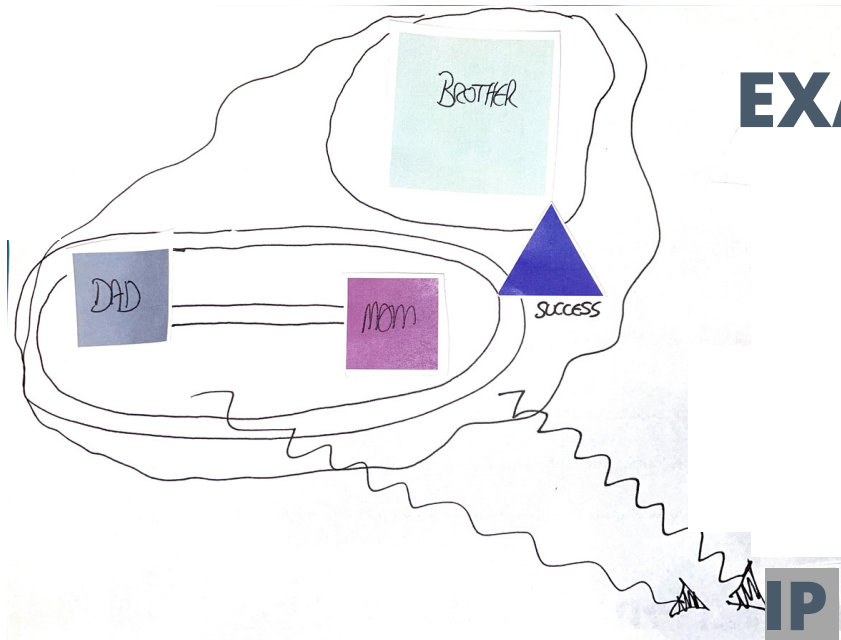
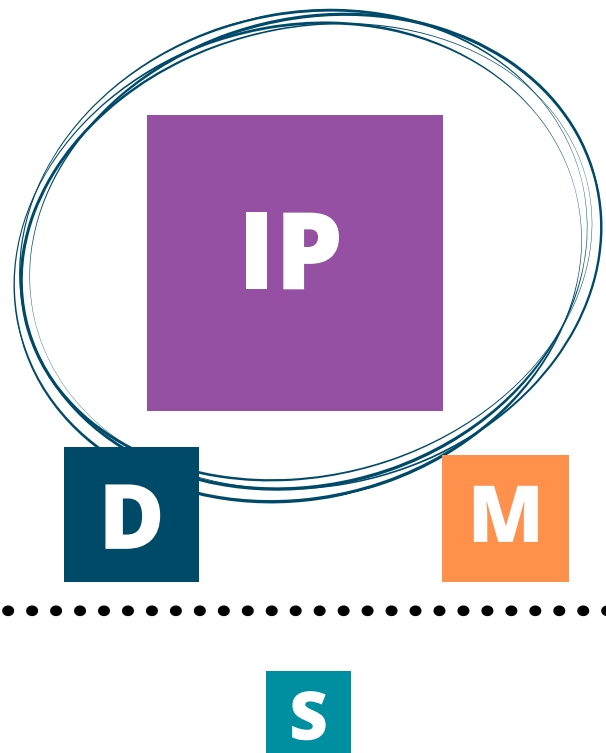
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# FAMILY MAPS

- Just like a geographical map, **a family map is overly simplified, lacks details, can't account for change and is static.** AND it's really useful for organizing the information, creating a hypothesis and if it's correct, determining treatment plan.
- Structure is not apparent or clear to the therapist or the family but with data and diagnosis achieved from joining the system in the intake it becomes possible. **Data comes from the transactional field - observations, words, feelings etc.**

## EXAMPLE 1



## EXAMPLE 2

# INSTRUCTIONS

1. DECIDE WHICH FAMILY YOU WILL PICTURE.
2. OR CUT OUT ANY OF THE SQUARES AND TRIANGLES YOU LIKE. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH FOR EACH RELEVANT PERSON IN THE FAMILY.  
THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS ON WHOM YOU INCLUDE OR HOW YOU SYMBOLIZE THEM OTHER THAN SQUARES ARE PEOPLE, AND TRIANGLES ARE NON-PEOPLE (PETS, INSTITUTIONS, ACTIVITIES)
3. LABEL EACH SQUARE AND TRIANGLE WITH APPROPRIATE INITIALS (CABR, OR MOM, BROTHER). INCLUDE AGES IF IT HELPS COMMUNICATE INFORMATION
4. ARRANGE THE SQUARES AND TRIANGLES SO THEY EXPRESS THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU FEEL, SEE OR HAVE OBSERVED IN FAMILY WORK. IF YOU'RE NOT A FAMILY THERAPIST, THIS COULD BE BASED ON WHAT THE CLIENT HAS TOLD YOU, OR WHAT YOU'VE OBSERVED IN MFG OR READING NOTES.
5. DRAW ANY BOUNDARIES OR RELATIONSHIP LINES YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO INCLUDE TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE
6. LIST ANYTHING YOU'VE LEFT OUT THAT YOU MIGHT LOGICALLY HAVE INCLUDED AND EXPLAIN WHY YOU LEFT IT OUT.

## SHAPES



Family Mapping is much more simple than a genogram - it's easier to remember that squares are people, triangles are 'things' - places, institutions, ideas.

Remember to put names inside each shape so we know who is who.

## COLORS



You can use different colors for different people, or just sketch using the same pen.

*IN SESSION* When working with teens it is interesting to use colors and process their choices when they're done. "I notice Dad is a red square - any thoughts on that choice?"

## SIZE



Please consider the size of each shape you use - does someone in the family feel bigger than others? Perhaps someone feels smaller, and that can be represented too with a smaller shape. Show this in the map. This is a subjective sense of 'size' - show us how you felt in the room with them (or your experience watching)

*IN SESSION:* I pre-cut shapes of card for the family using a variety of colors and sizes

## POSITION



Place each shape on the page until it feels right to you. Consider who is 'above' and who is 'below'.

Who is close? Who is further away? Use the entire page as you see fit, but think where you're putting people and why.

*IN SESSION:* **This is a projective activity- clients are showing you unconsciously how they see the family or how they wish it were.**

## BOUNDARIES



Place boundaries around or between different subsystems or individuals.

Solid - healthy

Dotted - porous

Double - rigid.

*IN SESSION:* I have used colored string and rope to make it more engaging.

## CONNECTIONS

Use your creativity to mark any relationship dynamics of note.



Focus on this person?

Too close

Conflict?

# PRE-SESSION HYPOTHESIS

## BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

WHO MADE THE CALL TO YOUR OFFICE?

- WHAT DOES THAT MEAN WITH REGARDS TO STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY?

WHO HAS HAD THE MOST / FIRST CONTACT WITH PRIMARY (IN RTC)

WHO IS DEFINITELY GOING TO SHOW UP TO SESSIONS?

WHO IS A 'MAYBE'?

WHO IS THE IP ACCORDING TO THE FIRST CALL?

## THE FIRST SESSION

THE WAY A FAMILY ENTERS THE SESSION CAN BE AN ILLUSTRATION OF WHO THEY ARE AND HOW THEY ARE ORGANIZED.

- ARE THEY OVERLY FRIENDLY?
- WHO IS ANGRY?
- DO THEY SEEM DESPERATE?
- DO THEY SEEM DEFENSIVE?
- ARE THEY UNITED?
- WHO IS LEADING THE FAMILY?

- WHO IS MORE RELUCTANT?
- HOW DO THE SIBLINGS ACT?
- WHO IS DISTANT?
- WHO STARTS TALKING?

## MARRIAGE

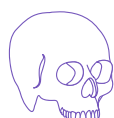
### CRITICISM



### STONEWALLING



### CONTEMPT



### DEFENSIVENESS



# ASSESSING HIERARCHY

SOMETIMES THE FAMILY SHOWS US HOW THEY ARE ORGANIZED AND WHO HAS POWER BY THE WAY THEY INTERACT

WHEN WE ARE ASSESSING FOR HIERARCHY YOU CAN HAVE THESE QUESTIONS IN MIND

## ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- WHO IS IN CHARGE OF DIRECTING THE FAMILY?
- WHO DIRECTS THE CONVERSATION?
- WHICH OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE AUTHORITY?
- IS LEADERSHIP IN APPROPRIATE HANDS?
- IS IT SHARED? IF SO IS SHARING BETWEEN APPROPRIATE PEOPLE?
- IS HIERARCHY ASSIGNED APPROPRIATELY WITH RESPECT TO AGE ROLE AND FUNCTION
- WHOSE BEHAVIOR HELPS REGULATE THE BEHAVIOR OF OTHER MEMBERS?
- WHO STARTS THE CONVERSATION?
- WHO REMAINS SILENT? DOES THIS PERSON GET IGNORED OR FOCUSED ON?
- WHO CALLED TO MAKE THE SESSION?

# ASSESSING STRUCTURE

SEATING SOMETIMES INFORMS US OF HOW THE FAMILY IS ORGANIZED AND CAN BE USEFUL TO OBSERVE AND CONSIDER

IF THE ROOM IS LARGE ENOUGH:

IS MOM SEATED BETWEEN CHILDREN?

IS IT PARENTS VS CHILDREN?

MALES VS FEMALES?

DURING COVID - WHO IS SHARING A LAPTOP, WHO IS IN THE SAME HOUSE ON A DIFFERENT DEVICE?

IF THE IP SITS BETWEEN PARENTS, WHAT MIGHT THAT SUGGEST?

# ASSESSING POWER

There are several elements of 'power' to consider when assessing a family:

- **MONEY** Who has power when it comes to money - spending and earning?
- **TIME** Who decides how time is spent in the family either as a family or individually? Does anyone interrupt this time?
- **COMMUNICATION** Who communicates / who keeps secrets / who determines what will be shared?

If one parent is uncommunicative, decides how time and money is spent, the other might develop symptoms to regain some power.

Did the power in the parent system switch suddenly? If one parent became unemployed - they may develop symptoms to regain power.

If one parent is uncommunicative, decides how time and money is spent, the other might develop symptoms to regain some power.

Does the IP impinge on the parent's time and money while communicating in ways they cannot understand while keeping secrets?

Who has more star 'power' with regards to status and career?

Who ends the conversation?

Who tells people where to sit?