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ADVANCED TRAINING ON PSYCHOSOCIAL TOOLS

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Summary	<p>As no refresher training on psychosocial tools had been made in several years and new employees had been enrolled in Enfance, it was decided in June 2015 to conduct a 4-day training on the use of psychosocial tools.</p> <p>An important particularity of this training is the fact that the participants were asked to use the taught psychosocial tools on their own colleagues in order to practice, which is not easy and can make them uncomfortable. However, this experience proved (through an evaluation survey) to help the family counselors to better understand the feelings and difficulties of the family when processing the tools. Moreover, since local social workers often meet similar psychosocial issues in their own families, such a practice helped them handle their feelings when working with the families.</p> <p>Since the training contents are difficult to grasp for the social workers, refreshing sessions were planned every two weeks to help them assimilate the notions. As for the order of the psychosocial tools to be processed, we started from the less involving and personal (i.e. the genogram: the counselor is the one who draw it and both the counselee and the counselor can focus on its descriptive function if they want to avoid any emotional involvement) to the most personal tool (i.e. the time lifeline, which focuses on the personal feelings and the past history of the counselee).</p>

Target participants of this training:

- Family Counselors / Social Workers who are following families with heavy psychosocial issues and who could use psychosocial tools to “unblock” these families.

Objectives

- Discussing goals and conditions for processing psychosocial tools
- Strengthening the team dynamic
- Identifying potential difficulties and feelings of families that arise through psychosocial tools.
- Helping family counselors express their own issues and histories through their own process of these tools so that they will be able to better handle their own issues when they process the psychosocial tools with families

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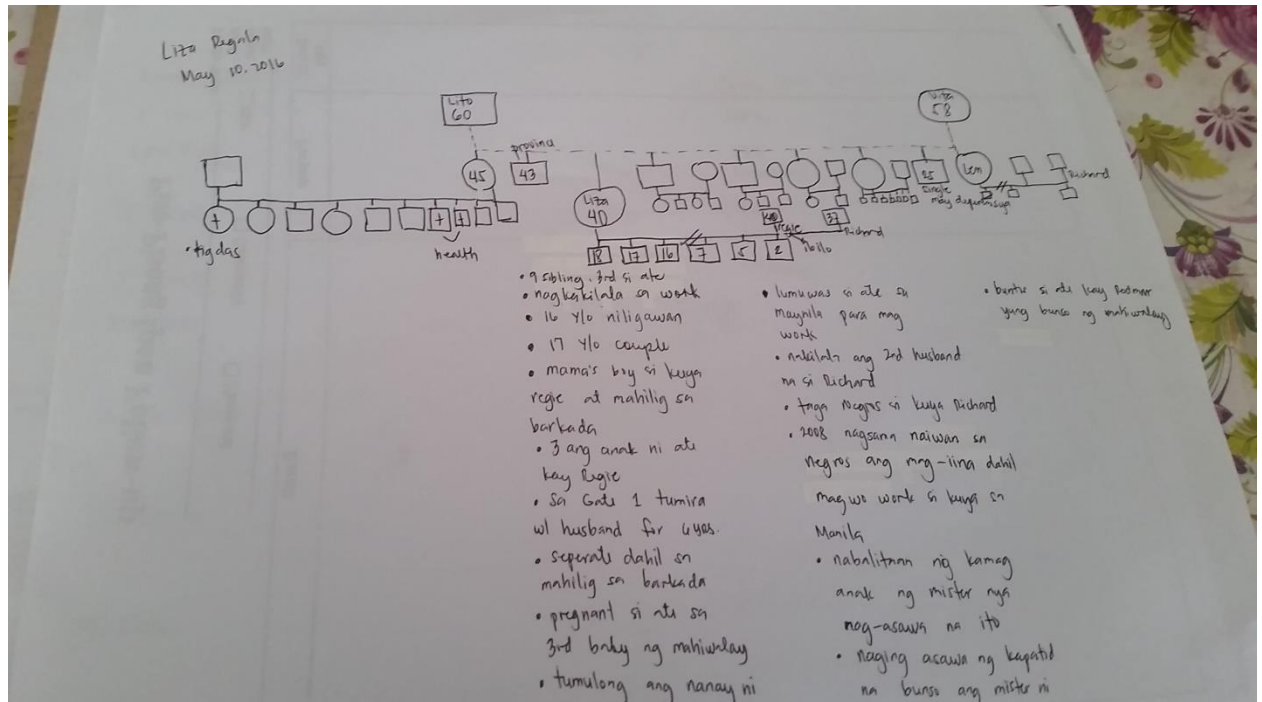
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1. Genogram

3 hours



1.1 Workshop 1: defining genogram

- Form 3 groups
- Give a large piece of paper to each group and let them randomly pick a question among the following:
 - ▶ What is a genogram?
 - ▶ What are the objectives of the genogram?
 - ▶ When is a genogram used?
- Participants can draw or write on the paper, as they wish.
- Give them 15 min, then each group has to present its work to the others

If needed, complete the answers of the participants after every group has finished its presentation:

What is a genogram?

- **The genogram is a graphic representation of a family tree** that displays detailed data on relationships between family's members. It highlights useful information for the social worker about the represented family.
- First, it **contains basic data found in family trees** such as name, gender, date of birth, and date of death of each individual.
- **Additional data can be written on the margin** and may include education, occupation, major life events, chronic illnesses, social behaviors, nature of family relationships. It may also include information on disorders running in the family such as alcoholism, depression or diseases.

What are the objectives of the genogram?

- **Explore the family history and kinships deeper.** The genogram helps the FC ask about the familial structure, family history and relationships between members. It gives information on beliefs, traditions, family values and reference points.
- **Get a mapping of the family to give more clarity to the family stories and explanations.** It helps distinguish family members between one another
- **Identify the family schemes (number of children per woman, age of first pregnancy, of marriage, support persons and decision makers, ...)** to help the family identify positive and negative family patterns (past events, intergenerational transmission, ...), which can enable them either to understand the history of their own issues and break out of the vicious cycle, or to use the positive replications to harness strength and gain hope.
- **Make hypotheses** about the links between family history, relationships and the difficulties experienced by each one in order to guide us, to orient us in the work to do with the family. These assumptions include a better understanding of **complex interactions, relationships or behaviors that the counselee and/or the FC cannot grasp** (child abuse, sudden parent anger, excessive jealousy, reluctance to seek treatment, use of contraception ...). Caution, hypotheses are never definitive truths and they must be confronted with reality. Indeed, the family may unintentionally forget important details of its history or blur the tracks when dealing with subjects that worry them. Similarly, the FC may not hear some important information.

When is the genogram used?

The genogram is a very simple and useful psychosocial tool and as such, **it can be used with all families**. In the Philippines, it was used with all the families, generally after 4 months (out of 9) of follow up.

It is however especially useful:

- When the family is ready to discuss or share their family history (**ideally 2-4 months after the first visit**). **If the genogram is processed too early, the family will not benefit from it** because they will not disclose key elements (reasons of death, complicated relationships ...).
- When the family is interested in clarifying key family relationships.
- When the family shows resistance during intervention and is unable to take proper actions to solve specific objectives.
- When the family faces difficulties to share with the FC
- When the family needs to identify repetitive patterns of behavior and to recognize hereditary tendencies and wants to understand it as well.
- When the FC sees the need to highlight family dynamics to the family and shed light on the family's present situation.

1.2 Workshop 2: Processing the genogram

- Ask the participants to group themselves in pairs (if possible, it should be done randomly but that is not compulsory)
- Let them find a place where they will be able to talk confidentially and ask them to process the genogram of each other's family.
- During this practice session, the trainees are allowed to choose how much they want to share: they **have the right not to answer to some questions or to invent a fictive family if they do not dare talking about themselves**.

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- Give them between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half to do it.
- You can form a pair with another participant if the group is odd-numbered. Otherwise, just stay available if participants have question but do not interfere with the process.

If the participants do not know how to process the genogram at all, you can give them a lecture using the information below:

- Introduce the family to the genogram with the following sentence: “Today we are going to process the genogram; it is similar to a family tree. It will show the structure of your family and your partner’s family and we will be able to see the patterns and possible repetitions. Afterwards we will look at the drawing together and you will be able to identify the repetitions and to incorporate it into an action plan. Are you ok / happy to do this together?”
- In order to spread the benefit of the process on the whole family, it is important to involve most of the family members in it. For example, if young children are present, you can at least show them the genogram and point out where they are, where are their siblings, parents, If only one member of the family is present, you can encourage him to show the drawing to his partner/children later.
- ***Always begin by representing the person with whom you are doing the genogram, and then the immediate family and then the extended family (generally you don’t have to go further than the grandparents)***
- First questions in order to draw the representation of the family
 - ▶ Name & age
 - ▶ Where are they living? With who? (allow you to also know who is still alive)
 - ▶ If dead, date of death

Once you have drawn the genogram and have a global view of the extended family (**and not before**), you can ask the following additional questions:

- ▶ Education / Profession of members
- ▶ Relationship / conflict / separation? Why?
- ▶ If death, how?

When asking these questions keep in mind that:

- ▶ *Open-ended questions and rephrasing allow for more detail and knowledge of emotional elements that are more difficult to assign such as describing a distressing family climate or dysfunctional relationships.*
- ▶ *It is essential to always pay close attention to the respondent's reactions. This allows you to discover the buried emotions, grudges, anger, grief or guilt that may come out at this time*
- You can write the answer on the margin or near the drawing of the member. To go deeper on how to draw the genogram, you can check this [training](#)
- Then, you can tell the family: “let’s look at the genogram together. What do you notice or observe in your own family, your paternal/maternal family and your partner’s maternal/paternal family? Look closely”
- Counselor should notice repetitions and may have had realizations of the root causes of problems they may encounter (e.g. “my parents had money to send us to school but they didn’t, why? Oh, it is because my mom never went to school herself so she did not see the value of it.”)
- If the counselor does not notice some important repetitions: “I noticed some things that you

have not mentioned, is it OK if I share these with you?"

- The topics/issues (e.g. parenting, addiction, etc) that come out can be addressed in later visits as the primary goal of doing the genogram is to provide a representation of the family. Do not try to address everything in one visit as you will not have enough time and this could be too heavy for the family.
- Offer the family to bring them a photocopy the next visit so that they can have time to examine the patterns deeper.

1.3 Workshop 3: Feedback after processing

- After this, gather all the trainees and let them share their feelings (they don't have to share their personal history if they don't want to) during the process. You can also ask them the following questions:
 - ▶ How do you feel now?
 - ▶ What was difficult (as counselee and as counselor)?
 - ▶ Did you discover things you did not know about yourself?
 - ▶ What do you have to be careful of when processing the genogram?
- This last part can be very sensitive so it is very important to provide a safe environment for all participants at that time.

You can complete the answers of the participants with the following points:

- **Doing the genogram sometimes requires time.** If it takes too much time or if the FC noticed that it would last very long s/he (the FC) could focus on the counselee with whom s/he is doing the genogram and his/her immediate family. If needed, the FC could always tell the counselee that the genogram can be continued during following visits, which gives additional room for the counselee to talk to his/her partner and discuss and know more about his/her family especially if they have not talked about it previously.
- **Doing the genogram necessitates attentiveness.** When some members of the family are around, be mindful that these discussions may be difficult or may be very sensitive for some family members too, even if they don't seem listening
- **Processing the genogram sometimes calls for reception.** Be prepared to listen to a lot of stories. Stories are the best way to remember and transfer information. Encourage these as they arise by listening attentively and asking open-ended questions that motivate the person to share more about these stories. If the family reveals a painful event and begins to express its experience, it is because they feel ready for us to hear it. If we are embarrassed or avoid the subject, we tag the message they give us with taboo and shame.
 - **Drawing the genogram sometimes upsets the family** especially if and when the family has an unsettled or unresolved past, thus making them not want to remember it at all. It's all right. In this case, it is important to demonstrate our understanding of their difficulty and respect for their suffering. Don't force them to remember. In their own time, they will. When they are ready and when they have the strength to face it, they will. Your role is just to facilitate their readiness.
 - **Doing the genogram sometimes triggers painful past events and memories that the family might be carrying up to the present,** thus making them cry. If some members of the family cry, just let them, all the while processing or guiding them to the possible reason/s for crying. You can then explain that it is normal to cry, and that it can actually help release this specific past to be able to move on and go forward in life.

You can provide participants with examples of open questions (do not give them before to let participants find their own questions).

- Tell me about your current family? What is the occupation of each spouse, your date of birth? Your religion, (if applicable)?
- How many children do you have, What is their age, gender? Their position in siblings? Were there any deaths among them? When? Stillbirths, abortions or miscarriages?
- An adoption? A child with a particular difficulty? Impact on family life ...
- Who lives under the same roof as you?
- Where do other family members live?
- What was the reason for their departure?
- What recent events have affected your family? What happened exactly? What was everyone's reaction to this event?
- Have there been any changes in the relationship between you? Other types of changes: moving, changing work?
- Are your children married? Tell me about their spouses. - How many children do they have? What is their age, gender? Their rank in siblings.
- Were there any deaths among them? When? Stillbirths, abortions or miscarriages? An adoption? A child with a particular difficulty?
- Tell me about their relationship with their spouses?
- Were there separations? Divorces? Broken links between you brothers and sisters?
- Do you, your spouse or some of your children have specific problems with alcoholism, suicide? What diseases have you suffered: cancer, respiratory diseases, allergies, mental illness, legal problem? (Please specify).
- Tell me about this difficulty. When did it begin?
- How did you or your children react? How do you see the problem?
- Was the family environment different? Who got involved?
- Has there been external assistance? How has the problem evolved?
- Tell me about your sisters and brothers? How many are they? Their rank in siblings?
- Are your brothers and sisters married? Tell me about the ties that bind them to their spouses? Were there separations? Divorces? Broken links between you brothers and sisters?
- How many children do they have? What is their age, gender?
- Were there any deaths among them? When? Stillbirths, abortions or miscarriages? An adoption?
- Are there any particular problems with alcoholism or suicide? What diseases have they suffered from cancer, respiratory diseases, allergies, mental illness? (Please specify).
- What were the relationships between them, uncles and aunts and their nephews and nieces, that is, your children?
- Tell me about your parents. When were they born? Are they still alive? The date of death? Where do they live? What are they doing? How did they meet, when did they get married? What ties united them? What was their religion, their nationality (or race)?
- Was there a separation? Divorce? Was there another marriage? Were there any children from that other marriage? Broken links between your parents and some of your brothers and sisters?
- Have your parents experienced particular problems with alcoholism, suicide? What diseases have they suffered from cancer, respiratory diseases, allergies, mental illness? (Please specify)

2. Projective drawing

3 hours



2.1 Workshop 1: Defining projective drawing

- Form 3 groups
- Give one large piece of paper to each group and let them pick a question randomly among the following:
 - ▶ What is a Projective Drawing?
 - ▶ What are the objectives of the Projective Drawing?
 - ▶ When is the Projective Drawing used?
- Participants can draw or write on the paper, as they wish.
- Give them 15 min, then each group has to present its work to the others

If needed, complete the answers of the participants after every group has finished its presentation:

What is a Projective Drawing?

- **The projective drawing is a psychological tool in which an individual is instructed to draw something** in order to make visible some parts of cognitive, interpersonal relationship or psychological functioning. **In FDP, we mostly give the instruction: “draw your family”**
- **Presumably revealing hidden emotions and internal conflicts** projected by the person into the drawings, together with **motives or underlying feelings**.

What are the objectives of the Projective Drawing?

- **Discuss family relationships and the role of each member of the family deeper.** Therefore, the counselee and the Family Counselor (FC) can understand better the family dynamics through the drawings, and especially the behavior of the family towards certain events or certain persons.
- **Identify and question the place and representation of the counselee inside his/her own family.** Through this, the counselee is able to build up his own representation of his/her

family

- **Explain complex interactions, relationships or behaviors that the counselee and/or the FC cannot grasp** through the highlight of specific family patterns.

When is the Projective Drawing used?

The projective drawing is a simple and useful psychosocial tool, but which requires a little higher participation of the family than the genogram. As such, **it is generally better to use it after the genogram.**

In the Philippines, it was used with 1 out of 4 families, especially when there was a neglected child: both parent and child were asked to draw and through the comparison of the different drawings, both the family and the FC were able to grasp what the child's place was.

Overall, it is especially useful:

- Generally, **to complete the genogram**, when the FC feels there is still something that was not revealed by the genogram.
- When the FC wants to **better understand the current family dynamics** (while the genogram will reveal more about the family history).
- It can also be useful **when there is a specific issue with one member of the family**: the projective drawing can be used with him/her or with another member of the family, focusing on their drawing of this specific member (for example, when a specific child seems neglected or abused in the family)

2.2 Workshop 2: Processing projective drawing

- Ask the participants to group themselves in pairs (if possible, it should be done randomly but that is not compulsory)
- Let them find a place where they will be able to talk confidentially and ask them to process the projective drawing of each other's family.
- During this practice session, the trainees are allowed to choose how much they want to share: they **have the right not to answer to some questions or to invent a fictive family if they do not dare talking about themselves.**
- Give them between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half to do it.
- You can form a pair with another participant if the group is odd-numbered. Otherwise, just stay available if participants have question but do not interfere with the process.

If the participants do not know how to process the Projective Drawing at all, you can give them a lecture using the information below:

- Introduce the projective drawing with the following sentence: "Today we are going to do the projective drawing, as I mentioned during the previous visit. Here we can see your family's dynamics, behavior towards certain events and persons, interpersonal relationships and probably much more. Not only that, but also what you want to see and what you want to show, it all depends upon you and the processing. Are you ok / happy to do this together? "
- If the life-partner is not there, you can add: "You can discuss what you observe with your partner/children later", and if other members of the families are there, you can ask them to also draw their family and then compare the drawings.
- **The instruction to give to the person is: "Draw your family"**

- If the counselee asks what to draw, as most of the counsees do, the FC can tell him/her that that's the only instruction s/he will give. What matters is how s/he understands it and this will be reflected in his/her drawing.
- While the family is drawing, the FC just observes.

After the drawing:

- In general, the FC should ask the counselee about every little thing s/he notices in order to really understand the whole scenario and not jump into irrational conclusions and biases.
- The general assumption is that **everything matters but there are no automatic explanations** → **the counselee is the only one who can give meaning to his/her drawing.**
- If the counselee does not describe directly what s/he has drawn, you can ask the following questions to start the discussion:
 - ▶ "What came to mind when I gave you the instruction?" E.g. the counselee has drawn a house. The FC could have a follow-up question, "why did you draw a house?"
 - ▶ Alternatively, you can also simply ask "what did you draw?"

2.3 Workshop 3: Feedback after processing

- After this, gather all the trainees and let them share their feelings (they don't have to share their personal history if they don't want to) during the process. You can also ask them the following questions:
 - ▶ How do you feel now?
 - ▶ What was difficult (as counselee and as counselor)?
 - ▶ Did you discover things you did not know about yourself?
 - ▶ What do you have to be careful of when processing the projective drawing?
- This last part can be very sensitive so it is very important to provide a safe environment to all participants at that time.

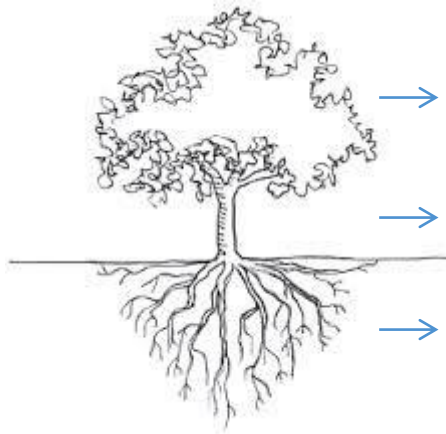
You can then provide the participants a more specific list of potential interpretations of drawing (see below and next page), keeping in mind that **everything matters but there are no specific meanings** (do not give the list before processing the tool in order to let the participants find other questions on their own).

- The picture of a house is supposed to conjure the feelings towards his/her family
- Windows, doors, and sidewalks- they relate to openness, willingness to interact with others
- Open doors or many windows in a house can mean strong needs to engage others
- Shades, shutters, bars, curtains, and long and winding sidewalks- indicate some unwillingness to reveal much about oneself
- A picture where family members are in separate rooms may indicate isolation or a lack of interaction between family members (may also provide indicators of abuse)
- Victims of sexual abuse may stress sexual characteristics in their drawings and more generally, excessive detail with regard to the sexual nature of the drawings may indicate sexual maladjustment.
- A person who omits or distorts body parts may suffer from emotional impairment.
- Lack of several details, incomplete wholes, and use of very faint lines are a combination found in subjects who are deeply depressed.

What you see	Examples of questions to ask	What you learn / what could be represented
The order the family members are drawn in and the order they are on the page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why did you draw your sister first? Why are the mother and father on opposite ends of the children? 	<p>Shows relationships (e.g. distance between parents could show husband and wife conflict)</p> <p>Could indicate parenting problems (e.g. the child drawn last could show neglect)</p> <p>Could indicate hierarchical relationships in the family.</p>
Spacing between family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why have you drawn the father so near/far from the rest of the family? - Why are some family members drawn closer to each other compared to others? 	Shows closeness, conflicts, physical or emotional distance.
Different sizes of family members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why is the mother so much larger /smaller than the rest of the family? 	Shows importance/value in the family, dominance, a desired strength (e.g. want to be stronger than husband when experiencing domestic violence in the family).
Clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are they wearing? - Why is your sister dressed like a princess? - Why do you have no shoes? 	Shows self-perception, desire, the way the counselee want others to see his/her, his/her perception of family members (could reflect personalities), and relationships (members s/he feels closer to may be drawn with nicer clothes).
Who is included and excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why did you draw your paternal/maternal family and not your own current family (e.g. husband and child)? - Why did you exclude your father/brother? - Why did you not include children who are married? 	<p>It shows how the counselee situates him/herself (e.g. in their paternal/maternal family or current family).</p> <p>Shows how the counselee views family autonomy (e.g. children living in their own houses are considered mature and no longer part of the immediate family)</p> <p>Could indicate sexual abuse (if father or brother is not included in the drawing)</p> <p>It can show resistance (e.g. if she gave up a child for adoption she may not draw that child because she does not want to remember).</p> <p>Could show parenting/neglect problem if a child is excluded.</p>
Other objects on the page (e.g. house, pets, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why did you draw a sun / a big house? - Who lives here? What goes on inside? What's it like at night? 	<p>Often shows what's missing in their lives/desires and dreams</p> <p>Often shows what's important to them.</p>
Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is this person? Who are these people? How old are they? 	

3. Dream tree

3 hours



Future: my children will go to school, my husband and I will stop fighting, we will live in a big house in the province.

Present: living in a small house, lot of fighting with my husband, we are hungry

Past: born in Cebu 1974. My mother left, I went to Manila, my child died, I found a new husband and I had 3 new children.

3.1 Workshop 1: defining Dream tree

- Form 3 groups
- Give one large piece of paper to each group and let them pick a question randomly among the following:
 - ▶ What is a Dream Tree?
 - ▶ What are the objectives of the Dream Tree?
 - ▶ When is the Dream Tree used?
- Participants can draw or write on the paper, as they wish.
- Give them 15 min, then each group has to present his work to the others

If needed, complete the answers of the participants after every group has finished its presentation:

What is a Dream Tree?

- A dream tree is a psychological tool in which the counselee is instructed to **draw a tree as a metaphor of his/her life, with:**
 - ▶ **the roots symbolizing his/her past**
 - ▶ **the trunk his/her present**
 - ▶ **the leaves his/her future.**
- After the drawing, the counselee is asked to write some sentences about his past besides the roots, about his present besides the trunk and about his future besides the leaves.
- It enables people to speak about their lives in ways that are not re-traumatizing, but instead strengthens their relationships with their own history, and help them plan their future¹. Dreams are emphasized, showing that evolution is possible.

¹ A thesis has been made about the “tree of life”, a similar but more developed psychosocial tool used with traumatized children (while it has been used more often with adults as a part of the Family Development Approach)
<http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/138842/thesis%2BHelen%2BKolb.pdf?sequence=1>

What are the objectives of the Dream Tree?

- **Discuss personal history and its relationship with present life deeper.** The counselee and the Family Counselor (FC) are able to better understand the personal history of the counselee and how his past is affecting his present.
- **Encourage a new dynamic by discussing future plans and dreams.** By revisiting and externalizing his past, the counselee is able to engage with himself in a new and different way, reconnecting with past events in a safer way and linking them to future dreams, s/he can also realize that past issues have been overcome and then discover his/her source of resilience.
- **Help the counselee (re)create a narrative of his life,** and thus (re)establish a feeling of control over his life, also improving his sense of coherence

When is the Dream Tree used?

The dream tree is a simple and useful psychosocial tool, but which requires a little higher participation of the family than the genogram. As such, **it is generally better to use it after the genogram.**

In the Philippines, it was used with 1 out of 5 families, especially when the counselee had trouble to express dreams and was either focusing on the past only or not talking about the past at all.

Overall, it is especially useful:

- Generally, to **complete the genogram,** when the FC feels there is still something that was not revealed by the genogram.
- When the counselee seems interested in better **understanding the links between his past and his present**
- When the counselee seems **“stuck” in his past and has difficulties to think about the future,** as if nothing could change.
- When the FC feels that there are **events in the past that are deeply affecting the present situation,** even if the counselee is not talking about it.

3.2 Workshop 2: Processing Dream Tree

- Ask the participants to group themselves in pairs (if possible, it should be done randomly but that is not compulsory)
- Let them find a place where they will be able to talk confidentially and ask them to process the dream tree of each other's family.
- During this practice session, the trainees are allowed to choose how much they want to share: they **have the right not to answer to some questions or to invent a fictive family if they do not dare talking about themselves.**
- Give them between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half to do it.
- You can form a pair with another participant if the group is odd-numbered. Otherwise, just stay available if participants have question but do not interfere with the process.
- If the participants do not know how to process the dream tree at all, you can read aloud the textbox below before they start processing the tool.

If the participants do not know how to process the Dream Tree at all, you can give them a lecture using the information below:

- Introduce the dream tree with the following sentences: “Draw a tree with roots, trunks and leaves. Any kind of tree you wish to draw. “. If the counselee wants to draw fruits, flower, branches, it is possible also and you could then ask them what it represents.
- “After drawing you could also write some things”: *(In some cases, the facilitator could assist the counselee in writing if the counselee doesn't know how to write but it should be the counselee who draws).*
 - ▶ “At the root you could write significant past events, significant people in your past, significant dates (if you remember) if there are any past regrets or any things she wish to forget. Anything of importance or relevant in your past (e.g. childhood). “
 - ▶ “At the trunk you could write about your present. Who are you with? How many children? Name of the partner. Names of the children. How are you now? Anything about the present.”
 - ▶ “At the leaves you could write about your dreams, future plans, hopes and aspirations in life and things that you want to achieve or acquire someday. (This could be about yourself or about your family). Anything you wish for the future.”
- While the counselee is drawing, the FC will just observe.
- If the past is composed mostly of sad events and the counselee has trouble writing about the future, the FC can ask the following questions: “Despite what happened in your past, how do you see yourself few years from now? Or how do you see your future? And if there is one thing that you would like to have in your life right now, what would it be?”

After the drawing:

- The goal of this tool is to create links between past, present and future in order to increase the sense of coherence and of control of the person.
- As a result, the FC should above all:
 - ▶ Help the counselee connect his different stories (past, present and future) and strengthen his identity (who I am and what do I want now)
 - ▶ Highlight the resources of the counselee and how he has been able to overcome past challenges and to use past experiences to build his future
 - ▶ Finish the visit on a positive note: discuss about the future plans of the counselee and the fact that things can still evolve from now on. S/he can also encourage the counselee to look again to the dream tree later to see the evolution and the achievement of dreams.
- Aside from this, the FC can also use the drawing as a metaphor of the counselee's life and ask questions about the drawing's specificity (see some example of questions in the next slide)
- While asking questions about the dream tree, the FC has to keep in mind the general assumption that everything matters but there are no automatic meanings → **the counselee is the only one who can give meaning to their drawing** and it is therefore necessary to ask questions before jumping to conclusions.

3.3 Workshop 3: Feedback after processing

- After this, gather all the trainees and let them share about their feelings (they don't have to share their personal history if they don't want to) during the process. You can also ask them the following questions:
 - ▶ How do you feel now?

- ▶ What was difficult (as counselee and as counselor)?
- ▶ Did you discover things you did not know about yourself?
- ▶ What do you have to be careful of when processing the dream tree?
- This last part can be very sensitive so it is very important to provide a safe environment to all participants at that time.

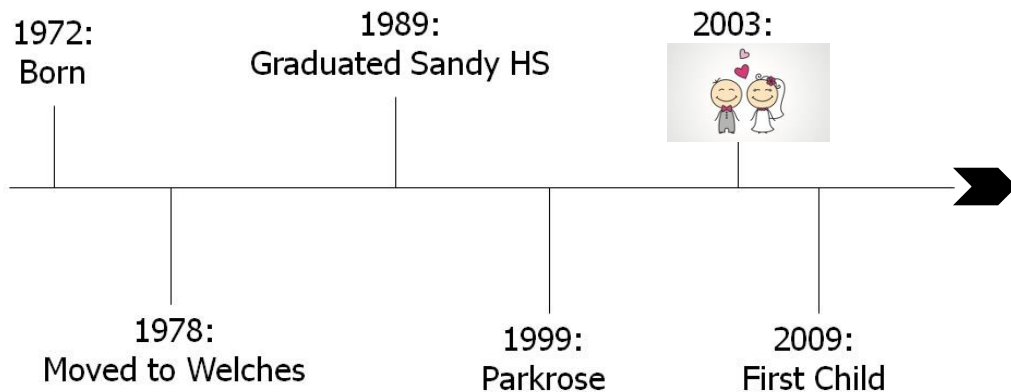
You can provide to the participants a sample of potential questions to ask (not to do give before in order to let the participants find other questions on their own).

- What kind of tree did you draw? And why? (*The picture of the tree itself is supposed to elicit feelings of strength or weakness, while the type of tree an individual draws relates to the structure of the psyche or the unconscious itself.*)
- What did you draw first? Why?
- Why is the trunk large and the roots small?
- Can you tell me a story about what did you draw and write?
- How did you feel while drawing and writing? How do you feel now that you look at your drawing and writing?
- How do you feel after sharing? Do you feel better?
- Do you think that this kind of activity helped?
- In what ways?

4. Life Timeline

3 hours

Timeline



4.1 Workshop 1: Defining Life Timeline

- Form 3 groups
- Give one large piece of paper to each group and let them pick a question randomly among the following:
 - ▶ What is a Life Timeline?
 - ▶ What are the objectives of the Life Timeline?
 - ▶ When is the Life Timeline used?
- Participants can draw or write on the paper, as they wish.
- Give them 15 min, then each group has to present his work to the others

If needed, complete the answers of the participants after every group has finished its presentation:

What is a Life Timeline?

- A life timeline is a psychological tool which requires the counselee to **place all the significant events of his life on a chronological line, starting with his birth and finishing today.**
- In the Family Development Approach, given the time constraints of the visits, **we generally ask the counselee to choose 5 major events** (which can be flexible), but generally, there are no limits on the number of events that can be drawn in the life timeline.
- It enables people to speak about their past and to link these events together
- Similar tools used in psychology can be called “river of life”, “lifeline”, “timeline”, ...
- As all the above-mentioned tools, it is based on the assumption that telling and building up

one's own story is reinforcing both the sense of coherence and the narrative identity of oneself, thus strengthening self-confidence and sense of control.

What are the objectives of the Life Timeline?

- **Discuss personal history and its relationship with present life deeper.** The counselee and the Family Counselor (FC) are able to better understand the personal history of the counselee and how his past is affecting his present, also seeing themes that connect and cut across seemingly different events.
- **Help the counselee (re)create a narrative of his life,** and thus (re)establishing a feeling of control over his life, also improving his sense of coherence. By revisiting and externalizing his past, the counselee is able to engage with himself in a new and different way, noting how *his responses* to events have shaped his life and character (and not events themselves).
- **Encourage a new dynamic by highlighting how much changes have happened in the past and as a result, how much could still happen.** The counselee discovers his source of resilience and his key achievements. By underlining the past experiences and the challenges already overcome, the counselee can increase his self-confidence.
- **Help the counselee overcome past traumatic events:** the graphic representation helps the counselee to go through these events (because the timeline goes on after the events) and to go again through future challenges

When is the Life Timeline used?

The dream tree is a simple and useful psychosocial tool, but which requires a little higher participation of the family than the genogram. As such, **it is generally better to use it after the genogram.**

In the Philippines, it was used with about 1 out of 10 families, especially when the FC felt that the counselee was not disclosing a traumatic event.

Overall, it is especially useful:

- Generally, to **complete the genogram**, when the FC feels there is still something that was not revealed by the genogram.
- When the Family Counselor faces trouble to **understand the past of the counselee because of chronological inconsistency** or because the counselee is not sharing about it at all.
- When the counselee **seems "stuck" in his past and has difficulties to think about the future**, as if nothing could change.
- When the FC feels that there are **events in the past that are deeply affecting the present situation** (such as sexual abuse or other **traumatic events**), even if the counselee is not talking about it.

4.2 Workshop 2: Processing Life Timeline

- Ask the participants to group themselves in pairs (if possible, it should be done randomly but that is not compulsory)
- Let them find a place where they will be able to talk confidentially and ask them to process the life timeline of each other's family.
- During this practice session, the trainees are allowed to choose how much they want to share: they **have the right not to answer to some questions or to invent a fictive family if they do not dare talking about themselves.**
- Give them between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half to do it.

- You can form a pair with another participant if the group is odd-numbered. Otherwise, just stay available if participants have question but do not interfere with the process.
- If the participants do not know how to process the life timeline at all, you can read aloud the textbox below before they start processing the tool.

If the participants do not know how to process the Life Timeline at all, you can give them a lecture using the information below:

- Introduce the life timeline with the following sentence: “Today we are going to do the life timeline as I mentioned to you during the previous visit. Here you will be able to write or draw the main important events of your life and to put them on a chronological line. Are you ok / happy to do this together? “
- Then, first ask the counselee to draw a line, to make it start with the year of their birth and to finish it with this year.
- After, the counselee can **write (or draw if they have trouble to write) on the line the 5 most important events in his life with their respecting year**. If the counselee has trouble to restrain himself to only 5 events, you can allow him to add some. **The counselee can chose any event, there are absolutely no rule about this.**
- If they have trouble to identify 5 events, you can help them by saying that **for some people** it can be their first love, when they had children, when they get married, when they left their parents’ home, when they finished their studies, ...

After the drawing:

- The goal of this tool is to encourage the counselee to discuss about his past, to link it with the present and to insist on the possibility of changes.
- If the counselee doesn’t after the drawing, the FC can ask: “why did you choose these events?”. Indeed, asking generally about all events rather than specifically about one event allows the counselee to discuss any event s/he wants or to avoid it if too sensitive.

4.3 Workshop 3: Feedback after processing

- After this, gather all the trainees and let them share their feelings (they don’t have to share their personal history if they don’t want to) during the process. You can also ask them the following questions:
 - ▶ How do you feel now?
 - ▶ What was difficult (as counselee and as counselor)?
 - ▶ Did you discover things you did not know about yourself?
 - ▶ What do you have to be careful of when processing the life timeline?
- This last part can be very sensitive so it is very important to provide a safe environment to all participants at that time.

You can complete the answers of the participants with the following points:

- Depending on the relation with the counselee, you can also ask the following questions:
 - ▶ Why did you draw the line straight / going up / going down? (the answer can give hints about the mood and optimism of the counselee)
 - ▶ What strikes you or stands out in looking over your timeline?

- ▶ Can you identify any 'stages' or 'turning points' in your timeline?
 - ▶ Is your timeline crowded in some places and spacious in others? What does this mean (to you)?
 - ▶ Is there a 'center' or a central theme (or two) in your timeline and life, overall?
 - ▶ Who are/were the most significant people in your life? How?
 - ▶ Can you identify a driving question / a leitmotiv / a trend / a fear / a project that, consciously or subconsciously, has driven your actions and choices throughout life? If so, how did this shape you, your choices or events?
 - ▶ Is there anything you've omitted or left out in the timeline (people, accomplishments, events, etc.)?
- This exercise can be emotionally exhausting for the counselee, especially if there are some traumatic events (rape, death, separation, ...) that are coming out at that time
 - As a result, it is important to follow the rhythm of the counselee and not to push him on discussing all the events mentioned.
 - Besides, the counselee can feel "stuck" in his past and determined by what happened to him. It is therefore important to insist on the fact that:
 - ▶ Things are in the past now
 - ▶ The counselee managed to overcome these difficulties (as he is still alive now, the line did not stop with the event but is going on after it)
 - ▶ There have been a lot of changes and events in the past, which means, there can also be a lot of changes and events in the future
 - Finally, to emphasize the fact that things are still moving on, you can extend the line past the current year, to show that things are not ending today. Then, you can also suggest to the counselee to write the future events / dreams that will happen after this year.
 - Also, you can merge the timeline of different family members, especially the 2 life-partners.