

Creating Lifelines, a Group Mural Submitted by Beth Huss

ETC: P/A C

MDV: R HC S

Materials: Large roll of butcher paper
Crayons or markers
Roll of masking tape (to hold down corners and display)

Procedure:

1. Ask group members to choose their drawing media and chose a spot where they would like to work on the mural.
2. With the chosen drawing material, have group members divide their work area into three sections. In the first section (starting from the left) ask the clients to create images that depict "Where I have been" or "Images of my past life." In the second, middle section, have each member create images of "Where I am now" or "What I want now," and in the last section, "Where I want to be" or "What I want in the future."
3. To process the intervention, the leader picks a section of one member's drawing and asks the member to share. The leader may ask a question specifically about the colors or shapes involved in the image, or about the ideas and emotions behind the images. Following the leader, the group member who was first questioned then picks another image and asks the drawer a question about their image. This cycle continues until the entire group has asked questions about each other's art work and also shared their own art work.
4. To bring the intervention to a close, the leader could ask the group to brainstorm and come up with a title for the mural.

Rationale: This intervention is designed for group members to share about themselves-- their struggles, present outlooks, and future goals. It would be best implemented during the working stage of the group process, when members would be more comfortable sharing with each other. This intervention helps its member's exercise and gain socialization skills.

Adaptations: For the visually impaired, instead of a two-dimensional mural, participants could create images that incorporate pre-cut, textured shapes. The shapes could be cut from wallpaper, sandpaper, or some other textured paper. Learning disabled and/or mentally disabled clients could create the lifeline mural as a group and process the intervention together, focusing the discussion of specific topics such as goals, likes and dislikes. The physically disabled could work on their own piece of paper and assist the group leader in assembling the individual pieces into a mural. The content and processing can be modified to accommodate the varying abilities and limitations of the individuals in the group.

1) I (Linda Probus), often work as 'scribe' for clients unable to accurately assess current level of cumulative stress.

I have them talk quickly off the top of their heads, rattle off anything overwhelming, worrisome, etc. and I make a list for them.

Upon review, they are always surprised at quality/ quantity of what's been identified..

I explain this as " sometimes 1+ 1 + 1+ is OFTEN way bigger than "3". The list can be used to visualize and verbalize stressors, find associations, origins, "chronicity," etc.

The concept of cumulative stress is often new to them.

2) The other is concept of a continuum that helps explain why certain needed, expected actions/ events do not occur.

I use my hands to represent "intention" on one side and "inability" on the other, tipping my hands while describing sitting on an old fashioned teeter-totter, trying to balance w/ one's feet off of the ground...