

Resilient Families Practice Sculpts

What is a Sculpt?

A sculpt is like a low-impact version of a role play! You can do it with a group of people, or using figures like Lego, or on paper.

The purpose is similar to a dis-integration grid. It can help you see a network around a member of a family (child, young person, parent, carer) that helps us understand the 'help and support' from their perspective. Its particularly useful if a family member isn't experiencing the network as helpful, and exploring why that might be.

With a sculpt, we are trying to understand and reflect, not solve a problem. You are trying to imagine what each person in the network - friend, family member, loved one, public services, community services, significant others etc - means to the family member.

Sculpt is a tool from AMBIT and you can find more about it here
<https://manuals.annafreud.org/ambit-static/sculpting-a-network>

How to Do A Sculpt (Simplified Version):

Prepare the Exercise

Family worker brings an example of a network around a family member. They may have a dilemma relating to the network, or they may just be curious about how the network is functioning together as scaffolding ("*James doesn't seem at all comfortable with this network, he's now refusing to come to TAFs and I'm not sure why that is*")

- Facilitator chooses someone to be the family member and places them at the centre, sitting or standing.
- Facilitator then asks for a volunteer from the group to 'play' the worker who is bringing the case (the actual worker who brings the case does not participate physically in the sculpt, they observe).

List the Network Members

- Facilitator uses flip chart or paper to list all the members of the network around the family member
- Facilitator invites volunteers from the group to play the 'characters' of different people in the network (close family members, friends and peers, sports coach, police officer, teacher, youth worker, religious leader, etc etc)

Build the Sculpt

- The facilitator asks the family worker to position each character in relation to the family member in the centre, using their 'best guess' of how the family member might see their relationship with that person. This should include the person 'playing' them:
- Close relationship - sit them close together, looking at each other
- Distant relationship - sit them far apart
- Consider whether you want them seated "facing" or turned away from each other etc
- continue until all network members have been 'positioned'

Pause for Reflection

- Once the network is sculpted "as it is", stop and pause for a reflection. Facilitator to remind the group that you are not asking people to PROBLEM SOLVE or ASK QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE CASE, but to stop and look at this network and reflect on:
 - What thoughts and feelings is this bringing up for people in the room, seeing this network sculpted out?
 - How do the group think the family member might be thinking/feeling about this network?
 - How do the group think other people in the network might be experiencing this?
 - Key question - where is the person who has epistemic trust with the family member? how close or far away are they? How are they seen by other network members?
- Hold the boundary of sticking to the reflections – part of the purpose is to offer people a chance to connect with what kind of experience of help we end up creating around a client. Does this seem like a helpful way of organising care?

Re-Sculpt The Network

- Once the network is sculpted "as it is", ask key "players" to talk about how it might feel for their character to be in this position.
- Facilitator now invites the family worker who brought the dilemma to try re-organising the network:
 - Physically re-arrange the characters in ways that the family member might start to experience them as more accessible, helpful, etc
 - Invite the family worker to think about who within the network the client might trust – is there an obvious person with epistemic trust or is there a lack of a person with epistemic trust? How close or far away are they?
 - After this has been established, who might they move to be closer to who?
 - Who might they take away?

Acknowledge Practicalities and Invite Next Steps

This is not about solving the case, but is about **empowering** the case-holding worker to see it is as within their role to INFLUENCE how the network around clients might look.

Acknowledge that it may not feel so possible in “real-life” to make these changes, but to make a plan about how they might want the network if it were going to be experienced as useful is a helpful starting point.

The worker could think about HOW it might be possible to influence (sometimes we get stuck with the feeling that we can’t change it and therefore never make attempts to try to plan what we could do).

The key message to leave the group with from this section of the exercise is that they should feel that it is within their influence to think about how they would like the network to look and

to make a plan about how they might support this to happen (often a gradual process, rather than a one-off re-organisation).

A Real Life Sculpt Example

We once sculpted the network around an 8 year old child. There were 35 people in the network. Once we sculpted the network, the child had literally disappeared into the crowd and we couldn't see her anymore.

This was a powerful representation on how the child might be experiencing the 'scaffolding network of help' as completely overwhelming, and was a wake up call to all of us involved.