

# Pulled From a Hat

Source: Karen Freud

## Goals

- Increase positive interaction within the family
- Increase cohesion among family members
- Implement new methods of effective communication between family members

## Materials

- Drawing Directives (included)
- Paper or 10-15 index cards
- Scissors
- A hat (or other container large enough to hold the index cards)
- Large sheet of white paper
- Drawing materials such as markers or colored pencils

## Advance Preparation

Copy the Drawing Directives and cut out each one, or copy each directive onto a separate index card. Place the directives in a hat.

Arrange a flat space for the large sheet of paper so that each person has easy access. Arrange the drawing materials near the flat surface so all family members can easily reach them.

## Description

Tell the family that they are going to work together to make one picture according to specific instructions that they will pick out of a hat.

The family members sit together around the sheet of paper. One at a time, the members choose one index card from the hat and follow the directive. They may use any color they choose and they may use any part of the paper. When done, the member passes the hat to the person sitting to his/her left.

This continues until the family unanimously agrees that the drawing is complete. Members are asked if they would like to add anything to their drawing such as more lines, shapes, color, or images. Encourage the participants to decide together.

The family is then asked to identify the images in their drawing and to tell a story together about their drawing. The story must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and each family member must contribute to the story.

Then lead the family in a discussion about the drawing. Discussion questions might include:

1. Was it easy or difficult to follow the instructions?
2. Was it easy or difficult to wait for your turn?
3. What is your favorite part of the story?
4. What was it like to work together as a family on the drawing and the story?

In addition to asking the above questions, it is important to address any issues that may have arisen during the process. For example, the family might have experienced a situation in which a parent or sibling drew on an area that another child had wanted to use. Or some family members might have taken more time than others to finish their turn, causing the others to feel impatient. The parents may have been tempted to make a decision for their child rather than allowing the child to make an independent choice about how to follow the directive.

## **Discussion**

This activity enhances positive behavior within the family such as following rules, taking turns, and working together toward a common task. It also helps family members gain insight into how their choices and behaviors affect others, such as whether or not to follow the rules. The activity provides everyone in the family with the opportunity to exercise independent decision-making and emphasizes how each person's role is important. Discussions about the drawing, such as deciding when it's complete and/or telling a story about their drawing, can help the family develop their communication skills.

There are many benefits to using art in family therapy sessions. As Malchiodi (2005) writes, "Art therapy provides the client with an opportunity to externalize his or her thoughts and feelings through visual images. Making an image, whether a drawing, a painting, or a sculpture, is an experience of visual thinking and can be an additional source of information for both client and therapist...Art expression offers a tangible and lasting product that provides a valuable component to therapy...a drawing or painting can be looked at, referred to, and talked about immediately or in a later session."

## **Reference**

Malchiodi, C.A. (2005). *Expressive therapies*. New York: Guilford Press.

## **About The Author**

Karen Freud, BA, A.T., received her training at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute. She is based in Toronto and currently conducts individual and group art therapy sessions and workshops for various community organizations. Her experience includes working with children and adults, and she has worked in a variety of settings that include mental health agencies, long-term care facilities, and private practice.

# **Pulled From a Hat**

## **Drawing Directives**

Draw a straight line

Draw three dots

Draw a circle

Draw a square

Draw a squiggle

Draw a box

Draw a number

Draw an animal

Draw a person

Draw a tree

Draw a house

Draw a road

Draw water

Draw a mountain