
Creative Interventions and Activities Clearinghouse

Road Maps: Helping Clients Examine Their History and Future Through Artwork

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Purpose:

The purpose of this creative intervention is to help clients see their life histories and gain certainty regarding their future.

Materials Needed:

Paper, markers, pencils, pens, and crayons

Procedures:

Through this activity clients and counselors are able to explore patterns, expand self-expression, and plan their lives more effectively. Clients paint or draw their life paths and career influences in the same manner that they map out directions to a specific destination. In this procedure, clients sketch in significant events and experiences along the way. Counselors may introduce the activity by saying, "I want you to represent your life as a road map. Some roads are straight and wide; others are narrow and winding. Some are bumpy, and others are smooth. There may be some road blocks or detours. It is possible that the road of your life has been many of these features and more." These directions give client free reign to evaluate the factors that have been most influential and then symbolize them in a form that allows the visualization of past and present simultaneously.

Process Questions and Follow-Up

After completing the drawing, clients talk about the map and the events depicted on it.

What events were expected?

Which ones were unexpected?

What people were associated with these events?

What feelings are remembered?

These and other questions encourage self-exploration while providing the counselor with a picture of clients' contextual development.

Practice Setting:

Mental Health Agency/Private Practice

Additional Comments:

Support clients who have a fear of drawing and clients who are perfectionists.