

People ⁱⁿ my Life

The contents of the People in my Life figure set

Figures

People in my Life figure set contains over 300 figures, designed with minimal facial features to allow the representation of a wide range of people of all ages.

The figures are thin and light, printed front and back on robust Never-tear polyester paper. When in use, they can either be laid down flat or slotted into a stand and stood beside each other on a tabletop.

The figures are:

- People - men, women, adolescent boys and girls, children, small children, and babies
- Cats and dogs
- Special figures - Fantasy Friends and Trouble Trolls. These can be used with narrative approaches with externalised problems or a solution focus.
- Small cards representing buildings, a car and a wall

Figure stands

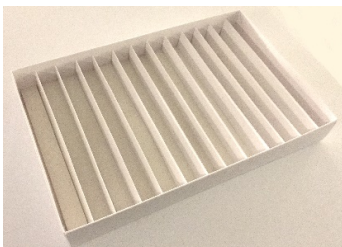


There are 100 figure stands in the People in my Life figure set. When a figure is selected it can be slipped into a stand and easily removed after use. The stands can be used repeatedly, but their holding power will be reduced if thicker objects are placed in them. The set



also contains a **flat-packed box** to hold them.

The display boxes



It is often useful to have a small selection of figures, ready in their stands. The other figures can be kept nearby, standing up in the two display boxes. These are made to accommodate a large selection of standing figures. The bases are divided into rows and at the base of each row there is a thin strip of sponge which will hold figures upright against the side of the row.

You can arrange the figures in the boxes in the way that suits your client group and practice. The rows are wide enough to accommodate figures in their stands, and the sponge strips can be removed if this is more convenient.

Any surplus figures can be kept in reserve in the pocket sheet they arrive in.

The printed backgrounds

Figures can be placed freely on a table, standing or lying down to form a relationship overview. A blank canvas can be supplemented with labels and symbols. Placing them on a whiteboard or sheet of plain paper allows writing and drawing. For example, a simple representation of a school playground or classroom can be drawn, and figures can be set out to help demonstrate how a child has experienced in a difficult situation or incident.

The set contains A3 paper sheets with 5 different patterns, designed to assist the placement of figures. Copies of the sheets in PDF format can be downloaded from the peopleinmylife.org website.

Hexagon



The hexagon background has defined spaces for the placement of individual figures, and these are particularly helpful for younger children. When they place their figure in the centre this clearly indicates whose point of view is in focus now. The colouring of the hexagons with lightens distance from the centre which can indicate relationship closeness and distance, encouraging expressions of

attachment and belonging.

It is usual to begin by asking the first person to choose a figure for them self and place it on the centre. When other figures are chosen and placed on the background to make a relationship overview, you can ask about the significance of where they are placed. Sometimes figure placements seem interesting or unexpected and these can be a rich source for enquiry about the relationships. As the conversation develops you can ask questions such as whether they would prefer any figures to be standing in a different place and what it would mean if a figure was in a different place. In family sessions, the other members can be drawn into the conversation when it seems appropriate, and they can show each other their points of view and talk about their differences and agreements.

Circle

The circle background is based on the charts used for talking about social networks. This version comprises six segments that can be labelled to represent different social arenas, such as the household, family, relatives, work/school, neighbours, friends, helpers. The definitions of the sectors can be written on post-it notes. Placing figures on a background allows more flexible than a traditional chart where symbols are drawn on paper. They can be moved easily and this allows the representation of contrasting perspectives and the comparison of different alternatives.



Coloured Circle



The 8 segments of this background can be labelled to show different aspects of a situation. It was initially drawn to indicate different emotional reactions to a specific event. When each segment is labelled to represent a feeling, figures can be placed to indicate the intensity of that feeling. Eckman's model of 6 basic emotions is useful when talking with children and Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions is more elaborate and more appropriate for teenagers and adults. Family

members can be asked to place each other's figures to indicate how they have experienced each other. For example, a child may experience an anxious parent as angry and believe that they are being blame for something that was not their fault.

The segments can be given labels to indicate any kind of option. If the family want to make a decision together, each segment can represent an alternative and the shadings their degree of preference. By placing figures, everyone's perspective can be seen and heard before a decision is settled on.

Lined

The lines can represent generations when making a genogram or family map illustrated with figures. Place the most recent generation furthest down (or up) and add their parents, grandparents and great grandparents above them with cousins, aunts and uncles on the sides. The eldest sibling is usually placed to the left, youngest to the right. Talking about family members, the relationships between them, their similarities and differences and their ways of dealing with difficulties can focus on both their vulnerabilities and resources in the way they face up to life's challenges.



Scale



Figures can be placed on the scale to express their evaluations or preferences concerning a particular issue. They can show values like their enthusiasm, optimism, satisfaction.

In working from a mentalisation-based perspective, people can show how rate their own level of

mentalising in a particular situation.

Note blocks

There are 3 note blocks in the set for writing names, labels or small drawings to supplement the figure placements.



Thoughts and feelings card

These cards can be used to talk about how someone understands the thoughts and feelings of another person. This is a mentalisation-based exercise that can also be useful for developing emotional awareness. Download the PDF file from the website.

Read more about People in my Life at our website

www.peopleinmylife.org



Enquiries or feedback

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Steven Balmbra's website www.relationshipoverviews.org presents a dialogue model about using figures for talking about relationships, and there is a resources page with links to other similar websites.