

Family System Mapping Template

Visual Documentation Tool

Overview

Family system mapping provides a visual representation of relationships, alliances, and dynamics. This tool helps identify patterns that may not be apparent through verbal description alone.

Mapping Elements

Relationship Lines:

- Solid line: Normal relationship
- Double line: Enmeshed/overly close
- Dashed line: Distant/disengaged
- Zigzag line: Conflictual
- Line with slash: Cutoff

Role Designations:

- GC: Golden Child
- SG: Scapegoat
- EN: Enabler
- FM: Flying Monkey
- IP: Identified Patient (family's "problem")

Triangulation Patterns

Document triangles by drawing lines showing how third parties are pulled into dyadic conflicts. Note who initiates triangulation and who gets recruited.

Questions to Guide Mapping

- Who talks to whom about problems (vs. directly addressing them)?
- Who has alliances? Who is excluded?
- What happens when someone tries to change the system?
- Who holds power? How is it maintained?
- What secrets exist? Who knows what?

Using the Map

- Share with client to validate their experience visually
- Identify intervention points in the system

- Track changes over time as client sets boundaries
- Use in couples work to show each partner's family patterns