

People in my Life

The contents of the People in my Life boxed figure set

Figures

People in my Life figure set comprises as many as 300 figures. This allows the representation of a very wide range people, varying in age and appearance, but with minimal and neutral facial features. Not all the figures have to be displayed at the same time, some can be held in reserve until they are an appropriate match for a person's social network.

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

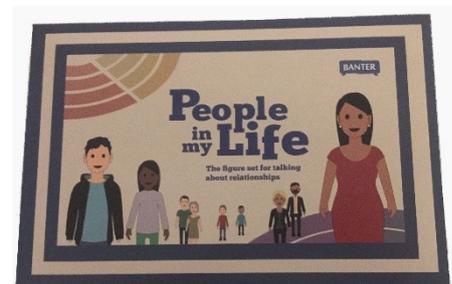
The display boxes

The two display boxes can accommodate a large selection of standing figures. The remaining figures can be kept in reserve in the pocket sheet. The bases of the display boxes are divided into rows and the base of each row is lined with a sponge strip at the bottom. The figures can easily be slotted in between the sponge strip and the



side of the row, standing ready for selection. In this way,

almost a hundred figures can be displayed in each box, but it is up to you how many it is appropriate to display at any time. The rows are wide enough to accommodate figures in their stands, and the sponge strips can be removed if this is more convenient.



Surplus figures can be kept in reserve in the pocket sheet. One option is to display male figures in the one box and female figures in the other, adults at the back, children in front of them, babies and pets foremost.



The figure stands and their box



When figures are selected, they can be easily slipped into the stands provided with the set, then removed and replaced again after use. There are 100 stands in the set, many more than would ordinarily be needed to make an overview of a person's important relationships. The figures slip easily in and out of the stands which can be used repeatedly, although it is

best to avoid placing thicker objects in a stand as this will reduce its holding power. The stands come in a grip seal bag and the set contains a **flat-packed box** that can be opened up to hold them, ready for use.



The printed backgrounds

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

The patterns are:

Plain

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.

Hexagon



The hexagon background has defined spaces for the placement of individual figures, and these are particularly helpful for younger children. Placing the first figure in the centre indicates clearly whose point of view is in focus. 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 talk about where they are placed where they are.

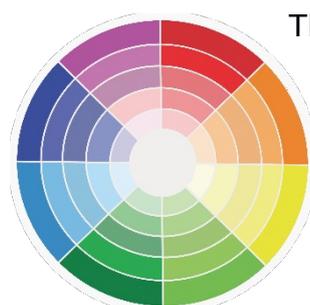
Sometimes figure placements seem interesting or unexpected and these can be a rich source for stories about the relationships. As the conversation develops you can ask questions like whether they would prefer any figures to be standing in a different place and what it would mean if a figure was placed differently. 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 opinions.

Circle

The circle background is a form of network chart that can be used in a similar way to those developed by Bronfenbrenner. 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 names of the sectors can be written on post-it labels. Placing figures on a background is more flexible than traditional charts where symbols are drawn on paper, because they can be moved easily, which opens for 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. They can be used show perceptions of different levels of feelings among family members, related to a specific event. When each segment represents 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.

Post-it labels can be used to give segments any kind of name. 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 an illustrated genogram or family chart. Place the most recent generation furthest down and add their parents, grandparents and great grandparents above them with cousins, aunts and uncles on the sides. Traditionally the eldest sibling is 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 of one to nine to express their evaluations or preferences. They can show values like their enthusiasm, optimism, satisfaction.

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



More

Read more about using People in my Life at our website www.peopleinmylife.org

You can also read more about how figures can be used for talking about relationships at Steven Balmбра's website www.relationshipoverviews.org

Enquiries or feedback? Contact us at post@banter.no