

# Family Quilt

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**Theme:** Engagement and Assessment

**Recommended Age Range:** Four and Up

**Treatment Modality:** Family

## Goals

- Engage and assess the family
- Identify what each person brings to the family
- Focus on positive aspects of the family

## Materials

- White card stock
- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Masking tape
- A patchwork quilt

## Advanced Preparation

Cut two (four or six inch) squares of card stock for each family member.

## Description

Begin by showing the quilt and pointing out the different squares that make up the quilt. Lead into a discussion of how a family is like the quilt in that each family member is unique and brings different things to the family and that they are going to make a family quilt.

The therapist gives each family member two quilt squares and instructs them to decorate their squares, using markers or colored pencils, to represent themselves and what they bring to the family. Suggest they draw hobbies, favorite foods, music they like, personality traits, etc.

After the squares have been completed, turn them upside down and tape them together on the reverse side in the shape of a patchwork quilt. Pause for a moment before slowly turning it over as you say, "I present to you the \_\_\_\_\_ family quilt." Have each family member describe what their squares say about them. Family members may ask questions or make comments about each others squares.

The therapist can ask questions such as, “What did you learn about each other?” “What one word describes your family quilt?” “What would someone who didn’t know your family learn from looking at your quilt?”

## **Discussion**

Quilts are often made from scraps of fabric taken from discarded clothing of family members. When those scraps are joined together, it creates a picture of the family. This activity is an assessment tool that gives the therapist a picture of how the family members see themselves. Many families struggle with being able to see that each family member brings unique strengths to the family and that without each member, their family would not be complete. The family quilt enables them to see their family from a new perspective.

Creative expression in family therapy sessions allows all family members to be drawn in. Interaction and conversation occurs among the family members while they are decorating their squares. This gives the therapist an opportunity to observe family dynamics such as, “Was the family interaction positive or negative?” “Did one family member take charge or was the responsibility of making the quilt shared?” “

This activity can be adapted to grief. The family members could make a quilt with the squares representing their individual memories of the person who died.