**House Drawing Exercise**

**Aim of the Exercise**

Estimated Time: 15 minutes for the drawing and as much time as you want to devote to debriefing

The object of the initiative is for a team of no more than about 10 to 12 individuals to work at drawing a house together, one line at a time, with no talking. The exercise provides an opportunity for team work, the use of communication skills and strategies, minimal problem solving, and the role of individual differences. The task is a great lead in to discussions of how patient-provider interactions take place, how to approach and engage others, and how teams tend to function.

**Materials**

* A large piece of paper that will allow a group of 10 to 12 draw a house together
* Washable markers

**Front Loading**

The facilitator begins by asking the group to take a minute or two to think about and conjure up in their mind:

“The house of their dreams. Money is no object. And when you have this mind’s eye view of your house, look up at me so that I know that you are ready.”

The facilitator goes on to say:

“From here on there is no talking. Laughing is allowed. The task for your group is to draw one picture of a house on the paper before you, trying to stay true to the picture you have in your mind. There will be one house drawing when your group is done. Everyone must participate, drawing one line at a time. “

**Rules and Considerations**

The facilitator then lets the group draw to a point where there is a fairly developed object and everyone has been able to have several turns.

There may be some challenge by group members regarding talking – just remind them that there is no talking. Try not to intervene in anyway, unless there is inappropriate behavior or disrespect toward others. Try not to comment on what is being drawn at the time that the group is working together.

You can set up paper for a number of groups. This task has been done in rooms where there were numbers ranging from 5 to 70 or more. It would require having enough materials for groups of 10 to 12.

**Debriefing**

The facilitator, during debriefing, passes through the following “building questions.”

What was it like in doing the task?

Not what they did or what they had seen taking place. Simply what it felt like in doing this “silly exercise.”

What did they see or experience during the task?

* What was the initial reaction of the team?
* How well did the team cope with this challenge?
* What skills did it take to be successful as a team?
* What creative solutions were suggested and how were they received?
* How did individuals respond to other’s ideas as demonstrated through their drawing?
* What would an outside observer have seen as the strengths and weaknesses of the team?
* What roles did people play?
* What did each team member learn about him/her self as an individual?

What could the team take from this experience in addressing team work in the future?

Themes to consider and which are typically observed and noted during the activity:

* Challenges in getting started
* It is fine and acceptable to have tasks that are both “fun” and “frustrating.”
* Struggles with communication
* Individuals had to anticipate where lines were going and how to move things along by the placement of their own lines.
* Like patient-physician interaction – each comes in with a perception of what health is, and then it is a process of determining how to motivate or move toward “health.” We each may have an idea of a house, but have different perspectives. We have to work at determining where the lines are and how to communicate.
* There is a willingness to compromise on one’s own perspective or agenda.
* There may have been some “broad ideas” of what constitutes a line – relate this to how rules and guidelines are addressed by groups/teams.
* Note how some may have had a top down perspective in how to draw a house, while other may have had a side view.
* Some individuals may have been daring and willing to strike out on their own, while others may have been more cautious and tentative so as not to be disruptive.