

ART THERAPY RESOURCES



★ *Art Therapy & Families*

This art therapy exercise is designed as a collaborative art task for all family members to undertake. The goal of the exercise is to create an artwork that resembles a puzzle with each puzzle piece representing a family member.

INSTRUCTIONS:

As the art therapist, take a piece of paper and cut the paper into the number of pieces that exist in the family unit. For example if a family unit is made of 4 people, cut the paper into 4 pieces or if a family unit is made of 6 members, then cut the paper into 6 pieces. The paper can be cut in random shapes to represent a puzzle. The shapes of the paper do not have to be symmetrical or even, however, the shapes should be approximately the same size with an inference that all family members represent an important piece of the family puzzle.

Give each family member a piece of paper that has been cut from the sheet (the puzzle pieces). Allocate each family member with the name of another family member. You can do this by drawing names from a hat or simply asking each family member to refer to the person sitting to the right of them.

Ask each family member to write that person's name at the top of the puzzle shape. Ask each family member to decorate the puzzle piece in colours and patterns that they believe best represents their allocated family member.

Ask each family member to write 2-4 things that they believe the other family member contributes to the family. Younger children who cannot write may need help with this task by writing words down for the child.

After the pieces are decorated, ask the family members as a group to reconnect all of the pieces back into a single puzzle with all pieces in place.

After the puzzle is in place together, you can facilitate a discussion amongst family members to consider:

- Why each family member decided on their choices for decorating their piece.
- Ask each family member about their choice of written words to describe what they perceive the family member contributes to the family unit.
- Discuss about perceptions amongst different members of the family unit.
- Discuss how each family member forms part of the puzzle that makes up this family unit.

