

# **MODULE 16**

## **AGENDA**

- I. Planning for Change
- II. The Family System
- III. “Soul Food”
- IV. Areas Affected by the Entrance of New Members
- V. Eco-Maps



# AREAS OF CONSIDERATION



The decision to resource parent will affect your immediate and extended family. Planning ahead with your family for the change can lessen any negative responses and enhance the overall experience for everyone including the child placed. Consider your family system and answer the questions below.

1. Are there family members who do not agree with your decision, or family members who may need extra attention in order to support your decision?
2. Are there family members who are in support and could be used to encourage other family members?
3. How would you handle questions from neighbors and/or church members?
4. How strong is your ability to communicate change, as well as areas that require change? How comfortable do you feel talking about your decision to become a resource parent with those who “don’t support your decision”?
5. Do you have support systems in place, to support your decision to resource parent? (If not, creating one would be beneficial.)

# Family Systems

The members of your family compose your family “system.” Although there are relationships between the members, each family member has individual characteristics. Thus, the family members are independent, yet dependent on each other.



## Families Interact in Patterns...

There are predictable patterns of interaction that emerge in a family system. These repetitive cycles help maintain the family’s balance. *What are some of your family’s patterns?*

## Families have boundaries...

Families have boundaries, which can be viewed on a continuum from open to closed. A boundary refers to territory, bounds, limits, or confines.

### Different Types of Boundaries

- ❑ **Open boundary systems** allow people and situations outside the family to influence it. A family with open boundaries may even welcome outside influences.
- ❑ **Closed boundary systems** are very protective and resistant to outside influence. A family with closed boundaries will isolate its family members from outsiders, and may seem secluded and self-contained.
- ❑ **Clear boundaries** are flexible. This allows an appropriate response to the given situation.

No family system is completely closed or completely open. Most will operate somewhere on a continuum. *How would you describe your family’s boundary system?*



## Families use messages and rules...

Messages and rules are relationship agreements, which limit or establish expected behavior over time. Messages and rules are repetitive and redundant. They are rarely, if ever, explicit or written down. They give power; they induce guilt; they control or limit behaviors; and they perpetuate themselves and reproduce. Most messages and rules can be stated in one or a few words. For example, “*More is better,*” “*Be responsible,*” and “*Be perfect*” are all examples of messages/rules. *What are some of your family’s messages and rules?*

## Each family member has a “role”.

Members are expected to perform specific behaviors with rules that govern these behaviors. Some specific roles are listed in the Roles handout. *Do you recognize any of the roles in your family system?*

## All families have communication patterns.

Families establish (not necessarily consciously) patterned ways of initiating and responding in the world.

A family’s communication is composed of:

- ▶ Listening skills (Attentiveness)
- ▶ Speaking skills (Speaking for self)
- ▶ Self-disclosure (Vulnerability/defensiveness)
- Respect and regard for each other



**How would you describe your family’s communication patterns?**

# **FAMILY ROLES**

## **"Scapegoat"**

This is the family member who the family feels ashamed of – but, who can be the most emotionally honest person in the family. Scapegoats provide distraction from the real issues in the family.

## **"Placater" - "Mascot" - "Caretaker"**

This member takes responsibility for the emotional well-being of the family. They become the family's 'social director' and/or clown, diverting the family's attention from the pain and anger.

## **"Adjuster" - "Lost Child"**

This member escapes by attempting to be invisible. Adjusters daydream, fantasize, read a lot of books, or watch a lot of TV. They deal with reality by withdrawing from it. They deny that they have any feelings and "don't bother getting upset."

## **"The Ambassador"**

The Ambassador is the member who represents the family to the outside world. He or she regularly speaks on behalf of the family.

## **"The Comforter"**

This family member serves as the "counselor" from whom other members seek advice and comfort, and with whom they discuss problems.

## **"The Consultant"**

The Consultant is a family member, outside of the immediate family, who is considered influential or powerful by the members. The Consultant generally enters and exits quickly, but his/her presence never goes unnoticed.

## **"The Financial Advisor"**

This family member provides advice about financial matters to the family.

## **"The Fence-sitter"**

This family member has no opinion about anything. He/she generally agrees with the last opinion given by someone else in the family.

## **"The Kin-keeper"**

This family member is the organizer. The Kin-keeper keeps the family together, and works hard at keeping the family in touch with one another.

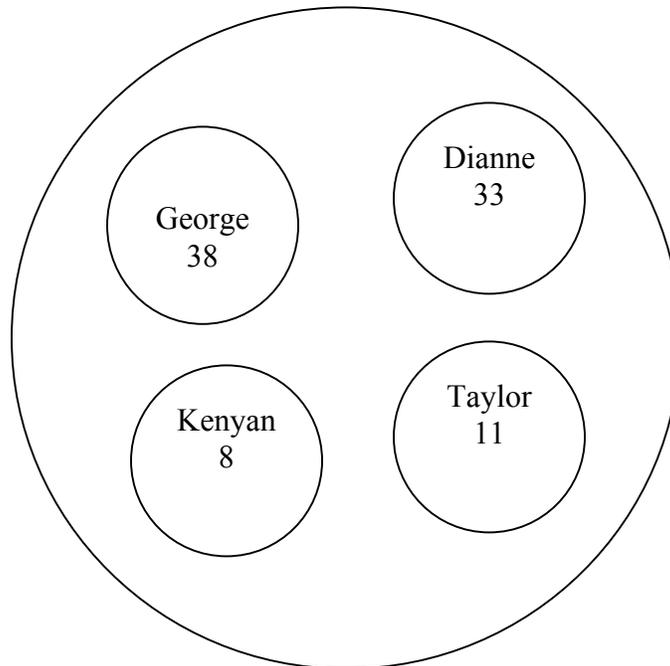
## **"Enforcer/Disciplinarian"**

The Enforcer is the family member most likely to set the household rules. He or she keeps the family in control.

## CREATING YOUR FAMILY ECO-MAP

An Ecological Map (Eco-Map) is a visual representation of your family system and all the extended familial, community, and institutional supports with which your family interacts.

1. To create your Eco-Map, begin by drawing a large circle. Inside this circle, place each member of your immediate family (those living in your household). Put each of their names/ages in a circle of their own within the large circle.



2. Outside of the larger circle, create circles of varying sizes to represent your interactions with extended family, work, community, social institutions, or any other type of system with which your family regularly interacts. Utilize your Family Support List, which you completed earlier in the training session, to remind you of people and places to include.
3. The next step is to create the visual relationships. This is done by drawing a line from the larger circle to the outer circles using the following key:

**Dashed line** \_\_\_\_\_ = Weak relationship

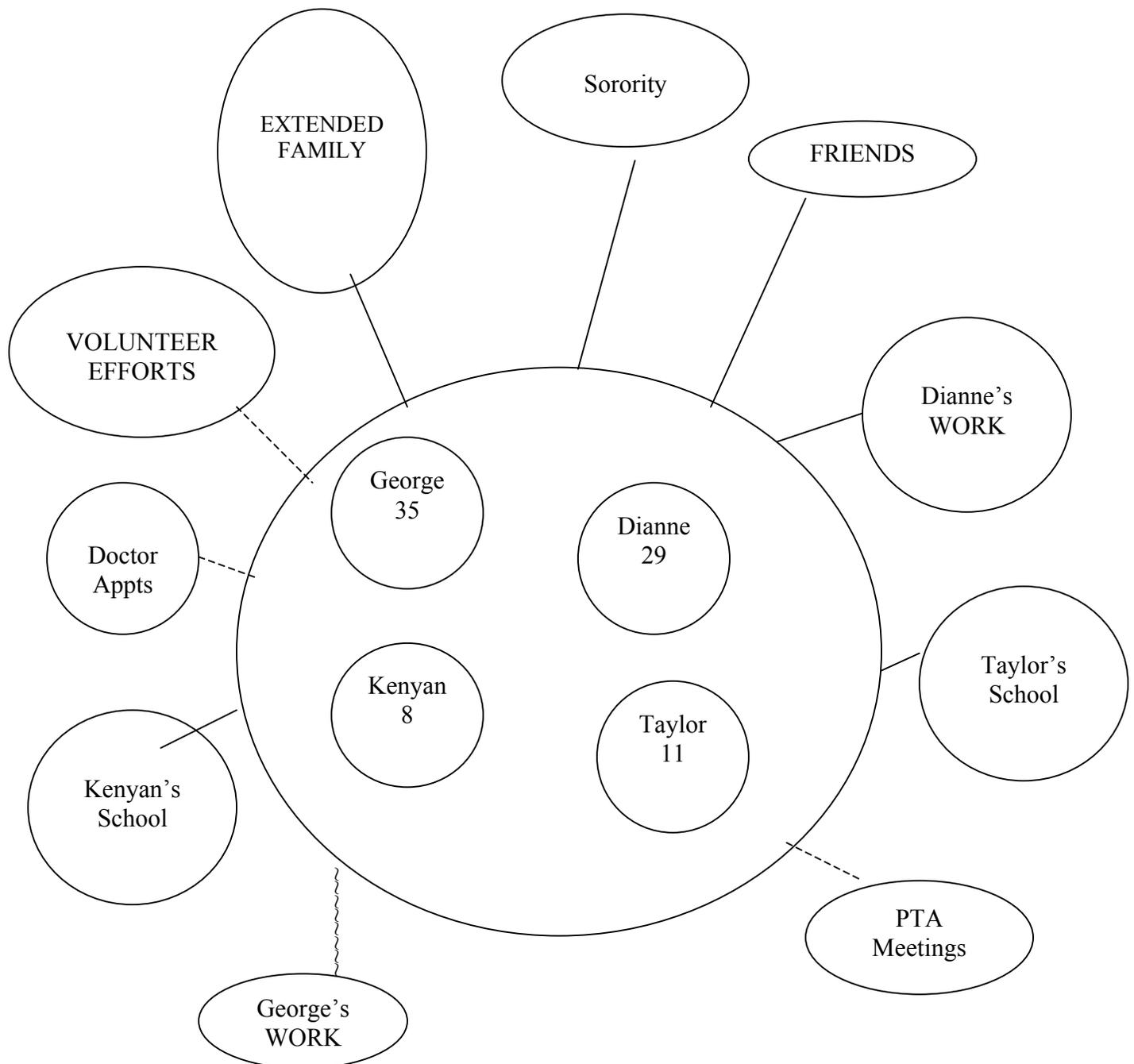
**Solid Line** \_\_\_\_\_ = Strong Relationship

**Hashed Line** // = Difficult or Problem Relationship

## CREATING YOUR FAMILY ECO-MAP

4. To consider how the addition of a child may change your family's Eco-Map, use a different color marker to add the needs that the child may bring (i.e., school, visits, siblings, activities...)

**NOTE:** Each circle drawn outside the larger circle should be connected to the larger circle with some type of connecting line. Relationships inside the circle can also have connecting lines, indicating relationships within the home.



# My Life

**Instructions:** Fill in the first column with your immediate and extended family members and friends. The second column should include all your social supports, hobbies, and activities. Finally, in the third column, list all the community or institutional supports that you regularly (often) interact with, to include doctors, religious organizations, and community organizations.

<b>Family Members Immediate &amp; Extended Friends and others</b>	<b>Social Supports, Hobbies, Activities</b>	<b>Community/Institutional Supports Organizations</b>