

# The Tree of Life

1 day training as a course instructor + 2 days workshop with young people.



The Tree of Life is part of a process for strengthening identity, where the tree is a metaphor for life itself. The roots of the tree represent one's roots: where one comes from, family, good memories from childhood, important values and good experiences.

The earth represents life here and now, well-being and happiness in everyday life.

The trunk of the tree represents one's personality; whatever you are good at, such as dancing, singing, fixing cars and more personal qualities such as being caring, responsible etc.

The branches represent hopes and wishes for the future. The leaves on the tree represent important people in one's life, and the fruits represent what meaning they have for your life and what you learned from them.

The process of drawing and writing on the tree is divided into two: First, one concentrates on all that is good to remember, that which makes one proud and happy. Each person

presents her or his tree to the others. The participants then give the person feedback on what he or she means to them and what strengths they see in him or her.

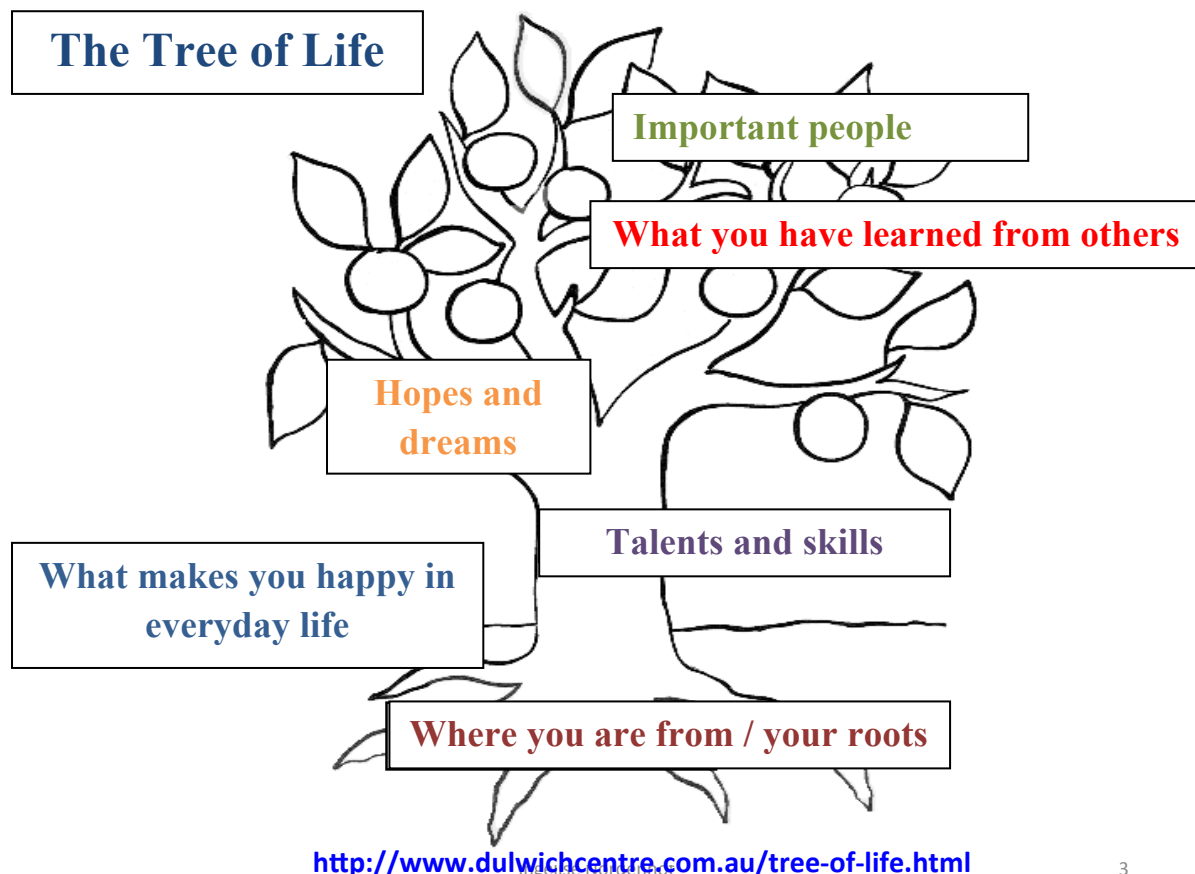
Secondly, the focus is on storms in one's life, i.e. the difficulties the participants have encountered in life. One does not go into their storms in detail, but discusses how different storms affect emotions, thoughts and actions. The main focus is on what the participants did to get through the storms and what is good to remember when one encounters storms in life. The group becomes an arena for reflection on mastering and opportunities, even though a person has been exposed to painful situations in life.

The Tree of Life is derived from Narrative practice. The method was developed in South Africa in working with children who had lost parents in war or from HIV/Aids.

The purpose is to strengthen the identity of the participants and create a context in life. The dominant painful story often hinders the memory or awareness of all of the important and good things the person may have experienced in life. Starting from the good, the person one wants to be and the hopes, dreams and values one has for life, creates a safe platform for conversations about the difficulties and pain one has experienced.

The Tree of Life can be used both in groups and with individuals. It is important that the process is followed by close carers, teachers and so on, so that conversations about life can be continued in everyday life in an expanded understanding of who the young person really is.

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The young people who have completed the Tree of Life will receive a personal diploma. Participants in the course that includes workshops (2 days) and training (1 day) will receive a course certificate. In addition, the course instructors will receive this Inspiration booklet, developed in collaboration between Regional Trauma Centre (RVTS South) and Department of Child and Adolescence Mental Health (Sorlandet Hospital), as support for the implementation of the Tree of Life with the young people.

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