

1.1

REFLECTING ON FAMILIES YOU HAVE WORKED WITH  
CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

Taking time to think about families you currently work with, or have worked with in the past, is a great way to generate ideas for a case.

**Instructions:** Each of the boxes below contains a prompt and a question to start you thinking about families. For each prompt, write down some ideas about a family that comes to mind. You might look at old photographs, case files, or journal notes to help inspire you.

# Think about a family that...

*...surprised you.* What was surprising?

*...was special to you.* Why do you feel this way? What was your relationship like?

*...you had much success with.* How and why were you successful?

*...you wish you knew more about.* How would you have worked with them differently in the past, or how could you work differently with them now?

*...you learned something from working with them.* What did you learn?

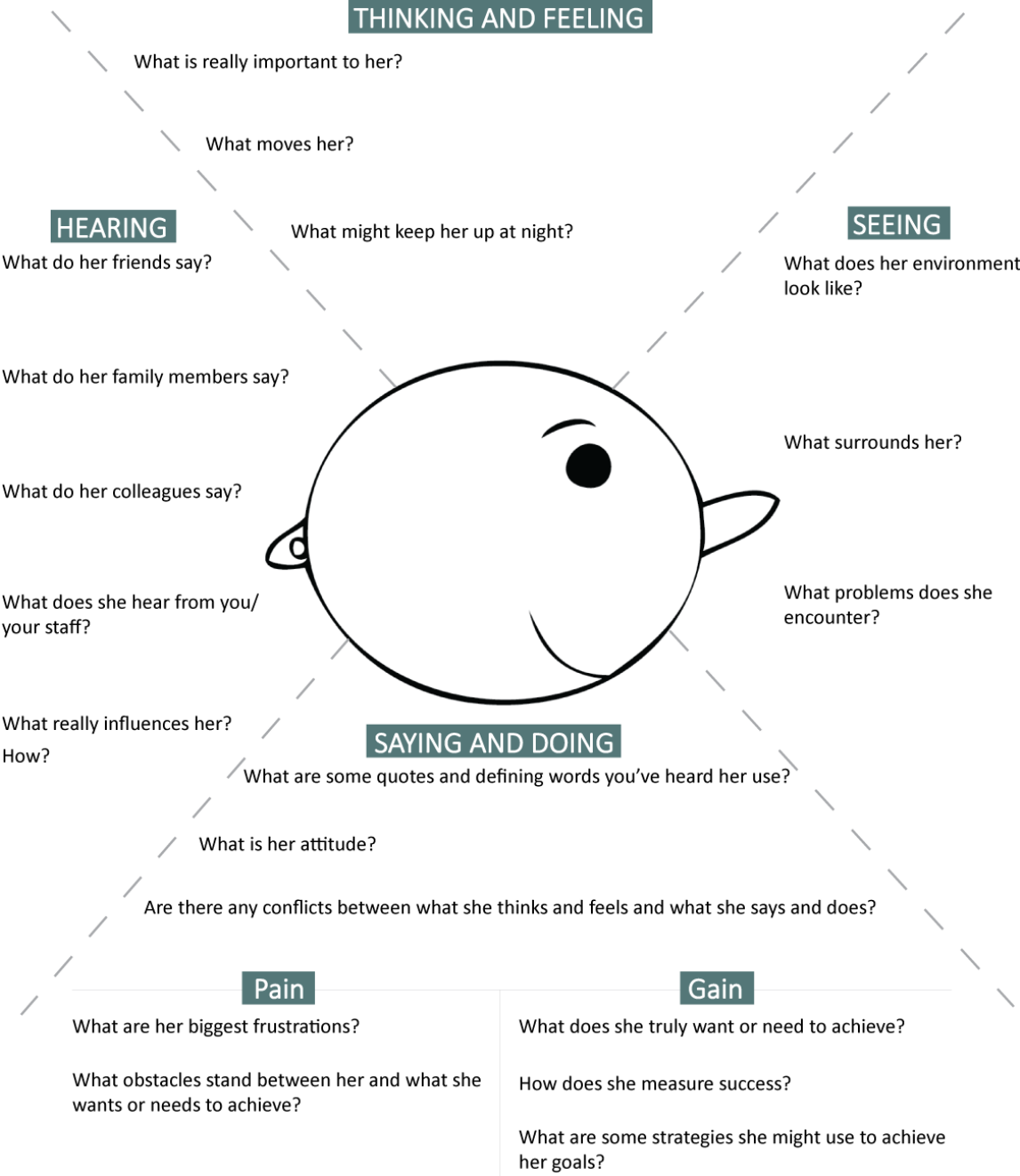
*...you wish you had worked with differently.* How would you work with them today?

**1.2**

USING THE EMPATHY MAP\*  
 CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

An Empathy Map is a tool designed to help you develop a better understanding of how a family member that you work with now, or have worked with in the past, thinks and feels.

**Instructions:** Select a family member that you want to include in your case. Read through each of the categories below, and use data and anecdotes to answer the questions about him or her. After you complete the map, think about how this information might be integrated into a case.



\*Note: This exercise has been adapted from Osterwalder, A., & Pigneur, Y. (2010). *Business model generation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and Gray, D., Brown, S., & Macanuso, J. (2010). *Gamestorming: A playbook for innovators, rulebreakers, and changemakers*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

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IDENTIFYING MISMATCHES

CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

A case revolves around mismatches between what different people in a situation want. A mismatch might be the result of a breakdown in communication, relationship-building, or differences between what people want, or, what they think people might need. As you move forward in writing your own case, it is important to clearly identify mismatches that you would like to highlight.

**Instructions:** Think about families that you work with currently or have worked with in the past, in which there have been mismatches between what one of the family members needs and wants and what you—or another person—need and want. Fill out the table below as you consider these situations while keeping a particular family member in mind.

	What are the family member’s needs and wants?	What do you—or the other person in the situation—need and want?	What steps would you take (or, were taken) to fulfill the desires and wants of the family member and those of the other person in the situation?	What steps would you recommend (or, were taken) to build a stronger relationship and better communication with the family member?
Family 1.				
Family 2.				
Family 3.				

# 3

## CHOOSING PEOPLE AND INFORMATION FOR YOUR CASE

### CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

When you develop your own case, you don't need to include a lot of people. You *do* need to make sure that you include enough information about each person so that readers can understand everyone's actions and learn from the situation described in the case. Make sure that the people you choose to include are involved in the mismatch of the case—that is, make sure that readers understand the differences between what some people in the situation want or expect and what others—maybe you—might want or desire.

**Instructions:** Think about the case you are interested in writing. Identify 2 or 3 people that you would include in your case (one might be you!) and the information that is important to share about each person. Fill out the table below to help you organize your thoughts. Be sure not to use real names; only use names that you have made up.

	Person 1. <i>(You, or someone central to the case mismatch)</i>	Person 2.	Person 3.
Name			
Age			
Where the person lives			
Whom the person lives with			
Education level			
Religion/Culture			
Family and community contacts			
Important events in the person's history			
Person's strengths			
Person's needs			
Type of relationship the person has with other people in the case			
Other important information			

4.1

DEVELOPING YOUR CASE STRUCTURE\*  
CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

While creating a case, you might find it helpful to think about the experience you want to write about, from the beginning to the end. This gives you a full sense of the order of the events that you are trying to capture.

**Instructions:** Think about a family’s experience that you would like to turn into a case. Fill out the story outline below to describe their situation.

**Once upon a time, there was**

**Every day,**

**One day,**

**Because of that,**

**Because of that,**

**Until finally,**

\*Note: This exercise was adapted from StoryShots. (2012) Re: 22 #storybasics I’ve picked up in my time at Pixar. Message posted to <http://storyshots.tumblr.com/post/25032057278/22-storybasics-ive-picked-up-in-my-time-at-pixar>

## 4.2

### STRUCTURING YOUR CASE AROUND THE “BACK STORY” AND THE “FULL STORY”

#### CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

The purpose of your case is to teach something to others. A great way to do this is by structuring your case into two parts: the *back story* and the *full story*. The back story provides information about the people in the case and ends with the central mismatch that the reader needs to reflect on. The full story either provides the resolution to the situation or demonstrates the way that progress was made toward managing the mismatch. You can review the [Case Collection](#)\* to see examples of this case structure.

**Instructions:** As you consider the case you are developing, place information in each of the appropriate boxes below as a guide to help you organize your writing.

### *The Back Story*

**Consider:** What are you trying to teach? What is your main message? What complex choices do you want your reader to grapple with and discuss with others?

**Include:** The background of the people involved in the case, important events, and details about the central mismatch of the case. End the back story either with a situation that is not resolved and that the reader needs to respond to.

### *The Full Story*

**Consider:** What lessons would you like your reader to come away with?

**Include:** The resolution to the mismatch or an explanation of the progress that was made toward managing it.

\*NOTE: The Case Collection is available here: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/professional-development/create-your-own-case-toolkit-case-collection>

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REVIEWING YOUR CASE  
 CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

The purpose of this guide is to help you and others revise and strengthen the case you have written.

**Instructions:** Read your case and respond to the questions in the matrix. Then, if possible, for another point of view, ask someone else to read your case and answer the questions as well.

<p>Is the mismatch in the case clear to readers? <i>Explain the mismatch.</i></p>	
<p>Can you identify strengths of the family members and others involved? <i>Give an example for each person.</i></p>	
<p>Are the relationships between family members and others involved with the situation well-defined? <i>Provide an example.</i></p>	
<p>Is the writing clear? Where might it be clearer?</p>	
<p>Do readers need more detail to respond to the case? <i>Describe what is needed.</i></p>	
<p>Overall, what are the strengths of the case?</p>	
<p>Overall, what areas need more work?</p>	

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CREATING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS\*  
CREATE YOUR OWN CASE TOOLKIT EXERCISE

After you finish writing your case, you will want to share it with others. You might choose to create discussion questions for readers to help guide conversations about your case. The following matrix will help you think through the kinds of questions that you might want to include. Each of the five categories of questions in the left-hand column draws out a different element of the story that you might want your readers to focus on, and leads readers to discover new ideas and solutions.

**Instructions:** Refer to the first column to get ideas about the types of questions that you might want to develop for your discussion, and then look at sample questions in the middle column as a guide. Finally, in the third column, create your own questions based on your case.

Create questions that encourage readers to:	Sample discussion questions from <u>"Reaching John: When Disengagement Is Not What It May Seem,"</u> by Christopher Hope**	Questions from your case
<p><b>Describe the situation.</b> Ask readers to describe the main individuals and situations in the case, and state the basic mismatch to be resolved.</p>	<p><i>Who is John? What are his strengths? What are his challenges? What is John's relationship with Christopher? What are the differences between what Christopher wants and needs and what John wants and needs?</i></p>	
<p><b>Explore contributing factors.</b> Ask readers to explore how past events, assumptions, culture, or other factors contribute to the situation.</p>	<p><i>What were John's experiences in school? What assumptions does Christopher make about John? How do we learn that these assumptions are incorrect?</i></p>	
<p><b>Think about next steps.</b> Ask readers to imagine that they are a particular person involved in the case and to think about what steps they might take to resolve the situation if they were in that person's shoes.</p>	<p><i>After talking with John at church, how might Christopher have followed up? What would you do if you were Christopher, and John stopped showing up at events again?</i></p>	
<p><b>Replay the case.</b> Ask readers to think about how outcomes in the case might have turned out differently if other people or circumstances had been involved.</p>	<p><i>Imagine that John and Christopher had not connected at church. In what other community settings might Christopher have built a trusting relationship with John?</i></p>	
<p><b>Look at the bigger picture.</b> Ask readers questions that make them consider how larger ideas and policies affect the main themes of your case.</p>	<p><i>How might prior experiences impact the ways that families are engaged in their children's learning? Why is it important to take time to listen to families' stories?</i></p>	

\*This matrix is based on the case discussion framework presented in Weiss, H., Lopez, M. E., Kreider, H., & Chatman-Nelson, C. (2013). *Preparing educators to engage families: Case studies using an ecological systems framework* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Available at <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book237463?siteId=sage-us&prodTypes=any&q=%2C+Preparing+Educators+to+Engage+Families%3A+Case+Studies+Using+an+Ecological+Systems+Framework&fs=1>

\*\*Note: Please see the case titled, "Reaching John: When Disengagement Is Not What It May Seem," written by Christopher Hope: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/professional-development/create-your-own-case-toolkit-case-collection>