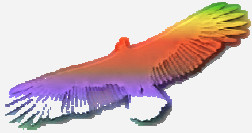


# Organisational sculpting

Controlled Folly

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Respect the individual as well as the system when leading change with the [Satir Change model](#) (webpage)

Then bring it all together in

Organisational sculpting (this document)

## Sculpting, a powerful and versatile tool



Organisational sculpting is a powerful and versatile tool that can reveal dynamics an organisation has tacitly agreed not to talk about.

It can be used for:

- illustrating problems experienced by a particular type of organization
- illustrating relationships between the state and local unites of state wide human services
- developing a strategy by helping an organization assess its relationship with external organisations

- team building by assessing the dynamics of the team and its relationships with other teams
- helping an individual manager identify the dynamics of a problem set of relationships
- providing feedback to a system.

The gains are tremendous. A sculpt can generate large amounts of data, and lay the basis for a long term program of work on key organizational issues.

The only restrictions are our imagination, skills, and abilities.

## ... and there is no such thing as a free lunch

I knew it! There's a catch!

In nearly all instances, sculpting evokes powerful feelings of dismay when participants see the representation of what they are dealing with.

After all, that is why the agreement to not talk about it existed in the first place.

What may be revealed are perceptions on functioning of others and yourself. While you believe you are perceptive, others may perceive you as irrelevant, while you believe you are focused and determined, others may perceive you as irresponsibly harsh and/or super-rational.

Everything doubtful can come up when

suddenly a group gets a handle on just how bad the situation really is: non-confrontational confused responses, victim type tune outs, procrastination and emotional freezes, and total panic responses are not uncommon.

If, as a consultant, you are not willing and prepared to help the group work through its feelings and identify positive actions or sculpt a positive resolution of the situation, don't do it.

If, as an organization or individual participant, you are not willing to face such challenges and surface some of the real problems, don't do it.

Consultant and organization must be prepared for receiving critical feedback, if they are to be successful.



We can learn something  
new any time we  
believe we can –  
Virginia Satir

## Satir sculpt: concepts

To help an organisation understand and diagnose its own interpersonal or intergroup dynamics, or a group from similar organizations understand typical dynamics, or to provide consultation in a training context, we can use a visual sculpt of an event or relationship related to a challenge, problem, or “stuck” situation.

The process requires a focal person, also named a “star” or “explorer” to provide the data for the sculpt.

The star can be chosen on the spot, for example in a training context, or be chosen well ahead of time when visual sculpting is used for strategy development or feedback to the system.

Our use of sculpting as a change process follows the 6A steps:

**Awareness** *This is **real***

**Acceptance** *This is **me**. This is **mine**. This is **us**. This is **ours**.*

**Authorship** *I can **do something** about this!*

**Articulation** *I am going **public** for accountability and support*

**Application** *These are my **choices** how I can change **my** world*

**Activism** *This is how I can participate in **changing our organization**.*

## How a sculpt works?

1. Get centered with star, and check trust levels are high enough to proceed (center, contact, contract).
2. Create an organisational map together with the star: define the key elements (people, groups, relationships, roles). Do this for all to see, or if made in advance, walk through the map, allowing participants to ask clarifying questions.
3. Show the system as it is. Use a stand-in (alter ego) for the star. See it in operation. This may mean putting props, action and/or sound into the sculpt.
4. Debrief the “as is” sculpt. Ask role players and observers for what was seen and heard, and ask role players, each, in turn, how they felt in the role, ask the star, and what insights were gained. Freedom to congruently comment is extremely important now.
5. Ask each person in the sculpt to reflect/meditate on what they would need to make the situation more positive for themselves. Then shares the outcome, and on cue, sculptors move deliberately and consciously, to show the possible shifts.
6. Debrief the sculpt again.
7. Break up in small groups to identify what needs to happen to allow the organization, team, or star to evolve to the more positive place envisioned in the second sculpt.

## “Missing link”

The steps above merely represent a mechanical description of activities in conducting the sculpt. It is the broader task of the sculptor guide to facilitate learning, to develop awareness and acceptance in the focal person or group, articulation during debriefings, and authorship and application in the last three steps.

