Method Script: Dialoguing with Images

Containing the Imaginative Space within an Outer and Inner Frame
(Phase I)

Preparation for Drawing Activity [script used at the end of first qualitative interview (narrative), preparing family members for drawing activity in second interview].

“When someone in the family needs a BMT everyone in the family is affected. We’ve talked about what it was like for your family to go through ______’s BMT. We would like you to think some more about how this experience has affected you. Even though you are going through this experience as a family, each member of the family might have different feelings or ideas about what this was like for them. We would like each of you to take a moment to think about what this experience has been like for you. Think about an image or a picture that pops into your head when you think about your experience of ____________’s BMT.”

“Everyone in the family might think of a different picture, and you will each get a chance to draw your own picture when you come back to meet with us again. Whatever you draw will represent your own experience. Your picture will be about what it has been like for you to go through BMT.”

During Second Interview, Family Members are Guided into the Drawing Space/Activity [following some initial conversation with family participants]

“We have taped a large piece of brown paper on the wall so that everybody can have some space to draw his/her own picture. So, you will be drawing together. It’s really important for you to know, there’s no right or wrong pictures. The pictures will help you tell your stories, and when you are finished drawing, we’ll play with the picture a little bit, asking the picture questions to help us understand some of the other pieces of your stories. We are going to bring the recorder over to the drawing area. And we have choices of smelly markers and crayons because they’re the ones that look the best on the paper. Hopefully, you will think of a picture that is about what you feel and think about experiencing BMT.”

Creating an Embodied Image: Image Work is an Expressive Generative Process (Phase II)

Researchers offer only limited words/comments as family members work to create their drawings. Here, there is a focus on emotional containment of the imaginative space as participants draw. Researchers work to simultaneously attend to the artistic process of each family member, and they may need to respond to questions or comments offered by family members as image making proceeds.
A Shared, Participatory Aesthetic Interpretation  
(Phase III)

Aesthetic Attentiveness

Once each family member has drawn their own image, they are asked to stand back and look at the image together. After a period of time, one of the researchers will ask: 1) “So, when you step back and take a look at the picture you drew, what are one or two words that you think of? And again, remember there are no wrong or right answers.” [Each family member is given a chance to respond to their individual image]. 2) “So now, I want you to each look at the whole picture, everybody’s image together. What would be one or two words you would like to say about the whole picture?” [Each family member is given an opportunity to respond to the whole image].

A Speaking Image

“And so, this is the part that might feel a little silly, but it won’t once we get into it. One by one, we are going to give everyone a chance to ask the image some questions. You can choose whatever question you think of as you look at the image. If you can’t think of a question, that’s okay too. Who would like to go first?” [As each family member poses their question(s), the researcher(s) writes them down on a small white cue card].

“Now we are going to ask you to answer your questions, as if you were the picture [one family member at a time]. Please stand near the wall, right next to the picture. And this is the funny part of this activity. I’m going to ask you to pretend that you are the picture. As I read your questions, you will answer as if you are the picture, what you think the picture would say. Everyone else is going to listen, and if they have a different idea of what the picture might say to a question, they can share their ideas.”

Crystallizing Stories of Illness  
(Phase IV)

The Image Becomes More

After every family member has answered questions as the image, they are asked to stand back to look at the whole image again. “Now that you can see the whole picture and you have heard the stories of each member of your family and you have heard the messages the picture has given you, can you think of any way that you might like to connect the pictures to make it a family story?” Family members will discuss ideas about how the images might be joined. “Do you think you would like to join the images together now?” “Who would like to join the images?” One or more family members may join the images together. If the family decides that they do not want to join the images or that they don’t feel that the individual images connect together then this is alright as well.
Returning from the Imaginal Space

To conclude the family drawing activity, one of the researchers asks the following questions: “What does the image say to you about what it is like for a family to go through pediatric HSCT?” and then, “Any last thoughts you want to share about this image?” And finally, “If you could give one piece of advice, or share a message with another family about going through HSCT, what would that be?” [Each family member is given a chance to respond].