Why Draw Genograms Anyway?

- It’s fun and interesting.
- It’s an efficient way to obtain a history.
- It can be used to promote therapist empathy and understanding.
- It can help you understand the target family and its members.
- It can be used by family members to better direct their own lives.
How Do You Draw a Genogram?

- Use the client, other family members, documents, and other sources of information to make the diagram as complete and as accurate as possible.

Basic Symbols

Male

Female

Inside each figure, show the person’s age. Include the person’s date of birth as well.
Basic Symbols

“X” through figure indicates death. Include cause of death and the date of death. Also, include the person’s age when they died.

Basic Symbols

Figure with a dark, horizontal bar indicates that person has a history of substance abuse.
Basic Symbols

A figure with a dark, vertical line denotes a history of psychiatric difficulties.

Basic Symbols

Figure within a figure indicates person is the “identified patient,” “identified client,” or “family star.”
**Basic Symbols**

Horizontal line connecting people depicts marriage or coupling.

A single diagonal line depicts marital separation.
Basic Symbols

(Date of Marriage)                      (Date of Divorce)
\[ \text{Two parallel diagonal lines denotes divorce.} \]

Basic Symbols

Name <Occupation> <Personal Attributes> Age
\( \text{(Date of Death)} \) \( \text{(Date of Birth)} \) \( \text{(Date of Death)} \) \( \text{<Cause of Death>} \)
Example of a Cross-Generational Triangle

Child in utero
Basic Symbols

Identical, maternal, or monozygotic twins

Dotted line denotes household membership
Basic Symbols

Dotted horizontal line denotes common-law relationship.

Dotted vertical line denotes adoption or foster care situation.
Include At Least Three Generations

- Dates of birth, marriage, separation, divorce, death, and cause of death
- Sex and birth order of each family member
- Ethnic background
- Religion
- Occupation
- Education
- Geographic location of family members

How Do You Draw a Genogram?

- Depict the nature of important relationships (e.g., distant, enmeshed, conflictual).
- Identify salient triangles.
Look For and Explore Patterns

- These patterns may be relational, behavioral, affective, temporal, and so on.

Specific Patterns

- Family lore and folklore
- Traditions
- Protection/overprotection
- Conflict/avoidance
- Family jokes and humor
Specific Patterns

- Secrets
- Family myths
- Birth order (and distance in age between sibs)
- Significant life events
- Anniversaries

Specific Patterns

- Significant separations
- Responsibility/irresponsibility
- Family rules and roles
- Alcohol and other drug misuse, abuse, dependency
- Trouble with the law
Specific Patterns

- Serious problems (e.g., mental illness, disability)
- Household composition
- Transitions
- Traumas
- Level and style of functioning of family members
- Resources and strengths

3 Types

- Basic
- Distances
- Details
Basic Genogram

- Basic facts
  - Names
  - Ages
  - Dates of birth, death, marriages, separations, divorces
  - Structures and relationships

Distances

- Relationships
- Sociometrics
Details

- Details
  - Medical/physical conditions
  - Personality
  - Behavior
  - Other personal attributes
  - Family themes
  - Roles
  - Traditions

Hierarchy

- Power differentials
- Degree of influence certain family members have on others
- Alliances
- Coalitions
Eight Patterns

- Alignment
- Force
- Boundary

Pattern I
Pattern II

Pattern III
Pattern IV

Pattern V
Pattern VI

Pattern VII
Pattern VIII

Projective Genogramming

- Developed by Florence Kaslow, Ph.D.
- One way to help individual become aware of what Bowen called “intergenerational transmission process”
**Projective Genogramming**

- Given rudimentary tools of genogramming, the individual starts wherever he or she chooses.
- A key assumption of this approach is that where a person starts and where he or she goes from there is personally and clinically significant.

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**Projective Genogramming**

**Basic Steps**

- With whom did you begin and why?
- Whom did you omit or exclude?
- Whom would you like to eliminate?
- Whom would you like to add?