

Background

1

A genogram is a visual tool which shows a family tree of at least three generations. It is used to give a pictorial representation of a family system.

Genograms are a foundational tool used in systemic practice, where there's a focus 'on relationships' and a recognition 'that individuals are always embedded in their social context' (Burns, 2018).

How do they help?

2

Genograms help us to be curious about relationships in the family from the perspective of different family members. Because they are pictures, they enable us to engage with ideas and information about a family in a different way than if we had read a written report.

they can help us to track and reflect on the impact of different patterns of beliefs and behaviour through the generations within families. This includes the impact of adverse experiences on family functioning, as well as identifying relationships within the family system that are resilient and supportive.

Specifically genograms help us to;

3

- Map family and other significant relationships
- Think about life stages and transitions
- Understand why a particular issue is significant now
- Map out professional help in the past and present
- Identify resources within the family's life.

Further Reading

7

[Using genograms in practice | Research in Practice](#)
[Genograms – Safeguarding Network](#)

What goes into a genogram?

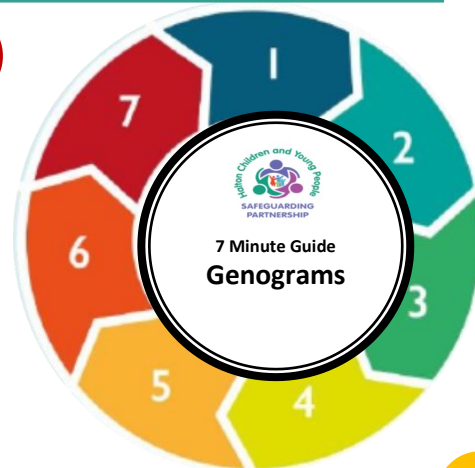
6

- Names and ages of all family members
- information on three or more generations
- Dates of birth, marriage, separation, divorce, death and other significant life events
- Notation with dates about transitions, migration, illness and other changes in life
- Other significant relationships and / or connections with community agencies, i.e. church, mosque, school etc.
- Details of cultural background
- Significant dates and events in relation to social work involvement

You should always include the practitioner and other workers involved with the family in the genogram, along with information about gender, age, culture and any other factors relevant to working with the family.

Genograms should be, wherever possible, completed with families on your first home visit.

The completion of genograms should help the Social Worker to understand who is in the family, who sees the children, the family dynamics, who is in the support network, the family history etc

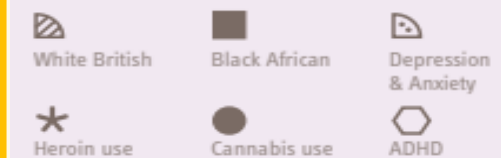


Key

5

April 19 - Police referred due to domestic abuse at Julie's home.

Sept 19 - School referral due to concerns about Billy settling into school and his behaviour.



How do I draw one?

4

Genograms are usually drawn and discussed with families themselves. They are considered to be a tool that enables the family to learn more about themselves and each other.

Drawing a genogram and talking about this with a practitioner is useful in creating feedback for the family to consider, and to gain a more rounded perspective about whether or not there are connections between life events and the issues of concern. Similarly, when used in supervision discussions, genograms can help supervisees and practice supervisors to generate feedback and ideas about family life and relationships in exactly the same way.

Example of a genogram

