

# GENOGRAMS

A genogram is an interview format for drawing a map of a family. It records information about family members and their relationships over a least three generations. A genogram is constructed in the first meeting with an individual/family and is revised, as new information becomes available. It helps both the worker and the family to understand problems, issues, events and symptoms, their potential consequences and their meaning to the family. In this way, it is also a preventive intervention, helping to place symptoms, events and issues in the context of the family's overall development, its culture, its resources and its burdens.

A genogram is a visual image of a family story. Start with one person to tell the story and involve others as the story unfolds.

There is no "right" way to construct a genogram. Start with a pencil with a good eraser and be creative!

## **Why do a Genogram?**

- Record Keeping
- Treatment planning and care management
- Prevention
- Rapport building and joining with the family
- Research
- Connects symptom/problem to context
- Efficient clinical summary
- Vehicle for systematic history taking
- Helps family members gain a perspective
- Identifies stressors and risk factors
- Saves time and repetition in subsequent visits
- Way to manage a complicated family situation
- Visualizes the family "at a glance"
- Clarifies consequences of individual behavior
- Aids in analyzing family processes
- An effective teaching tool for clinicians