Create a Simple Family Genogram

Objective

To create a simple genogram of your family's relationships.

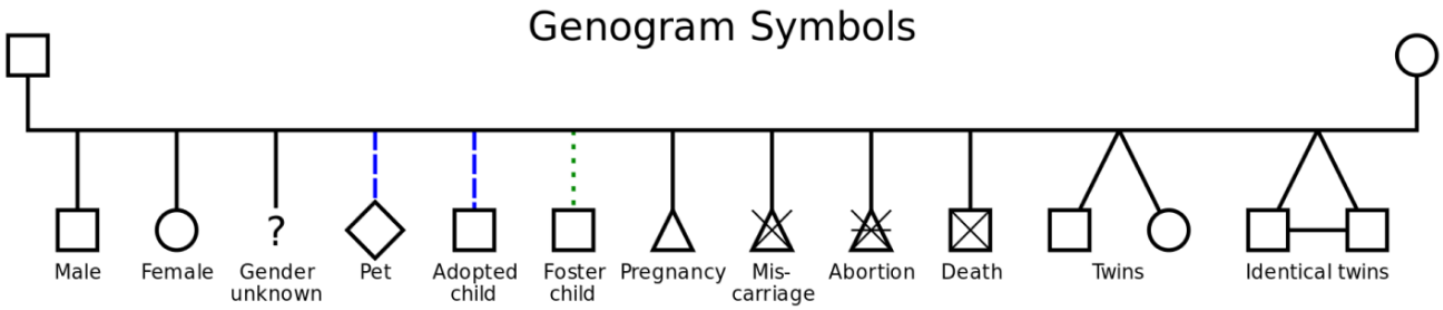
What to Know

A genogram is a tool that outlines your family over the course of a few generations. More detailed than a family tree, a genogram includes the roles of family members and the relationships between them. This tool is helpful to visualize patterns, medical histories, and mental health problems, and it can reveal family issues that need to be addressed. Genograms contain a lot of information, including:

- demographic information like name, gender, date of birth, and date of death
- education, occupation, major life events, and chronic illnesses
- types and styles of family relationships.
- information about disorders like alcoholism, depression, diabetes, and so on

What to Do

Use the following symbols and example to chart your own family.



Same Sex Attracted Male

Same Sex Attracted Female

Transgender

Male to Female

Female to Male

Deceased

Married

Committed

Separated

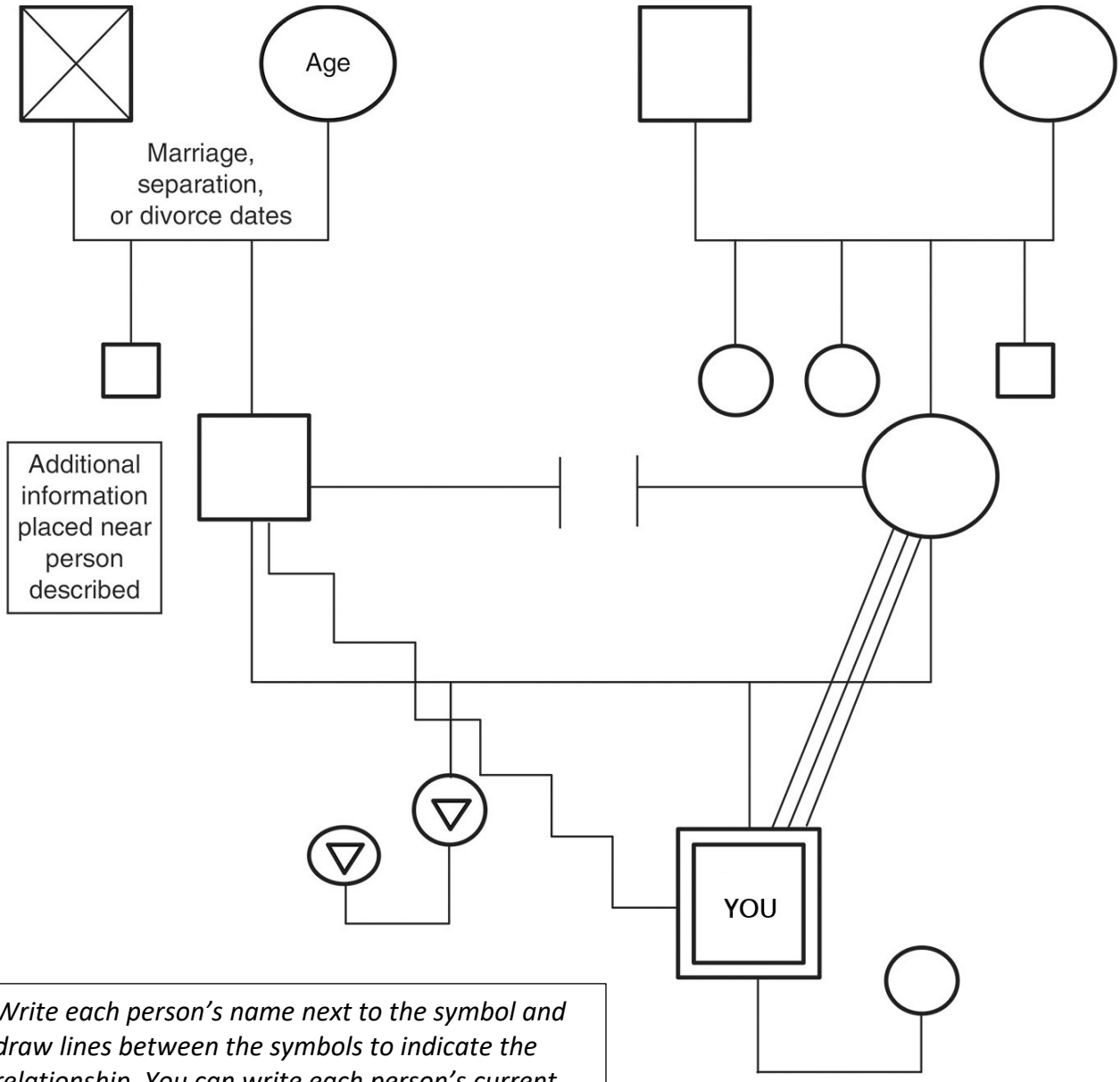
Divorced

Close

Enmeshed

Hostile

Example



Write each person's name next to the symbol and draw lines between the symbols to indicate the relationship. You can write each person's current age with each symbol.
In this example, ***YOU*** *has an enmeshed relationship with his mother and a hostile relationship with his father.*
Next to each symbol, you can add information that might help your counselor or coach understand your family better.
Note: Enmeshed describes a relationship between two or more people in which personal boundaries are loose or unclear.

_____’s Genogram



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Next, answer the following questions.

Describe each family member with two or three adjectives (parents, caregivers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, children). Use an additional piece of paper if you need more space.

Describe your parents' (or caretakers') and grandparents' marriages.

How was conflict handled in your extended family over two to three generations?

What were some generational themes or patterns (e.g., addictions, affairs, financial problems, losses, abuse, divorce, mental illness)?

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Were there any family “secrets?” If yes, describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was considered “success” in your family?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Were there traumatic losses, such as sudden death, prolonged illnesses, stillbirths, bankruptcy, or divorce?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Did family members show affection? To each other? To the children?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you get along with your siblings? Now? During childhood? How were conflicts managed? What role did your parents play in these relationships?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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What role do you play in your family?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How did your family's background shape you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

_____

_____

_____

Adapted from: *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (1985) by Monica McGoldrick, Randy Gerson, and Sueli Petry.

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