

GENOGRAMS

A genogram can be a powerful visual tool to use when assessing and working with individuals or families. It can:

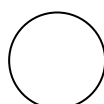
- Provide information about a family. It shows "who is who" and the relationships between them. It can save long descriptions and help your evidence - for instance in Courts and Conferences.
- Show patterns through the generations and so help to understand how families work and what "messages" family members receive – e.g. estrangement of fathers and sons
- Help to engage a family or individual by involving them in the process of creating the picture of the family and talking about the way their family works and their position in it. The person is the "expert" in their own family so compiling the genogram can reduce power differences between individual and worker.
- Enable an individual or family to see the patterns, talk about the meaning of the family for them, explore "secrets" and maybe to move on and resolve unproductive situations as a result
- Be used in Life Story work with children who do not live with their families to help with their identity and their need to make sense of their past. This can use all the above ideas.
- Help adults to reminisce and reflect on their lives – especially if they feel they have lost identity – e.g. by being in hospital or have to take a different role in the family.


Names and key dates (birth, marriage, death, and others) go in or near the boxes. You can also add other information – e.g. "In Australia" or "in prison" etc and write information along the relationship lines – e.g. "no contact" or "domestic violence" etc.

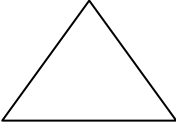
As it can be powerful or painful experience to explore family relationships you as a worker need to be aware of this and go at the individual's pace. You may need to continue to work with any strong feelings which are evoked. You may find yourself affected so if this happens, make sure you seek the support you need for yourself

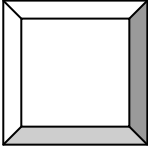
CONVENTIONAL SYMBOLS for GENOGRAMS


Female

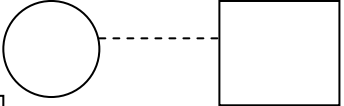


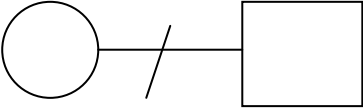
Male 

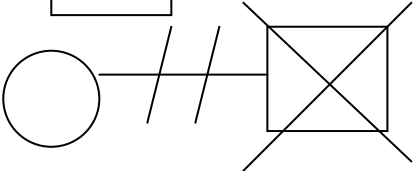
Gender unknown/pregnancy 

Double line around the subject of this genogram 

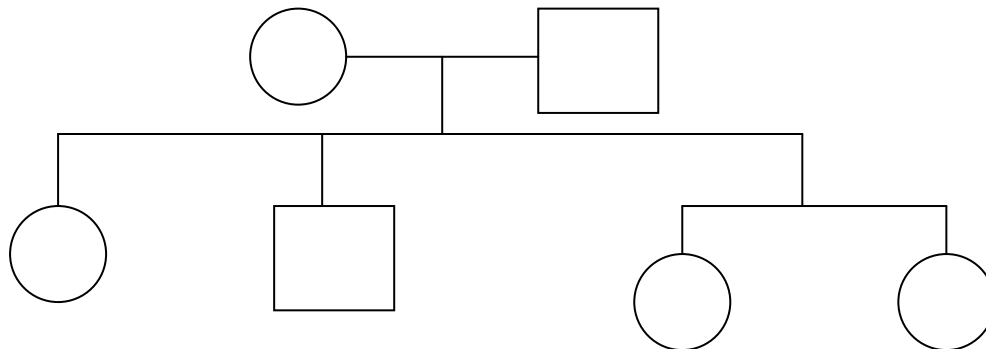
Marriage or enduring partnership 

Transitory or brief (or sometimes a troubled) relationship 

Separated or divorced 

Death (of the male partner in this case) 

Children – in age order – in this case girl, boy then girl twins



Children with same mother and different fathers. People who live together in a household are encircled by dotted line. This can be a useful device

