

3.2 Mapping the young person's relationships

3.21 Genograms

There are various tools for mapping a person's relationships. Best known of these are genograms. A genogram is a graphical representation of family relationships showing the quality and proximity of relationships and patterns across generations. Genograms can be used as a visual tool to encourage young people to talk about their family, and can be approached as a 'work in progress', developed over time, allowing the young person to tell their story at their own pace. This enables the worker to more sensitively respond to elements of the story when and if the young person feels safe enough to share.

Basic genogram legend

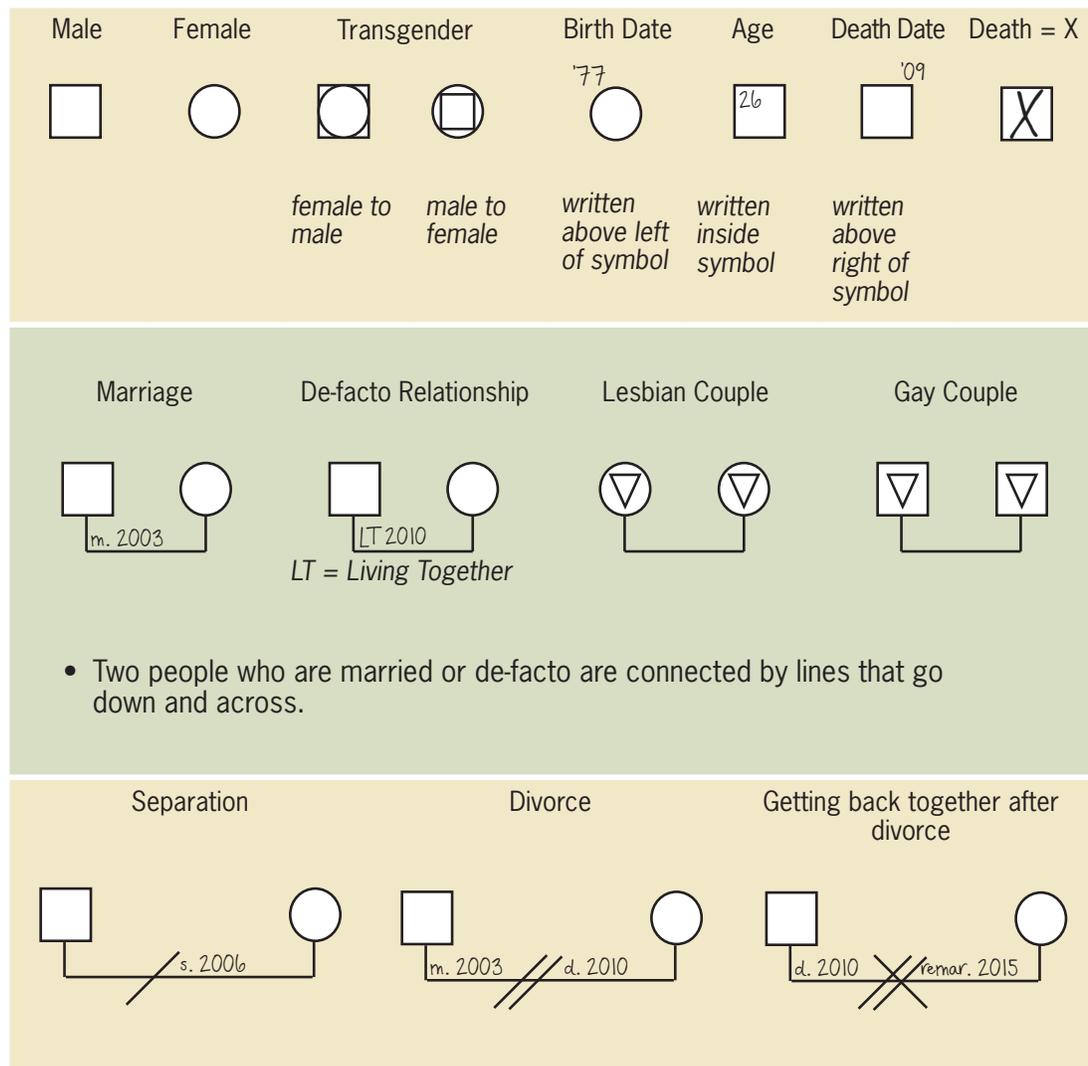
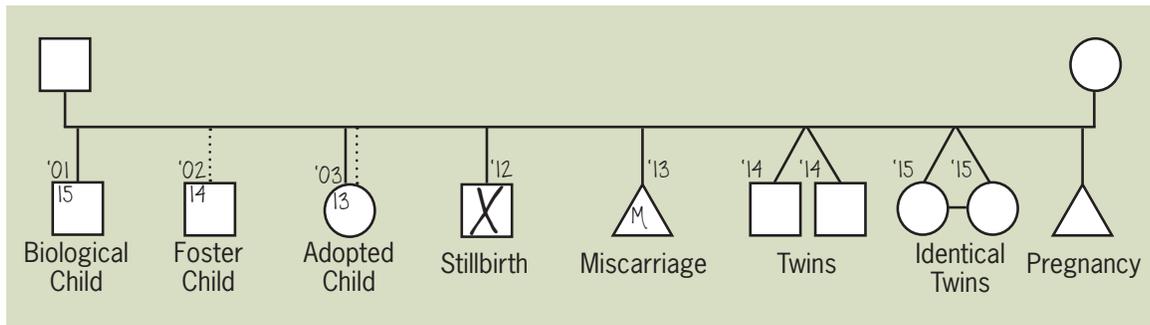
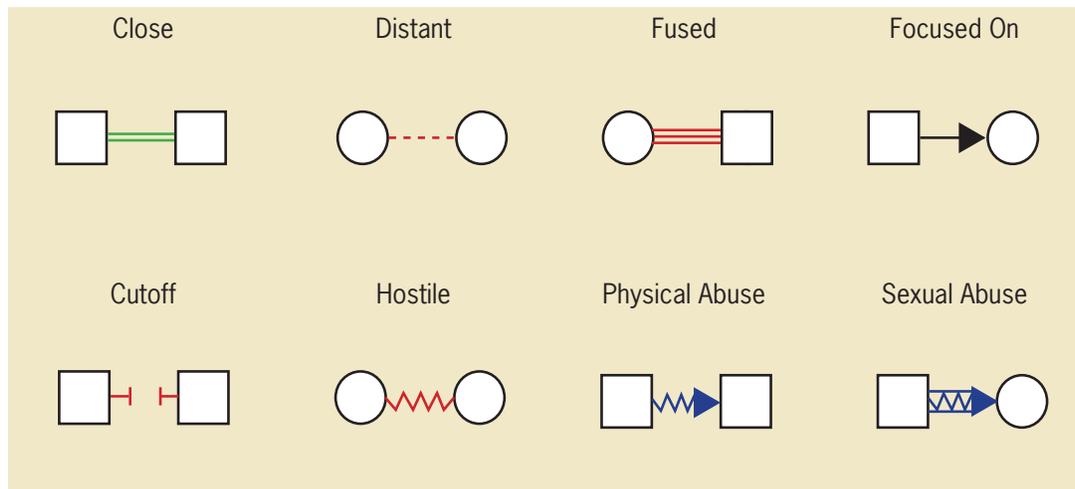


Figure 3: Basic genogram legend

Children: List in birth order beginning with oldest on the left



Symbols denoting interactional patterns between people



Symbols Denoting Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) and/or Mental / Physical Problems

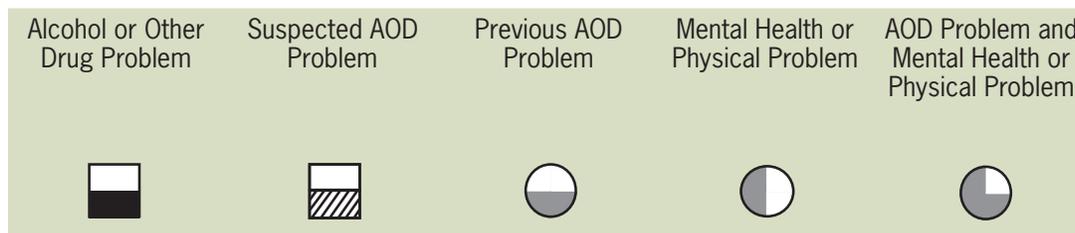


Figure 3: Basic genogram legend

Genogram example - Darren's family

Darren is twenty one years old and has come to your service for help to quit smoking cannabis. During your conversation with Darren you discuss his family. Darren tells you that his parents divorced when he was two years of age and he lives with his mum Janis, 42. He informs you that his parents split because his mum had a drinking problem, however gave up drinking after the divorce so she could "be a better mum". Darren tells you that his mum has had problems most of her life because she was sexually abused by her father and her mother had a problem with alcohol. His grandmother divorced his grandfather when she found out about the abuse and re-married some years later. Darren said he never met his grandfather but knows that he has passed away.

Darren tells you that his mother is much happier now and has a new partner, a woman named Cathy. They have been together for about sixteen years. Cathy was also married and Darren tells you that Cathy left her husband for his mother. Darren described this has a stressful time for his mum and Cathy, as Cathy's husband did not take the break up well. He still doesn't talk to Cathy even though he has re-partnered. Cathy and her ex have three children together, their youngest daughter Emma is seventeen and in her last year of high school. She also lives with Cathy and Darren's mum. Darren said Emma hates her dad and his girlfriend and he knows Cathy is really worried about her. Darren's mum has even confided in him that she thinks Emma is doing drugs. Cathy's other daughter has a 'drug problem' so this only adds to Cathy's fears. Darren tells you that Cathy's eldest is about twenty four and he just got married because his partner fell pregnant. He thinks she is probably due to give birth really soon.

Darren tells you that his dad Pete is forty five and says he got re-married about a year after he divorced his mum. Darren has two half-sisters, Chloe 18 and Becky 16. Darren describes his relationship with his sister Becky as 'really close' and said she is one of the main reasons he wants to quit smoking pot. Becky lives with his dad and step mum and she is also in her last year of high school. Darren tells you that he doesn't see his other sister Chloe very often and said they never really 'clicked' growing up. He said Chloe moved interstate last year with her boyfriend.

You ask Darren about his dad's family and he tells you that his dad had one older brother who died in a car accident. Darren says that his dad's father passed away last year and his paternal grandmother just moved into a nursing home.

Using the information Darren has provided you decide to map a genogram of his family history.

Reflective exercise

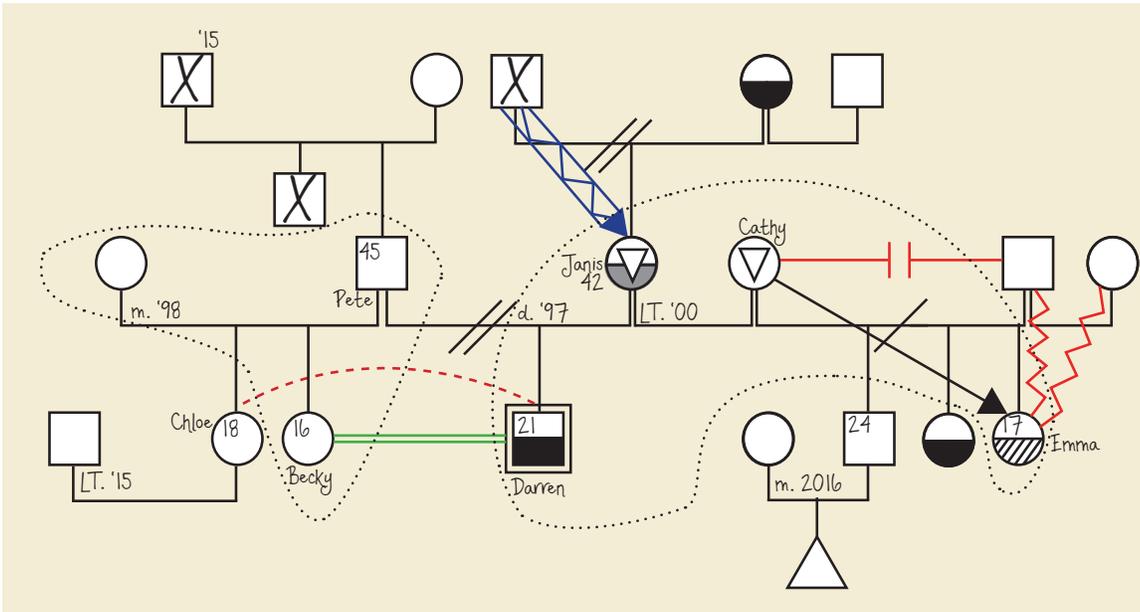


Figure 4: Genogram example - Darren's family

Please Note



In this example we are using a double line to denote the client we are working with.



A dotted line surrounding people indicates members of the same household.