

Assignment: Illustrated Family Diagram



SSW 201 Family Relationships

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1. What and how does your diagram illustrates your family and its history?

My diagram illustrates my family's history of relationships, physical ailments, learning disabilities, trauma, and addictions. Starting from my grandparents, down to my grandson, I show my close relationships with my maternal grandmother, my maternal uncles and aunt, my mother, my sisters and brother, my son, and my grandson. I also show that my mother had four relationships that produced children. The yellow highlight shows one child was given up for adoption. I had an Indigenous stepfather who had two children with my mother. I did not know my biological father or paternal grandparents.

The orange highlighter shows the recurrence of cancer in my family. The green asterisk shows heart problems. The blue D is diabetes. The MS is multiple sclerosis. The green stripes show how learning disabilities run through my family. The capital T shows how trauma has also been present in my family history. The addictions in pink, that started in my mother's generation, contributed to the history of trauma.

The grey arrow shows that my stepfather was abusive to my mother, my half sister and me. There are also grey arrows that show my mother's oldest brother and one of her other partner's were abusive to her. There is also abuse shown by my daughter-in-law towards my son which explains the broken relationship. Also, the pink X illustrates my oldest sister committed suicide.

The patterns of the diagram help explain how the circle that represents me has addiction, learning disabilities, diabetes, trauma, pre-cancer, and no current partner.

2. How does your diagram impact how you look at your life at the present moment?

The diagram shows me a pattern of learning disabilities, addictions, and multiple couple relationships. It has helped me to understand why I have had learning disabilities, addictions, and different couple relationships. The problems I currently have, as a partial consequence of these issues, I now can put into a larger perspective. I can see how many close relationships I have in my family and how loyalty is a real strength in my family. By better understanding my family, I can accept who I am and acknowledge the good traits in my family, and therefore, feel empowered to make changes. I don't feel so hard on myself because I see a bigger picture of my family issues.

3. How could a family diagrams be a useful tool when working with families?

A family diagram may be useful in working with families because it can help the individual see patterns in their family history. It can be a source of family data that provides information on biopsychosocial issues. The individual can see how their current problem maybe related to their family history through repeated physical and/or mental illness, addictions, and relationship dynamics. It can also show the strengths in the family by showing the closeness in relationships which then can be identified as possible resources to support the individual. The process of making the family diagram, by listening to the individual share their stories, also helps to develop rapport and trust.