

Family Diagram

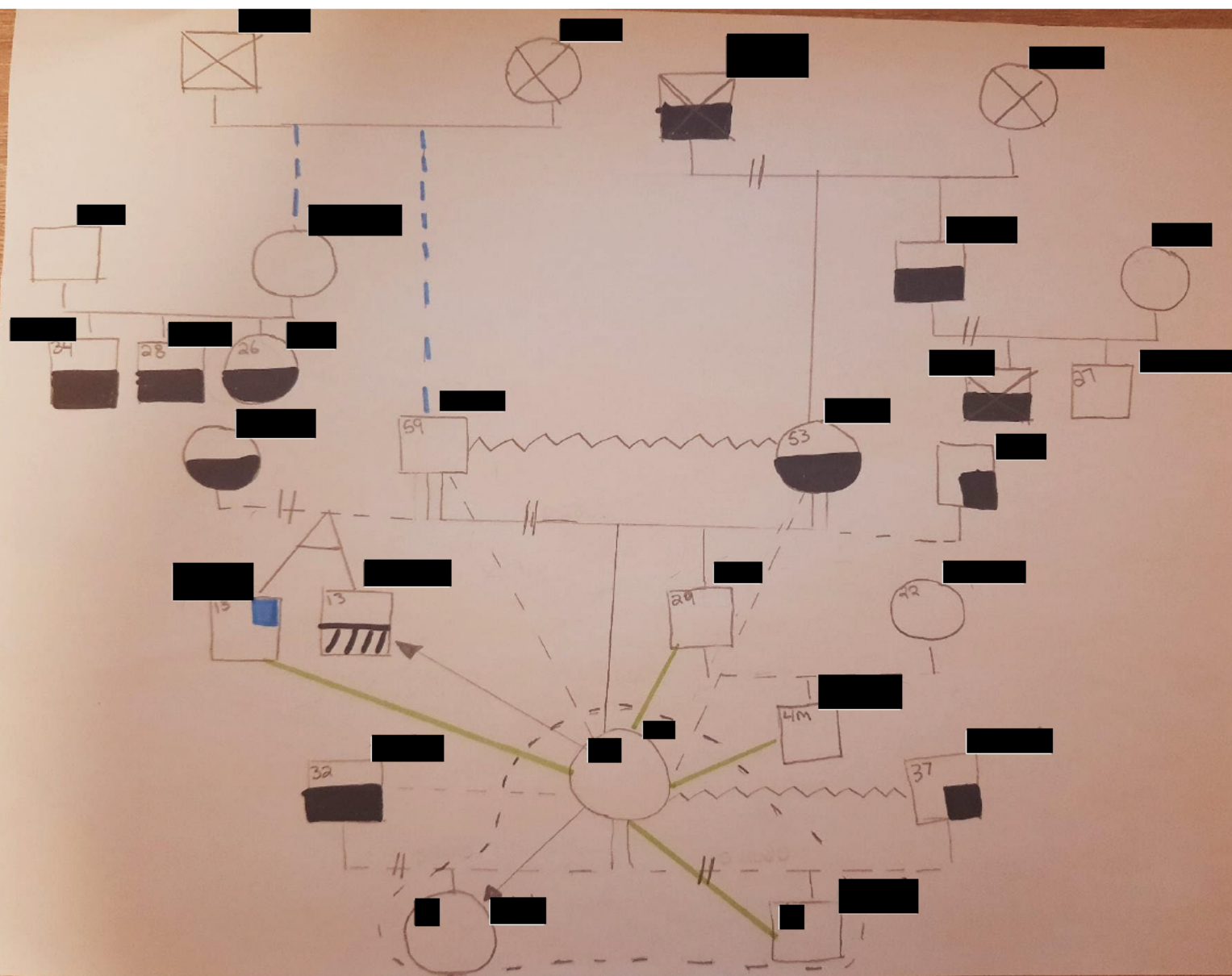


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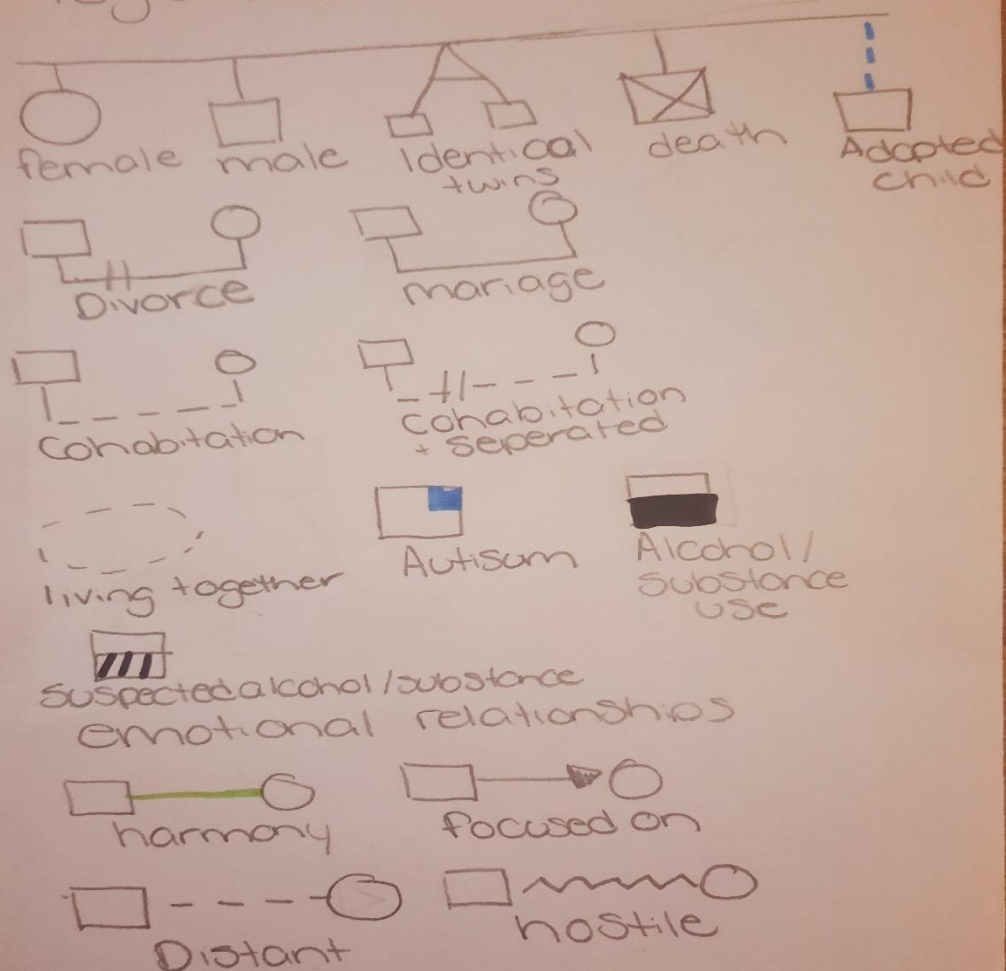
SSW 201: Family Relationships

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legend



I used the genogram for my family diagram (Like et al., 1988). I choose the genogram because I felt like it could show a lot of information about my family. In my genogram, a circle represents a female, and a square represents a male. I have chosen to highlight the high rates of alcohol or substance use in my family by filling in each person affected square or circle half black. I think I was able to highlight this well, as nine people in my genogram are shown to struggle with substances. I was also able to show the loss of my cousin from toxic drug use in my genogram. Through my genogram, I showed divorces and separations through slashes in family member's lines. I also displayed my family members' ages that I know in the top left corner. My genogram displays that my dad and his sister were adopted as children, with blue dashes leading to their adoptive parents. Both sets of my grandparents have passed away, which I was able to show by crossing their circle or square out. I showed how I have identical twin brothers; one is a person with autism, and the other is suspected of using substances. The dashed area around my children and I show we live together in a single-parent household.

My genogram shows the current type of emotional relationship I have with some family members. My more harmonious relationships being with my son and two brothers, which I showed through a green line connecting us. While I have a harmonious relationship with my daughter, I choose to use an arrow that shows I am focused on my daughter because she is going through a challenging time emotionally, which has me feeling concerned. I also choose to use an arrow to my other brother as I worry about him since it is suspected that he has been using substances. I displayed how I feel distant from my parents and my daughter's dad with grey dashes. I showed the hostile relationship between my parents and my son's father and me through squiggly lines.

The experience of creating my own family genogram has shown me how distant I am from my family and how there is no sense of community for me. I think about how I would like

this to change. Looking at my genogram, what has impacted me the most is how many people in my family struggle with alcohol or substances, and this made me feel quite sad. Before doing this activity, I did not realize how much substance use runs through my family, but now it is like seeing a big picture of everyone it has affected. In a way, I feel empowered by doing my genogram because even though I do not have the strongest relationships with much of my family or my children's fathers, I am still doing my best to raise my children by myself, and I can see I am a strong person.

A family diagram, specifically the genogram, could be helpful when working with families. I could see myself using this activity as the first step in getting to know my clients as an assessment tool (North Island College, n.d.). The genogram is a tool that shows the current type of relationships between each family member (GenoPro, n.d.). By doing this activity, I could see how every family member feels about each other, allowing me to learn about their family dynamic. This is helpful because it can open up conversation, and by using active listening skills, I could better understand any conflict the family is facing and then work towards solutions.

I would be able to see patterns that stick out through the genogram (Like et al., 1988). as there may be many generations of substance use problems, abuse, or divorce. This allows me to gain a deeper perspective of how these patterns could be impacting the family currently. For example, there may be intergenerational trauma that is affecting the family. Like et al., (1988) explains that genograms give the worker a tremendous amount of information and can be used to help understand how the client is struggling and used as a diagnosis test. While I would not be able to use this as a diagnosis test with my education, I could use it as a support tool by seeing where the primary areas of conflict are for the family and connect them with other resources. I could also support a family by empowering them and showing them all their family has overcome through the genogram.

I can see that the genogram may be triggering for a family or young person to make if their relationships with their family have much conflict or a history of abuse (North Island College, n.d.). The worker should create a safe space first with their client. Its also important to use active listening and empathy skills while the client shares their genogram.

The family tree of life would also be beneficial to use with clients as it is a strength-based approach (Weller, n.d.).Unlike the genogram, I feel that the tree of life may be less triggering for a family to make as it draws upon your values, strengths, hopes, and dreams (Weller, n.d.). Also, looking at the past, present, and future (Weller, n.d.) with the family tree is helpful. I can guide the family to recognize how the past has affected them and support them to look into the future and how they would like to make changes to live in harmony as a family.

I can see the benefits of using the eco-map for a family assessment tool. The eco-map can be used to learn about a family's social environment (Thomlison,2015). It allows the worker to see where there are strong social supports and areas where there may be conflict, social isolation, or more needed support (Thomlison,2015). I could determine where to offer guidance and support by doing the eco-map activity with a family. For example, a single parent working full-time eco-map may show that they do not have any support systems to help. They may be struggling financially, and the parent does not have much time to themselves, causing stress and conflict in the family. Through my assessment, I could connect the family to other supports like government-funded respite so the parent could have a break occasionally or to the food bank to help with some of the costs of groceries.

References

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