

Tools for Gathering and Recording Family Composition

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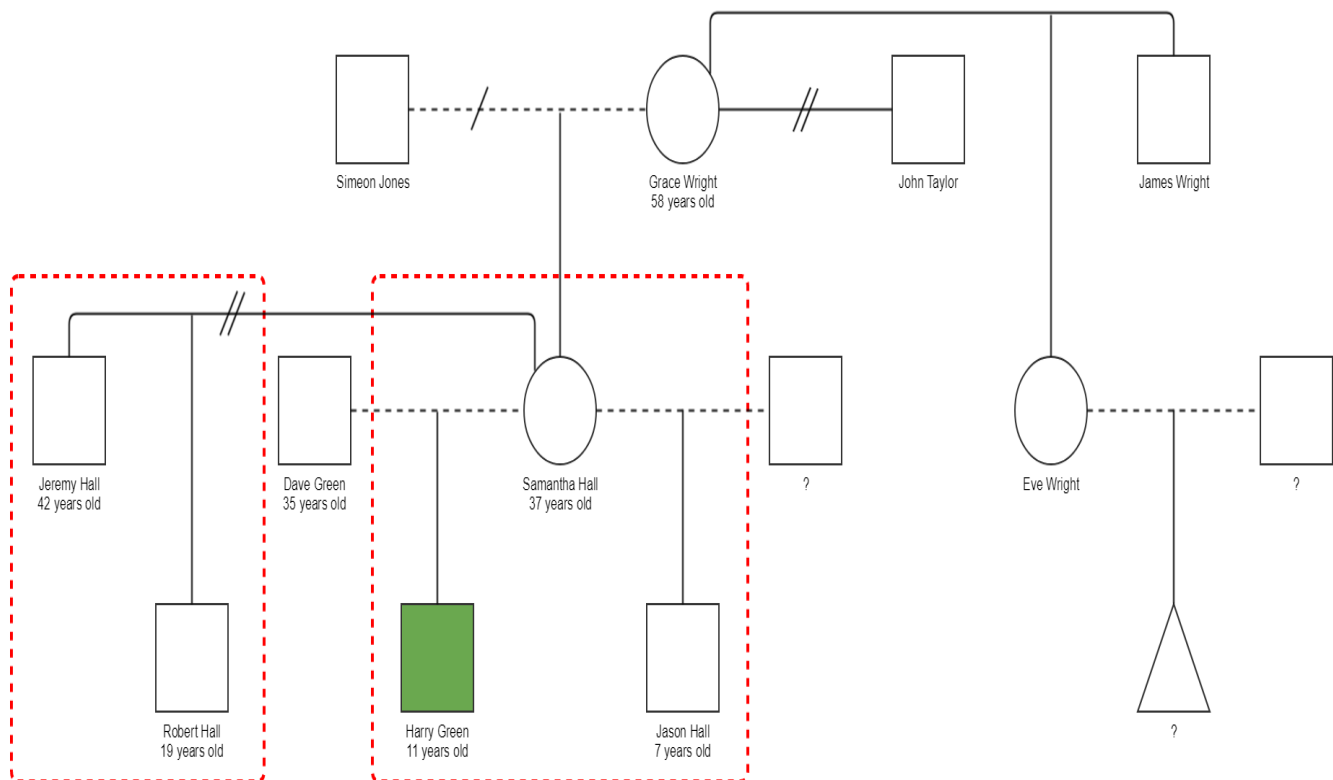
THE DIFFERENT TOOLS USED:

Genograms:

A genogram is a tool for creating a visual display of the child's family tree (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985).

Using genograms as part of assessment and intervention in social work practice with children and families aids in:

- Developing self-reflexivity through considering our own family and cultural genogram.
- Understanding how the use of genograms might add to an assessment through identification of relational patterns across generations and for developing hypotheses.
- Using the genogram as a systemic intervention towards relationship building and assessment.

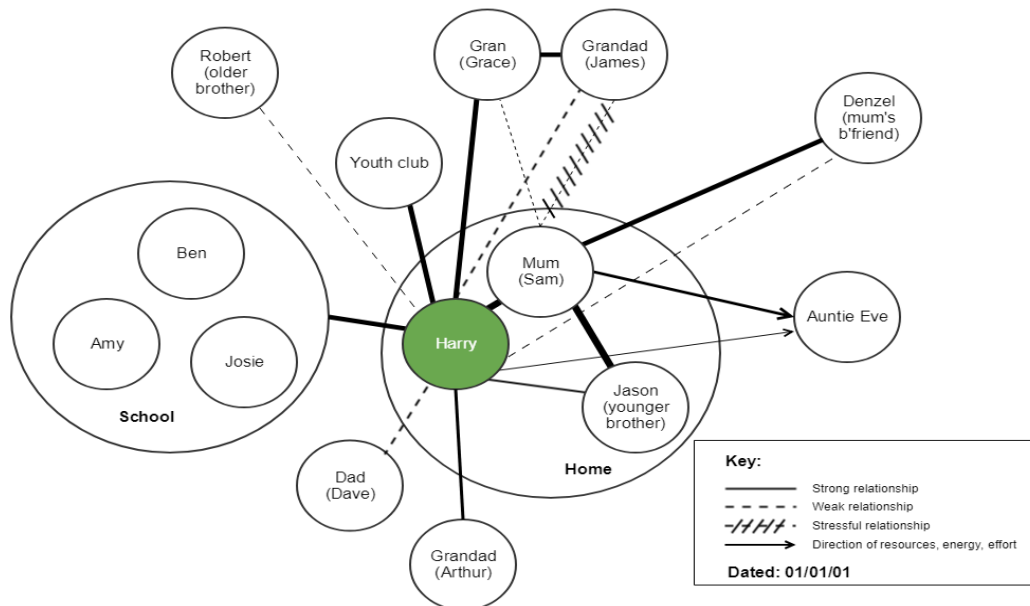


Ecomaps:

The ecomap is a visual display of the informal and formal systems in the child's ecology. Eco-maps are a visual map of a family's connections to the external world. They provide a useful tool for assessment of family, social and community relationships and highlight the quality of these connections.

With a social work ecomap activity, social workers can help foster positive working relationships and explore effective intervention strategies to facilitate change.

To create an Ecomap: Use a white board or a large piece of paper and draw a large circle in the centre. In this circle describe each member of the immediate family - squares to show males and circles to show females. Put each person's name and age in the centre of the square or circle.



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GENOGRAMS AND ECOMAPS

Both Genograms and Ecomaps can be used to collect information with biological mothers, biological fathers, children, the kinship caregiver, other member of the kinship network, and/or the entire extended family as a whole.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENOGRAM AND ECOMAP

A genogram is a graphic portrayal of the composition and structure of one's family and an ecomap is a graphic portrayal of personal and family social relationships.

Genograms are a bit more complex than ecomaps and do not focus on the social environment, but rather it focusses on the family and extended family's history.

DISADVANTAGES

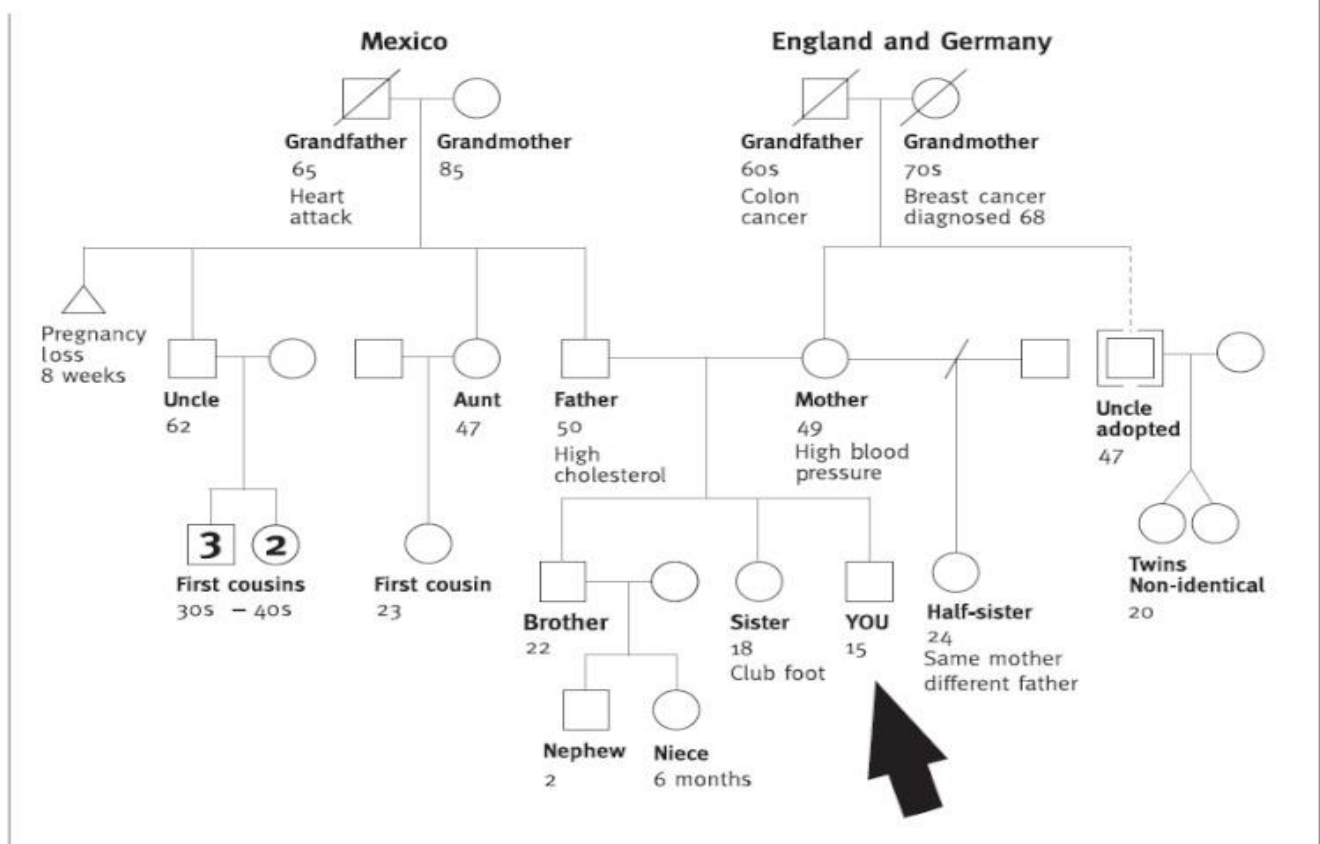
- **Ecomaps** - One disadvantage of the ecomap is its imprecise terms, which make the exact nature of the relationships portrayed difficult to determine.
- **Genograms** - With what are termed “blended families” on the increase, genograms do not tell us about the amount of contact that there is between family members, or who is important to the child (i.e., the context in which they live).

USED BY HEALTH

Pedigree Charts

Pedigree charts are used by some Health agencies to chart family medical conditions.

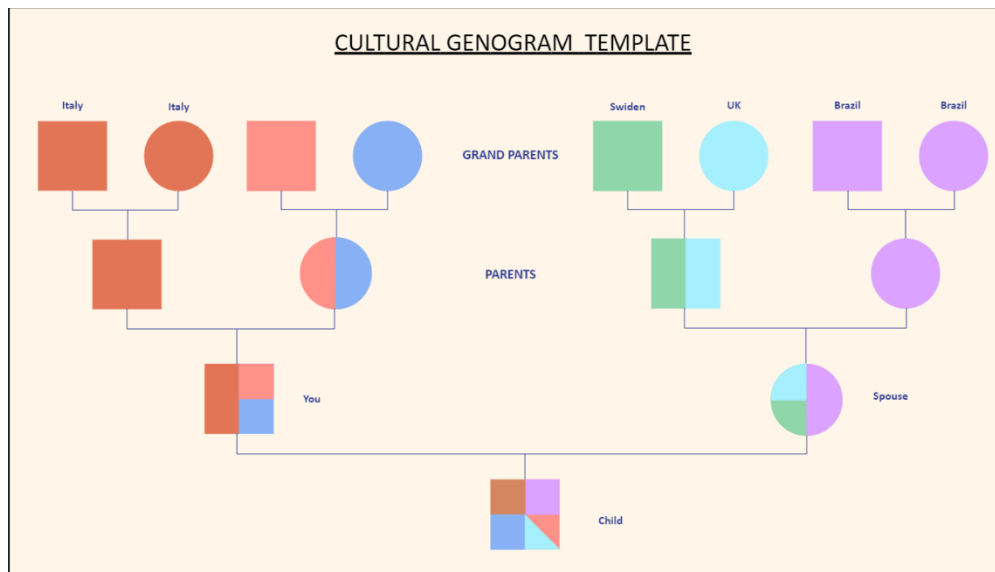
SAMPLE PEDIGREE



CULTURAL GENOGRAMS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

A cultural genogram is a pictorial representation of the relationships and experiences within a family. It is a visual tool that enables engagement with the family and provides the practitioner with an overview of individual and group culture within a family.

A genogram uses a set of special symbols to help describe relationships. It can represent a family tree. Genograms contain a wealth of information that analyses the family's background and ancestors and their behavioural inclinations in determining what personal traits their future offspring may inherit.



AVAILABLE TRAINING AND RESOURCES

- Cambridgeshire County Council deliver training on Genograms and Ecomaps as part of the following courses:
 - Direct Work with Children and Young People
 - Tools to Assess Neglect – including the Graded Care Profile
- Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership encourage people to use ecomaps and have a who page about them on their website: [Ecomaps | Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership \(leedsscp.org.uk\)](https://www.leedsscp.org.uk)
- I found this document, which might be of interest, on the website for the Norfolk Children Partnership [Genograms.pdf - Google Drive](#)
- Genograms in Supervision [Drawing-a-genogram.pdf \(rip.org.uk\)](https://www.rip.org.uk/drawing-a-genogram.pdf)
- [Using genograms in social work practice | Research in Practice](#)
[How practitioners are using genograms in practice | Research in Practice](#)
[cf_pt_using-genograms-in-practice_final.pdf \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](#)
- Programs for creating Genograms [The Genogram - GenoPro](#)

- [Microsoft Word - Outline for a Brief Genogram Interview.doc \(iswmatters.co.uk\)](#)
- The Pan Bedfordshire Chronology and Genogram Guidance [guide_pract_chronol_genogram.pdf \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)
- This guidance is mostly about chronologies and has a one page description of a Genogram
- [Ultimate Guide on How to Use Social Work Ecomaps | Social Work Haven](#)
- [A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words - SocialWorker.com](#)
- When a picture is worth a thousand words <https://youtu.be/F1tcrVdIYpw>
- [What is systemic practice? \(communitycare.co.uk\)](#) – Couldn't access the full article as you have to subscribe. This is the description provided:

'This article comprises of excerpts taken from a guide on Community Care Inform Children about systemic practice, written by Liz Burns, family and systemic psychotherapist. The full guide covers using genograms and ecomaps to explore family relationships in more detail and includes practical case studies that show how social workers can take a systemic approach to their practice. Subscribers can read the guide on Inform Children.'

CONCLUSION

- I have found that **Genograms** and **Ecomaps** are the most widely used tools for gathering information about family compositions in various parts of the world including the USA, India, Europe.
- They are used by people in the field of family therapy, medicine, genetic research, social work, and education use genograms to better understand the family dynamics that affect the actions and behaviours of each entity in the multi-generational diagram.
- Some, but not all, Health organisations also use **Pedigree** charts to chart family medical conditions.
- The only other things I found are computer programs used by universities for Students to use in Geology courses or for use in creating ancestral family trees. Like **Family Tree Maker**.
- Some practitioners have modified the basic genogram by using colour coding. Others have employed alternatives, such as the sociogram (Leung & Silberling, 2006), family sculpting (Perkins, 2000), and ecomaps (Marchetti-Mercer & Cleaver, 2000), to gain information about relationship processes.
- I have found no specific training on either genograms, however maybe this is covered or embedded into other course as Cambridgeshire County Council do, as mentioned above.
- GenoPro is the most used program for generating Genograms.

