

PRT019: Family Counselling 2 EAP



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Introduction

Group Rules

- ❑ You can share personal stories, but you take the responsibility of your level of openness.
- ❑ The confidentiality requirement applies to all personal information shared in the group. Anonymous examples should not be easily recognisable.
- ❑ Questions and discussions are welcome.
- ❑ If you have questions or have difficulties in meeting the course requirements, please contact the teacher.
- ❑ Telephones and computers should be used only for class purposes. Communicating with those not present should be reserved for the breaks.

Ways of Learning

- Lecture
- Discussion, questions, groupwork
- It is a pass/fail course, at the end of which the student writes a self-reflection.
- To pass the course the student must achieve at least 80% in the following assignments:

Participation	✓ 30%
Genogram	✓ 20%
Self-reflection that includes references to the required reading, 4-5 pages	✓ 50%

Independent Work Tasks

1. Draw **your genogram of three generations, use relational symbols** and bring to the class next time.

2. Read:

either „Making Marriage Simple: 10 Truths for Changing the Relationship You Have into the One You Want“ by Harville Hendrix, Helen LaKelly Hunt,

or „Emotionally Healthy Spirituality“ by Peter Scazzero .

3. At the end of the course **write a reflection: *My family background and how it impacts the way I work with people.***
Relate it to the required reading.

Topics

- Terms and definitions, scope of coverage.
- Lifespan development, developmental phases in family life.
- Family myths, legends, scripts (behavioural guidelines)
- Emotional family dynamics over three generations
- Differentiation from the family of origin
- Emotional dynamics in nuclear family
- Genogram

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- The symptomatic cycle
 - Symptoms in children or adult family members within a family system: diseases, behavioural problems, drug addiction
 - Father's role in a family system
 - Extrafamilial triangles
 - Divorce
 - The influence of disease and bereavement on family dynamics
 - Characteristics of blended families
 - Helper as a tool - opportunities and limits, possible confusion of roles; self-analysis

Different Levels of Pastoral Care in a Local Church



Different Levels of Helping People in Church Context

- 0. Foundational level – teaching of the church. It is the way people are taught about suffering, sharing about their concerns etc. through sermons and Bible studies.

Think about your church:

- Are people allowed to make mistakes? What is the attitude towards people who have problems?
- Are some problems allowed and some not?

Level 2. Informal Pastoral Care

- ❑ Fellowship, prayer and Bible study groups, interpersonal relationships while organising or participating in various events, visiting church members. Pastoral care is spontaneous and runs in parallel with other planned activities.
- ❑ The leaders may have some pastoral care training, but mostly it is not a prerequisite for being appointed as a group leader and the training is not systematic. People who have faced different issues in their lives might offer experience-based counselling. This is how several self-help groups, including AA, have started.

Level 2. Lay Pastoral Care

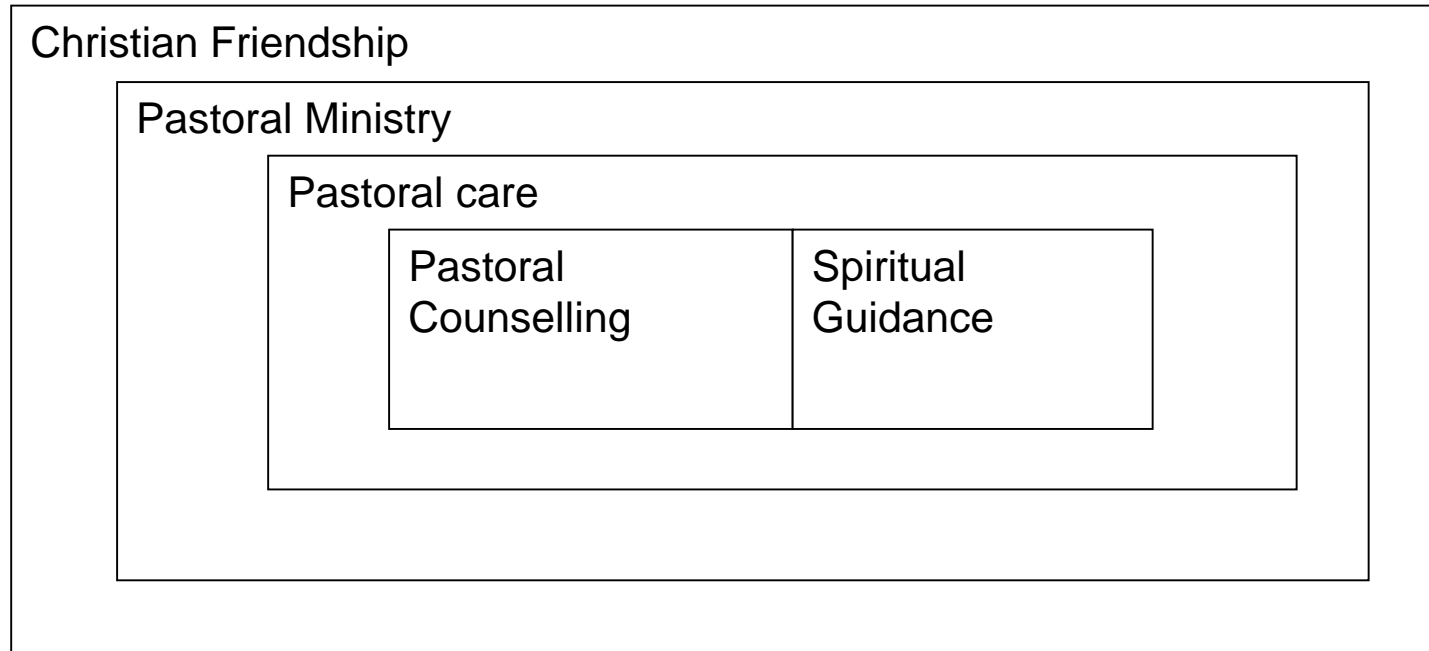
- The candidates are carefully selected and trained. They are appointed as leaders over different ministry areas within the church. The purpose is to offer informal pastoral care, yet those who provide it are well prepared, continuously trained and under pastoral supervision.
- E.g. Stephen Ministries in the UK (the author Kenneth Haugk is a Pastor and clinical therapist). The pastor finds a group of people who are then continuously trained and who are sent out to visit people in the surrounding community, including hospitals and care homes. The pastoral care is organised by the church using trained lay members, but in an informal setting.

Level 3. Formal and Planned Pastoral Care

- ❑ Organised pastoral care in a formal setting, offered by trained individuals in counselling centres, or in clearly defined church ministry framework, appointments are scheduled. Pastoral carers are carefully selected and thoroughly trained. They receive additional continuous training, supervision, co-vision.
- ❑ E.g. EELC pastoral carers, pastoral care therapists in Finland, Christian therapists and psychologists in Estonia.

Terms: Pastoral Care, Counselling, Helping

□ David Benner (2003):



Pastoral Care, Counselling, Helping

- ❑ Pastoral care – supporting a person at a practical, psychological or spiritual level through conversations, prayer, giving communion, confession, home visitations, letter writing, phone calls, providing practical help or information, advise for further training, including reading or other similar advice. Help can be provided by clergy or lay members.
- ❑ Helping is a synonym for broad-based pastoral care activities.
- ❑ Counselling – appointment-based single or repeated meeting with the person(s) in need to find a solution to a specific issue.

Psychology, Psychotherapy, Psychiatry

- ❑ Psychology – scientific approach to human reason, mental state, character and behaviour.
- ❑ Psychotherapy – usually a long-term process that uses the methods of psychology to change behavioural and communication patterns.
- ❑ Psychiatry – branch of medicine that treats mental disorders.

Family Counselling, Family Therapy

- Family counselling – solution centred, single or repeated meeting with the family. It is important to assess the seriousness of the problem and when necessary, refer to someone else.
- Family therapy – usually a process of 10 or more counselling sessions which aim at mapping out and changing family relationships by observing/involving 3 generations.

Lifespan Development, Family Life Cycle, Religious Development



Lifespan Development

- ❑ Infancy (0-1 a) – trust versus mistrust. Affectionate relationship with mother creates a sense of security and trust. Negative outcome: mistrust, insecurity.
- ❑ Toddler (1-2 a) – autonomy versus shame and doubt. Development of willpower. Negative outcome: shame.
- ❑ Pre-school (3-5 a) – initiative versus guilt. Central needs: reasoning/judgement, initiative, interaction. Negative outcome: passivity, guilt.

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- Younger school-age (5-10) – industriousness versus inferiority. Development of skills and self-motivation. Negative outcome: inferiority, lack of competence, pretending.
 - Adolescence (11-14 a) – identity versus role confusion. Developing a sense of self, devotion, fidelity. Negative outcome: unsure identity, holding on to certain dogmas.

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- ❑ Young adult (15-25) – belonging versus isolation. Finding friends, a partner, developing collaboration and intimacy. Negative outcome: loneliness, substitutional corporative groups.
 - ❑ Middle age - generativity versus stagnation. Raising children, career success, fulfilling life goals. Negative outcome: stagnation.
 - ❑ Older adult - Ego integrity versus despair. Developmental task: to integrate their whole life experience, acceptance of failures and mistakes, wisdom. Negative outcome: despair, imitation of wisdom. (E. Erikson)

Family Life Cycle

1. Meeting the partner

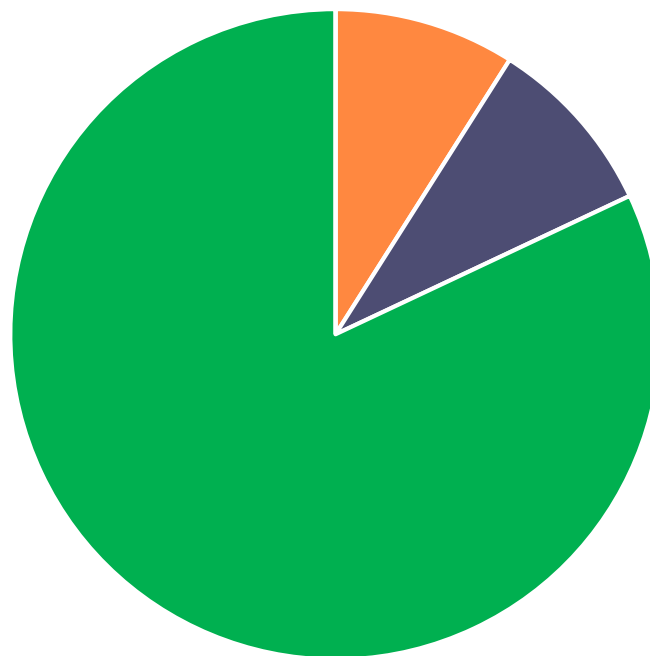


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My time

Time with partner

2. Birth of child



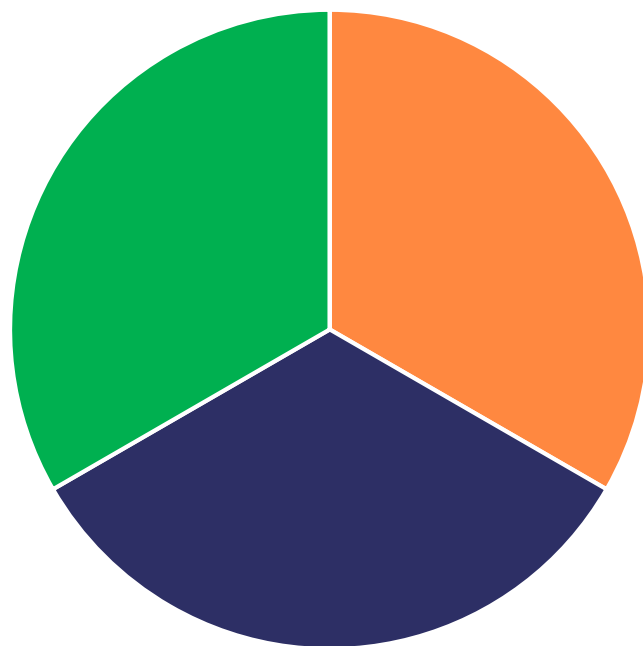
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My time

Time with partner

Parent and child

3. Child goes to school



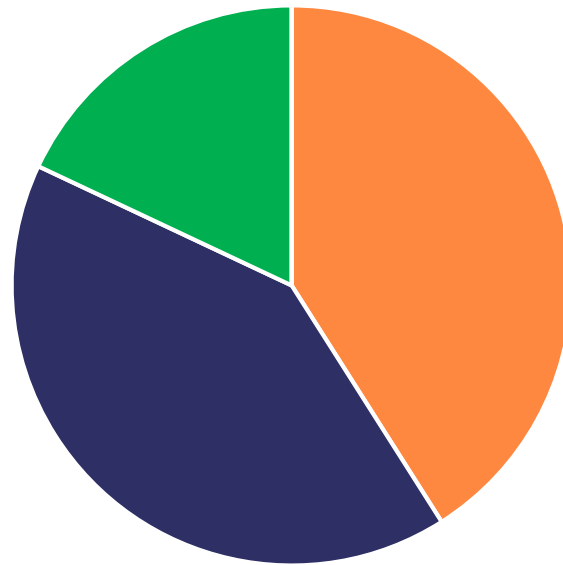
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My time

Time with partner

Parent and schoolchild

4. Family with an Adolescent



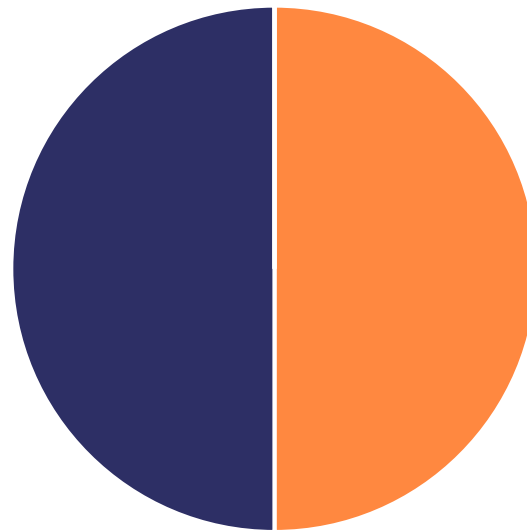
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My time

Time with partner

Parent and adolescent

5. „Empty nesters“



■ Minu aeg ■ Aeg paarina

My time

Time with partner

Religious Development



Religious Development According to J. Fowler

- ❑ Intuitive-projective faith – pre-school age. Fantasy and reality are intermingled. Formation of first ideas about God according to the child's upbringing.
- ❑ Mythic-literal faith – school-age. The surrounding world is perceived more and more through logic. Religious stories are understood literally. Some people remain in this phase even as adults.
- ❑ Synthetic-conventional faith – adolescence. Conformity to the beliefs of a certain religious group. No acceptance of those who have different ideas. Their own framework of beliefs has to hold, doubts are not allowed. Many adults are still in this phase.

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- ❑ Individuative-reflective faith. The person sees things more broadly, thinks about alternatives. Well-ordered systems start to crumble, looking for answers. In this stage some people reject faith.
 - ❑ Conjunctive faith – reached in mid-life. The person starts to recognise the limits of logic and accept the paradoxes of life. Does not try to explain everything away. A new level of understanding of religious stories.
 - ❑ Universalising faith – very few reach this stage. The person lives not for themselves but to serve others. Faith is embodied in behaviour.

P. Scazzero's description of the stages of faith:

- ❑ Life-changing awareness of God – the beginning of faith journey.
- ❑ Spiritual growth (discipleship) – joining a faith community, learning dogmas and behaviour.
- ❑ The active life – input to the ministry of the faith community. Service, proclamation, use of one's gifts.
- ❑ The WALL and the journey inward – one leads to another. The faith crisis.
- ❑ The journey outward – back to the life of action, but now laid on a new foundation – God at the centre. Deep sense of God's love, inward meekness.
- ❑ Transformed by love – God's sanctifying work in the person, growing towards perfect love.

Religious Well-Being

- ❑ Personal sphere – life and values are given meaning, formation of self-awareness and dignity.
- ❑ Communal sphere – the quality of relationships, involving morality and culture, displayed through love, justice, hope and faith in humanity.
- ❑ Environmental sphere – care and respect for the physical world, in some cases involving a sense of unity with nature.
- ❑ Transcendent sphere – a relationship with someone above the human sphere (God), expressed through adoration and worship.

These spheres are interconnected: the way person relates to the community, may depend on their self-image (personal sphere); culture (communal sphere) may influence the person's interaction with the environment. Although religious well-being depends on all those spheres, people tend to prefer one dimension over others.

Faith and Difficult Life Events

- The religious dimension helps to cope with difficult life events. When all other explanations fail, the religious explanation can still provide meaning for the given situation and life in general. Faith in a higher being who is in control can strengthen the weak.
- As faith significantly influences the person's self-understanding, relationships with others and the world in which they live, the religious aspect has to be recognised and considered when providing pastoral care.

My System of Values as a Helper

- ❑ Value-system free assistance does not exist.
- ❑ Even in secular theories, the worldview influences are apparent. Although secular helpers tend to disassociate themselves from classical religions, especially Christianity, we can still see how either consciously or sub-consciously they veer towards their preferred philosophical-religious system (including humanism, New Age, etc.).

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- ❑ One of the fundamental features of Christian pastoral care is that it is provided by Christians (especially clergy). It usually takes place on premises where there is a clear connection to Christian faith (church or various Christian events). The content of the conversation is already religiously framed.
 - ❑ Along with their problem, the person brings into the conversation their understanding (including pre-conceived ideas) of God, church, and clergy.
 - ❑ The pastoral carer also has their own beliefs about God, and about various life issues that influence their ministry.

Family Myths, Legends and Scenarios/Scripts



How do you eat buckwheat?



With:
salt and pepper;
salt and butter;
milk;
sugar;
boiled with salt, as
a sidedish to meat;
do not eat
buckwheat.

Every family has their own

- Legends – warnings about failures, stories of heroes;
- Myths – this is how we do things in our family;
- Scenarios – specific unwritten rules on how to behave in certain situations.

Legends

- Stories about foremothers and forefathers who were either very successful or failed in a specific area.
- Stories of how families survived the war.
- How did the family cope when the breadwinner lost their job or died.
- What happened to the youngster who left home at a young age.
- Etc.

Myths

Myths are either unspoken or verbalised beliefs; connected to the past; a solution that has worked in the past to resolve a specific situation.

- ❑ Men have to be the breadwinners
- ❑ The wife has to cope with going to work, housekeeping and raising the kids.
- ❑ We do not talk about our family issues outside the home.
- ❑ Men don't cry
- ❑ Men can't be trusted, women have to organise everything.
- ❑ We never have arguments in our family.

Scenarios (Scripts)

- Unwritten guidelines for specific situations. Every family member has developed a sequence of behavioural actions.
- Miniscenarios – may last only for a few minutes, where the chain of actions/responses it is rather predictable.
- These are usually learned in crisis situations.
- For example: visiting the Auntie. Some talk to each other, some take care of kids, some retreat to the kitchen, some always are first to leave, etc.

Think about

- Which myths, legends, and scripts exist in your family?

Emotional Family Dynamics Involving Three Generations



1. Differentiation from the family of origin

Definitions

- ❑ Nuclear family – adults who form a couple or a family
- ❑ Family of origin – the family where the person was raised (the parents and siblings).
- ❑ Household – people living together, may include different generations, do not need to be relatives.

Murray Bowen (1913-1990)



- ❑ Certain behavioural patterns are transmissioned from previous generations and the following generations will most certainly copy the same patterns.
- ❑ According to Bowen meeting/finding the partner, getting married and having children is by and large governed by emotions and instincts. The way partners manage their emotions and instincts shows the **level of their differentiation.**

Bowen's Scale of Differentiation

Fusion

Differentiation

0-25

25-50

50-75

75-100 (hypothetical)

0-25: governed by emotions; inability to distinguish between feelings and facts. Completely relationships-driven. All energy is spent on seeking love and acceptance, no energy left for life-goals. Failure to achieve approval causes either to retreat or fight. Many problems with health, economic and social problems. Persons at the lower end of the scale often spend their whole life in institutions.

25-50: Mostly a pseudo-self. Life is governed by emotions, but lifestyle is more flexible, the person has a better ability to connect emotions and reason. Relationships orientated. Most important is what others think. Seeks approval; wants to please teachers at school, or superiors at workplace. Another person, a group of people or science serves as the source of authority. May be highly educated, knowledgeable in impersonal matters. Poor understanding of interpersonal relationships; screwed relationships; life-long search for intimacy.

0-25

25-50

50-75

75-100 (hüpoteetiline)

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- **50-75:** Emotional and intellectual systems can act in parallel and collaborate. When anxiety occurs, the intellectual system is able to remain independent and does not succumb to the emotional system. Decisions are not made spontaneously, based on emotions. Logical thinking at the times of calm. When calm, can think logically to work out principles that help to cope in anxious situations. Emotionally more satisfied life. Sometimes emotionally on autopilot, but when needed can use reason to take control. Less relationship orientated, more liberated to fulfil life goals. Can evaluate themselves without self-pretence. In relationships can react to emotions without losing their own self. Independent when together and alone. Allow children to develop their own selves without forcing them to like the parent. Responsibility for one's success or failure is not shifted on others. Noticeably less relational problems.
 - **Hypothetical 75-100:** not individualists but people who know themselves and others. Accept their own and other people's limits. Individualism is a pretence (pseudo-self) when the person fights against assimilation.

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- Assimilation can increase or decrease the level of anxiety. The stronger the need for unity, the more the person seeks to fulfil that need.
 - An intense assimilation in a relationship increases the possibility of uncomfortable compromises made under emotional pressure.
 - Therefore people need intimacy to decrease anxiety, but also distance to avoid being suffocated by the relationship. All relationships are marked by this tendency.

When anxiety level rise, the more or less working relationships become dysfunctional

- ❑ Anxiety throws individuation-differentiation off balance. The drive for unity increases. People become more dependent and thus also more anxious because other people's dependency and anxiety. The more dependent partner becomes even more dependent, and the stronger partner more authoritarian while remaining trapped in their partner's dependency. Both expect more and more that the other partner would change hoping that it would bring anxiety levels down.
- ❑ The differentiated the partners, the more they can manage their anxiety and have less expectations for others.

Anxiety, Cutoff and Differentiation

- There is an inverse relationship between the degree of unresolved emotional attachment and degree of differentiation. Families at the lower end of differentiation are more chaotic, with higher levels of anxiety. Better differentiated families are more ordered and with lower levels of anxiety. The lower the differentiation and emotionally unresolved attachment the more intense are the mechanisms that are put to work to increase differentiation.
- People can live in a physical proximity with parents yet be emotionally separated. When the anxiety level is low they can communicate freely and spontaneously, when stress levels rise, emotional distance also increases to maintain emotional balance. Some again need physical distance to maintain balance, the extreme form of this is running away from home for good.

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- Bowen calls both the emotional and physical separation a *cutoff*.
 - One effective and automatic mechanism for reducing the over-all level of anxiety in a family is a relatively „open“ relationship system in the extended family.
 - Open relationship system is the opposite to cutoff and allows family members to have a reasonable amount of emotional contact with each other. In case of a cutoff as well as with open relationships the spectrum of frequency and quality of contact is very broad. Although openness reduces anxiety, it does not help with differentiation. Yet reduced anxiety levels allow the family members slowly move towards a greater degree of differentiation.

How to Differentiate from the Family of Origin

- ❑ **Personal relationships.** Personal communication between two people talking about themselves, not about other people or topics. According to Bowen, only few people can talk to anyone about personal things for longer than a few minutes without the rise of anxiety levels.
- ❑ Any attempt to create personal relationships in a family improves the quality of the relationship system and is a valuable exercise for getting to know yourself.
- ❑ Bowen advises to create a personal relationship with every extended family member. It helps to „grow into adulthood“ more than any other method. Yet Bowen admits that no-one lives long enough to fully achieve that goal. Success also depends on how others respond.
- ❑ Going through this process helps to understand the emotional processes in the family – how people pull together or grow apart at periods of anxiety and how great a blow it is when family members reject each other. Externally peaceful families do not always have deep personal relationships. Success depends on how others respond.

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- **Becoming a better observer and take control of emotional reactions.** Becoming a better observer helps to be more informed and less reactive and this, in turn, enables them to observe the family even better. Growing towards this goal enables the person to be more objective, to see the family from a different angle, not to criticise, or become angry. At the same, it is important to remember that the family members should not be aware about this goal, otherwise they will resist.

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- **Being present at the emotional moments** in family life and stepping out of the triangle. Personal relationships, observing the family, and controlling one's own emotions helps to see those triangles in the middle of which you were raised and take a different stance. Differentiation can happen only in emotionally activated situations. It is important to visit the family of origin when there is a serious illness or disease, or important family celebrations. These are times when anxiety levels usually rise. When everything is calm, new approaches cannot be practiced as the family tries to avoid emotionally charged topics. In those periods it is good to deal with smaller emotional topics from the past. The greatest mistake that is often made is confronting the family. It might bring an immediate feeling of success, a feeling of having achieved something, but if the family responds negatively, it will take months or years to heal the broken relationship.

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- **Other topics.** There are times in every family when a person becomes emotionally locked into triangle with their parents. It is futile to fight against it. This situation gives an opportunity to observe those people who are emotionally important to parents. The focus is shifted to one of the parents, on another family member and themselves. Sometimes it is possible to handle the triangle through other siblings, sometimes it is more fruitful to involve other relatives from the parents' generation, or from an even earlier generation, if still alive.

Emotional Family Dynamics over Three Generations



2. Emotional processes within the
nuclear family

Bowen's Theory of Triangles



- A two person system may be stable when everything is calm, but when anxiety levels rise, a third person becomes involved. When that triangle develops tensions, new people become involved creating new triangles.
- In a triangle with moderate tension, there usually are two people who feel comfortable and a third who is in conflict or alienated.
- The triangle often has fixed roles: e.g. One is the anxiety initiator, the other inflates it, and the third dampens it down. The initiator is often blamed although they were just the first to worry about a potential problem, but they did not the cause of the already existing problem circulating within the triangle.

Examples About Classical Triangles

(there is an infinite number of triangles)

- ❑ Distanced couple – one or both confide to a friend, find a lover, plunge into work, hobbies or sports, get a pet, etc.
- ❑ Husband-wife tension or distance (in case of divorce for example) – the child fills the role of an emotional partner.
- ❑ One of the partners has strong connections to their mother or father, the partner is left out.
- ❑ One partner has formed a strong connection with one of the in-laws in opposition to the dysfunctional partner (the wife and mother-in-law try to „fix“ the alcoholic husband).

Out of the Triangle

- ❑ Helping the person out of the triangle is one of the most important techniques of family therapy.
- ❑ It depends on how the formation of the triangle is understood. Triangulation happens by words, tone of voice and allusions.
- ❑ When the person manages to achieve neutrality or separation and when they are in contact with their own emotional triangles, the tension between other members in the triangle will lighten. Neutrality means that both sides are seen as going through a process and not being stuck with „how things should be“.

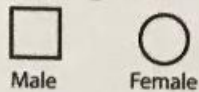
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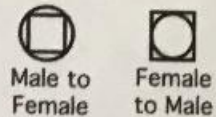
Standard Symbols for Genograms

Gender

Cisgender



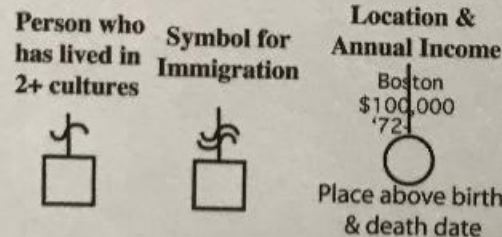
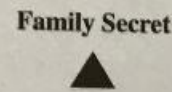
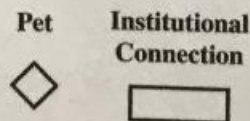
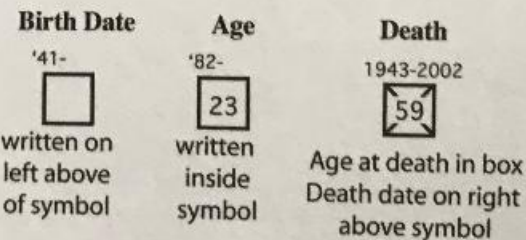
Transgender



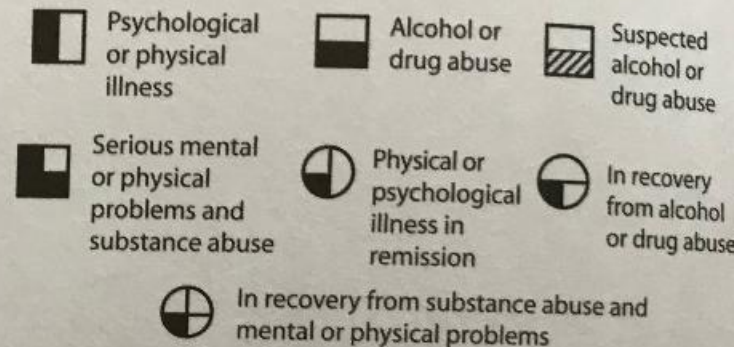
Sexual Orientation



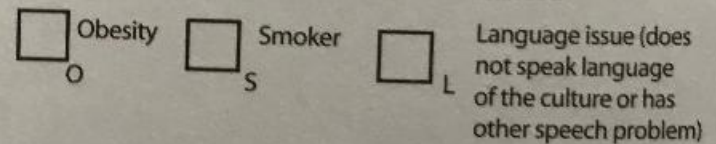
Birth/Age/Death



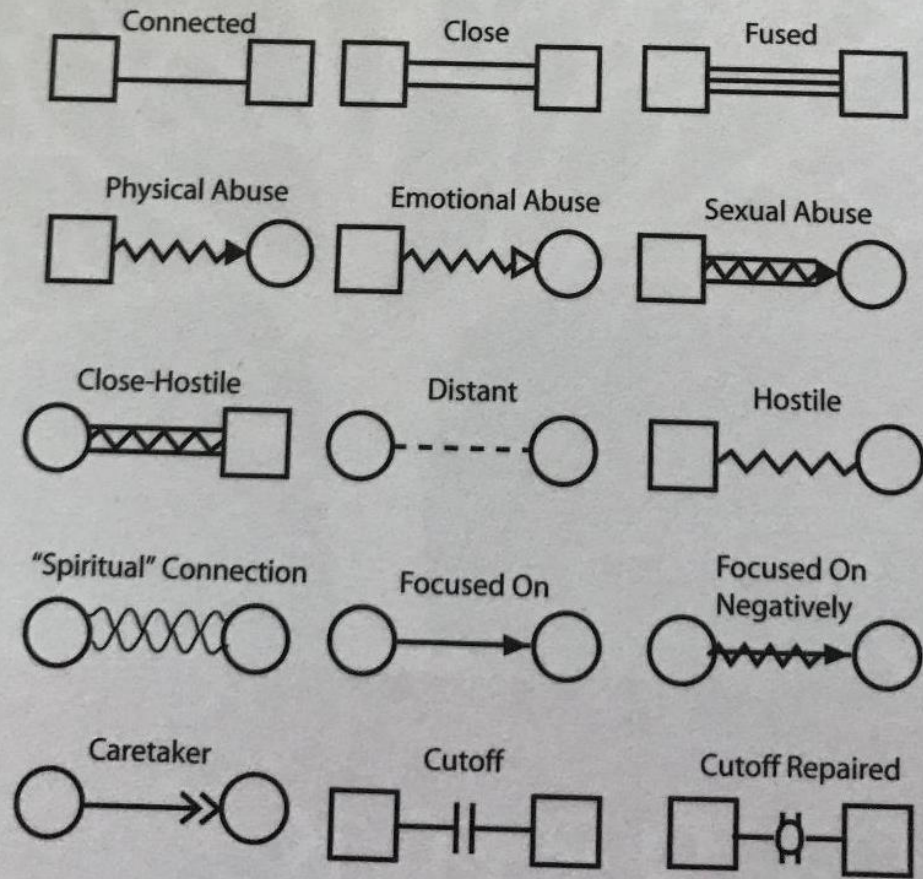
Symbols for Addiction & Physical or Mental Illness



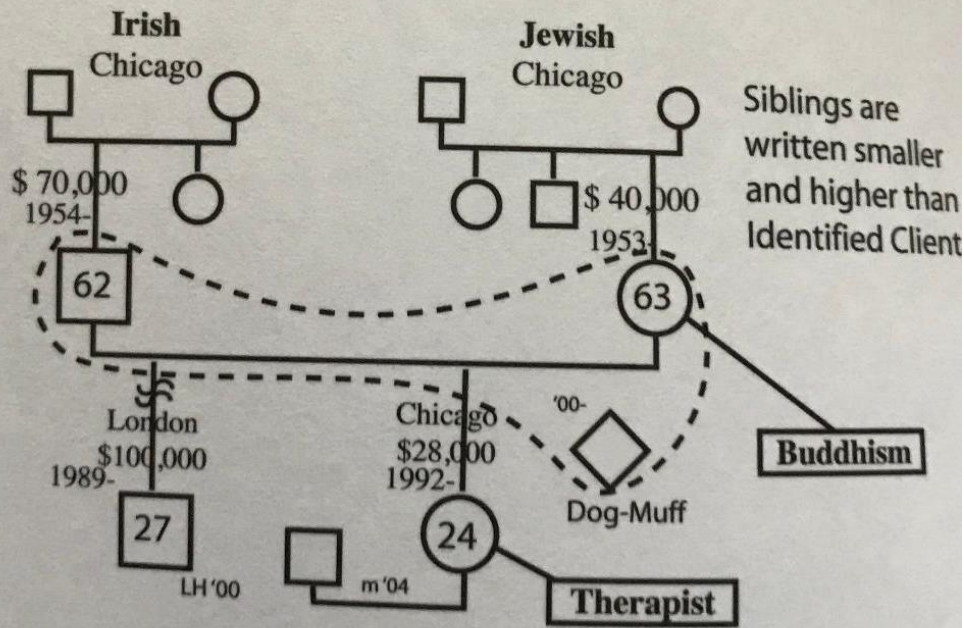
Other Individual Indicators



Symbols Denoting Interactional Patterns between People



Household, Size and Position of Family Members



Siblings are written smaller and higher than Identified Client

Sibling spouses are written smaller and lower.

Household is shown by encircling members living together (couple living with their dog after launching children)