

GENOGRAMS: CHARTING YOUR CONNECTIONS

BY RUTH SNAPP

I WAS NOT EXCITED about the class assignment. What would I learn about myself from some lines, squares and circles? By the time I finished, however, I'd not only learned about myself but also felt connected to my family in new ways. I saw the repeated vocations—missionary, farmer, and health care professional—of those who had gone before leaving a rich legacy for me. I also discovered disease trends—cancer on one side of the family, heart disease and hypertension on the other. I understood more of my background, too, as I examined and plotted relational patterns and major family events.

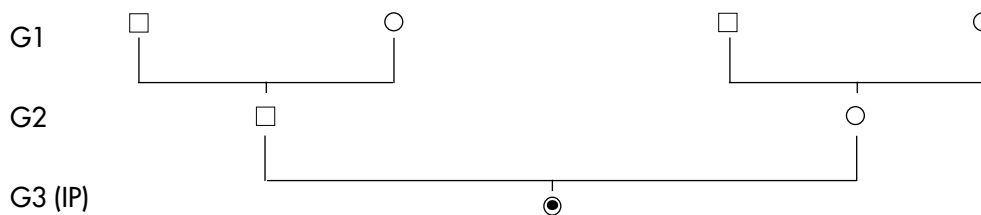
A genogram diagrams and records information about a family for at least three generations. It is a snapshot in time that illuminates, warns and comforts. You don't need to be an artist to draw the lines and symbols. Nurses can use genograms as an assessment tool with individuals and families to help them understand themselves and solve problems.

Below is the standard design and basic symbols. For more information, please consult the web pages and references.

Websites on Genograms:

<http://www.city-net.com/~markd/medical/genogram.htm>

<http://faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/commstud/galvin/genograms/Genogram%20Clues.htm>



1. Identify the index person (IP), spouse(s), sibling constellation, children

Male: Children: 
 Female: Divorced: 
 Marriage: 

2. Identify family of origin (G2), paternal and maternal families (G1).

3. Show household composition by drawing a circle around the people who live together.

4. Record birth, marriage, death dates by each person.

Died:

5. Record key life events, major moves and occupations.

6. Record personal traits and health histories.

7. Show relationship patterns

Close: 

Conflictual: 

Cut off: 

Overly close: 

Note: These symbols differ between sources.