

Adaptations of the Multifaceted Genogram in Counseling, Training, and Supervision

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This article provides a review of representative literature offering modifications of traditional genogram formats, procedures, and emphases. Topics include counseling techniques and interventions for couples' issues related to sexuality, intimacy, and gender roles. Families and stepfamilies are addressed in areas such as grief and loss, alcoholism, and identification of family resources. The authors also include adaptations of genogram techniques for career counseling, counselor training, and counselor supervision.

Murray Bowen contended that genograms depict nothing less than “the ebb and flow of emotional processes through the generations” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 306). While genograms have become a historical ensign to intergenerational family theory and therapy, they have concurrently become versatile and widely used therapeutic tools (DeMaria, Weeks, & Hof, 1999). Although Bowen laid the theoretical foundation for the genogram as a diagram of “underlying emotional processes in the family” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 306), intergenerational family therapists have been credited with advancing the practical use of the genogram as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool (Kaslow, 1995; McGoldrick, Gerson, & Shellenberger, 1999). The purpose of this article is to review representative literature offering modifications of traditional genogram formats, procedures, and emphases to address a variety of issues that clients present in both individual and family counseling modalities. In addition, we will review literature describing uses of genograms in the contexts of counselor preparation and supervision.

Evidence of the genogram’s adaptability and potency are documented in the abundance of related entries found in family counseling journals, counselor preparation journals, mental health counseling journals, and self-help literature (Halevy, 1998; Wachtel, 1982). Contemporary clinicians

have combined genograms with other approaches (Dunn & Levitt, 2000; Kuehl, 1995, 1996; McGoldrick et al., 1999; McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985; Wachtel, 1982). Educators have documented application of genograms in a variety of training situations (e.g., Anderson, 1987; Bahr, 1990; Benningfield, 1987; Emerson, 1995). Recognizing such a profusion of literature on the genogram, we have limited our focus to counseling, training, and supervision. (For additional explication on genogram uses, readers are referred to McGoldrick et al., 1999).

BASIC USE OF THE GENOGRAM

As illustrated in Figure 1, genograms chronicle families and major elements of their histories over a minimum of three generations (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985). Thus, genograms provide graphic annals of families’ membership, characteristics, and interpersonal relationships. They reflect the transmission of family patterns from generation to generation (Kuehl, 1995) and provide a “provisional blueprint for change” (Lieberman, 1979, p. 57).

Advantages attributed to using genograms are many. McGoldrick & Gerson (1985) suggested that

by scanning the family system historically and assessing previous life cycle transitions, one can place present issues in the context of the family’s evolutionary patterns. . . . When family members are questioned about the present situation in relation to the themes, myths, rules, and emotionally charged issues of previous generations of family members, repetitive patterns become clear. Genograms “let the calendar speak” by suggesting possible connections between family events. Patterns of previous illness and earlier shifts in family relationships brought about through changes in family structure and

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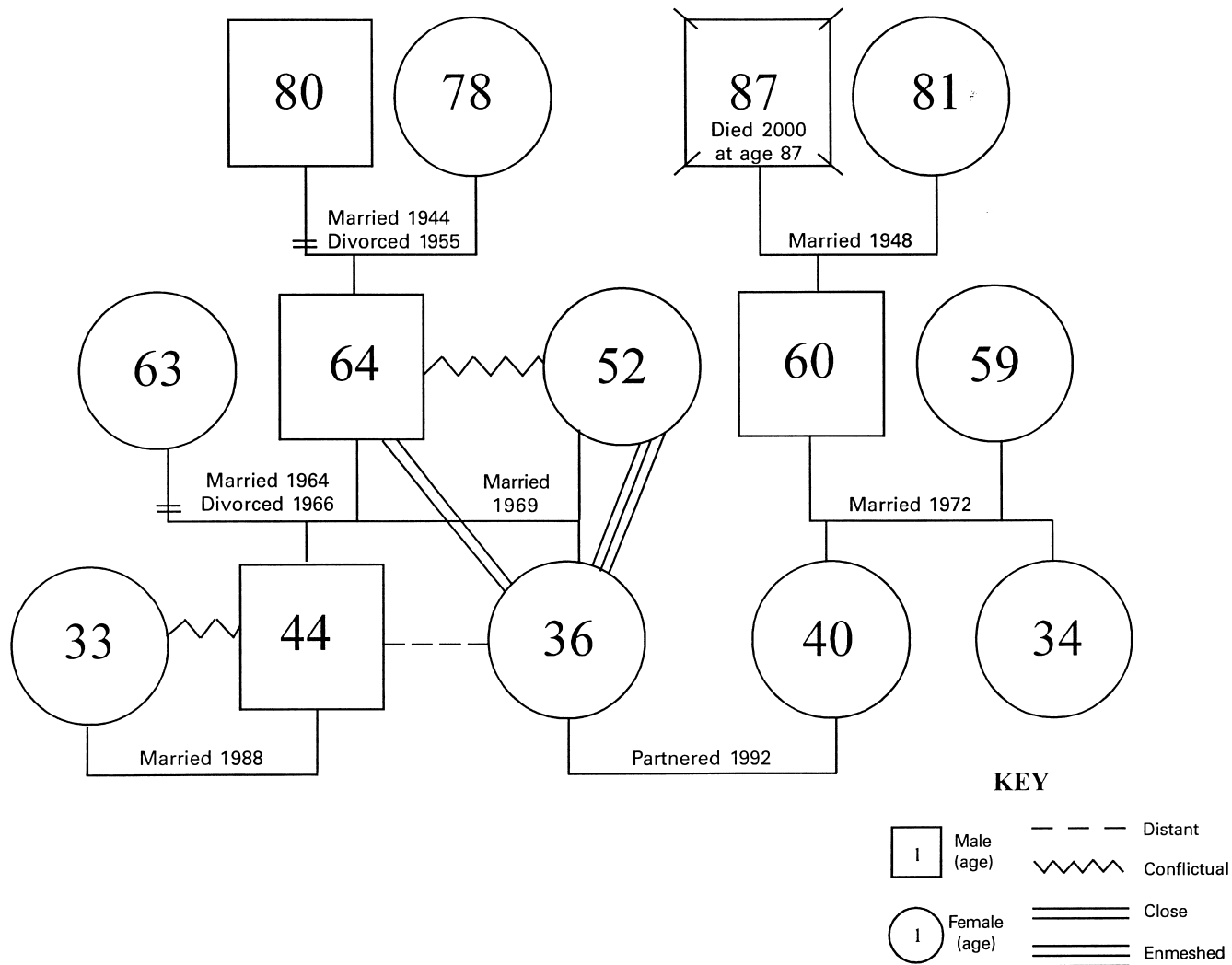


FIGURE 1: The Genogram

other critical life changes can easily be noted on the genogram, providing a rich source of hypotheses about what leads to change in a particular family. (p. 3)

In broad and comprehensive contexts, genograms offer alternate explanations for family difficulties (Wachtel, 1982). For example, contextualizing difficulties within an intergenerational family complex facilitates systemic understanding for family members and counselors who work with them. A meta view contributes to clients' heightened levels of objectivity (Hof & Berman, 1986; Kuehl, 1995) and less toxic interpretations of difficulties (Kuehl, 1995; McGoldrick, 1996; Searight, 1997). Erlanger (1990) asserted that participation in construction of genograms and examination of their content offer "highly positive experiences for both men and women, from young adults to very old persons" (p. 322). Genograms also enable counselors to conceptualize and document extensive individual and family history and more

readily recognize the absence of critical information (McGoldrick, 1995).

Clinical and educational uses of genograms are predicated on the premises that individuals are influenced by transmission of relationship styles from generation to generation and that unresolved issues surface in later generations (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Lerner, 1985; McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985; Wachtel, 1982). As clients recognize these inherited patterns of behavior, they are empowered to interrupt repetitive sequences that are counterproductive or anxiety provoking and sustain behaviors that serve them well (Searight, 1997).

GENOGRAMS IN COUNSELING

In clinical practice, use of the genogram is sometimes limited to documentation of essential factual information such as names and dates of births, marriages, divorces, and deaths

during initial assessment procedures (Searight, 1997). A more comprehensive approach (a) chronicles salient events and family members' reactions, (b) depicts subjective perceptions of relationship patterns, and (c) includes information about broader social contexts (McGoldrick & Gerson, 1985; McGoldrick et al., 1999). These genograms portray and explicate recurring symptoms; relational patterns; chronology and relationships of events; and responses to loss, change, or developmental transitions. Broader inquiry can include additional manifestations of cultural influence related to ethnicity, race, immigration and acculturation, social class, gender, religion and spirituality, and worldview (Thomas, 1998).

As work with clients progresses beyond assessment, the genogram becomes an intervention tool with diverse applications. Counselors working from intergenerational approaches facilitate the identification and examination of patterns and relationships among generations. Traditional intergenerational family counselors assume the posture of a coach who encourages clients to "make a research project out of life" (Bowen, 1978, p. 179) by observing family interactions and their participation within those interactions (Bowen, 1978; Titelman, 1998). With insight derived from these observations, clients assume responsibility for moving toward increased identity clarification within family contexts (Titelman, 1998). Accordingly, as individuals engage in person-to-person relationships with members of their extended families without involving other members to manage anxiety and achieve stability (triangulating), they become more differentiated. These modified patterns of relationship within family-of-origin contexts become new templates for participation in other relationships and are recognized as individuals are able to simultaneously (a) maintain a solid, autonomous sense of self and (b) invest in close relationships.

Although use of genograms emphasizes the role of extended family, modalities include work with individuals, couples, and various combinations of family members (Becvar & Becvar, 2000; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Regardless of the number of family members present, counselors often focus on individuals and their portion of the nuclear family genogram. Other family members may be asked to observe the process and share observations after genograms are drawn and initially discussed (Magnuson & Norem, 1998). As genograms are drawn, counselors document names of family members and their dates of birth, marriages, divorces, deaths, and significant events. By asking questions such as "How did your parents resolve conflict?" and "What happened when someone violated a family rule?" counselors invite clients to examine presenting problems in historical context and explicate general perceptions of relationship patterns and emotional functioning.

The extent to which genograms can be incorporated in treatment is broad and diverse. At times, however, more limited focus is appropriate (DeMaria et al., 1999; Sherman,

1993). Contemporary clinical applications and modifications are highlighted in the following sections.

Using Genograms With Couples

In our work with couples (see Magnuson & Norem, 1998), we have likened marriage to the merging of corporations. Consolidation patterns vary. For example, sometimes one corporation seemingly consumes another and forcefully imposes its organizational structure. At other times, corporations impetuously combine resources to avoid costs and quickly encounter unexpected chaos, confusion, inefficiency, and loss with no structure for resolving difficulties. Other corporations merge only after deliberate planning to identify, combine, and maximize existing strengths demonstrated within each entity. This analogy provides a rationale for incorporating genograms when couples plan to marry and when they encounter difficulties.

For premarital counseling, the individuals engage in a broader study of their families of origin to identify and examine predominant traditions, relationship patterns, gender roles, values, lines of power and authority, expressions of emotion, problem-solving strategies, and decision-making styles (Wood & Stroup, 1990). When couples engage in counseling to address areas of dissatisfaction, family-of-origin inquiry may reflect more specificity and connection to presenting problems. Examples of more limited areas of focus follow.

Using Genograms for Sexuality and Related Problems

Integrating principles of sex therapy and family therapies, Hof and Berman (1986; Berman & Hof, 1987) developed sexual genograms to examine sexual dysfunction within the intergenerational family complex. The authors based their approach on the premise that "sexuality is best understood within the context of . . . theories involved with family structure and three-generation transmission of loyalties and myths, as well as the more familiar dyadic issues of power, intimacy, and sex role learning" (Berman & Hof, 1987, p. 39). Hof and Berman (1986) initiated a five-stage process with a general orientation to the concepts and purposes of an intergenerational approach and assistance in constructing genograms. Subsequently, they invited clients to diagram examples of closeness, distance, conflict, and other relationship styles modeled in their families of origin. Discussions focused on events, families' responses to events, and contemporary manifestations of those responses.

Introducing between-session tasks, Hof and Berman (1986) provided a forum for additional reflection by asking clients to respond in writing to a series of questions related to family-of-origin sexual attitudes and behaviors. In subsequent sessions, clients modified or expanded genograms with insight gained as questions and responses were contemplated.

Hof and Berman (1986) encouraged clients to contact family members and acquire additional information. During scheduled visits with family members, clients asked questions such as “What were you taught about sexuality as a child?” and “What did you want me to know about [sexuality], to think about it?” (p. 43). The authors then capitalized on perceptions clients acquired via sexual genograms as they employed traditional sex therapy interventions. (A chapter addressing genograms in sex therapy is included in Hovestadt & Fine, 1987.)

Using Genograms to Examine Intimacy

Similarly, Sherman (1993) suggested that individuals develop “personal languages” (p. 91) and assign unique meanings to their experiences of intimacy. To help couples and family members “understand their respective languages” (p. 91), enhance trust, and develop tolerance, Sherman developed genograms with an emphasis on intimacy. Thus, he posed questions related to interactional patterns, rules, and beliefs in context of family traditions. Illustrative questions included, “What are the rules about being . . . intense and dramatic versus cool and calm?” and “Does intimacy occur most frequently during fights or during quiet times?” (p. 92). Sherman recommended analyzing responses to identify interactional patterns of the couple and extended family as well as rules, assumptions, values, and expectations related to intimacy. He further documented family rules at the bottom of the genogram. The author reported that familiarity with expanded intimate vocabulary and identification of subtle ways family experiences influence attitudes and intimate behaviors enabled clients to establish goals for enhanced intimacy.

Using Genograms to Explicate Dynamics of Gender

Genograms also provide a forum to examine “gender messages” (Softas-Nall, Baldo, & Tiedemann, 1999, p. 177). In this context, counselors ask questions to amplify subtle expectations, beliefs, and stereotypes about appropriate roles for males and females. White and Tyson-Rawson (1995) expanded this approach, advocating “gendergrams” to explicate etiology of gender-based assumptions within categories of (a) relevant events during childhood and adulthood; (b) significant relationships during various life cycle stages; and (c) emergent roles, patterns, and themes. Partners individually construct gendergrams to examine relationships with (a) persons of their sex and (b) persons of the other sex. Comparisons of gendergrams elucidate areas of similarity and difference and contribute to greater understanding of one another. As patterns and attitudes related to gender roles become overt, individuals and couples are empowered to examine and revise them.

Using Genograms When Treating Alcoholism

Synol (1984) advocated genograms to help couples challenged by an alcoholic member recognize ways they are individually and collectively influenced by their families of origin. A key advantage cited by the author was that couples were able to place less focus on drinking as the problem, view their difficulties in a broader context, and jointly participate in creating systemic changes. Rather than updating existing genograms, Synol recommended preparation of new genograms as therapy progressed to document and reinforce perceptual and behavioral changes. (Chapters on alcoholism are also included in Bowen, 1978, and Titelman, 1998.)

Using Genograms With Lesbian Couples

Magnuson, Norem, and Skinner (1995) proposed genograms as a structure for helping lesbian clients address conflict in intimate relationships. The authors suggested questions such as, “In what ways do you respond to your partner like your mother responded to your father?” (p. 113) to facilitate clients’ objective examination of roles they assume in same-sex relationships in the context of relationship styles modeled by extended family members. Magnuson and her colleagues also included process questions for enhancing self-acceptance and coping with homophobic family members as well as internalized homophobia. Clients contemplating disclosure of their sexual orientation were asked how family members had previously accepted unexpected news, how they have responded to persons who are different, or how they reacted when sons and daughters had broken family rules. In this context, the counselors prompted identification of potential support networks with the question, “Assuming there is only one member in your entire family who would be accepting of your sexual orientation, who would it be?” (p. 113).

Burke and Faber (1997) expanded concepts of the genogram to encompass a chronological portrayal of family members, primary emotional and social relationships and significant sources of influence. Thus, “genogrids” (p. 16) enable examination of strengths and challenges in a broader context, which is more representative of lesbians’ social networks. In addition, the sequential nature accommodates sequential unions and redefined relationships.

Using Genograms With Stepfamilies

Bray (1994) recommended genograms as assessment procedures for understanding complex stepfamily relationships, family contexts, structures, and presenting problems. Bray suggested that the fluid nature of genograms provides a responsive representation of evolving, growing stepfamilies. In this context, the author suggested that genograms also help stepfamilies appreciate the complexity of challenges they

encounter. (A case illustration for working with stepfamilies is included in Titelman, 1998.)

Using Genograms to Help Families Resolve Issues Related to Loss

McGoldrick (1991, 1996) discussed the value of genograms for assisting individuals and families presenting problems related to unresolved loss; in fact, she recommended that clinicians examine losses and patterns of response during assessment procedures with all clients. Walsh and McGoldrick (1991) further explained,

Our concern with the family impact of loss reflects a multigenerational, developmental perspective. Rather than regarding events surrounding a family death as pathological causes of disorder, we view them as normative transitions in the family life cycle that carry the potential for growth and development, as well as for immediate distress or long-term dysfunction. We realize that the family response to loss is as critical in adaptation as the death. Families influence how the event is experienced and the long-term legacies of loss. By attending to family processes, clinicians can promote healthy adaptation to loss and strengthen the family unit in meeting other life challenges. Sharing a multigenerational perspective on loss, we are careful to attend to the legacies of past losses in the family system in all clinical assessment and intervention. Equally important, our consideration of loss takes into account the cultural diversity in mourning processes. (p. xviii)

McGoldrick (1996) demonstrated the usefulness of a genogram in identifying issues of unresolved losses while working with a stepfamily whose presenting problem was a rebellious adolescent daughter. Assessment questions focused on family members' reactions to her biological mother's death, details about the funeral and burial, secrets and myths about her death, and subsequent communication about the mother. Recognizing oblique and distant responses to these queries, McGoldrick inquired about the family's responses to previous losses as well as attitudes and beliefs about death. Thus, she was able to illustrate that "the genogram . . . clarifies . . . ways in which certain family members become bound up in the legacy of unresolved mourning" (p. 60). This information provided the basis of her interventions, which focused on discussing and ritualizing the biological mother's death rather than solely addressing the daughter's behavior.

Similarly, Woodcock (1995) described the use of genograms as a healing ritual for families in exile. Working with families fragmented by political discord and war, the family counselors used a genogram to metaphorically connect divided family members and identify family strengths on which to draw for continued healing and resolution. This work was augmented by gathering family photographs and existing heirlooms to authenticate the memories of pre-exile family relationships.

Using the Genogram as a Quasi-Projective Technique

Although Bowen's (1978) approach to family counseling emphasized intellectual understanding, Wachtel (1982) described potential for using genograms as a projective technique to access unconscious and unexpressed emotions as well as wishes and beliefs. Upon recording factual information within the structure of a basic genogram, Wachtel invited clients' descriptions of family members, and various relationships between the family members, to gain a greater appreciation for the clients' subjective view of their family context. Referring to the genogram as a "map to the unconscious" (p. 339), Wachtel suggested that in the context of discussions related to extended family, clients were often less controlled and defensive and thereby susceptible to unexpected emotional expressiveness. Within this context, Wachtel emphasized the influence of family stories, which are often accepted without questioning by children. Thus, Wachtel also invited clients to examine the validity of family stories.

Kaslow (1995) capitalized on projective techniques by suspending traditional instructions. Subsequent to introducing genogram symbols, Kaslow limited directions to "draw your family" (p. 9). In this less structured format, attention is given to the order in which family members are included, and inferences are drawn from exclusions of family members. Subsequent discussions may focus on desires to eliminate and add members.

Using Genograms to Identify Solutions and Family Strengths

Emphasizing the need to modify elements of genogram applications to remain relevant and contemporary, Kuehl (1995, 1996) described an integrative approach characterized by solution-oriented and narrative techniques in the context of drawing genograms. In the process of constructing genograms, Kuehl suggested inclusion of questions such as, "Who in your family has dealt successfully with this problem?" followed by, "How do you think they did it?" (1995, p. 242) to identify potential sources of support and contextually appropriate solutions. He also proposed integrated postsession tasks such as, "Between now and the next time we meet, continue to notice the positive characteristics each of you has brought from your families of origin that you want to keep in your current relationship" (1995, p. 242). To assist with goal definition, Kuehl modified de Shazer's (1988) "miracle question" (1996, p. 5) to, "Given the way it was in your family of origin, and the way it is now, describe what you would like to see different for you (or your children) in the future" (1995, p. 243). Thus, as Kuehl discussed and illustrated a dialectic interpretation of theories underlying use of genograms and contemporary, constructivist approaches, he identified ways the seemingly disparate models can be mutually enhancing.

Using Genograms With Older Clients

Erlanger (1990) asserted that “the process of completing [a genogram] lends itself in a unique way to the crucial developmental task of old age—achieving ego integrity” (p. 329). The author detailed distinctive and interactive advantages of (a) preparing genograms with older clients and (b) the information derived via the process. Erlanger cited examples of therapeutic benefits such as providing a comfortable forum for working alliances to emerge, empowering clients, examining presenting problems in an intergenerational family context, facilitating a life review, and emphasizing clients’ identity as linking figures in both the history and the future of their families. She further suggested that genograms help counselors access valuable information for consultation, generate hypotheses related to both problems and solutions, and identify strengths and resources. (A case illustration for working with older clients is included in Titelman, 1998.)

Using the Genogram With Children and Adolescents

Equating the process of self-differentiation with the resolution of the developmental task of establishing an ego identity, Nims (1998) included genograms in a sequence of activities for an adolescent counseling group. Within the framework of a six-session model, Nims introduced systemic principles related to the complexity of families, closeness and distance, triangles, family roles, birth order, and potential effects of family experiences. Genograms were introduced in the second session, prepared independently, and discussed during the third session. The author suggested writing and discussion activities designed to help group members recognize their roles within family and peer group contexts, thereby promoting discovery of their individual identities and self-confidence. Fink, Kramer, Weaver, and Anderson (1993) facilitated a similar group experience with preadolescents.

McMillen and Groze (1994) extended traditional genograms to document sequential foster home and residential placements of children. In addition to traditional family-of-origin information, “placement genograms” (p. 311) document successive out-of-home arrangements. In addition to documenting extensive information in an efficient and retrievable fashion, placement genograms offer guidance and a tangible structure for intervention. The authors engaged children who were old enough in the process of drawing their placement genograms. They further used the diagram to identify patterns and repetitive themes (e.g., loss and conflict related to chores), invite discussion of feelings related to various placements and related losses, and challenge maladaptive behavior patterns.

Using Genograms in Academic and Career Counseling

Okiishi (1987) amplified genograms to explore sources of influence, values, life roles, decision-making strategies, and barriers to success in the context of career counseling. Okiishi proposed a three-phase intervention including (a) construction of genograms; (b) documentation of family members’ occupations; and (c) exploration of role models’ influence on worldview, career values, and related constructs. Representative questions to facilitate the third phase included, “What members of your family were successful in their personal lives; who would get stars?” (p. 140) and “For what reasons would your parents have gotten those stars?” (p. 142).

Moon, Coleman, McCollum, Nelson, and Jensen-Scott (1993) expanded this adaptation to examine career decision making and anticipation of career changes. Coupling Bowenian theory (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) with Super’s (1984) life span perspective of career development, these authors illustrated use of genograms to explicate and examine gender roles, decision-making patterns, career-related values, and other vocational issues in the context of intergenerational family themes. (Penick, 2000, described a similar application.)

Rita and Adejanju (1993) constructed “academic genograms” (p. 20) to examine reenactments of family patterns in school settings. Focusing on students’ responses to family events and circumstances, the authors suggested questions to be considered between sessions. Representative questions included, “What are the . . . messages in this family regarding education and academic success?” and “How was academic achievement encouraged, discouraged, and controlled?” (p. 22). Other topics for prolonged consideration included rules and secrets about success and changes that would be necessary to meet the clients’ wishes related to academic success.

Supplementing Individual Counseling With Client Self-Help

Richardson (1984) was one of the first authors to introduce genograms in self-help literature. To provide justification for his recommending family-of-origin approaches to alter individuals’ behavior patterns, Richardson emphasized that

none of us really has a choice about whether to deal with our families or not. Even choosing not to deal with them is a way of dealing with them. You can’t be free of your early experiences by denying their significance or ignoring them. Your early experiences are bound to repeat in your present life with different characters and in different contexts. (p. 3)

Appealing to lay readers, the author illustrated interconnected relationships between family members and

generations, examined patterns of closeness and distance, and elucidated subtle effects of differences on relationships. Richardson (1984) further examined the notions of self-differentiation, family triangles, birth order, and gender position and described the preparation of a genogram as an investigatory tool and agent for change. This author detailed guidelines for making family contacts to acquire information and maintaining individual changes within the family complex.

Addressing women and the topic of anger, Lerner (1985) also advocated family-of-origin inquiries via the genogram to explicate and change relationship patterns. Examining conflict resolution styles in both family and societal contexts, Lerner illustrated responses to discord that would resolve difficulties and enhance personal clarity. Although referring less specifically to intergenerational theory, Lerner discussed intergenerational influences, strategies to promote self-differentiation, and techniques for avoiding participation in triangles. She also presented construction of a genogram and examination of family patterns as tasks "for the daring and courageous" (p. 189). Lerner elaborated on these concepts in sequels examining intimacy (1989) and deception (1993).

Similarly, Marlin (1989) recommended genograms as an avenue to identify, examine, and edit "instructive messages that tell people in the family who they are and how they should behave" (p. 1). Marlin provided step-by-step instructions for acquiring family information and constructing genograms. She also offered recommendations for interpreting genogram material, responding to triangles, identifying family myths, and finding solutions to problems in the genogram context.

McGoldrick (1995) offered yet another self-help approach. After responding to the question, "Why go home again?" (p. 21), the author illustrated ways that families "inevitably come back to haunt us" (p. 22) with genograms and chronicles of approximately 30 famous families. Suggesting that the "past [becomes a] prologue" (p. 34), McGoldrick provided further rationales for engaging in procedures association with genograms and interpreted genogram symbols. She then illustrated the procedures and symbols with genograms of Benjamin Franklin's and Maya Angelou's families. In this comprehensive text, McGoldrick addressed family stories and secrets, communication patterns, responses to loss, intergenerational and cultural influences, sibling relationships, and intimate relationships. McGoldrick concluded with guidelines for reestablishing family relationships and engaging in family-of-origin inquiries.

GENOGRAMS IN TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Central to Bowen's training in intergenerational family therapy is recognition of the theory in the context of one's

own family (Titelman, 1987; Wells, Scott, Schmeller, Hilmann, & Searight, 1990). Based on the premise that differentiation within the therapist's family contributes to competence as a clinician, trainees examine dynamics within their own families of origin. Typically, the training process incorporates genograms (Anderson, 1987; Braverman, 1997; Wells et al., 1990).

Contemporary counselors have adapted and expanded the use of genograms for a variety of training experiences to enhance understanding of systemic concepts and the person of the counselor. For example, Pistole (1997) described an experiential class activity to facilitate participants' acquiring a greater understanding of systemic principles. In this context, students were asked to construct their genograms and find example of various systemic concepts within their own family context. The author suggested that this experience provided opportunities for participants to become more sensitive to clients' experiences in counseling, achieve greater self-understanding, and consider potential cultural influences.

Getz and Protinsky (1994) expanded a similar approach with an emphasis on trainees' personal growth. Examining their own genograms, participants identified family patterns in contexts of (a) tendencies toward underfunctioning and overfunctioning, (b) distancing and pursuing, and (c) triangulating. Subsequently, they reviewed tapes of their counseling session to identify ways they reenacted family patterns vis-à-vis clients. Dual consideration of trainees' and clients' genograms contributed to additional insight.

The Cultural Genogram

Authors have proposed a cultural genogram as a strategy to enhance trainees' awareness of and sensitivity to diversity (DeMaria et al., 1999; Halevy, 1998; Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995; Kelly, 1990). In this context, Halevy (1998) asserted,

Students must be encouraged to explore how their identities and connected meanings lead them to believe, think, act, and perform their roles as therapists in specific, at times discriminatory, ways. Just as it is necessary that trainees understand as fully as possible what personal issues they carry into their work, it is vital that students comprehend how their membership in identity groups shapes the way they have come to see themselves and others like and unlike themselves. Further, they must understand how their views, transmitted through the subtle process of mundane family and community life, affect their work as therapists. (p. 237)

Each of the above authors delineated procedures to facilitate construction, independent examination, presentation, and group processing of cultural genograms. Kelly (1990) included examination of value orientations related to constructs of time, activity, relationships, beliefs about the relationship between humankind and nature, and general views of human nature. Hardy and Laszloffy (1995) amplified the

preparatory phase by asking participants to define their cultures of origin; "major organizing principles" that govern "perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors" (p. 229) of their cultural groups; and issues associated with pride and shame. Hardy and Laszloffy also recommended the use of color coding to emphasize intercultural influences and examine strategies employed to negotiate culturally divergent issues. They suggested questions to amplify diverse and dynamic cultural influences and offered strategies for increasing facilitators' efficacy. Halevy (1998) provided an additional level that involved the identification of prejudicial attitudes or transmitted biases for significant members of the family complex.

The Professional Genogram

Modifying the focus, Magnuson (2000) devised the professional genogram to examine influences of professional mentors, authors, and theorists. Paralleling the family genogram structure, professional genograms feature a chronology of direct professional mentors on the baseline above participants' symbols. In ascending order, influential theorists and philosophies are documented. Lines can be added to illustrate relationships between the persons, philosophies, and entities that are symbolized. In the absence of information, participants are encouraged to inquire about mentors' theoretical orientations. The author purported that the process of preparing the professional genogram provided a forum for examining assumptions that inform professional practice and enhancing precision in definition of a professional paradigm. She recommended the strategy for counselors-in-training, supervisees, and experienced clinicians.

The Person of the Trainer or Supervisor

Building on the premise that increased understanding of self contributes to effectiveness as therapists, Fontes, Piercy, Thomas, and Sprenkle (1998) disclosed family dynamics and manifestations of family influence in the context of their roles as professors and supervisors in a marriage and family training program. As educators, they examined manifestations of their histories within the context of the graduate program. They further examined interactions between the faculty and between faculty and students. In this context, they invited others to "discuss self-of-educator issues" (p. 319) as an avenue to strengthen education practices and the family therapy field. Similarly, Anderson (1987) encouraged professors to use their own genograms to model preparation procedures.

RECOGNIZING LIMITATIONS

Contemporary authors have called attention to ways traditional genograms reflect cultural encapsulation. For example, Watts-Jones (1997) identified inadequacies of the traditional structure for documenting the more extensive concept of kin-

ship characterizing African American culture. The author recommended inclusive language to capture diverse and dynamic broader family relationships. This principle is illustrated with recommended questions such as, "Who raised you?" and "Is there anyone whom you consider family or like family even though they're not biologically related?" (p. 379). In addition, critiquing ancestors or divulging family information may violate cultural values (Estrada & Haney, 1998). Dunn and Levitt (2000) cited limitations in consistency and reliability, particularly in procedures for preparing genograms. They also emphasized the importance of therapeutic process and collaboration. In this regard, Dunn and Levitt contended that the clients' experiences with genograms can be augmented through consistent collaboration, even in determining if the approach offers a channel of growth. Implicit within this assertion is that clients should receive information about the procedures, the rationale, and possible benefits.

Thus, prudent clinical judgment is necessary to determine when and for whom preparation of a genogram would be helpful. Judicious clinicians consider culture, presenting problems, psychological and emotional capacity, current volatility and stress level, amenability, and other relevant factors when assessing the efficacy of using genogram procedures with clients. Although the possible and appropriate uses of genograms are multifarious, we encourage clinicians and educators to employ the device based on the unique needs each client presents and in the context of a systematically planned treatment approach characterized by internal consistency. Without such intentionality, the value derived from charting one's family experiences with lines, boxes, and circles will be diminished.

CONCLUSION

The prominence of intergenerational family therapy models and uses of genograms has resulted in a plethora of related entries in professional journals. Our intent has been to amass and review representative entries. Inclusion or exclusion of references should not be interpreted as a value judgment.

Using genograms to diagram family relationships can be a process of discovery for both client and counselor. The schematic replication of family members and their interactions provides a perspective that may be different from one derived through oral inquiry. When we prepare genograms with clients, we may not know what particles of information will later become relevant, but there is nearly always something in the preparation of a genogram that later illuminates an issue or an experience in therapy. Sometimes the client does not reveal the full effect of the exercise until the termination session.

Although we emphasize the importance of contextualizing the strategy within Murray Bowen's comprehensive and systematic theory of family counseling (Bowen, 1978; Kerr &

Bowen, 1988), we also believe construction of genograms can be highly useful when systematically integrated with other approaches. In that regard, we hope this review of applications of genogram development to specific populations, challenges, and educational modalities stimulates interest for clinicians, educators, and supervisors.

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