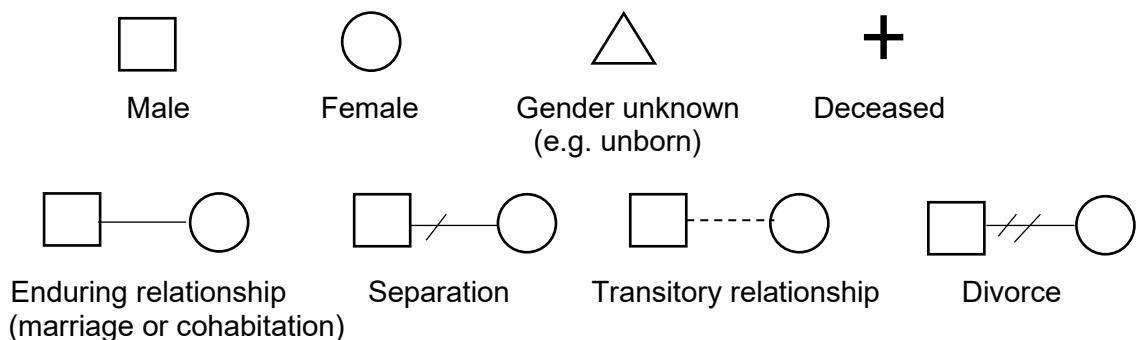


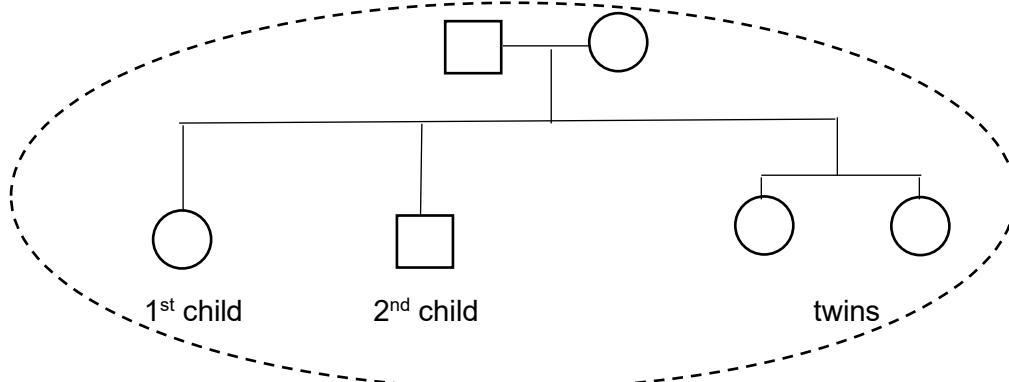
Completing a genogram or family tree enables family members and practitioners to identify and explore their family history, familial patterns of behaviour, wider family links and gain a sense and understanding of roles and relationships within the family.

How do we do it?

A genogram should cover at least three generations - children, parents, grandparents and, as far as possible, include the dates of birth of the family members. If using ages at the time of completing the genogram, it is important to date the genogram to include the dates of birth of the family members to stand the test of time. Genograms can be drawn using the symbols below:



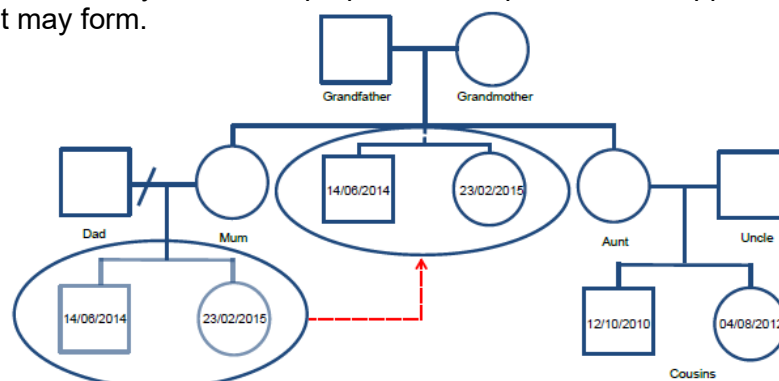
Example: A dotted line should be drawn around the people who currently live in the same house



Why is it important?

A completed genogram can be used to talk to families about their history, the nature of relationships they have with each other and others, and any patterns of behaviour associated with one or other(s) of them. This will enable practitioners to gain an understanding of significant events from the family's perspective - and allow them to introduce issues that have been raised as significant events by other people. A completed genogram is a really helpful tool if we are considering children moving from their parent(s) care to the care of a relative in their extended family. Moving the children from their current position in the family tree to the proposed/ new position will support exploration of the new relationships that may form.

Example:



- Moving two children from their mums' care to their maternal grandparents' care - might mean they are now on the same line as their mum and their mum's sister (their Aunt). What might this do to the children's relationship with their mum and their aunt - are they now all siblings?
- The Aunt may have two children herself - How might this change in family dynamics affect them? Will they still be cousins or are they now nieces and nephews?

How do we do it?

It is helpful to use a large sheet of paper, coloured pens and pencils. The family should be involved in drawing their family tree and this will provide the practitioner an opportunity to observe and explore family relationships, for example; how open family members are with each other, whether they describe different people/ relationships similarly or differently, how much they know about each other and how willing they are to share the information.

A family tree is the starting point of any assessment with a family and can be reviewed at any stage of the assessment or the intervention with the family so as to consider changing roles and relationships and new ways of behaving.

Practitioners who feel proficient at working with families to develop and discuss their family tree might move beyond the family and look, with the child or their family, at relationships in their community - using an ecomap or a sociogram.

An ecomap allows a practitioner to explore who is important to a child - putting the child in the centre of the paper and then drawing circles or shapes to represent the people they consider to be important to them. The worker can then explore how the child would feel if any of these people moved from their position - to get closer or further away from the child.

Completing a sociogram allows a practitioner to see who the child/ family is involved with in the community and the nature of this involvement - whether it is strengthened by joint locations they visit (e.g. a school, church or community centre) or by other relationships who are interlinked (a number of direct or indirect friendships, etc.)