

Genogram and family of origin paper



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Introduction

Creating a Genogram is one representation of how to describe your family tree. The genogram serves three functions. First, the genogram charts the basic family structure. The structure includes family members, genders, and if the family is related through adoption/marriage and or biologically. This occurs across all generations. Secondly, genograms record personality characteristics, demographic data, birth dates, behavioral /emotional concerns, significant illness, nodal events, and other pertinent information. Thirdly genograms focus on complicated family relationships, by focusing on the closeness and conflict between and amongst family members. Intergenerational patterns are also a focal point within a genogram.

In developing this genogram, I will examine my family’s patterns, as well as significant events which have occurred throughout the four generations within my family. The four generations I will discuss my grandparents, parents, brother, husband, children, and myself. I will also explore my family structure and the relationships within my family. I will also discuss the relationships and patterns that were observed in creating the genogram using key concepts. Although my family is small, it has a lot of character in

it. In learning about my family origins, I hope to gain a greater awareness of myself, and a better understanding of the impact my family origins has had on me.

Grandparents

My maternal grandmother had three daughters. Her youngest daughter is deceased. My grandmother was married to each of my aunts' fathers for a brief period; however, both of their father are deceased. The time frame in which they were married is unknown. My grandmother married my grandfather in 1960. When they were married, my grandfather, whose name is Everette Lee Coleman, used his mother's last name and signed the marriage license as Evert Lee Battle. My grandmother legally changed her name to Shirley Battle. July 26, 1963, my mother was born. My grandfather named here Gloria Coleman. I feel my grandfather tried to correct his error for giving my grandmother his mother's last name by ensuring my mother had the correct last name. According to Gehart (2014), this is considered second-order change. " Second-order change describes when a system restructures its homeostasis in response to positive feedback and the rules that govern the system fundamentally shift (Gehart, D. 2014, pg. 40). My grandmother divorced my grandfather in 1965. I met my grandfather for the first time in 1999. Although I didn't have a relationship with him, I was at the bedside when he took his last breath. My grandmother still hasn't changed her last name and has been married twice.

My paternal grandmother's name is Georgia Blockmon. In June of 1962, she married my grandfather Walter Blockmon. My grandmother gave birth to my

father September 24, 1962. My father was named Walter Blockmon. My grandmother stated she use to argue with my grandfather about spending time with the family and his late-night partying. According to my grandmother, she felt my grandfather never took her seriously. Because my grandmother felt the marriage was in trouble, she began to have an affair. According to Gehart (2014), in systemic reframing, once a person, object, or event is categorized, it is very difficult to see it as part of another category. My grandmother became pregnant during her affair. My uncle was born and named Leon Blockmon. Once my uncle was born, my grandmother divorced my grandfather in 1969.

Parents

My mother and father met while in high school. My mother became pregnant with me during her senior year. January 25, 1982, I was born. I was the first grandchild on both sides of the family. My mother and father developed a family tradition, where I received two birthday cakes each year. My mother and father had a loving relationship when I was a child. My grandparents were loving to me. Both of my grandfathers were living at the time of my birth; however, I do not know if they were involved in my life. As a child, my family worked in harmony to take care of me. According to Gehart (2014), homeostasis refers to the unique set of behavioral, emotional, and interactional norms that create stability for the family. Three years after my birth, my paternal grandfather passed away. The passing of my grandfather was a significant event which changed my paternal family's lives. When my grandfather passed, my father became distant. He began to stay out late, and cheat on my mother. My mother became distant from my father.

According to Gehart (2014), complementary dynamics often become a problem when their roles become exaggerated or rigid, which creates one to feel stuck. My mother did not want to leave my father; however, she was unable to deal with his lack of respect for our family. Once my mother and father separated, their relationship became distant and poor. My father later developed a relationship with Diana. My brother was born on January 29, 1990. My brother was named Walter Blockmon,

My Brother

Being the only child for eight years, I was excited to have a little brother. I would go over to his house on the weekends to visit him and my father. My brother had four other siblings. When my brother was nine years old, he came to live with my grandmother and father. When this occurred, my brother experienced a lot of emotions. He wanted to be with his mother, but my father would not allow it. According to the readings, this is an interactional/systemic problem. Gehart states, “ more of the same solutions can be described as mishandling the problem in three ways. In the terrible simplification step, action is necessary, but none is taken (Gehart, 2014, pg68). My father attempted to solve my brother’s problem by denying it. This affected my brother and fathers relationship. Because of this, I saw my brother as the helpless one, and I became the rescuer. This form of metacommunication is considered a double bind. Gehart (2014), states a double bind is created in this form of metacommunication when there is a contradiction that cannot be directly commented on. This was an area within my family I was unable to address. One way I rescued my brother was I ensured I picked him up on the weekends to take him to see his siblings.

My Life

Michael Thomas and I had our first child named Heaven Thomas. She was born on October 29, 2003. Her birthday is two days after my paternal grandmother. After a difficult birth, Heaven passed away. This sent me into a state of depression. I wanted to begin trying to have a baby right away. However, I was told I need to be patient. Based on the text, I was mishandling the problem by utilizing the utopian syndrome. According to Gehart (2014), in the utopian syndrome stage, one tries to change something that is unchangeable or nonexistent. I was unable to bring Heaven back. Michael and I separated in December 2003; however we are now good friends.

Michael Dogan and I had Alysia Dogan on July 27, 2005. Alysia was born one day after my mother's birthday. She was born premature and remained in the hospital for six weeks. During this stage of my life, I was still depressed. I was afraid something would happen to her, based on my experience with my first child. During the six weeks, Alysia was in the hospital; I stayed with her alone. Her father would not give me the support that I desired. According to Gehart (2014), when a family member expresses little emotional support or validation, this can be problematic within the family dynamics. In 2006 my relationship ended with Alysia's father. As of today, this relationship is cut off and estranged.

In 2006 I met Jerome Tyler. According to Gehart (2014), we were in the family development stage of couple formation. We had our first child, Amahri Tyler on December 27, 2007. His birthday is the same day as his dad's. June

28, 2019, Jerome and I got married. We were now considered a blended family. In our home, it was both of our daughters from previous relationships and our son. According to Gehart (2014), we were in the family with young children stage. During this stage of development, we were able to communicate with one another and meet the needs of ourselves and our children in a positive way. According to Gehart (2014), this way of communicating is congruent communication. It's the ability to communicate authentically while responding to the needs of both self and others. June 17, 2010, I gave birth to Ayden Tyler. Ayden was born five days after my husband's mom. When Ayden was born, we moved to the city and lived in the building with my paternal grandmother, father, and brother.

Family Dynamics

Moving inside of the building with my family changed the dynamics of how we interacted with one another. The boundaries within the household changed. According to Gehart (2014), with boundaries, the outward expression of effective versus insufficient can only be determined by examining the cultural context, family life stage of development, and symptomatic behavior. My grandmother and father began to enmesh and diffuse the boundaries. Often, they would make assumptions about what was happening in my home. They would display high levels of concern for my children and often be very overprotective of them when we disciplined them. Over time my children adapted these enmesh and diffused boundaries when interacting with one another. I feel some of this was due to the different parenting styles each of us had. My husband and I often would have to stand our ground and tell my grandmother and father no they could not intervene

when we were disciplining our children. This caused us to developed insufficient parental hierarchy. My brother always respected the boundaries within my home and had good relationships with everyone in my house. Although we often would fuss with one another, we still showed love to one another. July 14, 2014, my family life changed forever. My dad was killed in a car accident on the expressway. My family had a difficult time managing this change. According to Gehart (2014), my family was in the status growth model. First, we went through the status quo, which included our state of homeostasis being affected. We were unable to process my father dying. Secondly, we went through the introduction of a foreign element. This element was my father being killed. Thirdly we went through the Chaos stage. We were uncomfortable about my father's death, and we were unable to go back to life as we knew it. Fourthly we integrated new possibilities. After learning about the injuries my father sustained, we were at peace with him not being here in that condition. Next, we began to practice a new way of interacting with one another. Finally, we developed a new status quo, which is now our new homeostasis. My brother has moved out on his own, and I have taken over caring for my grandmother.

January 2, 2019, my mother became ill and was hospitalized for a year. This caused us to go through another six stages of change. Going through the status growth model, my mother and grew distant with her mother and sister. This was due to them not coming to see my mother. As a result, my family has a distant and poor relationship with my grandmother. It is also a limited amount of trust with my mother's sister. This has caused my children not to have a relationship with them, as well.

Conclusion

In completing this genogram, I saw many similarities with both sides of my family. Both of my grandmothers were divorced. Each one of my grandparents' children had different fathers. I also found that both of my grandfathers were absent from the home. This was also evident in my mother's relationship with my father. This pattern observed within with my husband and I. I saw this as a weakness within my family origin. I viewed this as we lacked effective communication skills, and or didn't know how to build healthy relationships. I wondered if the complementary dynamics of the relationships made them feel stuck? I also noticed that all the men in my family and my husband's family were deceased.

Another family pattern I noticed is each generation lost a child. I also realized that it was a pattern with how many children each of my grandparents had. My maternal grandmother had two living girls, and my paternal grandmother had two boys. I had two boys and two girls. I wondered if there was any significance to this. I also learned that each one of my children birthdays is close to a relative. I found that to be a family strength. I felt my family would not be able to forget their birthdays.

In completing this assignment, I learned that my family is small but mighty. I realized that we have faced many challenges. Through all of the deaths, we have continued to evolve. Although we had no idea what stages we were going through within our lives, we used the status growth model. I notice we are always in the practice stage of this model because we are forever changing. I am happy I was able to learn from my family origins. I am now

able to see why I trust, love, and carry out relationships the way that I do. I hope to help change and shape my families future with this knowledge.

References

- *Gehart, D. (2014). Mastering Competencies in Family Therapy. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole*