



International Project Week
HOCHSCHULE NORDHAUSEN

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The genogram as a resource in psychosocial services

Content:

The etymology of genogram comes from the Greek *genos*, "birth, origin", and *gramma*, "writing", giving the term its meaning, "the writing of the origin". The genogram is a way of understanding family configurations. It is also a way of communicating between professionals using easily identifiable graphic elements. It allows to build a historical and relational map of the family. The genogram opens up precious spaces for discussion in the work with the subjects and their families. It can be used to facilitate a family's or individual's involvement in the psychosocial services, clarify complex family models, unblock the system, or simply reassure them or help them answer a specific question. Murray Bowen, psychoanalyst and one of the pioneers of the systemic approach, forged the concepts of "differentiation of the self" or "undifferentiated family ego mass" which explain how personal growth develops: there would be on the one hand a tendency to merge relationships and on the other hand an ability in each of the family members to achieve an individualization of the personality. The individual while remaining linked to the family group develops an identity of his own. From these beginnings the genogram will therefore be used with the professional for work about his or her family of origin. "The genogram is thus a means of understanding family configurations, as it allows the construction of a historical and relational map of the family. It is also a way of communicating between professionals using easily identifiable graphic elements. The genogram opens up precious spaces for discussion in the work with the subjects and their families. It is a reference tool in the systemic clinic and in the training of systemic practitioners." (Daure, I. and Borcsa, M. 2020:23; own translation) It will then not be conceived only as an informative tool, a kind of photograph of the system and fixed in time, but as a dynamic and emotionally intense support that appeal to the experiences of the subject by putting him in relation with the previous generations. A "living genogram" as Murray Bowen called it, which allows the subject to dive back into his history, those of his ancestors, and to understand how he has built himself through the history of his family over several generations. The different methods of application of the genogram that will be presented here can be used in systemic work with an individual or the family group, and in the analysis of transgenerational links that may exist in professional choices. In order to train future practitioners who will use the systemic approach, it is commonly accepted that they must apply the methods and analyses they will use in their future work on themselves.

Methods:

- Power Point Presentation
- Role playing in small groups.
- Practice of the genogram.
- Discussion of clinical cases
- Presentation of the key concepts of the systemic approach.
- Historical and theoretical aspects of the genogram.
- The contexts of use and the different proposals.
- The construction of the genogram.
- The development of working hypotheses with the help of the genogram.
- Analysis of the genogram and articulation between family and institution.

Competences and skills to be acquired:

To know the use of the genogram according to the systemic approach. To know the ways of how to construct genograms. To acknowledge the different ways of reading this graphic map. To interpret the genogram. To be able to define when and how to use it.

Prerequisites:

None.

Language of instruction:

English