

# My Family, My Self

## 8-WEEK FACILITATOR ACTIVITY GUIDE

For Ages 12 – 18

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## Week Two Theme: **WHERE I COME FROM**

Girls will participate in activities that invite them to explore who they consider to be their family and/or support system, their ancestral heritage and culture, and how these factors have shaped who they are today and who they want to become.

### **ACTIVITY**

- Journal Decorating, Creating Family Genograms, Discussion and Journaling

### **MATERIALS**

- Journals (from last week to decorate)
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Stickers and/or glitter
- Markers, pens and pencils
- Family Genogram Sample
- Genogram Key handout
- Flip chart paper
- Flip chart markers
- Letter to Parent/Guardian

### **PURPOSE**

- To encourage girls to express their own individuality and strengths as a result of their experiences within their families
- To provide a safe place for girls to explore the healthy and unhealthy patterns that may exist within their families
- To have the group explore commonalities within family systems
- To help girls identify who they feel is their support either within or outside of their family

### **FACILITATOR PREPARATION**

- 1 Make copies of the Family Genogram Sample and Genogram Key for each girl.
- 2 Set up materials for journal decorating.
- 3 On flip chart paper, write the following quote and 5 questions for the Journaling and Family Discussion activity (to be revealed later.)

Quote: *"If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of these people."* – Thich Nhat Hanh

- Who has a voice in your family? Who does not have a voice or get heard?
- How do you get your needs met or get heard in your family or outside of your family?
- Who is most supportive of you and what makes that relationship feel good and supportive?
- What do you think or feel about the quote?
- What family patterns/traits do you think should be passed on in your family and which patterns/traits would you want to see end?



## Week Two Theme: **WHERE I COME FROM**

- 4 If you have never previously created a genogram of your own, take some time to create one for yourself and share with a co-facilitator or colleague. This experience will provide a foundation of understanding for you when introducing the genogram to the girls.
- 5 Make copies of the Letter to Parent/Guardian reminding parents and girls to bring a personal and/or food item next week.

*Note to Facilitator:*

- A) Plan to participate with the girls in next week's activity by bringing food and personal items representing your own culture to share.*
- B) During the introduction of Activity 2 – Creating Family Genograms – expect that girls will need some time to become familiar with this visual tool and the various symbols and meanings. Reassure the girls that it is normal to feel uncertain when first being introduced to genograms. Allow for questions. Once the girls begin creating their genograms, they will most likely find it very interesting.*



## Week Two



### OPENING RITUAL

Do the same opening ritual each time.



### THEME INTRODUCTION

Introduce the theme for the week, "Where I Come From."



### CHECK-IN

Before beginning the check-in process, ask the girls how they are doing with the circle agreements that they created together during Week 1. Then, go around the circle and have each girl "check-in" as to what is going on in her life.



### ACTIVITY 1

#### Journal Decorating

- 1 Introduce the journal decorating activity by asking the girls if they remember any of the things they wrote in the last session about their families. Invite them to review their journal entries from Week 1 and silently reflect about what family means to them.
- 2 Share with the girls that you would like them to continue thinking about their family and their support system while they work on decorating their journals. Encourage the girls to create a collage that represents:
  - their own individual identity
  - the specific strengths they have as a result of their experiences within their families and/or with the people in their lives who support them
- 3 Provide magazines, scissors, glue sticks, stickers, and glitter. Be sure to have the girls mark their names on the outside cover of their journals. This will help protect their confidentiality so you will not have to open their journals to find their names.
- 4 Let the girls know that they will have 30 to 40 minutes to decorate their journals and that they will then be invited to share one or two things about what their cover represents.



### SHARING OF ACTIVITY

Go around the circle and invite each of the girls to share their decorated journals and to say one or two things about the images or words they chose and how that depicts themselves and/or their family.

Ask:

- What was it like for you to make this collage? What stands out to you the most?
- How does it represent you, individually, and how does it represent your family or the people that support you?
- What are some of your own strengths you bring to your family that stood out to you while you making the collage?



## Week Two

- How have you become stronger as a result of your family experiences?



### ACTIVITY 2

#### Family Genogram

- 1 Introduce the family genogram by asking the girls if they are familiar with the concept of family trees or if they have ever made one.
- 2 Explain to the girls that each of them will have an opportunity to make a family genogram.
- 3 Tell the girls that after the activity they will be invited to share one thing of their choice.
- 4 Say:
  - A family genogram is similar to a family tree in that it shows all the members of the family and how they are related
  - It also shows patterns that may exist in a family – such as marriage, divorce, pregnancies, separation, and relationships that are close or distant
  - You can add things in your genogram that are positive in your family – like relationships that you feel are close or supportive
  - Genograms can also depict problems in families such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and health issues. All families can have patterns that are healthy and feel good, and other patterns that might feel unhealthy or not so good
  - Most importantly, all families have strengths and each are unique in their own way
- 5 Pass out the “Family Genogram Sample” and “Genogram Key” handouts. Explain the “Family Genogram Sample” and how to read the “Genogram Key” symbols to each of the girls.
- 6 Take time to help the girls understand both handouts and answer any questions they may have.
- 7 Let the girls know they will be drawing a genogram of their own families in their journals. Explain to the girls that the handouts are meant as a guide, but they can make their own symbols and draw the genogram in a way that makes the most sense to them.
- 8 Share with the girls that there is no right or wrong way to do this. It is just for them to see and share if they’d like.
- 9 Hand out pencils and pens to each of the girls and ask them to sketch out their family genogram with as much detail as they’d like in their journals. Encourage the girls to ask questions and seek help if they do not understand or get stuck. Allow about 10 to 12 minutes for the girls to create their family genograms.



## Week Two



### SHARING OF ACTIVITY

- 1 Go around the circle and have each of the girls share one thing that they noticed about their individual family genogram. They may show their genogram to the group if they feel comfortable.
- 2 Thank each of the girls for sharing and ask:
  - What was it like for you to make a genogram?
  - What patterns or symbols stood out to you?
  - What similarities or differences did you notice between the generations?
  - What stands out to you when you look at the whole family picture?
  - What commonalities did you notice in our group with these genograms? Did other people in the group have similar family backgrounds or other things in common?



### ACTIVITY 3

#### Journaling

- 1 Reveal the quote on the flip chart with the 5 questions.

*“If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of these people.” – Thich Nhat Hanh*
- 2 Have the girls respond to the following questions by writing in their journals.
  - Who has a voice in your family? Who does not have a voice or get heard?
  - How do you get your needs met or get heard in your family or outside of your family?
  - Who is most supportive of you and what makes that relationship feel good and supportive?
  - What do you think or feel about the quote?
  - What family patterns/traits do you think should be passed on in your family and which patterns/traits would you want to see end?



### SHARING OF ACTIVITY

When the group has finished journaling, invite them to share one thing that they wrote or thought about during circle. Say:

- Now that we’ve shared more about our families, what is one thing you might want to do this week to feel a connection with family members, or to feel more connected to someone who is like a loving family member?



## Week Two

*Note to Facilitator: Before ending group, let the girls know that they need to bring one food item and/or one personal item to circle next week that represents them or their families and/or cultural background. Tell them that you will bring an item to share as well. Answer questions the girls may have about this and give them a note to remind them and notify their parents. (See sample at end of unit.) It might also be helpful to call the girls before the next group to remind them.*

*If the setting does not facilitate the sharing of food, let the girls know that they should at least think about what they would bring if they could, and be prepared to draw or talk about it. Or the facilitator can bring items for the girls that are agreed upon as representing her culture.*



### CLOSING RITUAL

Bring the girls together for your closing ritual.

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#### Citations for Family Genogram Formatting:

[http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/Children\\_Family\\_Services/safety\\_rfb/a1FGenSym.pdf](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/Children_Family_Services/safety_rfb/a1FGenSym.pdf)

McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.



## Sample Reminder Note to Girls and Parents

*Dear Girls Circle Members and Parents/Guardians,*

*Next week, we will be doing an activity that asks each person to bring one or two items to share with the group. Ideally, each girl in the group will bring one food item and one personal item from home that is special to her and your family and that represents your family, and/or your cultural background (ethnic heritage, religious traditions, or values).*

*However, we understand that you may not be able to bring a food item. If that is the case for you, it would be just as wonderful for the group to hear about what types of foods you enjoy with your family and you could share a small personal item with the group instead.*

*If you have any questions, please call your Girls Circle facilitator at: \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Looking forward to seeing you in group next week!*

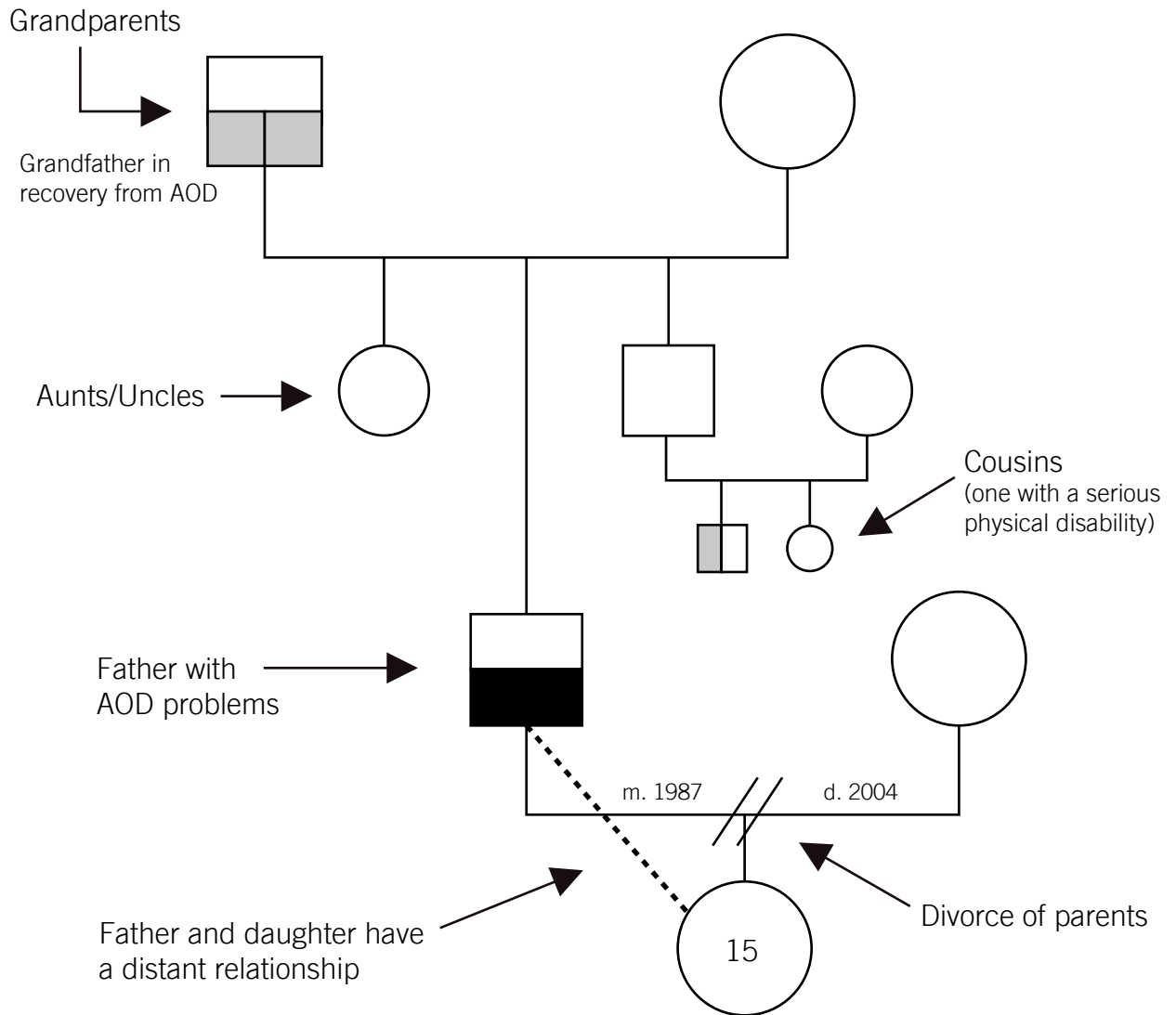






# Family Genogram Sample

## ACTIVITY HANDOUT

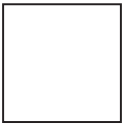




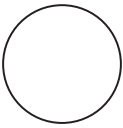
# GENOGRAM KEY

## Basic Genogram Symbols

Male:

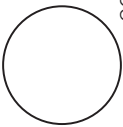


Female:



Birth Date:

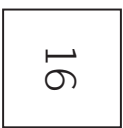
12/14/96



Age:

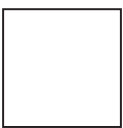
16

(Inside Symbol)

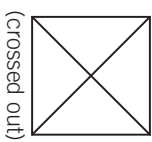


Death Date:

4/16/09

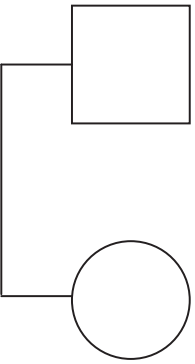


Death:

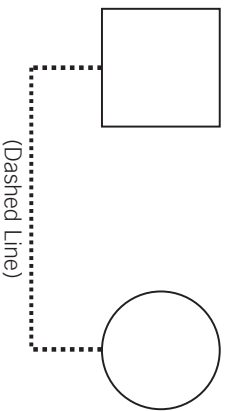


(crossed out)

Marriage:

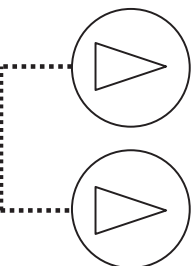


Living together/Affair/  
Intimate Relationship:

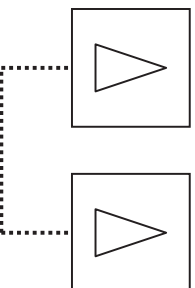


(Dashed Line)

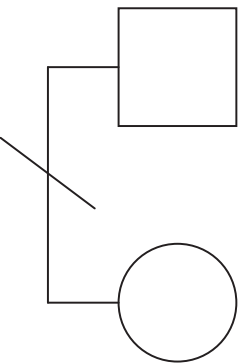
Lesbian Couple:



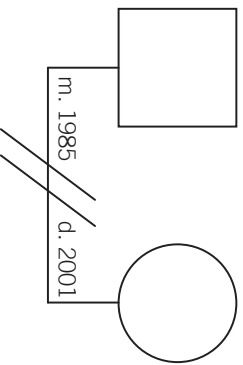
Gay Couple:



Marriage Separation:

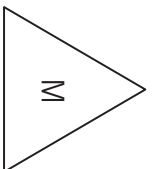


Marriage Divorce:

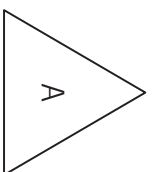
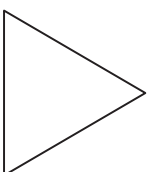


m. 1985  
d. 2001

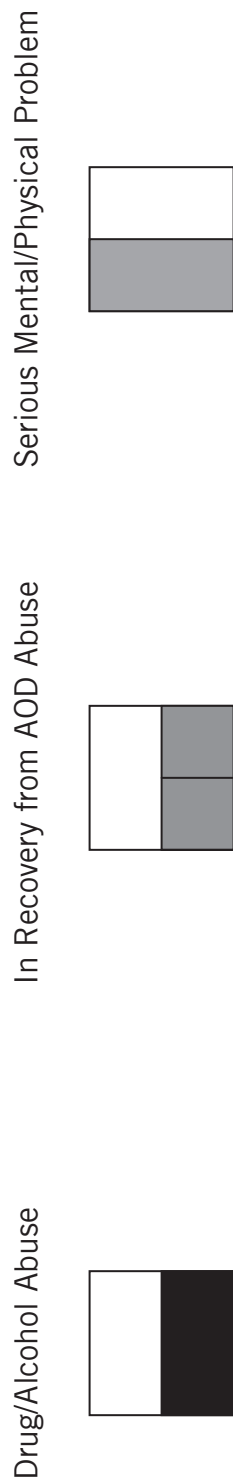
Pregnancy:



Miscarriage



Abortion



## Symbols for Interactions

