

Triangles

Adult Formation: In Relationship
St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Barrington, IL
Created by The Rev. Lisa M. Erdeljon

Activity I: Continuing the Family Diagram

Looking at the Family Diagram you made before, continue growing it out by adding spouses and another generation of children (if applicable). It should now include two more layers:

1. Any spouses and children of **your siblings**, and
2. Any spouses and children of **your children**.

Don't forget: Oldest to youngest, from left to right; and male is square, female is circle, and unknown gender is a triangle. Also include death dates and divorce dates, as applicable. Make additional generations or nuclear families a different color.

Activity II: Relationship Lines

Now, we'll start to turn this "Family Diagram" into a genogram, according to Family Systems Theory. By doing so, we must look at the relationship lines between each person on the diagram. Even if you do not interact with everyone in your diagram, everyone on the piece of paper in front of you has a relationship with everyone else on this piece of paper.

Family Systems Theory includes specific ways to indicate the different types of relationships based on lines. The lines are on the back of this page. When deciding how to identify the relationship line, you can add an arrow, indicated which direction the relationship line goes. You should also pick a time for the lines. For example, if your parents are no longer living, do a line from when you were a child.

1. Using the relationship lines on the back of this page, draw lines between you and your parents, you and your siblings, and your siblings and your parents.
2. Repeat the process for you and your children, you and your spouse, and your children and your spouse.

Activity III: Triangles

Now, look at the triangles that are formed, based on those relationship lines. Any three people that have relationship lines create a triangle. Focusing on you and your parents and/or you, your spouse, and a child, consider how the relationship lines imply certain types of relationships and triangulation.

3. Using a yellow marker, draw a triangle between you and your parents. Note the relationship lines that you added during Activity II.

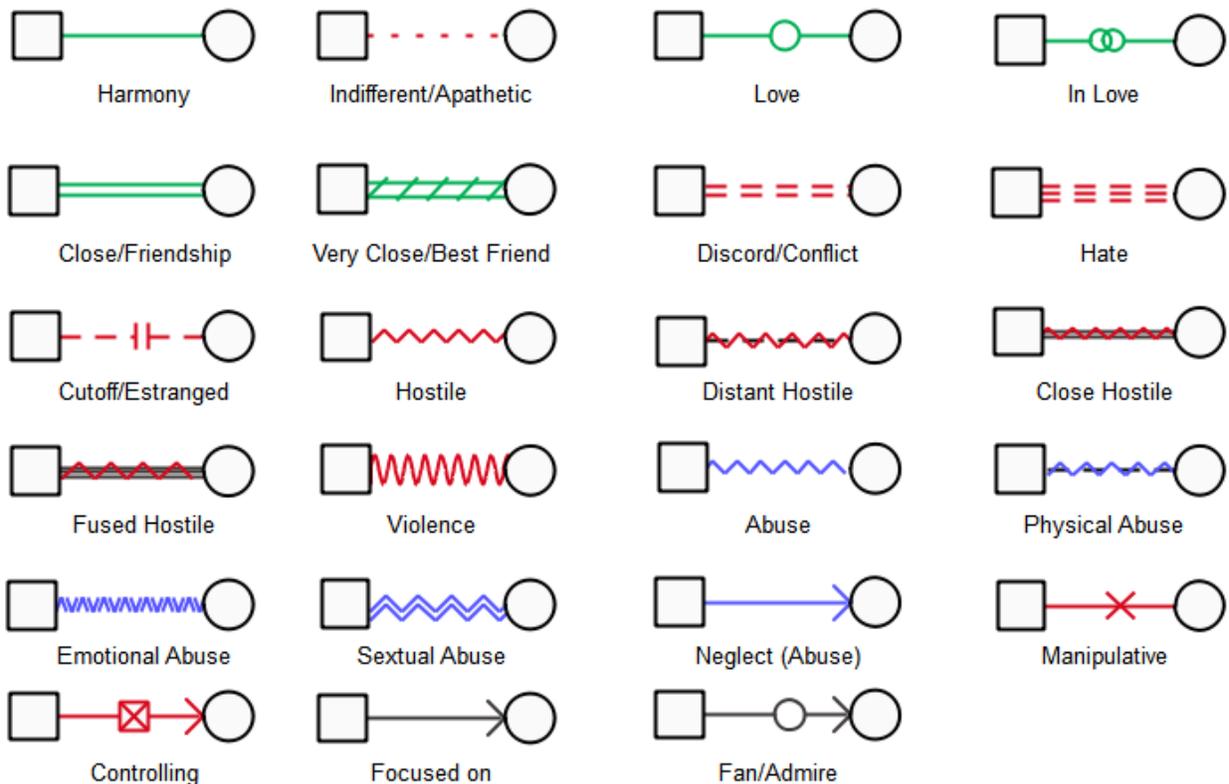
- Using a pink marker, draw a triangle between you and your spouse and child (or children, which requires multiple triangles). Note the relationship lines that you added during Activity II.
- Indicate if these are functional triangles or dysfunctional triangles.

Feel free to keep drawing triangles. Include you, a sibling, and a parent; you, and two children; you, a child, and a child-in-law; etc. Try using different colors or layers of tracing paper as you get more distant with your triangles.

Remember to hold on to this! We'll come back to this each week.

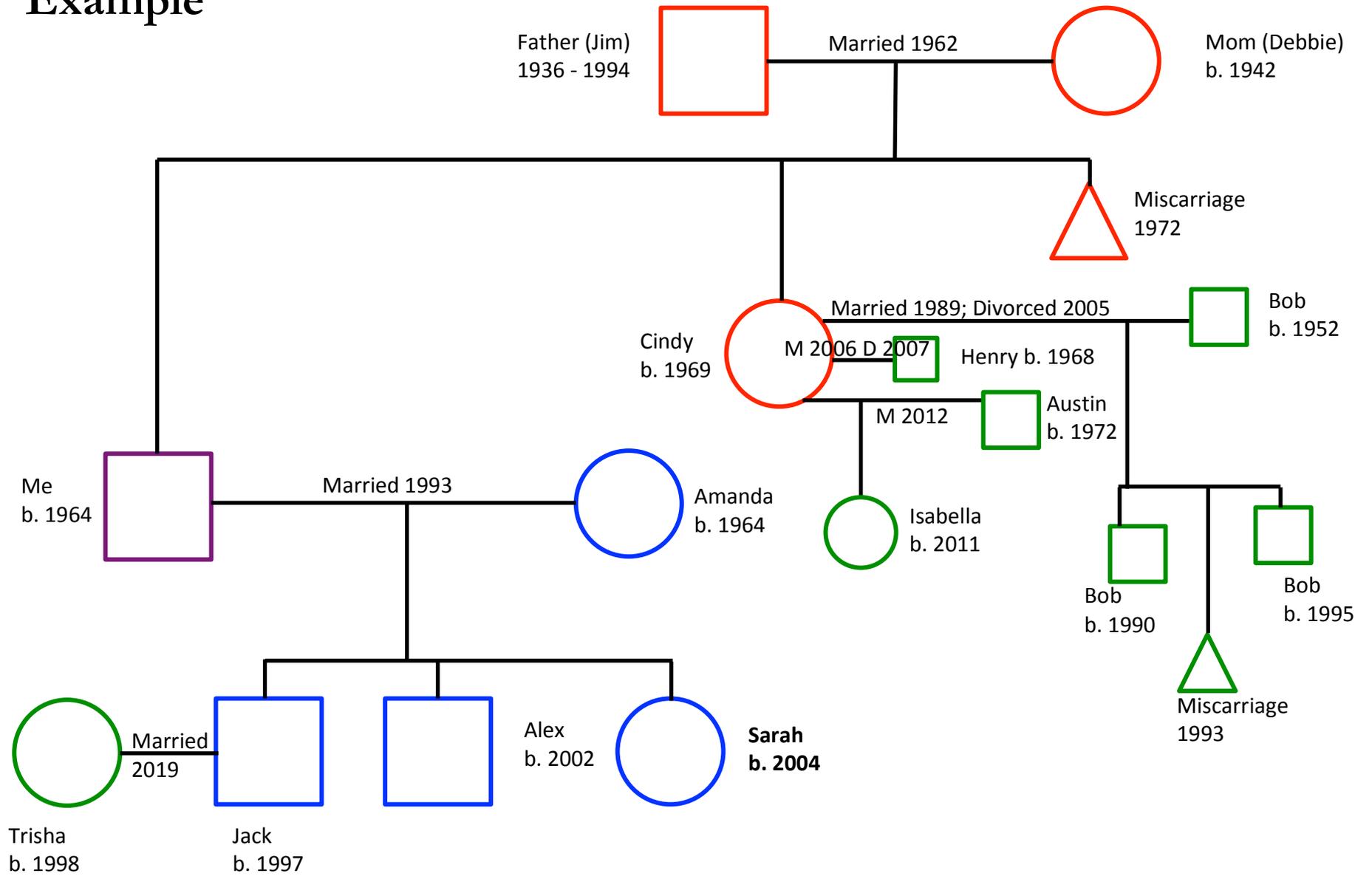
**Also, this is not a judgment,
nor is it to focus on the dysfunction of our lives and our families.
This is just a way to look at how relationships function.
This is also not about trying to “solve” any problems in the family;
instead, this is just to name the relationships that exist within the family.**

Relationship Lines



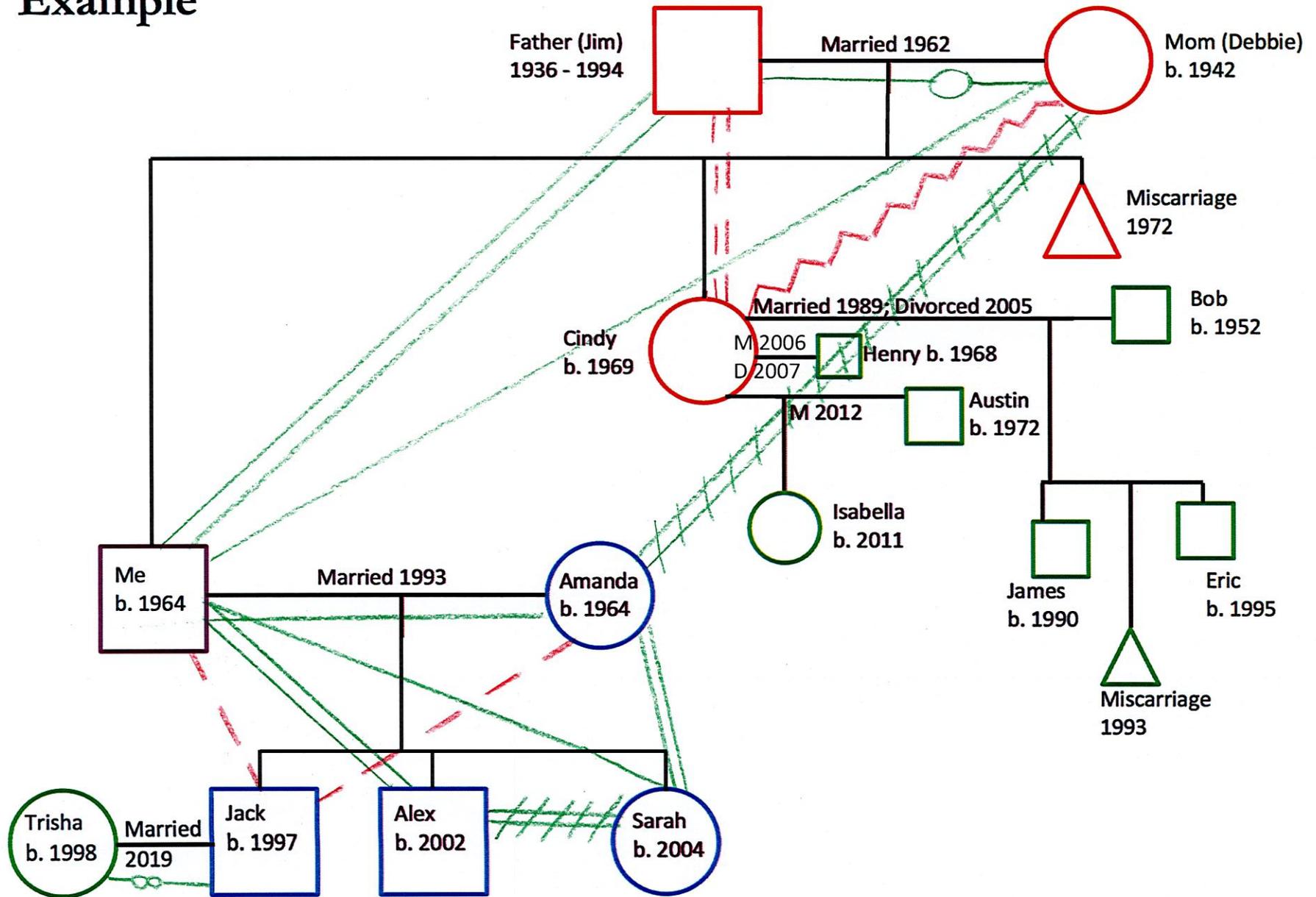
Activity I: Continuing the Family Diagram

Example



Activity II: Relationship Lines

Example



Activity III: Triangles

Example

