

Self-Differentiation, Emotional Cut-Off, & Fusion

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

Activity I: Self-Differentiation with the Genogram

Looking at the genogram created last week, with the relationship lines included, pick a triangle to study. For example: you, your spouse, and a child.

1. Looking at each person in the triangle, try to guess his or her self-differentiated role in the triangle.
 - a. This is usually easier with an unhealthy triangle.
 - b. Try not to include your own emotions in your assessment
 - c. If it is easier to look at a triangle you are not part of, go for it.
 - d. Reference the chart on the handout to determine higher vs. lower self-differentiation.
2. Use the color purple for the person with the lowest self-differentiated role in the triangle. Circle, mark with an "x," underline, or otherwise indicate who it is.
3. Use the color orange for the person with the highest self-differentiated role in the triangle. Circle, mark with an "x," underline, or otherwise indicate who it is.

Another reminder, 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.

Activity II: Triangulation with God

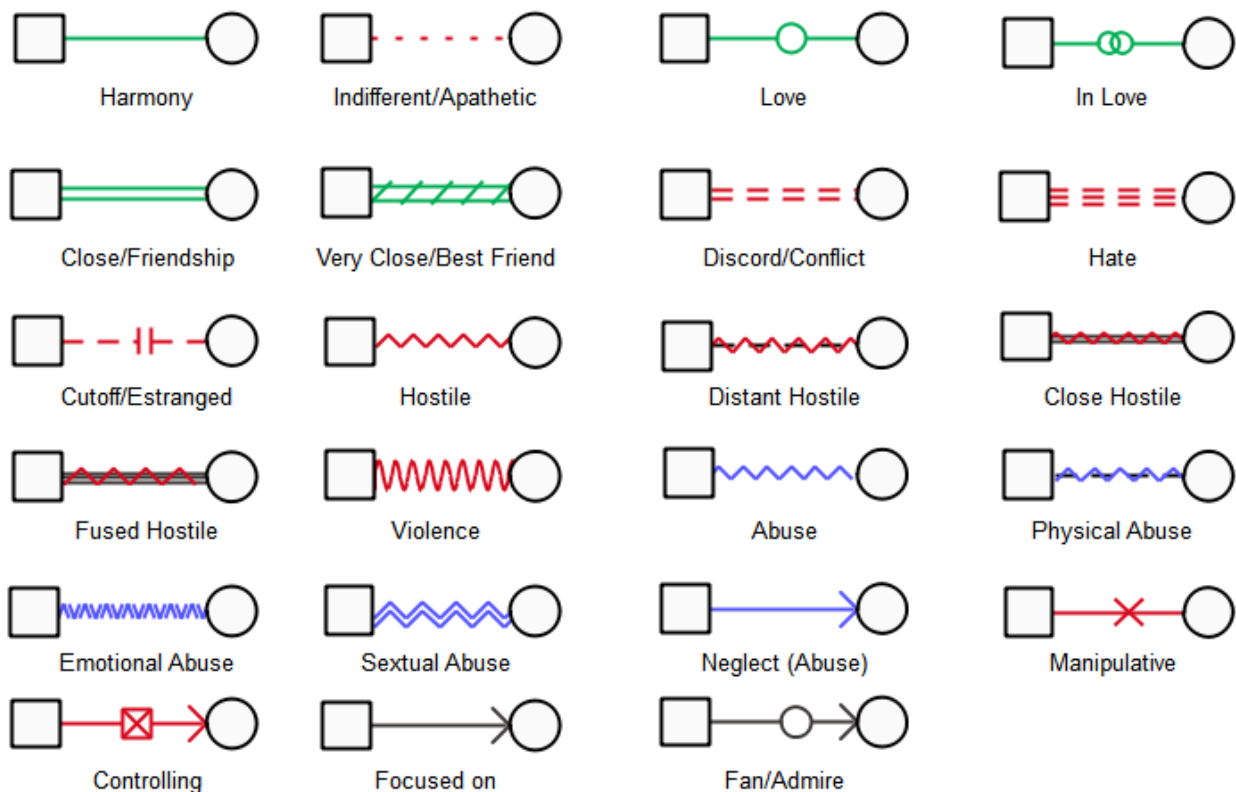
We will now use the genogram concept to look at our relationship with a specific object or aspect of our lives.

1. Pick something in your life that you regularly turn to; for example, alcohol, the television, running, your dog, etc. Create a genogram between you and this "thing".
2. Start with a star in the middle of the page, and label it the "thing" on which you are focusing.
3. Add you, your spouse, your parents, your children, and any other people who may be affected by your interaction with this "thing." Each person you add gets a **triangle** and is also labels. Place each of these on the page around the "thing," leaving the top of the page blank.
4. Start to create relationship lines between the other people, you, and your "thing." (See below for the relationship lines). This will start to look like a bunch of overlapping triangles.

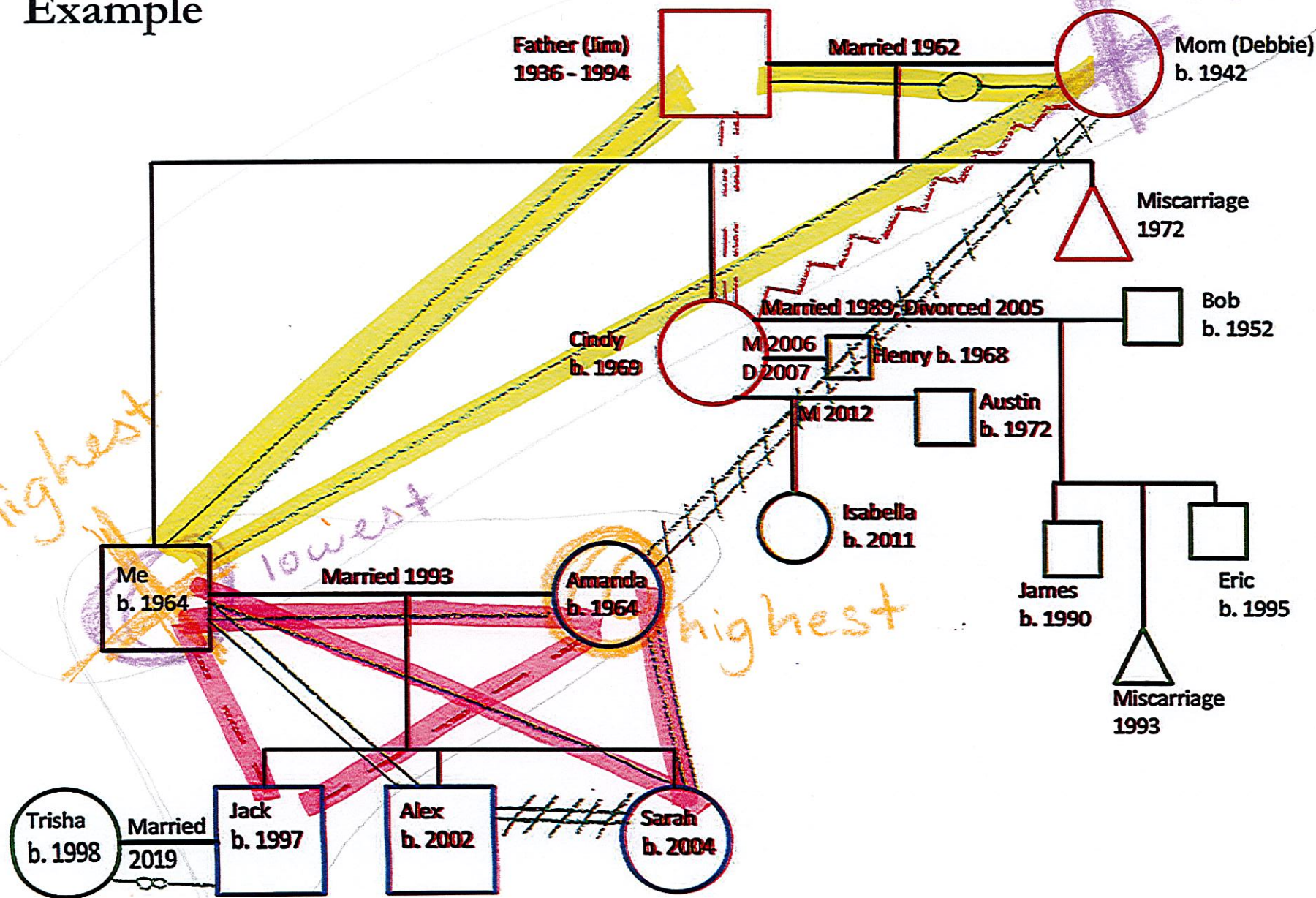
- Next, in several of the triangles you've created, circle the person with the most differentiated self and put a square around the person with the least differentiated self (See handout for characteristics of higher and lower self-differentiation)
- Now, add God to the top of the page, and draw a relationship line between you, God, and your "thing." Then, determine if you tend to express more differentiation or less differentiation in this triangle.
- Finally, take a deep breath and congratulate yourself. This is a lot of work for self-reflection.

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This is also not about trying to "solve" any problems in us or our families;
instead, this is just to name the relationships that exist within our families.**

Relationship Lines



Example



Example

