

PART II

Re-Introducing Focused Genograms and Therapeutic Posture

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3

A GUIDE TO THE FOCUSED GENOGRAM, MAPS, AND TIMELINES

What lingers from the parent's individual past, unresolved or incomplete, often becomes part of her or his irrational parenting.

—Virginia Satir (as cited in Hart, 1987)

Overview

As we discussed in the previous chapters, an important clinical goal of the Intersystem Approach (IA) is being able to use attachment theory as a guide for integrative interventions that derive from an understanding of the inter-generational transmission of attachment patterns within the client-system. In this chapter, we present a Focused Genogram (FG) Road Map to give readers a broader context for understanding the client-system from an attachment theory perspective. The FG Road Map introduces the organization of the new material that has been developed since the first edition of this book. The inclusion of attachment theory in the IA has led to the development of attachment-focused tools and new themes for the FGs. The FG Tools now include the specific themed FGs, and the attachment-focused Maps and Timelines. We begin by discussing the overarching relationship between the components of the FG Road Map to help readers understand the scope of the assessment and the connections between the specific tools. We then describe the theory and rationale for the use of FGs in clinical practice. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the unique and revolutionary mapping and timeline tools that bring attachment theory to life in the assessment of client-systems.

A Guide to the Focused Genogram

To begin the process of using FGs and the corresponding assessment tools, we provide an illustration of the FG Road Map (Figure 3.1). This Road Map helps practitioners graphically visualize how the proposed tools are connected within the IA framework. Succinctly, the FG Road Map includes the following components, to be discussed in the coming pages:

- Maps: Internal Models Map (IMM), Couple Interaction Map (CIM),¹ and Family Connections Map (FCM)
- Timelines: Individual Development, Relationship Experiences, and Family Timelines

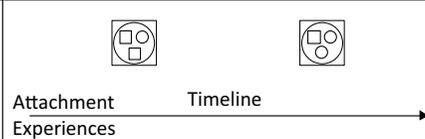
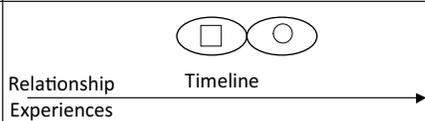
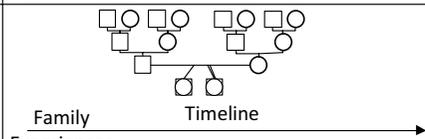
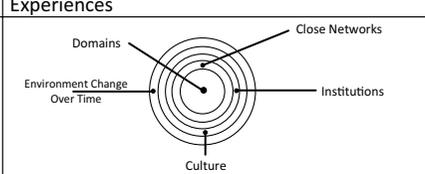
Domains	Maps	Maps & Timelines
Individual	Internal Models Map	 <p>Attachment Experiences</p> <p>Timeline</p>
Couple	Couple Interaction Map	 <p>Relationship Experiences</p> <p>Timeline</p>
Inter-generational	Basic + Focused Genograms	 <p>Family Experiences</p> <p>Timeline</p>
Contextual	Eco-Map	 <p>Domains</p> <p>Close Networks</p> <p>Institutions</p> <p>Environment Change Over Time</p> <p>Culture</p>
		<p>Focused Genograms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic • Attachments • Fairness • Others • Gender • Sexuality • Addictions • Abuse, Violence, Trauma • Healing Emotions • Self of the Therapist

FIGURE 3.1 The Focused Genogram Road Map. This figure visually represents the FG Road Map, a conceptual framework for using the FG Tools as part of the IA Case Formulation.

- The Basic Genogram and the Attachments Genogram—Beginning the Process
- Case Formulation Assessment and Treatment Plan: History, Basic Genogram, Maps, and Timelines²
- Focused Genograms: Fairness, Gender, Sexuality, and Abuse, Violence, and Trauma.

The FG approach operationalizes the application of the IA and the assessment of the intergenerational transmission of attachments. The FG Tools (the three Mapping tools and three Timeline tools) facilitate the practitioner's ability to identify the attachment patterns, styles, and scripts of the client-system across the three inner domains of the IA. The Attachments Genogram describes the application of the mapping and timeline tools through the attachment construct. Finally, themed FGs of the practitioner's choice will illuminate themes within the client-system. It is important to note that all tools can be used flexibly based on a practitioner's style and inclination.

What Is a Focused Genogram?

FGs are a method for exploring the family, multicultural, and contextual topics, as well as the intergenerational dynamics. The overarching goal of conducting FGs is to help both the therapist and the client-system see the connections between their current problem and other aspects of their life of which they may not be fully aware. Unresolved family-of-origin attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors carry into contemporary adult functioning. Exploring family traditions and stories can be viewed through the attachment construct, in particular, around family legacies. FGs were developed to help clinicians hone in on key patterns in these legacies.

There are five specific FGs that are presented in detail in this book. They include (1) Attachments; (2) Fairness; (3) Gender; (4) Sexuality; and (5) Abuse, Violence, and Trauma. We describe these distinctive FGs in the upcoming chapters. The FGs target common problems in a client-system. For instance, in recent clinical workshops and publications, the third author (MLCT) has demonstrated the utility of FGs when working with problem areas like military trauma (Papaj, Blumer, & Robinson, 2011), as well as couple and family technology concerns (Blumer & Hertlein, 2015; Hertlein & Blumer, 2013). Indeed, the clinician can always construct a FG for any client or problem keeping in mind the overarching family-based attachment narratives.

To develop a FG, start with an 8.5 × 11" tablet, or any paper, held in landscape orientation. Figure 3.2 illustrates the format for all the FGs (taken from the first edition) that are based on the Basic Genogram. The right-hand side depicts an intergenerational family genogram, preferably four generations. The

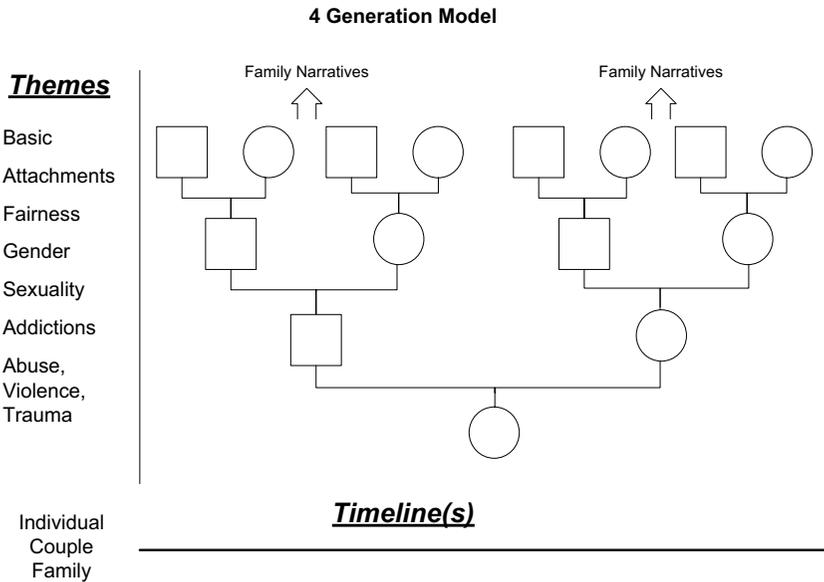


FIGURE 3.2 The Focused Genogram Master. This figure illustrates the four-generation approach recommended and identifies the five themed FGs that we emphasize in this text.

left-hand side outlines the Themes for each FG in topical form as the assessment proceeds. The Timeline is at the bottom of the page, and it provides a method for noting important, significant, and traumatic events. The mapping tools are best developed on a separate page.

Identifying the client-system’s narratives about their family histories, legacies, strengths, and challenges is an important aspect of the intergenerational focus of the IA. Personal narratives are the expression of underlying beliefs learned through early-life experiences, as well as early relational experiences within the family system (Hollander-Goldfein, Isserman, & Goldenberg, 2012; White & Epston, 1990). No matter which of the domains the client identifies as containing the presenting problem, FGs can be a pivotal tool in helping clients externalize the problem and re-story the narrative to include health in all domains. In Vetere and Dallos’ (2008, 2014) Family Attachment Narrative Therapy approach, they discuss the interplay between attachment theory, systemic thought, and narrative therapy. Not only does the family’s narrative encompass the systemic components of the family’s life and interactions, but it also contains the meaning of their relationships and love for each other based on attachment theory. They draw on Byng-Hall’s (1995) replicative or corrective scripts in order to tell the story of how parental and relational choices transmitted attachment and subsequent emotional processes through generations.

Another unique example is the “transformative narrative,” which creates new meaning in the pivotal family stories or events (Hollander-Goldfein, 2005; Hollander-Goldfein et al., 2012).

We propose that developing the basic, attachment, and other FGs are essential in helping the therapist get to know the client’s history and story. All this information is instrumental in developing the appropriate therapeutic posture (TxP) for each client and is described in detail in Chapter 4. Attachment-based narratives often influence patterns of intimacy, disconnection, disengagement, chaos, and enmeshment throughout the client–system. The clinician demonstrates respect for the presenting problem and the unique life experiences of the client–system, focuses on it first, and then shows them that the problem developed in a context over which they have had no or limited influence.

FGs provide a *set of questions* that focus on a particular problem or area depending on the FG. The FG questions allow for a deeper exploration of important areas of family life in detail, including attachment patterns, gender, sexuality, and family violence, to name just some of the possibilities. Questions about each area of problem behavior are systematically organized. Each question may serve as a point of departure for many follow-up questions.

Why Focused Genograms?

As Butler (2008) suggested, family diagrams³ and genograms are “not synonymous; rather they are distinctly different methods of family assessment,” (p. 169). Bowen used a family diagram to assess emotional connections with the family. Satir, Minuchin, and other family therapy pioneers also used family diagrams for assessment. The traditional genogram is a method using a pedigree format to identify members of the intergenerational family tree.

The Bowen pedigree format for the genogram, which was first called a “diagram” (Bowen, 1980) and later called a genogram by McGoldrick, is different from a “family map” illustrating relationship patterns as proposed by Minuchin (1974) in his mapping of generational boundaries and subsystems. Ackerman (1984) also mapped transactional patterns within three-person family systems to examine open and/or balanced relational patterns. Other than Stanton’s 1992 article, which focused on mapping family dynamics combined *with* a family timeline, mapping has received little attention in the professional literature.

Although practitioners often identify cutoffs, enmeshments, and conflicted relationships when they create genograms, these designations tend to become global assessments, which do not always address the complexity of relationship patterns and intergenerational legacies. The Bowenian genogram model is not a format that allows sufficient flexibility for depicting the complexity of individual, couple, intergenerational, and external influences. Consequently, we have developed additional tools to help the clinician assess the family system through various lenses.

The FGs, mapping, and timeline tools evolved over many years of clinical practice, particularly by the first author (RD), and were influenced by other models. Minuchin (1974), as well as Hartman and Laird (1983), used mapping to detail boundaries and the transactional process within the family system. Emphasizing behavioral patterns among the parental and sibling subsystems, Minuchin (1974) was the first to distinguish mapping as a separate process from a genogram. From a social work framework, Hartman (1978) developed the Ecomap as a method to represent information about the family system and its relationship with outside resources, organizations, and agencies. During this time, Olson and his associates (1979) developed the Circumplex Model of Family Functioning. Satir's (1967) mapping of families incorporated a historical family perspective and Timeline. Stanton (1992) went on to differentiate the Structural map, which accents behavioral relationships, from the Bowen genogram, which incorporates biological and legal relationships across generations.

There are two important considerations when 'mapping' relational patterns within the client-system. First, there is no one defined system used as a standard for genogram symbols. Although McGoldrick and Gerson (1985, 1999, 2008) compiled the most commonly used symbols for outlining basic family membership, structure, and interaction, to ensure readability they urge keeping details on the genogram to a minimum. Second, mapping symbols are typically put directly on top of the genogram lines, which then become confusing, especially in complicated client-systems. Just as geographers have various types of maps—topographical, political, climate, satellite, and thematic (to name a few)—systemic therapists need maps for the family system as well. Maps are an essential means to recording and communicating information, and maps are distinct from the genogram.

The use of the discrete FG mapping tools fosters the mental visualization of the client-system. Minuchin's symbols are a good example. Mapping the structural family subsystems, boundaries, and transactional patterns is easy to follow and is a useful part of the FG Family Map. Of note, Minuchin's early work was focused on delinquent adolescents with complicated family structures that required flexibility in drawing family diagrams (Minuchin & Montalvo, 1967). Similarly, Hartman and Laird (1983) use symbols to describe connections as strong, tenuous, weak, or stressful and the flow of energy or resources into and out of the family system. To make the symbolic soup even more comprehensive, Hardy and Laszloffy (1995) advocate symbolic representation of multiracial and intercultural marriages on the genogram as well, and Lewis (1989) advocates color-coding the genogram. Belous and associates (2012) recommend more accurate symbolic representation in genograms for clients identifying as sexual and/or gender orientation/identity minorities (i.e., transgender, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, etc.).

There are many different ways to construct family diagrams and genograms. There is no doubt that our methodology is the most comprehensive, complex,

and research-based in attachment theory. Researchers will need to investigate this approach as they have others. For example, Rohrbaugh, Rogers, and McGoldrick (1992) found that the highest reliability coefficients among experts reading Bowen genograms were in the areas of emotional cutoff, conflictual relationships, and repeated relationship patterns over generations. Coupland, Serovich, and Glenn (1995) found that doctoral students were highly accurate in recording names, dates, and ages; however, they were moderately accurate in recording unnamed persons, occupations, relationship descriptors, medical issues, personal issues, descriptive phrases, and other significant symbols. These studies suggest that use of the Bowen genogram can take on a very broad focus, yet historically has tended to be used to focus on very narrow characteristic patterns like cutoffs, conflict, and enmeshment.

Overview of Mapping and Timeline Tools

As pictured in the FG Road Map, the FG Tools include the various FGs and the related Maps and Timelines for the domains of the IA. In the remainder of this chapter, we will focus on each Map and Timeline individually, giving its theoretical background and discussing how to use it with client-systems. We begin with a preliminary overview of attachment terminology for maps that guide assessment in the four domains.

Each of the Maps has a different focus and helps the clinician use the attachment construct to explore the individual, couple, family, and contextual domains:

- The IMM is the key to a comprehensive understanding of a client’s internal working models (IWM) of attachment. Developing the IMM for all individual family members provides a crucial guide for enhancing the therapeutic alliance. Once identified, the attachment patterns of the members help the therapist develop a TxP for the client-system. TxP is described, in detail, in the next chapter.
- The CIM shows the interplay of childhood and adult attachment styles, and styles for the primary couple relationship revealing the Negative Emotional Infinity Loop (the Loop) that depicts what adult attachment

TABLE 3.1 The Intersystem Approach, Attachment Patterns, and FG Mapping Tools

<i>FG Tool</i>	<i>IMM</i>	<i>CIM</i>	<i>FCM</i>	<i>Ecomap</i>
Mapping attachment in each domain	Childhood patterns	Adult styles	Adult for parents, childhood for children	Social bonds

Note: This chart is a companion to the Attachment Terminology chart in Chapter 2. In this table attachment terminology is matched with each mapping tool for all four domains.

interaction patterns exist in the client-system. This map allows us to understand the interaction of the partners' attachment styles. This interaction creates a unique couple dynamic, and it may help to reveal the source of their interpersonal distress.

- Charting interpersonal dynamics within the contemporary family system, the Family Map, separates relationship patterns from intergenerational themes and legacies. The FCM identifies family attachment scripts/styles, which provides the overarching client-systems attachment narrative.
- Furthermore, the Family Map can be expanded into a variation of an Ecomap (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Hartman, 1978; Hartman & Laird, 1983) to explore other relational resources such as kinship, fictive, and other social and community affiliations. An Ecomap is similar to a sociogram; however, it focuses on the family's relationships and connections with the larger social and community networks.

Timelines are practical and useful tools for therapists to note developmental and nodal events that help explore the influence of developmental, transitional, and traumatic life events throughout the life cycle. The FG provides three Timelines: (1) individual, (2) couple, and (3) family. All can be combined into one Timeline or separated. Alternatively, the family timeline can be separated into a family timeline for information relevant to the family and a contextual timeline for information relevant to the sociocultural, environmental, and greater historical contexts. The Timelines are important as they allow the clinician to duly note such life cycle issues for further consideration in the therapeutic process. As with Maps, clinicians can also choose to create a series of Timelines as they construct specific FGs, or they can choose to maintain one master Timeline. For example, they can choose to develop specific Attachments Timelines that focus on childhood/adolescence, or adult intimate relationships, or patterns of connection in the evolving intergenerational family system. Other timelines are illustrated in the upcoming focused genograms chapters.

Mapping Tools

Attachment Mapping Symbols

A comprehensive client-system intergenerational map depicts the contemporary family system and includes individual, couple, and family maps. Each of these domains has variations to distinguish them within the specific domains. Child attachment patterns are used to map IWM as we highlighted in Chapter 2. The clinician's assessment of the individual IWM of attachment of the client begins from the outset of treatment and even preliminary contact with a prospective new client-system. We remind the reader that we explore childhood attachment experiences with all parental attachment figures. The

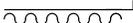
Secure		Reliable & Available
Anxious Ambivalent		Unreliably Available
Anxious Avoidant		Reliably Unavailable
Disorganized		Unreliable Unavailable
Disorganized		With Emotional/Physical Abuse

FIGURE 3.3 Attachment Mapping Symbols: Childhood Attachment Patterns.

IMM is a crucial element of the mapping tools, and it provides a method for identifying attachment patterns with each of the identified parental figures. The IMM is incorporated in the CIM as well.

The mapping symbols for the four attachment patterns, styles, and scripts are as follows: (1) secure, (2) ambivalent, (3) avoidant, and (4) disorganized. First, we present the childhood attachment symbols, and then we present the adult attachment symbols.

These childhood attachment symbols have been developed to reflect attachment patterns that represent childhood attachment experiences. Each attachment pattern has a characteristic emotional tone: secure attachment presents as flexible and adaptive; ambivalent attachment presents as anxious, uncertain, and often needy; avoidant attachment presents as independent, at times unengaged, and seemingly self-assured; and disorganized attachment presents a confusing relational style that can be difficult and/or nonresponsive.

While childhood attachment patterns were observable in young children, questionnaires were developed to identify adult attachment styles based on self-report (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987). We suggest that these adult attachment styles can be referred to as interaction patterns which are observable in interactions with the therapist, a partner, or other family members or significant others. The mapping symbols for adult attachment interaction patterns reflect the same four types as the childhood mapping symbols.

Cowan and Cowan (2006, 2009) highlight the importance of recognizing and working with child attachment patterns, adult interaction patterns, and family attachment scripts throughout the intergenerational family system in a way that expanded the work of others (Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, & Larsen-Rife, 2011; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011; Gallo & Smith, 2001; Holland et al., 2012). In particular, Cowan and Cowan’s (2005) research underscores the couple relationship as the central dynamic and the mediating variable

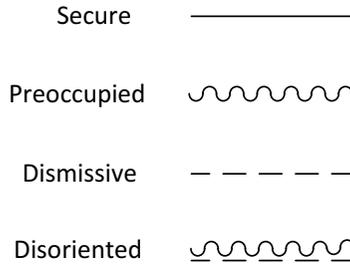


FIGURE 3.4 Attachment Mapping Symbols: Adult Attachment Styles. The adult attachment symbols shown in this figure can be used to depict adult interaction patterns within the couple dynamic and within and among the family relationship interaction patterns as well. The FCM utilizes a variation of the child and adult attachment symbols.

for transmission of intergenerational attachment scripts, patterns, and styles. Furthermore, the couple dynamic either intensifies insecure family attachment scripts or has the capacity to transform family attachment scripts toward a secure attachment script that bridges generations.

The interplay of the self-system and the intergenerational family system along with multicultural influences can be depicted as part of the comprehensive CIM. The CIM is crucial to an integrated systemic approach to treatment. Even if the individual has not experienced being part of a couple, is currently part of a couple, or has experienced failed couple relationships, the individual still contributes to the larger systemic attachment scripts through both couple and family interactions.

The Internal Models Map (IMM)

The IMM (Figure 3.5) is a mapping tool developed in the first edition, which reveals the unique attachment patterns of each individual with their significant childhood attachment figures. Attachment figures in childhood typically include mother, father, and often, other significant family members such as grandparents. The IMM is a unique method for depicting attachment patterns between a child and his/her/their parents. The individual's childhood attachment patterns are often different with each parent or other parental figures. The configuration of attachment patterns with two parents can be complex and unique for each individual.

Gender is a significant aspect of the IMM, which will be discussed in greater detail in both the Attachments Genogram (Chapter 5) and the Gender Genogram (Chapter 7). Attachment studies suggest that a same-gender, parent-child attachment bond influences parental attachments and family

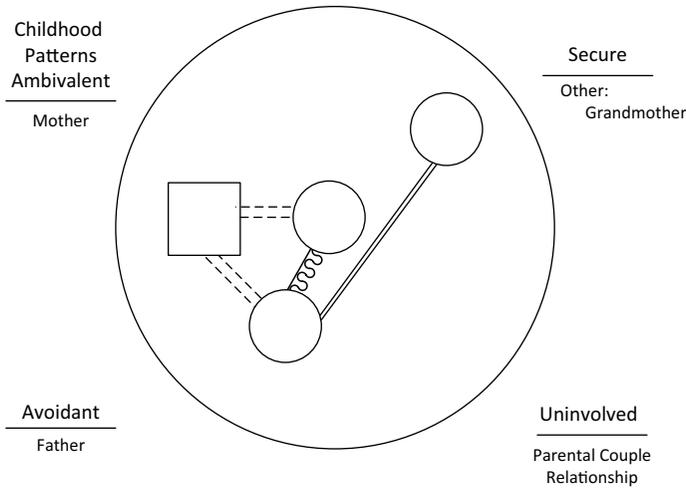


FIGURE 3.5 Margaret’s Internal Models Map. Margaret’s IMM in this figure illustrates her childhood attachment patterns.

dynamics (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). The internal models of attachment with both same- and different-gender parental figures influence childhood attachment patterns in gendered ways, which paves the way for the development of gender roles.⁴

Another value of the IMM is that it reveals the internalized couple/partner(ed) relationship attachment patterns. In addition to the childhood attachment patterns with each parent, children similarly develop IWM about the nature of intimate relationships from witnessing their parent(s)’ relationship(s). Learned patterns and behaviors from childhood interact within the adult’s contemporary couple relationship if/when they become parents. This contemporary pattern will either mediate secure patterns of attachment or contribute to insecure or disorganized attachments for each parent and child in the contemporary family. Thus, our thesis is that adult individuals can act out childhood attachment patterns in their couple/partner(ed) relationships, while simultaneously replaying their parental couple relationship in their contemporary relationship.

This illustration shows avoidant relationship with father, ambivalent relationship with mother, and secure relationship with grandmother. Margaret, abandoned by her father at the age of 5 years, did not see him again until she was 23 years old. Despite a few memories of closeness and connection, her overall sense of her father was one of loss and abandonment. When her father left, her mother went to work full time and her grandmother, whom she perceived as extremely loving and kind, took care of Margaret. With further exploration of these relationships, it was determined that Margaret’s adult attachment bond

with her grandmother was secure, while her attachment with her mother was mildly preoccupied, and her attachment with her father was dismissive. In her day-to-day life, Margaret experienced great comfort with older female colleagues, was more tentative with her peers, and found her relationship with her husband to be distant.

The Couple Interaction Map (CIM)

Attachment theory suggests that insecure attachment patterns developed in childhood are malleable in adult love relationships. A committed romantic relationship can establish a milieu for emotional healing and growth (Cowan & Cowan, 2006). When a couple begins an intimate relationship, the quality of both the attachment experience and the emotional and physical nurturing responsiveness creates a powerful pair bond. When the chemistry of romantic love is developing, a unique sexual bond emerges, which further enhances the caregiving attachment bond. The experience of a healthy, committed, and bonded romantic and sexual relationship helps couples strengthen their attachment bond and move toward a more secure attachment bond.

The foundation of secure attachment in adult relationships is based on both partners seeking physical and emotional connection with each other when in distress. Original attachment theorists proposed that attachment was enacted by proximity seeking, or seeking closeness to and connection with a caregiver when in distress (Ainsworth, 1979). We now understand that attachment security rests on these connections, which can be accessed and maintained through behaviors such as asking for a hug, or giving a partner a hug, or another sign of physical affection, when in distress. The need for proximity under stress is a feature of attachment while the need for empathy and support (and even play) are features of caregiving. Caregiving is another dimension of the couple bond, which can be defined as a nurturing physical and emotional bond that provides comfort and affection on a consistent basis over time, regardless of distress.

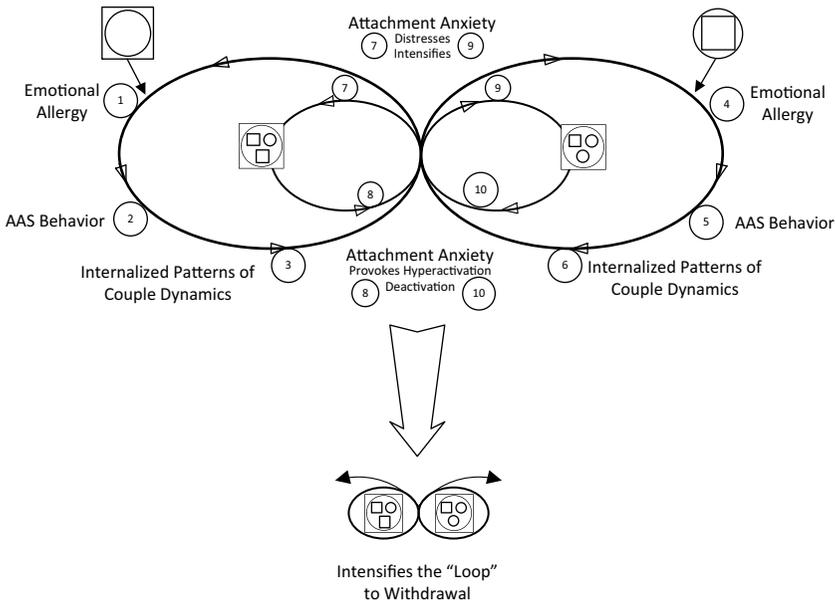
When under distress, insecure IWM often prevail, and the partners typically cannot access the physical, emotional, and verbal tools they need to establish an emotionally and physically safe relationship with each other. Insecure attachment styles of each partner intensify with experiences of empathic failures, misunderstandings, and conflicts over differences. Furthermore, significant trauma in life without sufficient emotional support in adulthood may have a negative impact on secure attachment or reinforce insecure attachment. Each partner's insecure IWM reciprocally influence attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Even if both partners have more secure attachment styles, when conflict escalates, most couples become engaged in the "negative emotional infinity loop" as they act out their IWM insecurities through behavioral expression of attachment insecurities (DeMaria & Hannah, 2003; Gordon, 1994). We have

developed the CIM to assess the defensive interaction patterns that comprise the “negative emotional infinity loop,” which we call the Couple Interaction Infinity Loop, or the Loop. Repetitive experiences of the Loop in the couple relationship interfere with attachment and caregiving behaviors.

The CIM, shown in Figure 3.6, is introduced in this edition of *Focused Genograms* and was first developed in 2004 by the first author (RD).

The CIM illustrates progression of the Loop, within which each partner’s IWM are illustrated by the IMM that were introduced in the previous section of this chapter. We explain Steps 1–10 of the Loop below, moving from the observed adult attachment styles to the childhood attachment patterns as emotional distress intensifies the actions of the Loop. The goal of the CIM is to help the clinician identify and explore the defensive interaction patterns observed in the Loop, which are driven by each partner’s attachment insecurities.

The CIM provides a practical method for conceptualizing how insecure attachment styles can lead to the formation of the Loop. Though this process is complex and unique for each couple, the CIM provides a model for ten



10 Steps to Emotional Disconnection and Insecure Attachment

FIGURE 3.6 The Couple Interaction Map: “The Loop.” This figure illustrates the CIM that shows each partner’s IMM, which influences their emotional, behavioral, and cognitive defensive patterns that drive the Loop. The CIM depicts “Steps to Emotional Disconnection and Insecure Attachment.”

steps to emotional disconnection driven by attachment insecurity. Here, we introduce the ten steps in a list and then elaborate on them further. The Loop helps the clinician identify each step in the Loop, which fosters opportunities to disrupt the Loop. The therapist can then help the couple in their efforts for reconnection.

The ten steps of CIM are as follows:

1. Identify initial emotional allergy (Partner 1).
2. Identify adult attachment behavioral response to emotional allergy (Partner 1).
3. Identify internalized patterns of couple dynamics held by Partner 1.
4. Identify emotional allergy (triggered for Partner 2).
5. Identify adult attachment behavioral response to emotional allergy (Partner 2).
6. Identify internalized patterns of couple dynamics held by Partner 2.

Deepening and Tightening of the Loop: Switch to Childhood Attachment

7. Identify Partner 1's deepening experience of emotional vulnerability and fear.
8. Identify Partner 1's childhood IWM to alleviate potential emotional vulnerability.
9. Identify Partner 2's deepening experience of emotional vulnerability and fear.
10. Identify Partner 2's childhood IWM to alleviate potential emotional vulnerability.

The Loop Continues to Tighten, Ending in Hostility and/or Detachment (if uninterrupted)

In Step 1, Partner 1 experiences the initial emotional allergy(ies). Emotional allergies can be referred to as 'triggers' that cause 'emotional flooding.' These emotional allergies are physiologically and affectively motivated and expressed behaviorally and cognitively, thus creating the stimulus for the "Loop" (reminder—negative *emotional* infinity loop). However, the use of the term emotional allergies is more descriptive than that of a 'trigger' because it evokes the hypersensitive physiological reaction akin to physical allergies. Emotional allergies activate emotional reactivity, but are also similar to physical allergies, which are hypersensitive reactions to physical stimuli with specific antibodies. Within the limbic system of the brain, drives and instincts are behaviorally directed toward physical safety and protection. In attachment terms, an emotional allergy is a threat to the attachment bond, which is a primary source of safety in a person's life (Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1971). Painful and traumatic emotional memories, conscious or unconscious, also stimulate the development of emotional allergies as trigger points that can evoke hypersensitive reactions based in the original traumatic/painful memory.

In Step 2, the emotional allergy induces a reaction much like Ainsworth recorded in her Strange Situation experiment that interfered with exploration when anxiety occurs (Ainsworth et al., 1971). Proximity seeking or avoidance

behaviors are observed, depending on the attachment pattern of the child. Similarly, Step 2 in the CIM is a behavioral response that is driven by the initiating partner's adult attachment style, which can be secure, preoccupied, dismissing, or disoriented, leading to connection, hypervigilance, disconnection, or confusion toward the partner. We propose that as the Loop deepens later in *Step 6*, each partner will also access internalized memory experiences based on the parental couple attachment dynamics, thereby activating their childhood attachment experiences with primary parental figures. However, in Step 2, the initiating partner acts out of their adult attachment style in response to Step 1, the initial emotional allergy(ies).

In Step 3, typically unconscious cognitive relational schemas based on internalized memory experiences with primary caregivers (between Partner 1's parents) become another part of the initiating phase of the Loop, driven by Partner 1's experiences of his/her/their parental couple dynamics growing up. Simultaneously, Partner 1 taps into his/her/their internalized understanding of the couple dynamics in their current relationship, which can sometimes lead to making assumptions about how Partner 2 will react. At this point, Partner 2 becomes activated and will notice and experience the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive expressions of stress, defensiveness, and distancing that have arisen from Partner 1. Partner 2's emotional response and prospective emotional allergy to Partner 1's actions constitute Step 4 of the Loop.

Step 4 begins as Partner 2 processes the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive gestalt presented by Partner 1. In a healthy interaction, Partner 2 would empathize with Partner 1, perhaps mirroring Partner 1's initiation for connection and asking what Partner 1 needs in order to feel reconnected. In contrast, if Partner 2 is triggered by Partner 1's action, Partner 2's own emotional allergy is likely to become triggered.

An insecure partner in need will stimulate the beginning of the Loop in either typical preoccupied or dismissive attachment style. The other partner's response may be compassionate (caregiving), an expression of physical comfort (physical presence in proximity), dismissing (avoidant response—"you'll be fine in the morning"), or preoccupied (ambivalent response—"I will 'fix' this for you let's do x, y, z"). The response by the other partner determines the escalation or de-escalation of the Loop. Typically, partners do not recognize when the Loop begins and how their own reactions reinforce and intensify the formation of the Loop.

Step 5 is the adult attachment behavior that results from that emotional allergy, this time with Partner 2 acting from his/her/their adult attachment style.

In Step 6, Partner 2 actuates the internalized memory patterns of couple interaction, including past experiences in this relationship, other relationships, and the parental couple dynamic.

Step 7 initiates a deepening and intensification of the Loop (shown in Figure 3.6 as the smaller loop inside the bigger loop). As the Loop continues to

evolve, unconscious fears of abandonment and/or engulfment expand for both partners. The insecure attachment response from Partner 2 typically deepens Partner 1's experience of vulnerability and distress, which we identify as Step 7 in the Loop.

From this position of vulnerability, in Step 8, Partner 1 becomes hyperactivated or deactivated emotionally, dependent on the type of attachment insecurity in his/her/their IWM. The complexity of Partner 1's vulnerability and reactivity will, in turn, result in more rigid distancing or escalating conflict patterns.

As the Loop tightens in Steps 8–10, each partner is likely to represent that partner's IWM typically of the same-gender parent for insecure partners (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). For example, in a heterosexual couple, the woman may perceive her partner's withdrawal and react from the interaction she saw between her mother and her father when her father withdrew. As we have emphasized in Chapter 2 and in this chapter, we provide a systemic lens to understanding the complexity of attachment bonds experienced in adulthood. The Loop reveals a process by which the couple relationship begins to fragment and split, resulting in disconnection and insecure attachment. The combination of emotional allergies, maladaptive adult attachment behaviors, and insecure IWM reveals the intergenerational transmission of attachment in action within the couple bond. As the Loop tightens and emotional intensity continues to emerge, both partners' childhood attachment patterns are exposed and will result in disconnection.

Step 9 activates further emotional vulnerability and fear of abandonment or engulfment as Partner 2's childhood attachment patterns are exposed.

Partner 2 then expresses these needs in Step 10 through escalating or distancing behaviors, again triggering Partner 1's emotional allergy, vulnerability, and fear of abandonment. Step 10 begins a process of reinforcement of the defensive interaction pattern that will become increasingly more tightly intertwined and reactive. Ultimately, this process leads to insecure connection and either detachment or hostility.

Summary of the Ten Steps to Disconnection and Insecure Attachment

Given this discussion, we hypothesize that there are primary and secondary defensive interaction patterns within the Loop. The Loop is often initiated when one partner has an emotional or physical need, thereby establishing a level of vulnerability. As the vulnerable partner moves toward the other partner for comfort, his/her/their attachment style will be expressed. If secure, the partner is likely to request comfort. If preoccupied, the partner is likely to be insistent or even demanding about the need for comfort. If dismissive, the partner is less likely to request comfort and may even withdraw emotionally, leaving the

other partner concerned. This primary defensive interaction pattern is typically a reflection of each partner's adult attachment style (Steps 1–3 and 4–6). The secondary defensive interaction pattern (Steps 7–10) occurs when the escalation of insecure attachment styles deepens vulnerability and triggers childhood attachment patterns of ambivalence, avoidance, or disorganization. The partners can then become stuck in interpreting cues and reacting from their IWM, which drives their childhood attachment patterns.

Identifying and responding to the IMM are key in untangling the Couple Interaction Infinity Loop in order to facilitate more effective bonding and strengthening secure attachment. As stress increases and/or conflict intensifies, then the secondary defensive interactions patterns will begin to be enacted in Steps 8–10. These secondary defensive interaction patterns are defined as hyperactivating and deactivating attachment strategies by attachment theorists, and result from failure to respond to the need for connection (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). Hyperactivating strategies are common for people who tend to score high on attachment anxiety who then seek connection, closeness, affirmation, and support from their current primary attachment figure. In contrast, deactivating strategies are common for people who tend to score high on avoidance. Those with high avoidance move away from their primary attachment figure, rather than move toward that person for connection, closeness, reassurance, and encouragement. We must also consider disorganized attachment patterns, which are more likely to escalate quickly due to underlying trauma. A disorganized partner in need typically initiates a request for connection and reassurance in demanding and simultaneously dismissing behavior. The other partner's response is often unlikely to soothe the disorganized partner. These couples are distinguished by high levels of conflict that are chronic and difficult to resolve and create challenges for many clinicians, even those who have much experience in the field. Overall, regardless of the constellation of attachment styles present, the Loop becomes highly unproductive and only results in tightening rigidity if uninterrupted, as shown in Figure 3.6.

Developing Couple Flow

Typically, secure couples are able to maintain a level of emotional flow of sharing, compassion, and problem solving. Insecure couples with high anxiety are likely to engage in negative communication patterns that may escalate. Insecure couples with high avoidance minimize communication and connection. Then, there are the mixed secure-insecure couples, which experience other variations of the Loop. Generally, these patterns are a mix of preoccupied, dismissive, or unresolved attachment styles.

If the partner in need who has secure IWM initiates contact and the other partner responds with compassion, then this couple will likely experience

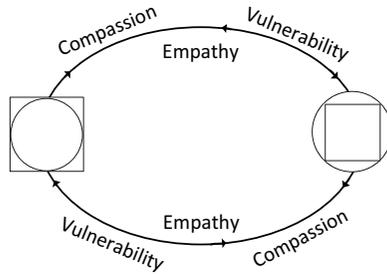


FIGURE 3.7 Couple Flow. Couple Flow is represented by an open process of sharing, empathy, and compassion.

Couple Flow, which is defined as a continuous loop of caring, support, affection, and responsiveness.

Summing Up the CIM and Couple Flow

Using the CIM has two important functions for the practitioners. First, it depicts the couples' relationship dynamics as influenced by the IWM of each partner's parental attachment figures and current attachment relationships. Second, it focuses on defensive interaction patterns that inhibit empathy, compassion, and support that would foster more secure connection. The IWM of each partner influence and are influenced by both past and present relationship experiences as we have described in this section. The CIM is a unique, sophisticated, and powerful tool because it illustrates the interplay of how both the childhood and adult attachment patterns and styles within the client-system intermingle with each other. Understanding how the childhood and adult attachment patterns and styles reciprocally influence intrapsychic and interactional dynamics and working models of attachment helps a therapist identify the attachment patterns that have been transmitted intergenerationally, and most importantly, interrupt negative patterns as adult children become part of a new couple dynamic.

The Basic Family Map

The tools developed as part of FGs provide therapists an opportunity to 'think outside the box' as they engage with their clients to explore the intergenerational transmission of attachment scripts. Family Maps differ from a genogram in that a genogram uses a typical pedigree format for developing the genogram. Separating the Family Map from the basic genogram provides the clinician a

flexible method to diagram the interpersonal relationships and the hierarchy of the current family system.

The basic Family Map is a traditional family assessment that includes emotional cutoffs, enmeshment, disengagement, and a variety of other descriptors for family dynamics and uses symbols to depict relational patterns among the members of the client-system. The Family Map is like a live slide that catches the dynamic forces at work graphically depicting the members of the contemporary family system and their relationship dynamics. It has been most commonly used in Structural Family Therapy.

A New Addition: The Family Connections Map (FCM)

The integration of attachment theory within the IA and the consequent expansion of mapping tools as part of the various FGs, resulted in a specific attachment-focused FCM and is a new addition to the mapping tools. The FCM is based on the foundational research of the Circumplex Model. The Circumplex Model was first introduced in 1979 by Olson and his associates (1979, 1989, 2000) and updated by Olson (2011). Olson’s model provides a useful approach to exploring the family/intergenerational domain of the IA because of its emphasis on ‘relational diagnosis’ for couples and families. The Circumplex Model is a fluid model that uniquely identifies how family members view their relationships within the family based on their sense of connection and flexibility within the system at any given point

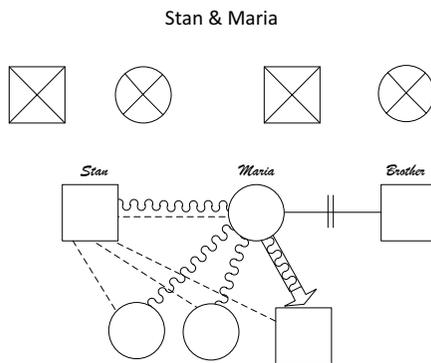


FIGURE 3.8 Family Map. This Family Map represents Stan and Maria’s couple relationship and the relationship with their children. Maria is disconnected from her brother. Stan is dismissive with all three children. Maria has preoccupied relationships with her daughters, and an abusive and disorganized relationship with her son.

in time (Olson, 2011). There have been over 1200 studies of the model and its applications in the last 30 years (Olson, 2011). There are two dimensions in the Circumplex Model: Cohesion (originally termed Connection) and Flexibility (originally termed Adaptability), which are comparative with other family assessment models. Olson suggested that “cohesion” corresponds to terms such as validation, affection, affective involvement, and affiliation. Flexibility, on the other hand, corresponds to terms such as adaptability, interdependence, capacity to change, dominance/submission, and problem solving.

Byng-Hall (1995) was among the first to apply Bowlby’s attachment theory to intergenerational family patterns, which he termed “scripts.” He emphasized the importance of a secure family base and described characteristics of secure and insecure families based on attachment style, calling these patterns attachment scripts. Attachment scripts are the intergenerational patterns that emerge over time and influence the family significantly, often without knowledge or understanding from contemporary family members. The intergenerational transmission of attachment styles is also a consistent finding in developmental psychology (Bernier & Dozer, 2003).

The FCM (Table 3.2) reformulated the dimensions and terms of the Circumplex Model into attachment terms, effectively merging attachment theory and styles. We have already discussed how the IMM captures the IWM of individuals based on their attachment schemas with primary attachment figures. Similarly, the FCM captures the experience of flexibility and connection within the family for each family member, and translates those experiences into attachment script terms. Attachment patterns not only describe parent-child bonds, but they also describe the bond between the parental couple, which is a primary vehicle for intergenerational transmission of attachment in the family from one generation to the next (Cowan & Cowan, 2005).

We have added attachment terms that we believe adequately describe the attachment scripts within the families of each type. We have equated flexibility

TABLE 3.2 Family Connections Map (FCM)

		<i>Disengaged</i>	<i>Distant</i>	<i>Connected</i>	<i>Enmeshed</i>
F L E X I B I L I T Y	<i>Chaotic</i>	UNPREDICTABLE Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	OVERINVOLVED Disorganized
	<i>Flexible</i>	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Structured</i>	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Rigid</i>	UNINVOLVED Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	CONTROLLING Disorganized
		CONNECTION			

Note: As illustrated in this table, the FCM depicts the flexibility and connection continua.

with the attachment term of reliability, and, similarly, we have equated connection with the attachment term responsiveness. Generally, connection refers to the degree of enmeshment or disengagement within the family, while flexibility refers to the rigidity of boundaries, roles, and rules in the family.

Furthermore, the FCM proposes sixteen types of family attachment scripts, which can be found in Table 3.3. Central to the table are four balanced family styles that we identify as secure. Radiating outward from secure, there are eight mid-range family attachment scripts. These will lean toward either preoccupied attachment family scripts or dismissive attachment family scripts, but not to the extreme of either end of the continua. Last, but not least, there are four disorganized scripts in the four corners, reflecting the different combinations of extremes. Next, we explain each type in more detail to allow the clinician to begin to recognize them quickly.

To expand on these types, we begin with the four secure family attachment scripts. Secure families are balanced in their connection and flexibility, with some potential variation in one or both dimensions under duress or developmental stress. Most individuals in a secure family will have secure IWM as well. On the other hand, the eight mid-range families show various iterations of insecure attachment patterns as the predominant family attachment script. More specifically, there are four dismissive family attachment scripts that reflect avoidant childhood attachment patterns, typified by a parental team that predictably deny, minimize, and/or exhibit miscues of emotional expression and physical affection on a regular basis. Conversely, there are four preoccupied family attachment scripts that reflect ambivalent childhood attachment

TABLE 3.3 Family Connections Map (FCM) with Attachment-Focused Family Typologies

High F L E X I B I L I T Y Low	Disengaged Chaotic Unpredictable	Distant Chaotic Dismissive	Connected Chaotic Preoccupied	Enmeshed Chaotic Overinvolved
	Disengaged Flexible Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Enmeshed Flexible Preoccupied
	Disengaged Structured Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Enmeshed Structured Preoccupied
	Disengaged Rigid Uninvolved	Distant Rigid Dismissive	Connected Rigid Preoccupied	Enmeshed Rigid Controlling
	<i>Low</i>	CONNECTION		<i>High</i>

Note: This FCM adds the language to describe the 16 family types, which are based on the level of flexibility and connection in any particular family.

patterns, developed through unpredictable patterns of emotional attention while parents are typically physically available.

The four dismissive family attachment scripts include the following:

- *Disengaged-flexible* families are extremely disconnected and very flexible.
- *Disengaged-structured* families are extremely disconnected and very inflexible.
- *Distant-chaotic* families are very disconnected and very flexible.
- *Distant-rigid* families are very disconnected and extremely inflexible.

The four preoccupied family attachment scripts include the following:

- *Enmeshed-flexible* families are extremely connected and very flexible.
- *Enmeshed-structured* families are extremely connected and very inflexible.
- *Connected-chaotic* families are very connected and extremely flexible.
- *Connected-rigid* families are very connected and extremely inflexible.

Finally, there are four disorganized family attachment scripts that occur in the corners of the FCM in the extremes of connection or disconnection and flexibility or inflexibility. We have redefined the descriptive terms from the Circumplex Model into new attachment terms: Unpredictable, Uninvolved, Overinvolved, and Controlling. Determination of the type of disorganized family style is an important aspect of developing TxP because these families present with complex and divergent attachment styles. Because disorganized attachment can be a result of chronic trauma, we discuss this aspect of the FCM in more detail in Chapter 9.

Based on our adaptation of the Circumplex Model in Table 3.3, the four disorganized attachment scripts are described:

- *Unpredictable* families are extremely disconnected and extremely flexible, leaving family members to fend for themselves due to unclear rules and roles.
- *Uninvolved* families are extremely disconnected and extremely rigid, leaving family members continually isolated and excessively independent.
- *Overinvolved* families are extremely connected and extremely flexible, leaving members feeling suffocated by one another, again because of unclear rules and roles.
- *Controlling* families are extremely connected and extremely inflexible, such that family members have difficulty with autonomy and self-reliance.

Disorganized and disoriented attachment styles become evident in individual, couple, and family therapy as the clinician begins to utilize the IMM, CIM, and FCM. We have also highlighted that the couple/parenting relationship is

the moderating relationship between the generations. If one or both partners have a predominantly disorganized attachment, the family attachment script is likely to reflect one of the four types of disorganized families identified by the FCM. For example, in a couple’s therapy case, one partner exhibited a disorganized attachment style. She was fearful in the presence of people she did not know as well as with her friends. She did not trust anyone because her parents had physically and emotionally abused her throughout her entire childhood and adolescence. However, the abuse was not chaotic and unpredictable. Her parent’s religious orientation was a justification for the abuse and fostered a more rigid structure. If religious teachings were not followed, the client was punished with shaming and corporal punishment. In this type of rigidly enmeshed family, which we call Controlling, the client both feared and desired connection with her parents. In the couple relationship, she both fears and desires connection with her partner. Simultaneously, the client is rigid in her own lifestyle, with rules about when to wake up, how the house should be, and what she is allowed to do. Consequently, she is terrified of breaking rules and of physical intimacy. This brief vignette illustrates how the family-of-origin experiences directly affects and promotes an intergenerational process for developing a Controlling family attachment script. It also illustrates the interactions between the IMM and the FCM that lead to intergenerational transmission of further disorganized attachment experiences.

The FCM is particularly useful in understanding the historical family system to discern the origins and presentation of the secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and disorganized attachment scripts for the family system. Procedurally, the FCM is simple to complete as part of a regular assessment. Each individual client is given a ten-question assessment (provided at the end of this chapter).

TABLE 3.4 FCM Questionnaire Scoring Table

		<i>Disengaged</i> (5–10)	<i>Distant</i> (11–15)	<i>Connected</i> (15–20)	<i>Enmeshed</i> (20–25)
F L E X I B I L I T Y	<i>Chaotic</i> (5–10)	UNPREDICTABLE Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	OVERINVOLVED Disorganized
	<i>Flexible</i> (10–15)	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Structured</i> (16–20)	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Rigid</i> (20–25)	UNINVOLVED Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	CONTROLLING Disorganized

Five questions for flexibility and five for connection allow the clinician to obtain a score which he/she/they can plot on the FCM table. The scores from each family member will cluster in one area of the table, showing the family's predominant relational dynamics. For example, if three family members land in *enmeshed-flexible* category, one lands in *balanced*, and one lands in *connected-chaotic*, the family dynamic is considered primarily *enmeshed-flexible*, suggesting a predominantly preoccupied family attachment script. The FCM questionnaire provides a method for exploring family dynamics that result in a suggested intergenerational attachment script. Byng-Hall (1995) attempted this type of categorization of family attachment scripts; however, the FG maps provide a structured method based on substantive research on couple and family typologies.

While the FCM describes the family attachment script, the individual attachment patterns may differ from the family attachment script. If one person's score for the FCM is different from the others on the FCM, as in the example above, they will tend to experience the family through a different attachment lens than most other members of the family. For another example, there might be a preoccupied member within a primarily dismissive family, which can be a result of unique childhood experiences. For instance, a child who is ill for an extended period of time may develop a more connected but unreliable attachment bond with the caregiver. If a complete IA assessment takes place, it may be possible to see how individuals in a family with one particular set of dynamics on the FCM style will have different IMMs depending on their experiences with their parents and others..

In understanding the FCM and its meaning, the element of time is important. Children can be exposed to one or more family systems depending on life experiences such as single parent families, extended family, and alternate kinship experiences. For many children/adolescents, family life can be variable over time and place. The FCM helps identify the attachment scripts at

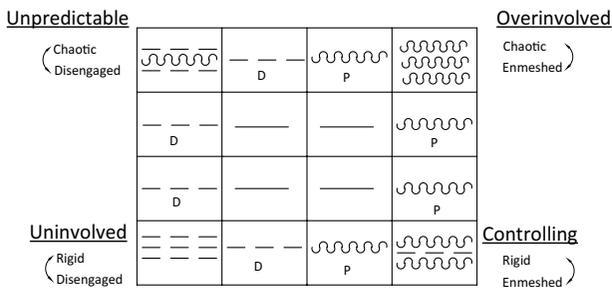


FIGURE 3.9 The Attachment Mapping Symbols: Family Attachment Styles. This figure depicts the predominant family attachment script, according to the FCM attachment typology identified.

play within the family system based on parenting patterns that reveal transmission of attachment styles from generation to generation. The Circumplex Model also highlights the value of role flexibility through time in family systems, which is important when developing couple and family timelines. Couple and family timelines will illuminate events and/or transitions that might have caused issues in flexibility for families. Finally, with communication as a moderating variable, we suggest that the various TxPs can adapt to these family styles.

Summing Up the Family Mapping Tools

In this section, we introduced the FCM, as a combination of traditional mapping from the Circumplex Model interwoven with new attachment-based terms for each of the unbalanced dimensions. As a result, we proposed that Disorganized IWM lead to the four very different types of disorganized family attachment scripts as we have described in the FCM. Consequently, the FCM is an essential part of the Case Formulation (described in the Focused Genogram Workbook, under contract). Creating Family Maps, both the basic Family Map and the FCM, provides the clinician with tools to examine relational patterns to establish goals, tasks, and bonds as part of the treatment plan.

As the practitioner begins to work with the client-system, attention to assessing family relationships, for both the contemporary family-of-origin and the intergenerational family system, is a way for practitioners to understand the emotional and behavioral strengths and deficits a client-system brings into the treatment setting. As clients bring their personal, relationship, and family stories into treatment, the therapist becomes an active participant with the client-system following themes that can be further explored using the FGs in this text.

The Importance of Ecomaps

From a social work framework, Hartman (1978) developed the Ecomap as a method to represent information about the family system and its relationship to outside resources, organizations, and agencies. Ecomaps are a popular tool in human service programs, as well as in settings that work with complex relational systems. Ecomaps are useful in identifying the ‘village’ around any given client-system. The quote ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ is often quoted, and the most likely source came from Toni Morrison who was quoted in *Essence*, July 1981: “I don’t think one parent can raise a child. I don’t think two parents can raise a child. You really need the whole village.”⁵ The Attachment-Focused Ecomap is a modified iteration of this commonly used mapping tool, specifically developed to complement the FG Tools.

Clinicians can choose to develop an Ecomap for an individual, couple, or family in order to map the ecosystemic influences on that domain in particular. For instance, a clinician could use an Ecomap to explore specific contextual resources that a couple can utilize in enriching their partnership. The contextual domain for FGs has been expanded in this text, because of the increasing diversity of life and challenges that environment and limitations of various resources place on family and relational systems. Culture heavily influences both interpersonal behavior and one’s sense of identity. Whether the client-system is an individual, couple(s), or family, the FG organizes the patterns and themes of

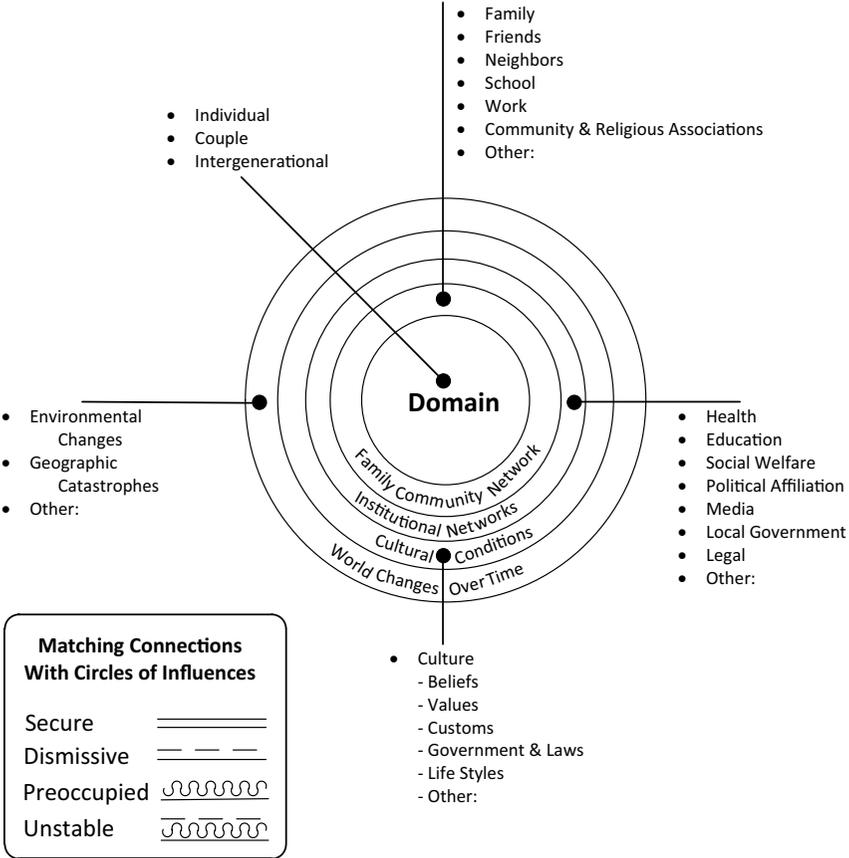


FIGURE 3.10 The Attachment-Focused Ecomap. In this figure, moving out from the inside of the circles to the outside of the concentric circles, each layer represents an aspect of the contextual domain. The family and community networks, institutional network, cultural conditions, and world changes over time are all circles, in which specific people, organizations, and conditions can be listed.

specific areas of life: culture, gender, sexuality, emotions, attachment patterns, work, health, addictions, violence, and so forth. Within each FG, we provide a series of questions that guide the clinician's attention to key themes and legacies that may be relevant for their life experience.

The Ecomap also reveals ways in which the client-system interacts with the community and maps out strengths, resources, and needs (McCormick, Stricklin, Nowak, & Rous, 2008). Philadelphia had been a mecca for developing and expanding family therapy practice to work with challenged children and their families. Speck (1967) and Speck and Attneave (1973) created a methodology for working for social and community networks that included 20–40 participants and several (3–5) family network therapists to search for ways to develop resources to work with family members struggling with extensive mental health needs. Compher (1989) began extending the work of various family therapy pioneers within the child welfare system in Philadelphia. Jones and Lindblad-Goldberg (2002), also in Philadelphia, established Ecosystemic Structural Family Therapy and Lindblad-Goldberg, and Northey (2013) further detailed the clinical and theoretical components of ESFT, a model now considered evidence based, which rests on the foundation of Structural Family Therapy pioneered by Minuchin (1974). These multidimensional family therapy models can also begin to use the IA and the Attachment Theory construct to deepen assessment of the client-system within the Contextual Domain. Kietabl (2012) emphasizes the importance of an attachment focus that respects cultural differences, and suggests that relational-cultural theory is a model that brings together attachment-based intervention based on these cultural values (Jordan, 2008).

Timeline Tools

The concept of Timelines is not new; however, we formulate them in a new way by including each of the domains. Viewing growth and development from individual, couple, and family perspectives gives the clinician a broad systemic method for exploring circular patterns, legacies, and challenges within the client-system. From a systemic view, Riegel (1976) explored the dialectics of development, and Lerner proposed (2011) in a similar way that development always involves change, but change will not always involve development; people are both products and producers of change at the other levels of the system. Timelines help the therapist attend to vulnerabilities as a result of life experiences, with particular attention to traumas at any and all levels.

Developmental and temporal information is often critical in developing and generating hypotheses regarding the presenting problem and complaints. While experiential and 'here-and-now' interventions affect change in the present, problem maintenance often results when historic issues are hidden and therefore unaddressed. Stanton (1992) suggests that the Timeline is a useful tool for answering the "why now?" question in assessing the presenting problem, as well as for discovery

and hypothesis generating, which we believe is a useful function of Timelines. Although there have been several attempts to integrate and develop Timeline genograms to facilitate the incorporation of temporal aspects of the client-system's problem experience into systemic assessment, these Timelines become unwieldy with too much detail, and thus have not received widespread clinical support. FG Timelines provide therapists a pragmatic way to include 'history,' which requires an attention to the various domains of the system (Friedman, Rohrbaugh, & Krakauer, 1988; Stanton, 1992). Throughout the chapters on specific FGs, illustrations of Timelines will be included. In this chapter, we provide an overview of the Timelines and their applications and usefulness for assessment.

The Timeline is like a temporal lens, which reveals patterns and events in the family at selected, or sectional, points in time. Timelines are simple to construct. External or contextual factors may be included on a Master Timeline, combined with one of the other three Timelines, or in a separate Timeline. Timelines provide a chronological view of the individual, the couple, and the family, as well as their contextual factors, thus creating the entire picture of the client-system's experience. Each of the four Timelines has a different focus, which will be discussed in the coming sections. Timelines for all the domains of the IA allow the clinician to explore the circular or reciprocal nature of one set of events across the different domains.

Individual Timeline

The Individual Timeline is a method to review both childhood and adult attachment experiences, noting important life events and transitions. Particular focus is given to the following:

1. Circumstances around birth—physical, emotional, and social
2. Developmental issues—cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and educational
3. Health and well-being—physical development and medical history
4. Family circumstances—traumas, tragedies, and life circumstances.

Figure 3.11 provides an example of an individual timeline for a client.

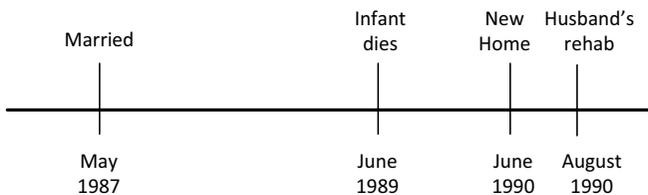


FIGURE 3.11 Ruth's Timeline. Timeline for Ruth's family system marks four significant events: her marriage, the loss of her infant, a new home, and her husband's entrance into an addictions rehab center.

This timeline included Ruth's husband's entrance into a three-month addictions treatment program one month after a move to a new home, which coincided with the one-year anniversary of her infant son's death. In this Timeline, her marriage (expected event), her infant's death (situational event), her husband's entrance into rehabilitation (situational event), and the move into a new home (expected event) all are noted. The therapist was able to focus the family's attention toward grieving for the infant and to discuss the implications it had for the husband's addiction. It also identified that the move triggered a depression in Ruth because it symbolized cleaning out the baby's room. Hence, Ruth became able to begin her own grieving process because she had finally cleaned out the baby's room.

There are numerous clinical situations where developing a Timeline may be useful. One example may be a client who entered therapy because she was concerned about her gender role within a new relationship. The Gender Timeline provides a way to note developmental issues related to gender role, gender identity, romance, and sexuality. The information gained from this Timeline might help the client understand why she might feel ambivalent about her gender role. For example, childhood and early adolescent experiences with gender-related thoughts, feelings, and behavioral experimentation can have a variety of effects depending on whether there is positive or negative feedback. If the clinician believes events or developmental issues are crucial, they are noted on a selected Timeline that is part of the FG (or a master Timeline, by preference). Dates are very useful in determining the overlapping of various individual and family stresses.

Child and Adolescent Development and the Individual Timeline

Assessing child and adolescent development and behavior is an important part of the FG process because each child's unique qualities and temperament interact with parental attachment patterns. In turn, these early attachment patterns have significant influence on the individual's adult attachment styles (Bernier & Dozer, 2003). Furthermore, the interaction of the parental IWM with the child's individualistic way of relating to the world will impact the child's response to parental caregiving, and ultimately, the developing child and adolescent attachment behaviors. Greenspan (1981, 1991, 2003) formulated the developmental structuralist approach to assess how a person organizes experience at each stage of development. He suggests that systematic observation of children should include attention to physical and neurological development, mood, human-relationship capacity, affects and anxiety, use of the environment, thematic development, and subjective reactions. Because children's issues and needs can be easily overlooked in the complicated process of systemic practice, assessing children's emotional problems that masquerade as physical ones is part of developing mental assessment. The reader is encouraged to become

knowledgeable about basic child development, childcare, parenting, and childhood attachment research.

The Relationship Experiences Timeline

The Relationship Experiences Timeline provides a longitudinal view of the current couple(s) relationship as well as significant couple transitions and crises, such as separations, affairs, or traumas. Previous intimate relationships of note are also marked for consideration. The events of the Relationship Experiences Timeline consider developmental and attachment events, and interact with the events of the Individual and Family Timelines as well.

Erikson's stages of adulthood (1963)⁶ serve as a solid (and well-known) framework for examining adult development and have been enhanced by the works of Gould (1978), Levinson (1978), and others. Arnett's (2000, 2007) recent work on emerging adulthood provides a lens for exploring unique aspects of those people who are growing up in the industrialized countries between the ages of 18 and 25 years. These stages are noted on the Timeline. Each stage is marked by periods of transition, and feelings of restlessness, stress, emergence of dysfunction, getting stuck in a stage when it is time to move forward, and the need for re-evaluation of life structure often accompany these periods of transition.

The IA has consistently attended to the couple's developmental life cycle (Monte, 1989; Weeks, 1989). Monte (1989) used the works of Berman and Lief (1975) and Carter and McGoldrick (1980) to develop a couple-focused developmental life cycle separate from children and parenting. The events of the Relationship Experiences Timeline influence and interact with the events of the Individual and Family Timelines as well.

The Relationship Experiences Timeline provides a tool for exploring the current couple(s) relationship and its history, as well as how previous couple relationships may be influencing the current relationship. The Relationship Experiences Timeline identifies early romantic (and sexual) experiences, which can be positive, negative, traumatic, or some combination. In addition, early experiences during childhood and adolescence, as well as those that develop in young adulthood and in later adulthood, may also play a role in the dynamics of the current relationship. In particular, the Relationship Experiences Timeline identifies and explores

1. Previous romantic and intimate relationships
2. How the current relationship(s) developed: how the partners met, their romantic experiences, and how and when commitment was established
3. Earlier dating, romantic, cohabitation, marriage, and divorce experiences
4. Current stage of the relationship and prospective developmental transitions, crises, and/or traumas.

Stages of Couple Partnerships and Marriages

Just like any other stage in human development, marriage and/or committed intimate partnerships can be viewed as a series of stages in which a couple(s) passes through. The couple relationship life cycle is much like the family life cycle stage perspectives, which are a subset of family development theory. Stage models for coupled relationships have not been a focus in much of the literature on couple relationships. Couple relationships provide a challenge for application of such stage models. However, there are a few that have explored intimate adult partner relationship development. Most notable is the works of Campbell (1990), Harrar and DeMaria (2007), Kovacs (2007), Monte (1989), and Scarf (1980, 2008, 2010). Some scholars have proposed that stages are not necessarily linear and may be dialectical, multidimensional, or curvilinear (D'Augelli, 1994; Kurdek, 1995; Weeks & Wright, 1979).

The stages of marriage⁷ theoretical framework emphasize the unique aspects of the adult love and marital/coupled life cycle. Some scholars have proposed that committed, intimate relationships occur in a series of linear stages (Clunis & Green, 1988; McWhirter & Mattison, 1984; Pelton & Hertlein, 2011). Therefore, they propose a progression of stages in which each stage has its own developmental tasks that can strengthen and fortify the relationship or diminish it if the tasks are not accomplished. For instance, the *7 Stages of Marriage* (Harrar & DeMaria, 2007) is a continuous developmental model based on the notion that marriage is a journey with predictable patterns of change over time, with gradual changes and transitions (Broderick & Blewitt, 2006; Elder, 1998). This model presumes an overarching lifespan model that allows for growth and integration (Kolb, 1984), and it is predominately a structural developmental model (Tamashiro, 1978) that identifies particular stages of marriage. These seven stages are (1) Passion, (2) Realization, (3) Rebellion, (4) Cooperation, (5) Reunion, (6) Completion (aka Contentment: Scarf, 2008), and (7) Explosion.

Blumer and Green (2011) offer a model of similar-gender partner(s) development based on their clinical experience and qualitative research with similar-gender couples (Blumer, 2008; Blumer & Murphy, 2011; Green, 2009; Green & Blumer, 2010). In their model, the individuals forming the couple/partnered relationship each bring their own individual cultural factors; attachment styles; levels of lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) identity development; and the managing of these respective identities through visibility management (Blumer & Green, 2011; Green & Blumer, 2013; Hertlein & Blumer, 2013). These individuals meet, and if they so choose, they form a partnered relationship, which may go through stages of maintenance and then conclusion and maybe back to forming and maintaining, and so on. Experiences as a similar-gender coupling are more similar to, than different from, those of differing-gender couples (Blumer & Murphy, 2011), with one big exception—their experiences as a couple that exists within what remains a predominantly heterosexual and

homophobic larger sociocultural context (Blumer, Green, Thomte, & Green, 2013). This external influence can put up barriers to couples forming in the first place (Bepko & Johnson, 2000), and it affects their degree of social and familial support, level of visibility as a couple, and their rights to have their relationships recognized legally. Thus, ultimately affecting their experiences of the stages of partnership formation (e.g., being “out” to date, finding people “out” to date), maintenance (e.g., parental rights), and conclusion (e.g., death and bereavement rights) (Blumer & Green, 2011; Green & Blumer, 2013).

The Family Timeline

The Family Timeline is founded in family development theory and attachment considerations. It is used to highlight expected and unanticipated life events for the contemporary family system. Expected events could include adult children leaving home, transitions to marriage, parenting, and aging. Unanticipated life events could include events such as physical illness, traumatic loss, climatological tragedies such as floods and tornadoes, political turmoil, and other geographical and social events (Arnett, 2000; Carter & McGoldrick, 1980; Duvall, 1977; Erikson, 1963; Walsh, 1982). External or contextual factors such as spiritual or religious events, cultural traditions, traumas, or outside influences can also be recorded on the Family Timeline.

Family development theory is a theoretical framework to describe the formation, maintenance, change, and dissolution of marital and family relations. Life cycle models and life span development underscore that stages overlap and that transitions are not discrete over time. Family life cycle theory describes stages as related to parenting and children, with a primary focus on transition from young adulthood to marriage/partnering and children moving through different stages.

Among family systems therapists, Satir (1967), in particular, encouraged close attention to the historical events taking place during pivotal life transitions. Through use of the family life chronology, she focused on the circumstances surrounding an individual’s birth, marriage, and the birth of their children. By graphing the timing of each child’s birth, coincidences of life events and anniversaries (both expected and traumatic), timing of major moves or migrations, and social, economic, and political events, the clinician obtains important developmental information about an individual and family system and gains a historical perspective not easily discerned on the traditional genogram.

It is important to note that families who experience multiple significant problems, such as economic, educational, and social disadvantages, frequently do not fit traditional family life cycle models well. Traumatic losses and intimate family violence can have particularly devastating effects on the family system. However, when these disadvantages or traumas are heavily present in a client-system, an additional Contextual Timeline is indicated.

Some examples include cases of immigrant or refugee families, families without permanent shelter, families of low socioeconomic status, those who depend on government assistance, individuals/families who have experienced multiple traumas, and those experiencing institutionalized racism. These particular life events or outside influences can create such sweeping changes in a client-system that they should be documented on their own Timeline, or at least given particular attention on selected Timelines as indicated.

Creating a Family Timeline is an important focus in early treatment in order for the clinician to have a developmental perspective of the client-system. The Family Timeline allows the practitioner to consider many aspects of family continuity and change, such as

- What generations are currently living? Were grandparents or great-grandparents known to the presenting client?
- What life cycle stages dominate the contemporary family system or are the various family units in various stages of family life?
- What are the current challenges identified by the current stage of family life for the presenting client-system and those affiliated with him/her/them?
- Are there current transitional challenges and/or stressors, such as health, financial, geographic and climate challenges, or military deployment or reunification?

Anniversaries of significant events also can be charted on the Timeline. Anniversary reactions refer to reliving the emotions associated with an event, usually traumatic, or re-enacting of some stressful life event, which can include disassociated experiences. Often, anniversary reactions occur around the time of deaths in the family or other traumatic losses or perceived losses, including such events as physical and mental illness. Anniversary reactions can vary based on the family member and can be quite complex to explore within a larger client-system. Some members of the family may develop an anniversary reaction to an event such as a death while others do not. Consequently, developmental and transitional events have different effects upon different individuals within the family. Because family life usually does not follow a smooth developmental path, Timelines provide a useful method to graph developmental and transitional events. For example, Masten and Coatsworth (1998) have identified specific developmental tasks that promote resilience for children and adolescents that can be identified on the individual Timeline. Similarly, Gladding (2009) emphasizes specific tasks required for an expected course of development.

The Timelines: A Summary

The FG Timelines (Individual, Relationship Experiences, Family, and Contextual if indicated) are essential tools for noting a sequence of events and connecting those events to current functioning. Though often nonlinear and discontinuous, development and attachment patterns are important to explore with respect to each unique client-system's cultural context and the events in their story.

Summary

This chapter describes the specific roles of the various Maps and Timelines as part of FGs. Each domain of the IA has corresponding maps and timelines to aid clinicians in collecting and organizing information about the client-system. The Maps allow the clinician to trace the attachment patterns, styles, and scripts throughout the domains and allow for greater understanding and awareness of attachment behaviors throughout the client-system. The IMM in particular depicts the childhood attachment patterns with parental and other relevant figures.

We then developed the CIM and FCM to detail how attachment has developed in the family of origin and plays out in the Couple Interaction Infinity Loop (the Loop) as observable emotions and behaviors in the consulting room. The CIM is derived from the individual attachment patterns depicted on the IMM. The CIM brings together (1) childhood attachment patterns with the inclusion of the IMM as part of the CIM, (2) adult attachment interaction patterns within the couple dynamic, and (3) the influence of contemporary family attachment scripts on the couple's relationship. The value of the CIM in couples therapy is that it not only describes the interacting adult attachment styles, but that it simultaneously helps the therapist determine which childhood attachment bonds are more primary in the couple relationship (i.e., either mother, father, or other). The FCM is also derived from the IMM and is an expanded version of the maps once used by family therapy pioneers such as Minuchin and Satir. The FCM combines Olson's Circumplex Model of family functioning with attachment theory, to deliver an assessment tool to describe family dynamics in terms of sixteen family attachment script typologies.

In addition to Maps, Timelines provide a useful temporal lens to enrich clinical hypotheses regarding individuals, couples, and family systems. The Individual, Relationship Experiences, Family, and Contextual Timelines provide information on development, trauma and abuse experiences, and other events. Timelines have historically been included in some genograms, but on a limited basis. By providing a temporal lens, Timelines enrich hypotheses formed about individual and family functioning.

The FG clinical tools, which include the FGs, the Maps, and the Timelines, provide a comprehensive assessment to guide clinical interventions and to focus the therapeutic alliance. Mapping family relationships and developing timelines are ways for practitioners to understand the emotional and behavioral strengths and deficits a client brings into the treatment setting. This process results in the sharing of information that is clinically relevant, and clients experience the attention to development and history in a positive way.

Notes

- 1 The IMM and the CIM are essential tools used in the Attachments Genogram.
- 2 The Case Formulation, the Basic Genogram and the Addictions Genogram are included in the forthcoming *Attachment-Based Genogram Workbook*.
- 3 We refer to these diagrams as the various Mapping tools that are used in developing FGs.
- 4 We acknowledge here and throughout the text that research related to ‘same gender matches’ related to attachment pattern has only been conducted with cisgender relational systems. We anticipate that future research will explore gender diverse relational systems.
- 5 Yale Book of Quotes attributes “it takes a village” only as far back as 1989.
- 6 We recognize that these stages of development have limitations as they are rooted in and often primarily applicable to white, middle-class, cisgender, monogamous, and heterosexual relational systems.
- 7 For purposes of assessment within the FG model the use of “marriage” includes long-term committed relationships and other forms when defined by the participants.

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APPENDIX 1

FAMILY CONNECTIONS MAP QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCORING

FCM Questionnaire Directions

The therapist can provide a copy of the questions or can simply interview the client(s). State the following: “These questions are to help you think about how close you felt to your mother, father, step parents, grandparents, or other adults in your life when you were growing up. Also think about if all family members felt close to each other or maybe some did and some didn’t. It can help to think about what happened if you moved or changed schools or had troubles in your life. Sometimes emotional problems for adults can interfere with them being connected to a child.”

Flexibility

Was there someone in charge of the family or were responsibilities shared?

1. Leadership is unclear
2. Usually shared
3. Generally shared
4. Sometimes shared
5. One person

How often do/did family members do the same things (roles) around the house?

1. Never
2. Sometimes
3. Often
4. Usually
5. Almost always



What are/were the rules like in your family?

1. Unclear and changing
2. Clear and flexible
3. Clear and structured
4. Clear and stable
5. Rules very clear and very stable

How is/was discipline of the children handled?

1. Very lenient
2. Lenient
3. Democratic
4. Somewhat strict
5. Very strict

How open is/was your family to making changes when they are necessary?

1. Very open
2. Generally open
3. Somewhat open
4. Seldom open
5. Not open

Connection

How close do/did you feel to other family members?

1. Not very close
2. Generally close
3. Close
4. Very close
5. Extremely close

How often does/did your family spend free time together?

1. Rarely or never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very often

How does/is your family balance separateness and togetherness?

1. Mainly separately
2. More separateness than togetherness
3. Equal separateness and togetherness
4. More togetherness than separateness
5. Mainly togetherness



How independent of or dependent on the family are/were family members?

1. Very independent
2. More independent than dependent
3. Equally independent than dependent
4. More dependent than independent
5. Very dependent

How loyal or trustworthy are/were family members to the family?

1. Not very loyal
2. Somewhat loyal
3. Generally loyal
4. Very loyal
5. Extremely loyal

Note: Family Connection Map Scoring:

Add the participant's answers in each category (Flexibility and Connection) to arrive at two separate totals between 5 and 25. Next, plot the scores on Table 3.4 FCM Questionnaire Scoring Table. Match the number for Connection with the column in which it is encompassed. Then match the number for Flexibility with the row in which it is encompassed. Follow the column down and the row across until they meet—this is the client-system's predominant attachment script.

TABLE 3.4 FCM Questionnaire Scoring Table

		<i>Disengaged</i> (5–10)	<i>Distant</i> (11–15)	<i>Connected</i> (15–20)	<i>Enmeshed</i> (20–25)
F L E X I B I L I T Y	<i>Chaotic</i> (5–10)	UNPREDICTABLE Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	OVERINVOLVED Disorganized
	<i>Flexible</i> (10–15)	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Structured</i> (16–20)	Dismissive	Secure	Secure	Preoccupied
	<i>Rigid</i> (20–25)	UNINVOLVED Disorganized	Dismissive	Preoccupied	CONTROLLING Disorganized
CONNECTION					

Family Connection Map Scoring:

Add the participant's answers in each category (Flexibility and Connection) to arrive at two separate totals between 5 and 25. Next, plot the scores on Table 3.4 FCM Questionnaire Scoring Table. Match the number for Connection with the column in which it is encompassed. Then match the number for Flexibility with the row in which it is encompassed. Follow the column down and the row across until they meet- this is the client-system's predominant attachment script.