



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



Chronologies

The Chronology provides a skeleton of key incidents. It is a 'sequential story' of significant events in a family's history. It will contribute to the practitioner's understanding of the immediate and cumulative impact of events and changes upon individuals within a family and therefore inform decision making.

Chronologies provide a key link in the chain of understanding needs/risks, including the need for protection from harm. Setting out significant events in sequential date order, they give a summary timeline of child and family circumstances, patterns of behaviour and trends in lifestyle that may greatly assist any assessment and analysis. They are a logical, methodical and systematic means of organising, merging and helping make sense of information. They also help to highlight gaps and omitted details that require further exploration, investigation & assessment". ([Completing social work chronologies – Practice Tool \(2022\)](#))

A chronology assists with how current events are understood in the context of historical information. It is a requirement of every open case in Children's Social Care.

A significant event is an incident that impacts upon a child's safety and welfare, circumstances or home environment. This will involve professional judgement based upon the child and family's individual circumstances.

Genograms

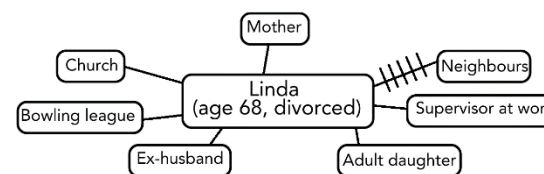
Genograms provide a historical picture of the family and the links across and between generations. It is a visual family mapping tool which allows professionals and family members to diagram a client's family history through at least three generations. Genograms illustrate family relationships to show parentage and birth order across the generations and capture in-depth details about family functioning and processes. They are similar to family trees in that they detail the composition of a family, who lives in and out of the household and other key supports such as a neighbour/lodger. ([Drawing-a-genogram.pdf \(rip.org.uk\)](#))

Ecomaps

Eco-maps locate the family in their current social context. They provide a visual map of the family's connections to the external world and show the social and personal relationships of an individual with his or her environment.

Once the eco-map is completed they can be used to assess whether the family's needs are being met from their basic needs for food, shelter and an income through to their need for belonging and social connectedness.

Example of an Ecomap



More information on how to compile an ecomap can be found [here](#)

Multi Agency Expectations

There is an expectation placed on all agencies to gather and record information on families. All agencies should keep their own chronology and be prepared to share information with the lead social worker to assist with the compiling of a multi-agency chronology. Other professionals should also gather and record details of other household members which includes accurate spellings of names, dates of birth and address details which can then be added to the social work genogram on file. Ecomaps can also be a useful tool to aid with the gathering of information that includes details of the quality of relationships and what other support systems the family rely on.

Culturagrams

A culturagram is an essential tool for social workers to use when assessing a family's cultural background. It gives the social worker an opportunity to understand their culture on an individual basis rather than generalizing them to the cultural group. It helps to understand that culture is such a broad concept and is different for everyone, even within the same cultural groups. The culturagram works from a strengths-based perspective. It is meant for the family and social worker to see the client's unique culture and empower them.

[The Social Work Podcast: Visual Assessment Tools: The Culturagram - Interview with Dr. Elaine Congress](#)