

OVERVIEW OF THE EXTENDED CONSULTATION & EXTENDED HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

This overview of the Extended Consultation course shows how medical consultations can be extended by using tools when needed and if needed, to adduce psychosocial perspectives by extending the history, examination, and investigations. Formulation of issues can be gleaned from the reason for encounter, complex/chaotic situations, and systemic issues in the patient’s circumstances. Based on the formulations on perpetuating, predisposing, precipitating, and protective factors, solutions based on problem, pattern, presence, and positive work can be included in the management of the patient’s life situations.

Keywords: Extended Consultation; Formulation; Integrated psycho-social work.

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OVERVIEW OF THE EXTENDED CONSULTATION SKILLS COURSE

The medical consultation is the keystone of a doctor-patient therapeutic encounter. The reason for the encounter or chief complaint is determined by the attending doctor and this is followed by a focused physical examination and, when needed, investigations of body images and/or body fluids. In the majority of encounters, information gleaned from this approach is adequate to diagnose the patient’s problem(s). Appropriate management based on medications, surgery, or physical therapies follows. Sometimes, the consultation might need to be extended using tools of enquiry to understand the landscape of the history, to evocate and to consider further psychosocial aspects that might be troubling the patient. These extended tools are tabulated in Table 1.

Unit 1 describes how the history is extended to include the family genogram with biological, social, and emotional links of the family members and the timeline of salient events.

Unit 2 describes how the physical examination is extended by using tools represented by the acronym “MINDS” to evocate psychosocial facts. More granular facts akin to detailed investigations of body images or fluids may be obtained by Socratic Inquiry, represented by the acronym “CAR-ACE”, i.e., clarifications, assumptions, reasons, alternatives, consequences, and relational experiencing.

Unit 3 describes how the totality of these data so adduced can be formulated in short phrases to extend the diagnoses in three ways; first, the 4 Ps of predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating, and protective factors of the reason for encounter; second, the S-BAR tools of the Summary, Background, Assessment, and Recommendations of complex or chaotic situations by the attending clinician; third, the ROADS tools for a systemic understanding of the

relationships, ordering, agency, and self-family identities of the psychosocial subsystems of individuals viewed through lens and filters. These formulation augments the diagnoses from biomedical data.

Unit 4 describes the problem approach in dealing with problem situations using behavioural techniques and cognitive techniques.

Unit 5 describes the pattern approach, which seeks to understand the patient’s patterns of coping and counsel the patient on new positive patterns of response to consider.

Unit 6 describes the presence approaches of humanistic approaches, existential approaches, reintegration (namely taking a wholeness approach), and experiential approaches. The presence work includes guided imagery and roleplaying to understand what the presence strategy is. Positive approach hinges on helping the patient use their signature strengths to lead three happy lives – noting the happy things in their daily lives, the positive engagement in their activities, and in this positive spirit be able to contribute productively to their community.

Table 1. Roadmap of the Extended Consultation

| Extended History | Extended Examination | Extended investigation |
|--|---|---|
| Genogram Timeline | Active listening to evoke the MIND | CAR-ACE Socratic Inquiry |
| Formulation | | |
| 4 Ps of Reasons for Encounter Predisposing, precipitating, protective | S-BAR of complex/chaotic situation Summary, Background, Assessment, Recommendation | ROADS to psycho-social sub- systems Relationship, Ordering, Agency, Development, Self-group identity |
| Management: Problem, Pattern, Presence, and Positive Work | | |
| 1-Problem Approach to Situations | | |
| Behavioural techniques | Cognitive Techniques | Problem Solving |
| AB Counter-Conditioning ABC Contingency Management | ABBCD Disputing Negative Automatic Thoughts Beliefs | Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-delimited |

| 2-Pattern Approach to Stories (EARs to Past, Present, and Future situations linked by theme) | | |
|--|--|---|
| EAR to past-present | EAR to present-future | |
| Examine salient problem situations and externalise if needed | Elicit Exceptions – unique outcome & Hopes Amplify Positives | Multi-stories & Multi-storied; Formed Pattern prospectively thicken to Problem Saturated Story (PSS); Alternative reality is Preferred Positive Story (PPS) |
| Align/Re-align (Deconstruct) | Rescale & Restart all over again | |
| Reconstruct to preferred stories | | |
| Reframe, Remember, Reauthor, and Retell | | |
| 3-Presence Approach to States in the Here & Now | | |
| Here in Space (HERE) | Now in Time (Mindfulness) | |
| Humanistic, Existential, Redintegration, and Experiential Perspectives | Attention to silence, Intention to stillness, Dissociation to simplicity | |
| 4-Positive Approach to Life, Situations, Stories, and States | | |
| SMART Life Hygiene | Pleasant, Engaged, and Meaningful Life | Positive spin to approaches: Problem Situation (Strength-based CBT), Pattern Stories (Solution Focus), and Presence (Flow) |
| Sleep, Meal, Activity, Relationships, and Toxic Avoidance | | |
| Source: <i>The Extended Consultation</i> Second Edition, 2024: Page vi | | |

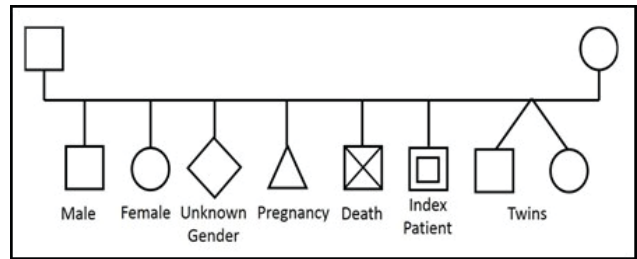
EXTENDING THE HISTORY

Two tools – genogram and timeline – record salient events in the patient’s history to provide perspective and context to the chief complaint and reason for encounter of the present encounter. The genogram and timeline can be represented in graphical, pictorial, and/or table forms.

Genogram

The genogram is one essential tool. It enables us at a glance to place our patient in a social unit, within a context, and with a relevant associated biopsychological background. When we analyse information gathered as genogram and timeline, we gain insight into our patient’s issues. We draw a genogram with information obtained using the extended relating and inquiry skills. Three sets of symbols are used in constructing the genogram, i.e., **basic** genogram symbols, links showing **social** relationships, and symbols showing the **emotional** relationships at play. These can be referenced at genopro.com. The genogram forms the starting point for analysing the patient’s life spaces.

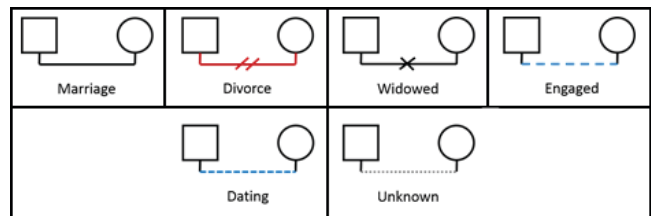
Figure 1. Genogram symbols



Footnote: Individuals are drawn from left to right in descending age in a genogram. We draw the eldest person on the left and the youngest person on the right. In **Figure 3.1**, the oldest child in the family is male, while the youngest in the family are the twins.

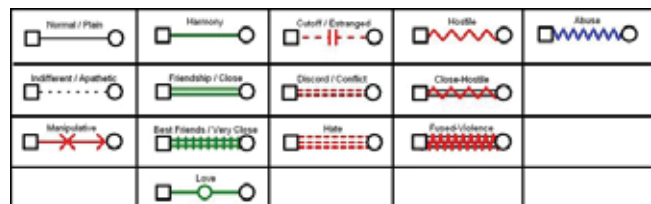
Source: *The Extended Consultation* 2024: Page 33

Figure 2: Family Genogram symbols (social relationships)



Source: *The Extended Consultation* 2024: Page 34

Figure 3. Family Genogram symbols (emotional relationships)



Source: *The Extended Consultation* 2024: Page 34

Timeline Analysis

Let us use the example of Dorothy to illustrate the timeline for significant events in life. A record of significant events at different times in her life can be drawn to analyse her life spaces. There are three ways to do this. See **Table 2, Figure 4**, and **Figure 6**.

The first option is to present a **chronological table** of significant events, with the first column indicating the date and the others a description of the events.

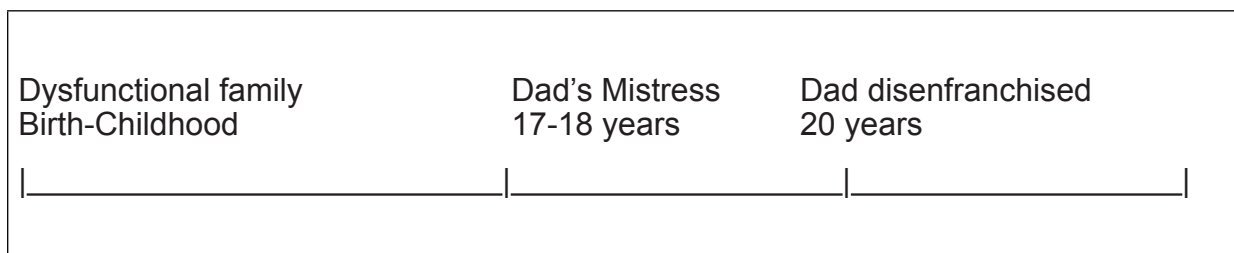
Table 2. Chronological Table of Significant Events in a Patient Named Dorothy

| (Date)/Age | Significant Events in Dorothy's Life |
|------------|---|
| Birth | Dad abused mum (his wife) in a fused-violent relationship. No physical violence towards Dorothy but she is emotionally abused. Indonesian maid as surrogate mother; distant relationship with biological mum. |
| 17 | Dad took a mistress from China after retiring and withdrawing CPF money at 55 years old. |
| 18 | Mistress left with dad's money. Increasing violence by dad against mum to get mum's money led to mum getting Personal Protective Order and moving to safe house. Dad's apparent suicide attempt, parents eventual reconciliation and Dad's vow to behave. |
| 19 | Dorothy commenced first-year university studies in Singapore. Mum still working and holding the purse-strings; demanding time and attention from dad. |
| 20 | Elder sister married and moved out. Only three left in the family, with weak/perverse executive subsystem. Dorothy manipulated by dad against mum (who now had control of the finances). Dorothy's academic performance deteriorated; she was in constant state of vigilance and anxiety. Dorothy attempted to assume role of parental child to stop parents' bickering. Unsuccessful attempt of being glue "blew her world asunder". |

Source: *The Extended Consultation*, 2024: Page 35 (Real patient with her name changed)

Another option is to have a timeline of the significant events with dates of (or age at) milestones indicated, and comments on the events:

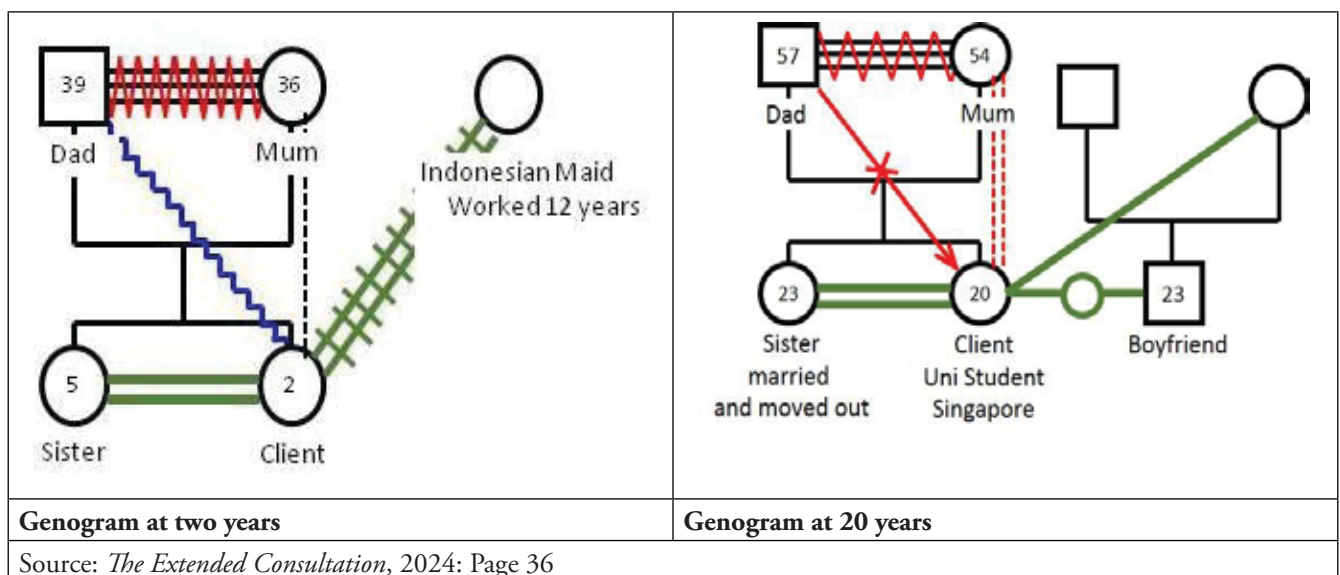
Figure 4. Timeline of Significant Events in Dorothy's Life



Source: *The Extended Consultation*, 2024: Page 36

Alternatively, we can draw multiple genograms at significant periods in her life. This has the advantage of showing the social and emotional relationships at sentinel periods. See **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Family Genogram at two years and 20 years



Source: *The Extended Consultation*, 2024: Page 36

REFERENCES

1. Corey G. Theory and Practice of Counselling and Psychotherapy. Brooks/Cole; 2013.
2. Prochaska J. An Eclectic and Integrative Approach. Transtheoretical Therapy. In Gurman AS, Messer SB. Essential Psychotherapies. 1995; The Guilford Press:408.

LEARNING POINTS

- **Extended history-taking records salient events in the patient's history.**
 - **The information provides perspective and context to the chief complaint and reason for encounter.**
 - **Two tools that are useful in the extended history are the genogram and timeline of salient events.**
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