

Review Article

Family Assessment

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Abstract: Family assessment is the collection of data about the composition of family and relationship among its members. It is a continuous process of evaluating patterns of interaction between family members relevant to the child health issue. The purpose of comprehensive family functional assessment is to provide the information necessary to determine the functioning of the family and how it contributes to child safety, permanency and wellbeing. The framework of the assessment of children in need and their families provide detailed guidance for gathering and analysing information about all children and their families. The framework refers to three dimensions for the assessment; child developmental needs, parenting capacity and family environmental factors. The features of high-quality assessment ensure equality of opportunity and respect for diversity including family structures, culture, religion and ethnic origin. Family assessment tools can be used to gather additional information about the family's functioning and can place strengths. Information about family can be illustrated by Genogram, Ecomap of family, Family life line and SCREEM. During the family assessment, the role of nurse is to gather information relating to the child developmental needs, child's safety, risk of maltreatment, ability to achieve permanency, parental protective capacity, progress toward health and wellbeing and parents' capacity to respond to those needs. Family assessment is more than simple medical care for a child with health issues. When the nurse meets the family, it is important to investigate how all the members of the family are affected by child health issue.

Keywords: Family assessment, Genogram, Ecomap, SCREEM.

INTRODUCTION

The assessment means gathering information from multiple sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what family knows, understand and can do for their child's future development [1]. Nurse obtain the assessment data while interacting with child and their families. It is an ongoing process to identifying and considering factors that impact children and families include child's safety, risk of maltreatment, ability to achieve permanency, progress toward health and wellbeing [2]. The best way to get to know a family is to conduct a formal family assessment. It is essential that the family assessment include components about the daily life of the family as well as the environment in which they live. Family assessment is a part of the evaluation but also can be used anytime to understand changes within each family. It also focus on the resources the family uses to support child development [3-6].

Definition of Family Assessment

It is a continuous process of collecting data about the family structure and relationships and interactions among the individual members [7].

Purpose of Family Assessment

Good assessments must be purposeful and timely. Nurse need to be clear about why they are carrying out assessments and what they wish to achieve. The various purpose of family assessment are:

- Gather important information about a child and family's health.

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- Understand the child's need.
- Decide whether the child is in need or is suffering or likely to suffer from significant harm.
- Provide support to address those needs to improve child's outcomes to make them safe.
- Identify and help to prevent a child's needs becoming more serious.
- Offer target support from universal services, family and parenting programmes.
- Identify the needs of family with multiple problems, methods of preventing them and promoting their health.
- Assess whether child's need are being met by the family or by any other services.
- Analyse the nature and level of any risks facing the child.
- Support the family to build on strengths.

Benefits of Family Assessment

- It facilitates family participation.
- It helps providers to understand the family's strengths, goals and priorities.
- It helps identify the family system and resources.
- It helps to reflect the voices and choices of the family.
- It reflects the family's needs so that intervention can be tailored to address those needs.

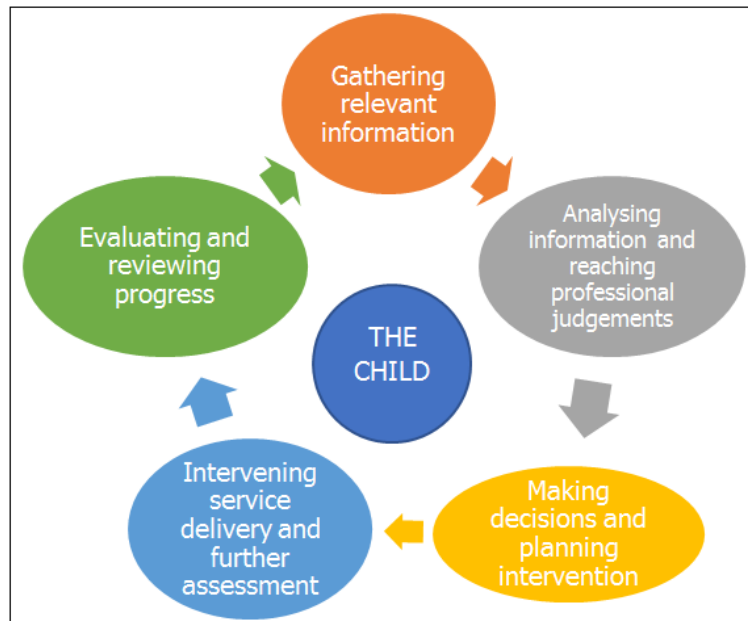
Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families

The frame work for the assessment of children in need and their families provides detailed guidance for gathering and analysing information about all children and their families. The frame work refers to three dimensions for the assessment.



The assessment process can be summarised as follows

- Gathering relevant information across all dimensions of the assessment triangle.
- Analysing the information and reaching professional judgements.
- Making decisions and planning interventions.
- Intervening service delivery and/or further assessment.
- Evaluating and reviewing progress.



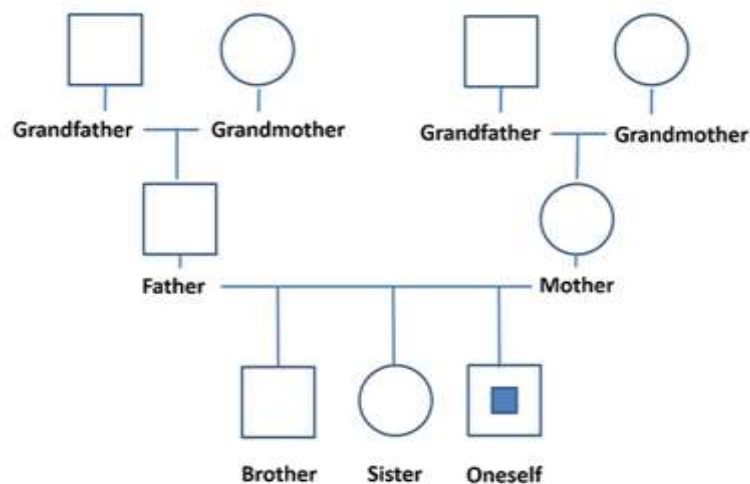
Features of High Quality Assessment

- It is child centred and informed by views of the child
- Decision are made in the best interest of the child
- It is built on strengths as well as identifying difficulties
- It ensures equality of opportunity and a respect for diversity including family structures, culture, religion and ethnic origin
- It is a continuous process, not a single event

FAMILY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

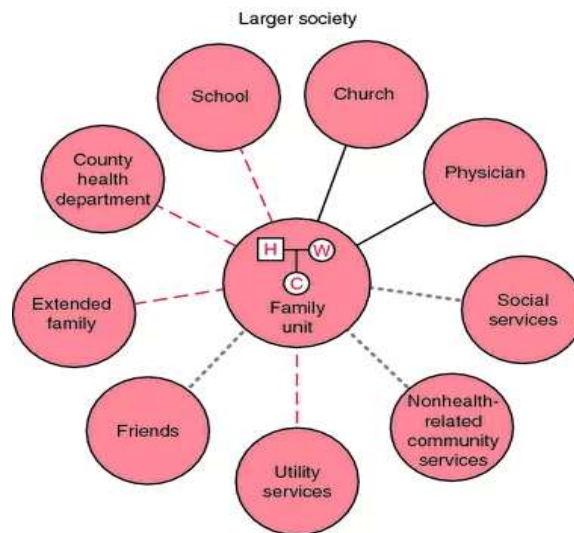
Genogram

A genogram is a format for drawing a family tree that records information about family member and their relationships over a period of time, usually three generations. It is a graphic picture of family history usually and over three or more generations.



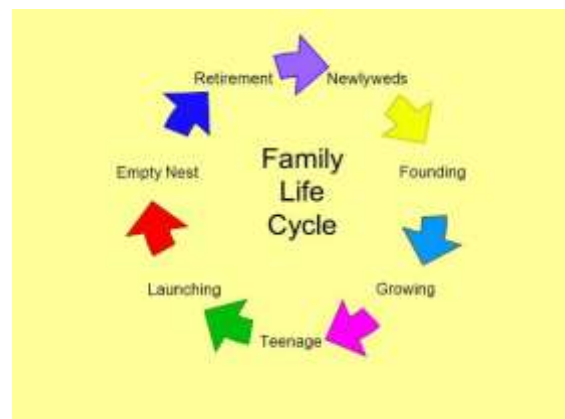
Ecomap

An ecomap is a visual representation of a family in relation to the community. It demonstrates the nature and quality of family relationship and what kind of resources or energies are going in and out of the family.



Family Life line

It is a tool that summarizes the history of the family, particularly the individual or the family’s significant experiences over a period of time in a chronologically-sequenced manner and includes how the family has coped with these stressful life events.



Screen

This is used to assess the family’s capacity to participate in provision of health care or to cope with various crises. This is an acronym that stands for social, cultural, religious, economic, educational and medical factors affecting health. These factors may be considered as resource or as pathology

	Resources	Pathology
Social	Social interaction is evident among family members.	The family is socially <u>isolated</u> from extra familial groups
Cultural	Cultural pride or satisfaction can be identified.	The family has feelings of cultural-ethnic <u>inferiority</u> or shame.
Religion	Religion offers satisfying spiritual experiences.	Dogma and rituals are so <u>rigid</u> that they limit the family’s problem solving capacity.
Economic	ability to meet the economic demands of normal life events and illness.	Financial problems make it <u>difficult for the family to meet</u> monetary demands of crisis or illness.
Education	Education of the family members is adequate to allow members to solve or comprehend most of the problems	Limit the ability of family members to <u>comprehend the problem or recommended solution.</u>
Medical	Medical care is available through channels that are easily established	<u>Inaccessible and under utilized .</u>

A thorough family assessment is an ongoing process throughout the life of the case and addresses the following questions.

- What are the family's strengths and needs that affect safety, permanency, or well-being?
- What is the child's current living situation with regard to safety and stability? Was a safety plan developed, and what has been the family's response to this plan?
- How do family members perceive their conditions, problems, and strengths?
- What is the parent's or caregiver's level of readiness for change? What is their motivation and capacity to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being?
- What is currently known about the parent or caregiver's history? Are there clues that further information about the past will help to explain the parent or caregiver's current functioning?
- What is known about the family's social support network? Who else is supporting the family and who will be available on an ongoing basis for the family to rely on?
- Are there any behavioural symptoms observed in the child? How has the child functioned in school and in social relationships? Who else may have information about any behavioural or emotional concerns?
- Have problems been identified that may need further examination or evaluation, such as drug or alcohol problems, psychiatric or psychological problems, domestic violence, or health needs?
- Has the child experienced any trauma as a result of his or her maltreatment and, if so, what specific services may be required to address it?
- What further information about the family will help provide an understanding of the risk and protective factors related to the potential of continued maltreatment?

Role of Nurse in Family Assessment

During the family assessment, the role of nurse is to gather information relating to

- Nurses notes down, how the family interacts with her and with each other.
- Nurse become vigilant to find out signs of family disunity, poor communication, inflexibility and animosity between the adults.
- Nurse has to coordinate the involvement of other professionals in the process like speech and language therapists, child psychologists and drug and alcohol counsellors.
- Assess the child's development needs which include self-care skills, social presentation, family and social relationships, identify emotional and behavioural development, education and health.
- Assess the parent's capacity to respond to those needs such as basic care, ensuring safety, emotional warmth, stimulation, guidance and boundaries and stability.

CONCLUSION

It is impossible for the nurse to be familiar with the attitudes and practices of family members, the values, ideas, religious beliefs, traditions and goals of individuals and family may differ. So, the nurse should understand the concept of culture and its impact on assessment. The assessment should be strength based, culturally sensitive, individualized and developed in partnership with the family.

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