

## Family Network Checklist

Some professional helpers find it useful to diagram each client's family in a pictorial that illustrates both family history and current family relationships. Instructions for doing such pictorials (known as genograms) can be found on the Internet (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genogram>). Such information is helpful in predicting genetic and social vulnerability for alcohol and other drug problems, the range of potential recovery sabotage or support, and the presence of any preferred pathways for resolving alcohol and other drug problems.

For purposes of assessment, it is helpful to identify if there is a family history of alcohol and other drug problems, and, if so, the density and intensity of these problems. The chart on the following page can serve as a quick assessment checklist. Here are the instructions on how to use it.

1. Have the client write the names of their relatives to the left of the first box marked Relationship.
2. Have the client place a check mark under the heading A for anyone who ever experienced any problems related to his or her consumption of alcohol.
3. Have the client place a checkmark under the heading T for any relative who was a daily smoker.
4. Have the client place a check mark under the heading D for anyone who ever experienced any problems related to his or her consumption of drugs other than alcohol or tobacco.
5. Have the client place a check mark under the Health column for anyone whose alcohol, tobacco or other drug use created health problems. Circle the check mark of anyone whose death was alcohol, tobacco or drug-related.
6. Have the client place a check mark under the Relationship column for anyone whose alcohol, tobacco or other drug use created relationship problems.
7. Have the client place a check mark under the Work column for anyone whose alcohol, tobacco or other drug use created problems related to work.
8. Have the client place a check mark under the Legal column for anyone whose alcohol, tobacco or other drug use resulted in legal problems such as arrest or incarceration.
9. Have the client place a check mark under the Other column for anyone whose alcohol, tobacco or other drug use created other problems in his or her life.

The purpose of the exercise is to look at the number of persons in the family tree with ATOD-related problems and to ascertain the nature and severity of those problems. The goal is not so much for the helping professional to interpret the chart as it is to have the client interpret what vulnerabilities he or she may have given this family tree. Genetic research has consistently noted that persons with family histories of alcohol and other drug problems have four to five times the risk of developing a substance use disorder in their lifetime compared to persons who have no family history of such problems. It is also helpful to ask the eventual outcome for each person identified as having an alcohol or other drug problem, particularly if there is a history of addiction recovery in the family tree.

