

## VISUAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Visual assessment tools can be helpful during the assessment phase. Deployment narrative maps, for example, can be used. The goal with these tools is to have family members tell their stories about deployment individually and describe how it brought about concerns, stresses, and challenges [82]. Any family challenges identified in the stories are graphically depicted on a timeline. After everyone completes their narrative, all family members are brought into a family session to review the deployment narrative maps and see how certain events triggered stress or reactions. Not only can narrative maps be used as an assessment tool but they can instigate greater communication and foster problem-solving strategies [82].

Genograms are another useful visual assessment tool that can be employed to help families see intergenerational transmissions of trauma, mental health issues, emotional disturbances, behavioral problems, and patterns of coping [39]. Risk factors and protective factors/strengths can be identified, which can be empowering for families [39]. Given the unique needs and circumstances of military families, military genograms are tailored to address specific challenges. For example, the following assessment questions may be used to generate a military genogram [39]:

- What is the soldier's history of military service, rank, length of service, honors, discharge status, and nature of discharge?
- What is the immediate family's attitude toward the military?
- What is the extended family's attitude toward the military?
- What is the family's cultural attitude toward military service? Attitude toward war?
- Was the military family member drafted or did they volunteer?
- Has the service member served during a time of war? If so, when? What war(s)?
- Has the military family member ever experienced wartime trauma? If so, what? Has it affected their functioning? If so, how?
- Has the service member experienced and/or witnessed casualties, injuries, disabilities, or prisoners of war?
- Did the service member lose friends or comrades in a war? If so, how many? What were the circumstances?
- What is the level of self-disclosure about the military experiences for the service member?
- What is the attitude toward mental health treatment or emotional illness?
- Does the service member have a drinking/drug use problem? If so, was it a problem prior to deployment?
- Does the service member use military-extended networks or Veterans Affairs services?
- What was the service member's role prior to deployment? Has it changed post-deployment?
- What are the family members' political affiliations?
- Does the family live on or off base?
- What is the current sociopolitical climate and how does it impact the family?

A military genogram is meant to be used within a solution-focused framework; instead of focusing on problems and barriers, the goal is to identify strengths and protective mechanisms and to generate concrete, specific, and workable tasks for the military member and family members to work toward [39].