

Simplified Relationship Mapping

Purpose

To provide a visual display of relationships between ideas, people or items to be changed, also known as a problem analysis. Relationship mapping provides a simple way to view connections between people or ideas. Participants can view the strength of relationships and make decisions on how to move forward.

How To

1. Decide what the goal of the mapping exercise is such as people connections, connections of issues or problems, connections between people to issues, etc.
2. On a large piece of paper draw concentric circles with space in the center for the theme card (described in the next step). Each circle represents the proximity of a relationship to the theme. The closer the circles represent a closer or stronger relationship.
3. On a note card, write the central issue/person (theme card).
4. Instruct participants to brainstorm who/what they know on the central issue/person(s).
5. Have participants write on notecards or sticky notes relevant items from their brainstorm.
6. Have participants place their cards on the large piece of paper about the strength of items on the theme card.
7. Review each card and proximity choices as a group, allowing for questions and clarifications.
8. Those items that are closest to the theme card are those with the strongest relationship.

Next Steps

The following are two examples of next steps as they are dependent on the theme card. When the theme card is an issue such as teen pregnancy, and the brainstorm cards are things that influence the theme card. The next steps would include either verifying connection with data or brainstorming actions to address the strongest connections. When a theme card is a person or position, then the brainstorm cards are who they know and how they are connected. The next steps are to determine who has the strongest connection to the person/position and solidify commitment to connect, contact or facilitate engagement.

Example

