

Tools for Discovering Connections

Below are other tools associated with the Family Finding model. The information listed focuses on work with children/youth; however, this information is research-based and readily translates to efforts made with caregivers to find connections.

Connectedness Mapping

Created by child, adolescent and family psychiatrist David Arredondo, Connectedness Mapping is part of the Family Finding Model, assists individuals in finding connections in the lives of youth, processing out how individuals are connected to the youth, and discussing the supports that those individuals offer the youth. Below, you will find the fundamental information you need to create a Connectedness Map as well as a few general considerations.

The Connectedness Map is a useful tool during the assessment phase. It is an excellent way for a child, family and social worker to identify people who are important to them. This tool can also establish a visually-compelling image of loneliness for young people separated from consistent adult relationships over time, stemming from multiple moves in out of home care as well as long-term separation from family members. Connectedness Maps are a very effective perspective-blending exercise for team members. Connectedness Mapping with the child or young person is never done without the parents' and/or social workers' permission.

In rare situations, children or youth may present with acute suicidality, which may be aggravated by acknowledging their profound loneliness with no clear, short-term solution. Working with the child or youth to stabilize this serious condition will be required prior to assessing connectedness with them. Despite this, Connectedness Mapping can still be done with parent(s), social workers, and other adult team members.

Elements of Connectedness:

- **Heart Connectedness** – Who do you love? Who loves you? Who do you want to love you? Who do you want to be loved by?
- **Mind Connectedness** – Who do you teach? Who do you learn from? What are you learning? What do you think about?
- **Body Connectedness** – Who shares your blood? Who provides you with food and shelter?
- **Soul Connectedness** – What are your passions? Who shares those with you? Who has similar values as yours?
- **Dotted Lines** – Represent relationships known but refer to individuals with whom the child/youth feels no connection.
- **Arrows** – No arrows = no perceived connections. Arrow one-way = connection felt for individual but is not reciprocated. Two arrows mean reciprocated connection.

In Connectedness Mapping:

- **Red** is for the heart that loves
- **Green** is for the fertile and creative mind
- **Blue** is for the blood that runs in the body
- **Yellow** is for the light of the soul/larger meaning

Source: Arredondo, David. MD. (October 21, 2009).

Tools for Discovering Connections (cont'd)

Connectedness Map

Generation	Biological Connections	Non-Biological Connections
Great-Grandparent's		
Grandparent's		
Parent's		
Sibling's		
Peer's		

Tools for Discovering Connections (cont'd)

Historical Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams:

Described in Brigitte De Lay's *Mobility Mapping and Flow Diagrams: Tools for Family Tracing and Social Reintegration Work with Separated Children*, mobility maps and flow diagrams are tools that field workers have used to reunify children and families separated following armed conflicts and natural disasters in areas like Rwanda.

- Mobility maps are simple visual aids to help workers learn about social and economic relationships, activities, and memories that children associate with specific locations.
- Flow diagrams outline a family's social safety network through question about who the family members go to when problems arise.

These techniques have been crucial in Rwanda for tracing children's families and reuniting dispersed members. (California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS), (October 27, 2009).

Historical Mobility Mapping Sessions (De Lay, Brigitte, M.S.W., (2003)).

The drawing exercise requires nothing more than colored markers, flipchart paper, and a social worker's skills. If the individual's first language is not English, or if the individual has other special needs, it may be necessary to secure the appropriate interpreter or other services. These issues must not serve as barriers to this opportunity to engage a child and others to find connections. The steps to facilitate a session follow:

1. Preferably in a comfortable room that allows for the posting of no more than six pieces of flipchart paper side-by-side, after establishing a rapport with the child, explain that you would like to learn more about him or her to help trace family and relatives. Explain that one way to do this is to draw pictures (maps) of where the child lived before the separation. You can show other children's maps or present your own drawing as an example.
2. Post the flipchart papers side-by-side. Provide the child the colored markers. Draw a small house in the middle of the paper. (The house can be drawn by the child or by the social worker.). Whenever possible, the child should draw the pictures, as this reinforces their need to picture in their minds what they plan to draw. This in turn assists in making other connections. Explain that this represents his or her house. Now ask the child to draw all the places around the house that he or she used to go to. (Depending on a child's age and level of understanding at the time this exercise is being carried out, it may be better to ask a child to draw a "picture" rather than a "map" because the latter may be an unfamiliar concept. The picture becomes a map in essence.)
3. After verifying that the child understands the exercise, allow him or her time to draw without interruption. Be patient and encouraging. This exercise can take up to an hour, depending on the level of detail in the drawing.
4. Once the child finishes, ask about all the places on the map. If the child is literate, ask him or her to label each place; if the child is not literate, label the places for him or her. Now ask if the child has forgotten any place or person. (Use probing questions such as "Did you ever visit a neighboring town?" "Where did you play with friends?" "Where did your father go to work?" Ask the child to add each place and person to the map as they are mentioned. (At any time in the exercise, a child may mention a place not originally drawn on the map. Always allow the child time to add each new place or person. This activity should not be rushed.)
5. Once the drawing is finished, ask the child to mark all the places that he or she liked best with a particular color of pencil or sticker.

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6. Compliment the child on his or her effort.
7. It is now time to interview. Begin by explaining to the child that you would like to learn more about his or her drawing and that you would like to ask some questions. Ask if it is all right for you to write down what the child says – or if the child can write the information, have them capture the information.
8. Begin with the best-liked places that the child listed. Following is a short, recommended discussion guide:
 - a. “Tell me about this place. Why do you like it?”
 - b. “What did you do there?” (Ask probing questions for information about activities, the reason for visits, etc.)
 - c. “Who did you visit there?” (Ask probing questions for information about relationships, nicknames, etc.)
 - d. “How often did you visit this place?” (Determine whether it was frequently, sometimes, or rarely.)
 - e. “What is your favorite memory of this place?” (Note: In conducting an interview, the interviewer can follow the above guide but should not be restricted by it. Follow-up questions are encouraged. The point is to help the child talk about any information that may be useful for tracing efforts.)
9. Repeat step 8 with all other places indicated on the map.
10. When the child/youth completes the drawing, ask the child/youth to identify anyone with whom the child/youth felt safe and connected by circling the individual(s) with a red marker (heart connection). Then, by circling with a different color marker, ask the child to identify anyone with whom the child/youth felt unsafe.
11. Ask the child/youth to look at their entire drawing and write on the drawing the five things that he/she feels that they need most right now in their life. Once the child/youth has identified the five, ask the child/youth to put them in the order of their importance to them. Doing so, especially with adolescent children, assists in creating a child/youth-centered plan and assists everyone in discovering what the child/youth values, why, and what can be done to support, if appropriate, what the child/youth values.
12. When completed, provide positive feedback to the child/youth for their memory, their drawing capability, their resourcefulness, their successes, and their strengths, as shown through the story they drew.
13. When the session completes, review with the child what you have learned from the map and explain how this information might be used for finding family and case planning. Thank the child for his/her time.
14. When possible, make a copy of the map for the child. Maps can be revisited several times, and the child can be re-interviewed if the social worker feels that more information can be obtained.

Tools for Discovering Connections (cont'd)

Other Thoughts:

Flow Diagramming Sessions (De Lay, Brigette, M.S.W., (2003)).

A flow diagram identifies the chain of resource persons approached when the household member or the child to be reintegrated is in need. Flow diagrams, more focused than maps, identify specific avenues for social support when the individual or household needs medical care, money, or moral support. The diagrams, of which a basic example appears on the following page, are an excellent way to verify and explore in greater depth the information gathered during the mobility map exercise.

Health	Money	Emotions
<i>Name/Contact Info</i>	<i>Name/Contact Info</i>	<i>Name/Contact Info</i>
<i>Name/Contact Info</i>	<i>Name/Contact Info</i>	<i>Name/Contact Info</i>

The steps associated with facilitating a session are described as follows:

1. After establishing a rapport with the child or family member, then explain that the purpose of the exercise is to help you understand to whom the individual turns for help when there is a concern. Often, people turn to different individuals for different types of concerns. For that reason, you will address three areas of need: money, health, and emotional support.
2. Begin with health concerns. Ask the individual to whom they go for help when they have a health concern. Write that name at the top of a piece of flipchart paper.
3. Proceed by asking to whom the individual would turn if the person listed were unable to help. Continue this line of questioning, writing the names in descending order, until the individual's options are exhausted.
4. Next, ask whom the individual would approach when financial issues arise. Once again, write this name down and then exhaust other options for assistance.
5. Conduct the same line of exhaustive questioning for emotional (or moral) support.

During the interview, you may ask probing questions such as "What type of support is provided?" "Why do you approach certain people?" "What are some past examples of support?"

Flow diagrams are an excellent complement to mobility maps and can often identify or confirm the importance of resource persons. In some cases, a new individual may be mentioned and should be added to the mobility map of which the work might be based.

