Using Eco-Mapping to Understand Family Strengths and Resources

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What Is An Eco-map?

- A snapshot in time of a family’s informal and formal supports.
- It shows the links a family has to the larger social system including:
  - Informal supports: friends, extended family members
  - Formal supports: early intervention providers, service agencies
Let’s Try It
Using the sample case study...

- Draw a circle in the center of the page with the reporter’s name in it.
- Add circles for each person / agency the reporter names.
- For each person / agency (other than the reporter), list:
  - R = the relationship to the support person (e.g., mother)
  - S = the type of support provided (e.g., emotional, financial)
  - F = the frequency of support (e.g., 2 x / week)
- Draw arrows between the circles to show whether the relationship is beneficial to one or both people. For example:
  - Two way arrows between reporter and mother
  - One way arrow from reporter to child
Your Thoughts…

- What do you think families would like about the eco-mapping process?
- What do you think families would NOT like about the eco-mapping process?
- What would you like about using the eco-mapping process?
- What would you NOT like about using the eco-mapping process?
History of the Eco-Map

- Developed in 1975 by sociologist Ann Hartman to help workers in public child welfare practice
- Long history of use in social sciences
- Some use in intervention & educational settings
- Useful with multiple audiences/clients/families
How Has It Been Used?

- To gain initial information
- To measure progress across time
- To describe change in relationships between family members
- To describe or measure change in relationships, perceptions, and/or satisfaction with service providers and agencies
Other Ways to Use Eco-Mapping

National Early Childhood Transition Center Study
- To build rapport
- Provide a picture of family supports
- Support / confirm outcomes from other tools
  - IFSP
  - Family assessment tools
- To give something meaningful to research participants

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**Example A: Few Supports**

- **Anna:**
  - **R:** Speech Therapist
  - **S:** Emotional Therapy
  - **F:** One time / week

- **Danny:**
  - **R:** Mother
  - **S:** All
  - **F:** Every day

- **Liz:**
  - **R:** Mother
  - **S:** All
  - **F:** Every day

- **Joe:**
  - **R:** Father
  - **S:** Financial
  - **F:** One time / week

- **Tiffany:**
  - **R:** Developmental Therapist
  - **S:** Therapy, Friendship
  - **F:** One time / week

- **Jane:**
  - **R:** Occupational Therapist
  - **S:** Therapy
  - **F:** One time / week
Example B: Many Supports
What Are Some Advantages to Using an Eco-Map?

Advantages

- Ice breaker--builds rapport
- Respondent takes the lead
- Visual representation
- Draws out shy respondents
- Others?
What Are Some Disadvantages to Using an Eco-Map?

Disadvantages

- Respondents with few supports may feel uncomfortable
- Can be difficult to read
- Shy respondents may not open up
- Others?
How Can I Use This In My Job / Life?

- To build rapport with families
- To evaluate program effectiveness & satisfaction
- To measure change / progress (Pre/Post)
- To facilitate transition
We’d Like Your Help!

- Tell Us Your Transition Stories
Have Questions? We Have Answers!
Thank You!