

## Mind-mapping

---

"Mind-mapping" is a tool for assisting and enhancing many of the styles of thinking and learning that we are required to do in our work. Though it has primarily been used as a learning skills tool, we have developed it as a information gathering tool, where ideas can be elicited and then utilized to further develop a community building solution focused process.



### How to do a Map

1. Print in capitals for ease of reading and to encourage you to keep the points brief.
2. Use unlined paper since the presence of lines on paper may hinder a non-linear process. (If you must use lined paper turn it so the lines are vertical).
3. Use paper with no previous words on it.
4. Write the main idea in the middle of the page - it may be a word, a phrase, or a couple juxtaposed ideas.
5. Place related ideas, words or phrases around the main ideas using lines that radiate out from the central idea like spokes. When you get a new idea start again with a new spoke from the center.
6. Go quickly, with out pausing-try to keep up the flow of ideas. If you are using this in a group process, do not allow the members to "process" the ideas, to make comments or to explain, just get the ideas on the paper. Do not stop to decide where ideas should go. (Ordering and analyzing are "linear" activities and will disrupt the Mapping process).
7. Write down everything that is thought of without judging or editing - this disrupts the flow.
8. You may want to use color coding to group sections of the Map.
9. One technique of mind-mapping is to then further explore each idea with related ideas branching out from those ideas.



### Advantages of Mapping

Mapping is sometimes seen as a form of brainstorming. Both of these techniques work to encourage the generation of new materials, such as different interpretations and viewpoints. However, Mapping relies less on random input and more on providing opportunities for fitting ideas together. In this format no ideas take precedence and all ideas are connected to the center.

Here are some advantages that will become clearer to you as you experience the mapping process:

1. It clearly defines the central idea by positioning it in the center of the page.
2. It helps you to clearly indicate the relative importance of each idea.
3. It assists in seeing the 'links' among the key ideas more easily.
4. It positions all your basic information on one page.
5. As a result of the above it assists with making recall and review more efficient.
6. You can add new information with out messy scratching out or squeezing in.
7. Because it does not lock the information into specific positions it allows you to see the information in different ways, from different points of view.
8. You can begin to see complex relationships among ideas.
9. It provides a foundation for questioning, encourages discovery and creativity by showing up contradictions, paradoxes and gaps in material.
10. Mind-mapping is a relatively easy technique to teach and to implement. For this reason it can be utilized quickly, with different groups of people, and produces abundant information.

**Chris Leischner, M.S.W., R.S.W.**

Example:

