Mapping the Conflict

Objectives:	To learn the technique of mapping.
	To understand how mapping can be applied in a range of settings and for many purposes.
Session Times:	2 hours: Sections A–E
	1 hour: Sections A–E Abbreviated
Essential Background:	The Win/Win Approach.
	Before teaching this section for the first time trainers would be helped by reading the chapter on Mapping in **Everyone Can Win**, *2nd edition (Australia: Simon & Schuster (Australia) P/L, 2006)* and doing some sample maps on issues relevant to their own lives.

Mapping the Conflict

What are the Needs? What are the Concerns?

A. Introduction to Mapping

(20 minutes)

Question: **Why do we use a map in everyday life?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses. In addition, you might consider:*

- to find our way

- to work out where we are

- to find the shortest route

- to get an overall picture.

We can use a map for similar purposes in conflict: to help us see the complete picture and to find our way towards solutions that will meet many of the needs of all participants.

Imagine hovering above the terrain in a helicopter, being able to see across the landscape. From this perspective we can see equally well, our own backyard and those of others.

Mapping a conflict gives us this same bird's eye view. It is a way of graphically representing a problem, showing everyone's perspectives on it, and getting sufficient distance to see issues and ideas which may otherwise go unnoticed.

We can map a conflict by ourselves, with another, or with a group, on any occasion when we want greater clarity. Usually, we do a map on paper. Writing down all the aspects can help us to see a situation more clearly. We can also do a mental map. Whenever conflict occurs, this skill is invaluable in helping us to focus on everyone's needs and can guide our response to the situation.

Question: **Think of a recent or current conflict to which it is difficult to find any solution. What's making it difficult?**

Discussion: *Ask participants to jot down and share their responses. In addition, you might consider:*

- hard to know exactly what the problem is

- very complex

- lots of people involved

- lack of resources to solve it.

Mapping, and the accompanying skill of Designing Options, can help us to deal with these difficulties.

To show how a map works we need a conflict to use as an example:

- *use a hypothetical example, such as the one mapped in this chapter; on workload division in a busy office that closely supports the company's sales team or*

- *ask the group for examples. Try to select one that seems fairly straightforward, current and as yet unsolved.*

Therefore select one of the following two approaches:

Approach 1

Use the hypothetical or group example to show the steps for doing a map. Do this briefly, not completing each step, but showing instead how it is done. Then, have the group form into small groups of five or six, each group doing a map on an issue the group selects. Move between the groups, offering assistance where needed. (Ensure that you have sufficient butcher's paper and pens for each small group.)

Approach 2

If time is limited, or the group is small, do one map only with the entire group. Use an example to show the steps in their entirety.

B. The Steps of Mapping

(30–60 minutes)

STEP 1. DEFINING THE ISSUE

Using a large piece of paper, draw a circle in the middle of the page in which to write the issue.

In defining the issue, take care not to identify a person as the problem.

Rather label the issue in broad, objective terms, in a way that all parties to the conflict would agree.

For example:

- not "employee's laziness" but "workload division"

- not "teenagers leaving their rooms in a mess" but "household chores".

Aim for a clear idea of the issue to be mapped, but don't worry if it's not exactly right. Sometimes the process of mapping itself clarifies the issue. Keep it open-ended and objective to provide a good starting point.

Question: **Using our example, what could we identify as the issue?**

Discussion: *Explore with participants what would be an appropriate definition of the issue. Then draw on the board:*

e.g.

```
    OFFICE
   WORKLOAD
   DIVISION
```
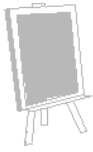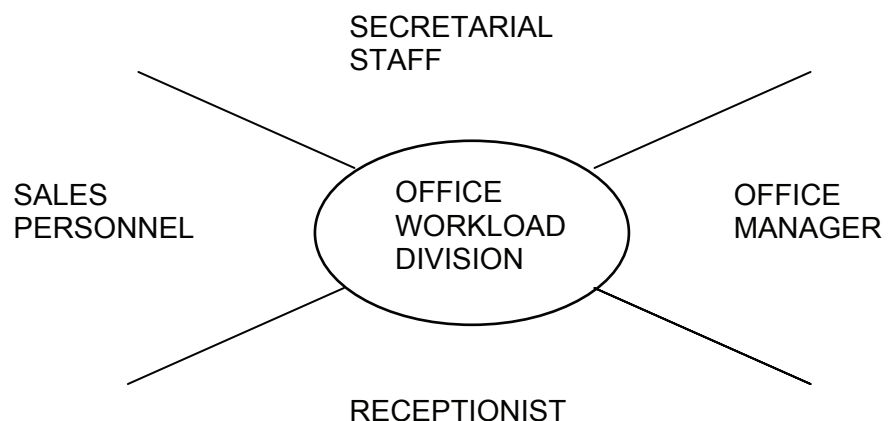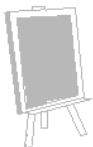
STEP 2. IDENTIFY WHO IS INVOLVED

Decide who are the major parties in the conflict. Include individuals (e.g. each member of a family or a team) or whole groups (e.g. sales team, clients, students). Include people who may affect or be involved in the conflict both directly and indirectly. As long as the people involved share needs and concerns on the issue, they can be grouped together. It's possible to include both individuals and groups on the same map.

Write a list of all these people. Then decide who to focus on in the map.

Draw segments out from the circle in which to identify each of these people or groups.

Question: **In our example, who would be the parties involved in the conflict?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses, prompting them to think of all the relevant parties as necessary. Then write on the board:*

```
              SECRETARIAL
                 STAFF

   SALES              OFFICE              OFFICE
 PERSONNEL           WORKLOAD            MANAGER
                     DIVISION

                RECEPTIONIST
```

STEP 3. LIST THE MAJOR NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF EACH PARTY

Needs

Going back to needs is the basis of the win/win approach. *(Remind participants of the Orange Story in Chapter 1. The Win/Win Approach: Section D.)* Really appropriate solutions can be generated once everyone's needs have been identified and understood.

The word "needs" does not have to be used too precisely. It may include wants, interests or the things you care about. Needs are those things which we are motivated to move towards.

We can elicit these by asking: "Relating to this issue, what are your major needs?"

Look for both tangible needs (such as more space, a tidy place to work) and intangible needs (such as a feeling of security, acknowledgement).

Be on the lookout for solutions masquerading as needs. These solutions can be called "satisfiers", and can direct us to the underlying needs. "I need a new filing cabinet" may actually be the satisfier to "I need space to store my files" or "I need a tidy desk". Some satisfiers may be hiding a need which is difficult for people to acknowledge. A satisfier such as "I need my name on the report" could be explored with a question such as "What is it about having your name on the report that is important?" This may uncover an underlying need for acknowledgement. However, if exposing this need would cause too much discomfort, it may be appropriate to leave the satisfier on the map, and explore alternatives in the designing options stage.

Sometimes the same need applies to several or all people. Listing it for each person shows that there are common needs – a great empathy builder!

Concerns

Concerns include fears, anxieties, worries – those things from which we are motivated to move away. Again, they may be both tangible (such as not having enough money, not getting the work done) or intangible (such as lack of respect, being rejected).

There are some concerns that are the reciprocal of some needs. Concerns that correspond in this way do not have to be listed if they already appear in the needs column. (e.g. having listed "clear guidelines" as a need, it is not necessary to list "not having clear guidelines" as a concern).

Sometimes under the heading of concerns, it's easier to draw out motivations that don't surface so well when considering needs. For example it's more palatable to say "I fear being out of control and powerless" than "I need to have power and control". And it is also true that some concerns are more comfortably articulated as needs.
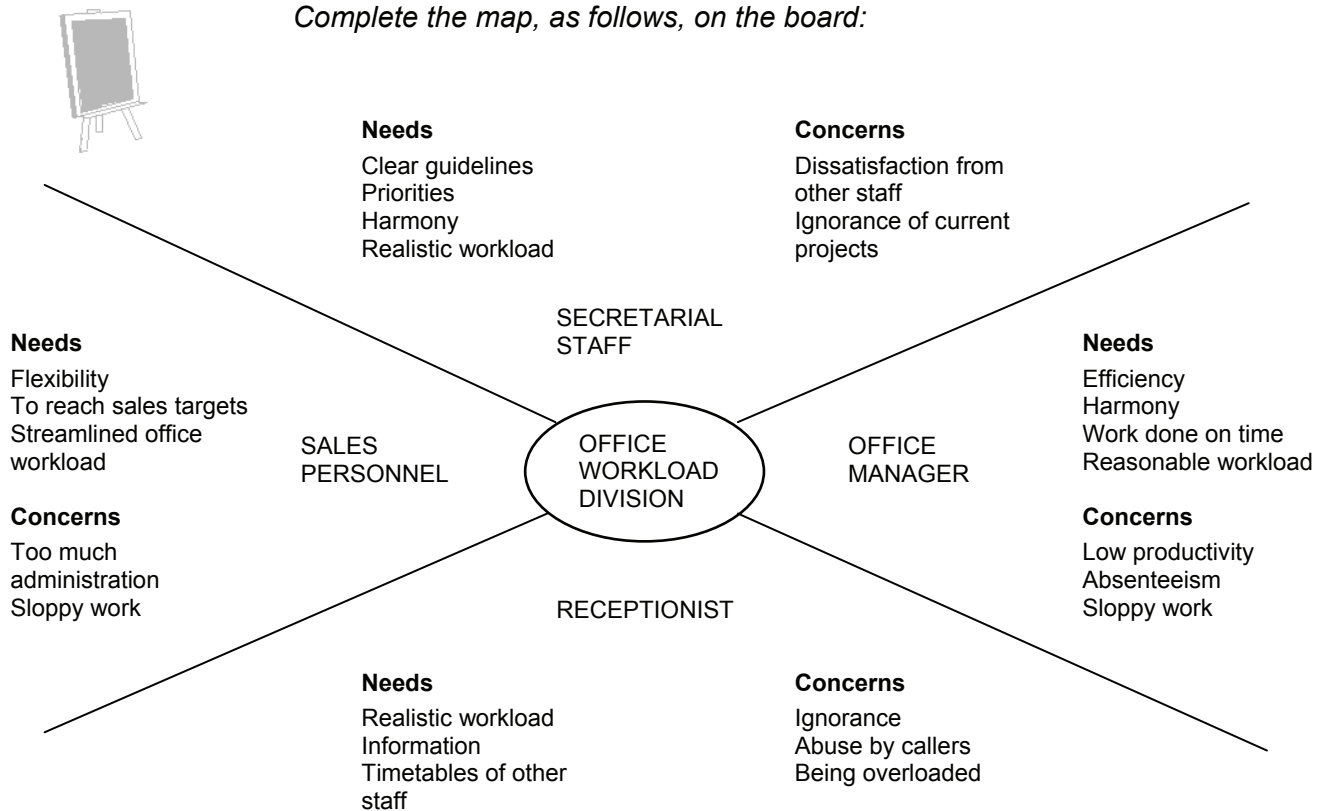
Question: Let's consider each party in turn. What would be the main needs of...? Now what would be the main concerns of...?

Discussion: *Explore with participants the needs and concerns of each party. Questions which you might use to check on these include:*

- Would e.g. the receptionist agree that .... is a need of hers?

- Would e.g. the receptionist agree that .... is a concern of hers?

- Is that the real need/real concern?

- Is that actually a solution? What's the need/concern that underlies it?

- Are there any more tangible needs or concerns e.g. need for more space, concern about not completing the report?

- Are there any more intangible needs or concerns e.g. need for security, concern about failure?

Complete the map, as follows, on the board:

Needs
Clear guidelines
Priorities
Harmony
Realistic workload

Concerns
Dissatisfaction from other staff
Ignorance of current projects

SECRETARIAL STAFF

Needs
Flexibility
To reach sales targets
Streamlined office workload

Concerns
Too much administration
Sloppy work

SALES PERSONNEL

OFFICE WORKLOAD DIVISION

OFFICE MANAGER

Needs
Efficiency
Harmony
Work done on time
Reasonable workload

Concerns
Low productivity
Absenteeism
Sloppy work

RECEPTIONIST

Needs
Realistic workload
Information
Timetables of other staff

Concerns
Ignorance
Abuse by callers
Being overloaded

If you are using Approach 1, allow small groups about 30 minutes to work on their individual maps. Remind them to use their active listening skills in eliciting needs and concerns: reflecting back, paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions.

*Give out the **handouts: "Mapping" and "How to Uncover Needs".***

C. Reading a Map

The process of reading a map is one of drawing together common threads and highlighting points of special concern or importance.

It's an essential step for organising the information that has emerged in the map, in preparation for designing options.

Question: **What common threads or points do you notice on our sample map?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses and write them on the board. Then give out the handout: "Reading Your Map" and expand on the points that are listed.*
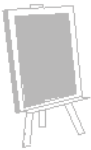
Common Ground:

• look for needs and concerns held by all or several parties.

• identify common threads that may be described in different ways.

• explore similarities that may not already be identified on the map, but can be agreed upon in principle.

• build a sense of partnership from which to consider areas of difference.

New Perspectives and Insights:

• consider the way in which the mapping process has changed the perspective on the issue and the people involved. Sometimes there are very significant insights and other times there are small shifts in perspectives.

Hidden Needs, Concerns and Pay-offs:

• look for unexpressed needs and concerns, as appropriate and with sensitivity. Ask gentle, probing questions to explore the needs and concerns hidden under satisfiers. *(See Section B, p8.5.)*

• be aware that frequently needs, concerns and pay-offs are not intentionally being hidden. They just may have not been considered.

• be aware also that, on some occasions, people may not want to state their needs, concerns or pay-offs because of embarrassment or fear; or because they have intentions they don't want known by others (e.g. an intention to sack an employee; an intention to find somewhere else to live.)
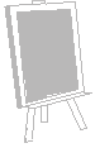
Special Concerns:

• note any areas that need priority consideration (e.g. access by a physically disabled person; secure fencing for young children; close proximity to photocopier by secretary etc.)

Leads:

- identify and explore areas for which you need more information that may be helpful in designing options.

Question: **Are there other significant points to be drawn out of our sample map? What are they?**

Draw out participants' responses and add them to the board.

*Then, if you are using Approach 1, ask small groups to read their maps to identify features listed on the **handout: "Reading Your Map".***

Allow 5 minutes.

D. When to Use Mapping

(10 minutes)

Question: **When would mapping be useful?**

Discussion: *Explore the responses from the group and elaborate on them using the points listed below:*

- mapping can be used on any occasion when we need greater clarity about a problem.

- it can be used for a simple situation or for a very complex one.

- it can be used individually, with a partner, or with a small or large group. Be careful in representing the needs and fears of parties not present. What would they consider to be their needs? How would they represent them? Be sure that we're not assigning our needs to them. For example, "they need to be on time" would be more accurately listed as our need not to be kept waiting.

- use mapping to help in planning. Consider needs and concerns before new plans or changes are implemented to avoid many tensions and conflicts. It builds better relationships when people know they are being considered.

- mapping an issue provides a structured process for dealing with an issue co-operatively. This can be particularly valuable if the issue is contentious and one about which people feel strongly. The mapping process often assists people to manage their feelings appropriately and prevents tempers flaring.

- when an issue seems very complex, or when those involved feel impotent to resolve it, mapping can be an excellent starting point. Seeing the overall picture and organising everyone's viewpoints often enables people to identify the part they can work on now.

E. When it is Difficult to Identify the Issue

If participants are having difficulty in identifying the issue about which to do a map, or if participants are particularly interested in exploring the mapping process further, then introduce the following material.

Question: **Why is it sometimes difficult to identify the issue from which the conflict arises?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses. In addition, you might consider:*

- the real issue is masked by peripheral problems

- the issue seems so complex and involves so many people

- different people have different perceptions of the problem

- some or all people in the conflict are reluctant to deal with the issue and resolve the conflict

- when it's difficult to identify the issue, a lateral thinking approach can be particularly useful.

Group Activity: **Cluster Diagram:** *working individually on a current conflict, participants learn to use a lateral thinking approach to identifying issues. (See mapping Activities, p A.8.1.)*

As well as thinking laterally about an issue, a more systematic approach often helps to identify the issue and uncover important areas that would not otherwise occur to us.

The five words: who, what, how, when, where are very helpful.

(These are suggested in the "Cluster Diagram" activity).

Other approaches can also help systematise our thinking. Andrew Floyer Acland in ***A Sudden Outbreak of Common Sense*** *(London: Hutchinson Business Books, 1990)* identifies four source areas of conflict.
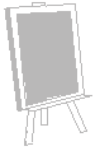
"All conflict stems from one or a combination of the following sources:

- The commodities at stake

- The principles at stake

- The territory at stake

- The relationships involved.

These frequently overlap." (p 51)

Write on the board:

Commodities

Principles

Territory

Relationships

Question: **What might be included under commodities?**
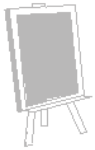
Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses. Include:*

- money

- land or objects

- franchises.

Sometimes the commodity is a symbol of something else e.g. if I get this antique vase, it will be proof that I am the favourite child.

If there is conflict about a commodity, it is because "possession of this commodity represents *to those who want it* a material gain." (ibid. p 52).

*Draw on the board a symbol to represent commodities:*

Commodity   **$**

Question: **What might be included under "principles"?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses. Include:*

- moral values

- political ideologies

- religious beliefs

- personal reputation.

Generally, it is unwise to challenge people's principles. These are often more precious to the holder than material gain, and often defended more vigorously. However, the **cost** of defending a principle needs to be weighed in the balance.

Draw on the board a symbol to represent principles:
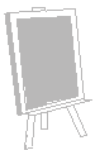
Principles

Question: **Can you think of a time when you or someone else backed down on a principle because the cost of upholding it was too high?**

Prompt with the following example, if none are easily forthcoming from the group:

A family may stoutly disapprove of homosexual relationships, but re-think this if a son or daughter becomes involved in one. Defending the principle would prevent a fulfilling relationship with that child.

Sometimes there may be some other issue at stake, and a principle is used as a smokescreen. (e.g. A supervisor may start insisting on punctuality of staff arriving at work. Previously there may have been more flexibility in commencement and finishing times. Now the supervisor says that it's a matter of principle "that employees should be at work on time". The other issue might be that the supervisor is concerned about management complaints of lack of staff discipline in his/her department.)

Question: **What might be included under territory?**

Discussion: *Draw out participants' responses. Include:*

Physical territory: home

                                 office

                                 armchair

                                 car.

Psychological territory: area of responsibility or "patch"

                                 personal privacy

                                 areas important for self-esteem (e.g. the work we do, the place we live, the skills we have)

                                 status

                                 identity.
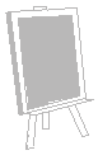
Draw on the board a symbol to represent Territory:
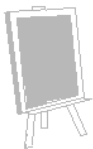
Territory | **MINE** |

Question: **What conflicts might stem from the relationships involved?**

**Discussion:**   *Draw out participants' responses. Include:*

- threats to relationship

- threats to potential relationship

- power juggling

- personality clashes

- prejudice

- violations of explicit and implicit expectations of the other e.g. trust, violence, abuse, reciprocal support.

Considering all four areas and their interconnections can be useful in systematically examining all of the issues involved. It may not be appropriate to deal with every issue but clarity about them will help us avoid pitfalls. It may stimulate us to produce more than one map for a conflict area, and identify where the needs and concerns differ around the various issues.

Draw on the board a symbol to represent relationships:

Relationships
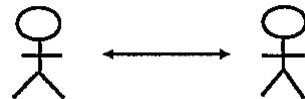
Group Activity: ***Source Areas of Conflict:*** *working individually on a current conflict, participants learn to use an organised checklist and to identify these four key areas. (See Mapping Activities, p 8.4.)*

F. From Mapping to Generating Solutions

(5 minutes)

Sometimes an appropriate solution or set of solutions will be obvious on completing a map. At other times, particularly when the issue is complex and/or involves many people, a formal process of generating, analysing and evaluating solutions will be required. Without this final phase, participants can lose faith in the process of mapping. Mapping is the bridge between being stuck and taking action. Developing options for action is the next skill described in the manual.

Mapping the Conflict Activities

Cluster Diagram

Instructions: We're going to learn an approach to assist in identifying the issues at stake in a conflict. It's known as a cluster diagram. You may have come across this method before as a lateral thinking tool.

Ensure each participant has a pen and a clean sheet of paper on which to work.

Step 1

Think of a current or recent conflict.

In the middle of the page write a word or phrase which comes to mind with regard to this conflict.

It may be the phrase someone has used that has upset or irritated us such as "No, I don't want you to come with us", "That's not your job" or "Why are you always late?" It may be an emotion such as being afraid, apathetic or not respected.

Or, it may be a brief summary of the area of difficulty such as "Lisa and John's relationship", "division of duties", "the disputed contract".

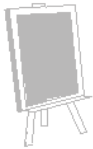Write this down and draw a circle around it.

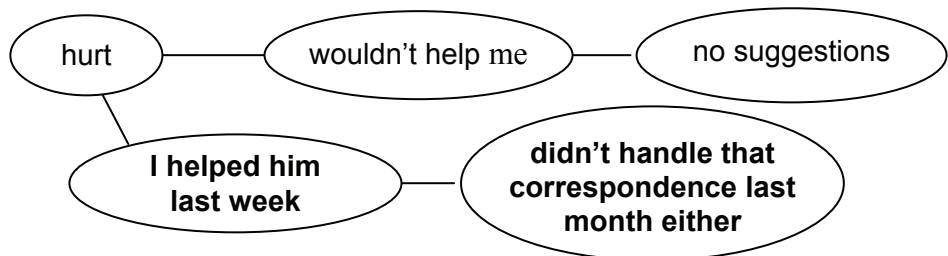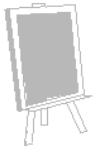*Demonstrate an example on the board e.g.*

(**hurt**)
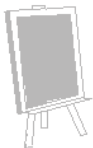
Step 2

Now write down any connections that immediately occur to you. Put a circle around each one, linking with lines those that are connected. These radiate, like a string, from the first circle in any direction.

Demonstrate on the board:

(**hurt**)——(**wouldn't help me**)——(**no suggestions**)

When a new or unconnected thought springs to mind, start a new string, radiating in a different direction.

Demonstrate on board.

(hurt)——(wouldn't help me)——(no suggestions)

(**I helped him last week**)——(**didn't handle that correspondence last month either**)

Don't be pedantic about it. Randomness is helpful for stimulating a broad range of possibilities while your thoughts spill onto the page.

Step 3

When you come to pause, allow yourself then to look at new interconnections between the circles. Tie them together with lines, arrows, or darken previously drawn interconnections that seem important. Doodle and decorate until the thoughts start flowing again.

Create lots of questions for yourself to help stimulate your thinking when stuck.

Ask: Who?   e.g. Who is involved?

          What?   e.g. What started it?

          How?   e.g. How did the problem arise?

          When?   e.g. When does it manifest?

          Where?   e.g. Where is this happening?

Allow 5 minutes for participants to complete their own cluster diagram.

Mapping the Conflict A.8.2

Pair Discussion: Now form pairs, and take several minutes each to discuss any new issues or interconnections you have identified.

Allow 5 minutes.

Discussion: *Encourage participants to ask questions or make comments.*

Did the exercise broaden the areas at which you were looking? In what ways? Did the exercise help you to become clearer about the issue?

Important Points to Cover:

A cluster diagram is a tool for broadening the range of issues at which we might look more closely. Often we find in it the starting place for a number of detailed maps of needs and concerns.

It can also be a starting place for envisaging the possibilities in a situation and developing a picture of the outcomes we want.

*(Optional) Invite participants working in pairs, to consider how they might address some of the new issues they had not previously thought about. This would be valuable, by way of completing this exercise, if you do not plan to follow it with the mapping activity **Source Areas of Conflict or Chapter 9. Development of Options** in this session.*

Mapping the Conflict Activities

Source Areas of Conflict

Instructions: The free-wheeling lateral thinking approach of a cluster diagram is valuable in helping us to identify what the real issues are. An organised checklist can serve the same purpose. We will learn how to construct one now and practise filling it in.

Think of a current or recent conflict.

Let's now look at the four source areas where issues are likely to arise. Commodities, Principles, Territory and Relationship. *(Refer to Mapping the Conflict. Section E, and Andrew Floyer Acland, **A Sudden Outbreak of Common Sense** (London: Hutchinson Business Books, 1990).*

*Give out **handout: "Source Areas of Conflict".***

Work alone with the handout on a current issue that you will be prepared to discuss with a partner in the next section.

Allow 10 minutes.

Pair Discussion: Now form pairs, and take several minutes each to discuss any new issues you have identified.

Allow 10 minutes.

Discussion: Does anyone have any queries about the process itself?

Who found the exercise broadened the areas at which they were looking?

Did anyone have difficulty deciding where a particular issue fitted i.e. commodity, principle, territory or relationship?

Developing a picture or vision of possibilities can be a useful next step.

Lead yourself in with the question: "What if..."

e.g. "What if we were to hold a meeting to negotiate a fairer arrangement?"

"What if I point up an overriding principle we both can agree on that could outweigh the one presently causing difficulty?"

"What if we were to separate areas of responsibility more clearly?"

"What if I delivered an 'I' Statement about my needs in this relationship?"

Possibly invite the pairs to develop some "what ifs" after this exercise. This would be valuable, by way of completion if you do not plan to teach the Development of Options in this session.
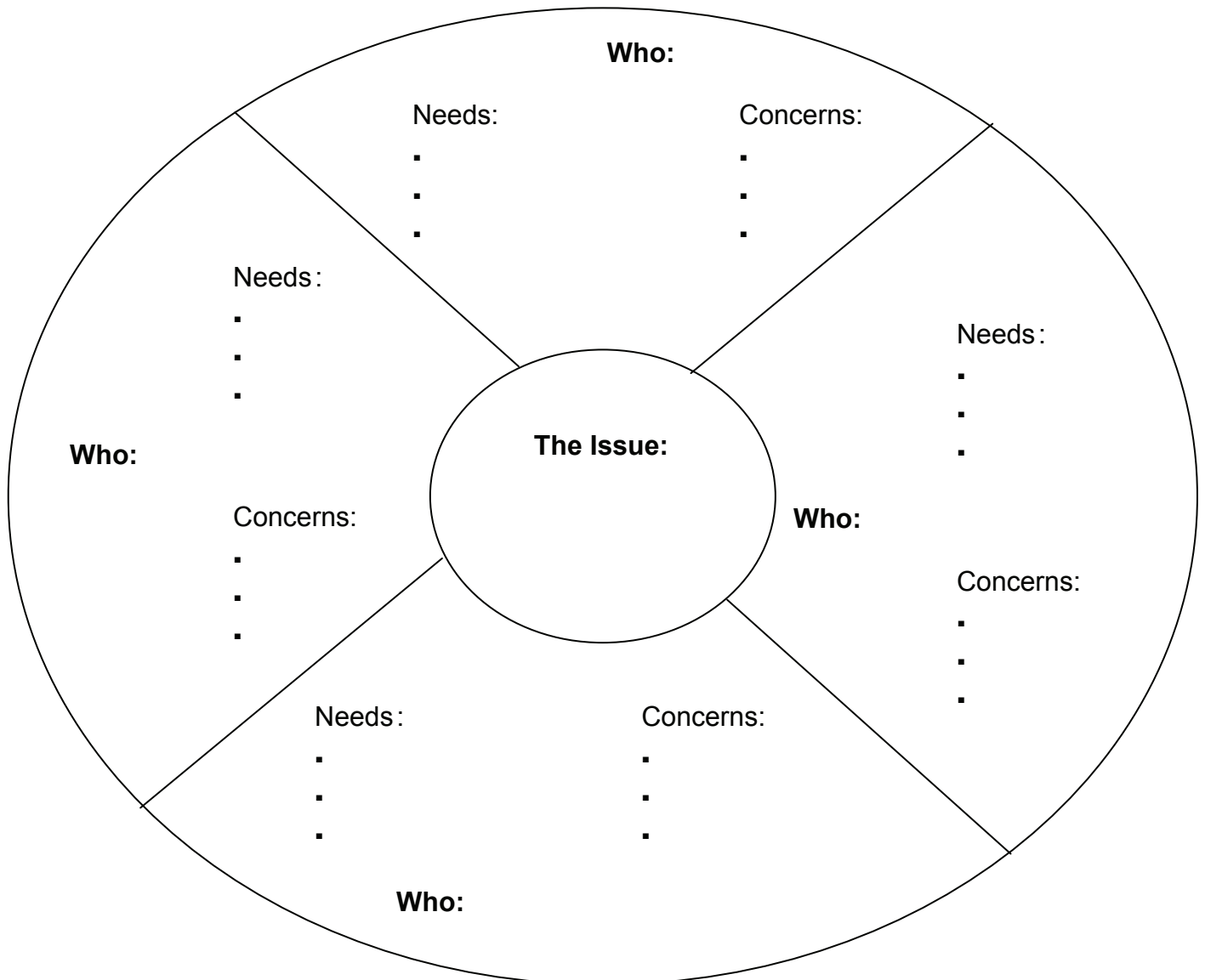
Mapping

In the centre circle, define briefly the issue, the problem area, or conflict in neutral terms that all would agree on and that doesn't invite a "yes/no" answer e.g. "Filing" not "Should Sal do filing?"

In the sectors of the large circle, write the name of each important person or group.

Write down each person's or group's needs. What motivates him/her?

Write down each person's or group's concerns, fears or anxieties.

Be prepared to change the statement of the issue, as your understanding of it evolves through discussion or to draw up other maps of related issues that arise.

Who:

Needs:
-
-
-

Concerns:
-
-
-

Needs:
-
-
-

Needs:
-
-
-

Who:

The Issue:

Who:

Concerns:
-
-
-

Concerns:
-
-
-

Needs:
-
-
-

Concerns:
-
-
-

Who:

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How to Uncover Needs

"Needs" include interests, values, hopes, desires, wants.

Encourage people to shift from their solutions to exploring their needs.

Introduce Needs Approach

Explain that we're looking for a solution that allows everyone to have as many of their needs met as possible.

Shift from Solutions to Needs

When asked what they need, many people reply with solutions that they think are needs, such as "I need him to ring me when he's going to be late". The need is to know he is safe. There are a variety of solutions which meet that need. Ringing when late is only one of these.

Ask "Why?"

As people explain why their solutions are important to them, they usually express their underlying needs.

Testing

Use active listening skills to check what you have heard or surmised about their needs.

Look for Indicators

If a need is intangible (e.g. respect) it may be helpful to ask what would indicate or point to the need being met. Ask what sorts of things the people concerned would want to have happen. These may be then built into the solutions.

Break into Component Parts

An abstract or complex need (e.g. lifestyle) may be divided into simpler parts by asking what is involved, and what it means to the person.

Identify Concerns and Fears

Enquire specifically what would happen or what would go wrong if the need wasn't met.

Move Fixed Positions

If people are stuck with their own positions, help them to shift. Ask if there are any circumstances in which their solutions would not satisfy them or why other solutions don't work for them. Paint a "what if..." scenario which could uncover their unrecognised needs to move from the current situation.

Brainstorm the Needs

What are the elements that would be part of a successful agreement? Explore what needs would have to be met to produce an agreement that works for everyone (including influential people who are not immediately obvious e.g. spouse, boss.)

Mapping the Conflict H.8.2

Reading Your Map

Look for:	*Consider:*
Common Ground	Which needs and concerns are held by everyone?
New Perspectives and Insights	What hadn't been seen before? What now seems clearer?
Hidden Needs, Concerns and Pay-offs	What stated needs might be masking • deeper needs and concerns; or • unstated intentions or pay-offs.
Special Concerns	What are particularly difficult areas that need attention?
Leads	What have you noticed that is worth following through or finding more information?

Highlight the major needs of each participant. Now develop options which incorporate as many of these needs as possible.

Source Areas of Conflict

Commodities

What does each person stand to gain or lose that has or represents material value
e.g. money, property, land?

Who	What

Principles

Does someone's position come from defending a value or ideology? Is there a cost
in defending it? What is it?

Who	What	Cost

Territory

Is someone feeling that their psychological "patch" or physical place is in question?
This could range from threatened job responsibilities to an invaded bedroom.

Who	The "patch" or place

Relationships

What existing or potential relationships are under threat? Are expectations or social
contracts being infringed or violated?

Who ←→ Who	Infringement of social expectations

Mapping the Conflict H.8.4