

Ecomaps

Visual Tool to help understand your life

Creating your own ecomap is a powerful way to visually represent the important people, systems, and resources in your life. It helps you identify and understand the support and challenges in your personal and social network, enabling you to see areas of strength and opportunities for growth. As a social worker, ecomaps are a valuable tool for understanding the client's social environment and helping them assess their support system.

An ecomap is essentially a diagram that shows the relationships between you and the systems in your life, such as family, friends, work, community, and professional support. By creating your ecomap, you'll get a clearer picture of how these connections impact your wellbeing.

Why Create an Ecomap?

Creating your own ecomap gives you a visual and organized way to see the support system that surrounds you. It's a tool that can help you:

- Identify resources and support systems in your life.
- Pinpoint challenges or weak spots in your network, such as lack of support in certain areas.
- Recognize strengths in your social connections.
- Plan improvements in your network by fostering stronger relationships or seeking new connections for support.

Using Your Ecomap in your day to day life

Once you've completed your ecomap, it can be a powerful tool to reflect on your wellbeing. You can use it:

- To assess how your social network impacts your mental health and wellbeing.
- To set goals for improving relationships or strengthening weak areas in your support system.
- As a discussion tool in therapy or support sessions to explore ways to enhance or modify your network.

Wellbeing. Support. Space.

How to Create Your Own Ecomap

1. Draw a Central Circle: In the centre of your ecomap, draw a circle and write your name in it. This represents you, the individual whose network you are mapping.

2. Identify Key People and Systems in Your Life: Around the central circle, draw other circles representing the key people, systems, and institutions in your life. These could include:

- Family (spouse, parents, children, siblings)
- Friends
- Colleagues or work-related contacts
- Healthcare professionals (doctor, therapist, counsellor)
- Community (church, local organisations, support groups)
- Social services or support organisations
- Neighbours or local community members

3. Use Lines to Connect Your Circles: Draw lines between your central circle (you) and the people or systems in your network. These lines represent relationships and connections. The type of line you use indicates the strength and quality of the relationship:

Solid line: Strong, supportive connection.

Dashed line: A less supportive or strained relationship.

Arrows: Indicate direction of support or energy flow. For example, a one-way arrow might show that someone offers you support, while a two-way arrow shows a reciprocal relationship.

4. Indicate the Nature of the Relationship: Next to the lines, you can label or describe the relationship. For example, "close friend," "work colleague," "family support," or "medical support."

5. Assess the Balance of Your Network: Reflect on the connections you've drawn. Are there areas where you have strong support, or areas that feel empty or disconnected? Look at the balance of your network—are there certain people or systems that might need more attention, or are there areas where you feel overwhelmed or unsupported?

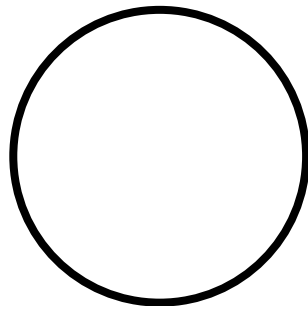
6. Identify Gaps or Strengths: Once you have completed your ecomap, take a step back and assess the strengths and gaps in your network:

- Do you have strong social support from family and friends?
- Are you involved in community groups or professional support?
- Do you have access to resources like healthcare and employment support?
- Are there areas of isolation or disconnection that you want to address?

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