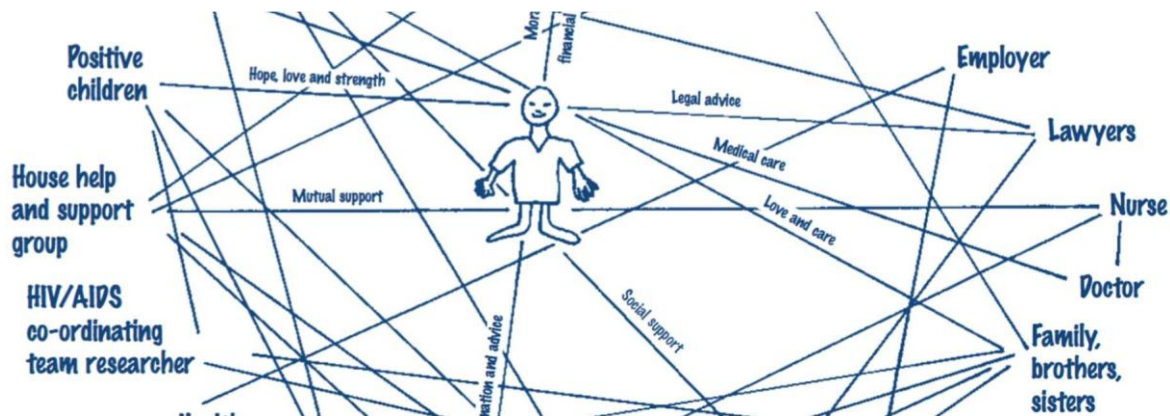


Helping Relationship Spiderweb



To explore the web of people and organizations that can support a person in a difficult situation and to identify what makes a helping relationship.

The Process

1. Explain the purpose of the tool and ask participants to select a type of person to focus on. Examples might include 'a young woman living with an alcoholic husband and facing violence every day' or a 'child laborer out of school.'
2. Ask the participants to draw a picture of the person in the center of the web.
3. Encourage the participants write or draw the different people and organizations that could provide support to the person. Ask them to place them in a circle around the outside of the person drawn.
4. Encourage the participants to identify which of the people and organizations have links to each other. Draw lines to show those links.
5. On the lines, write what kind of care and support is given and received. When the activity is complete, encourage the participants to discuss what the web shows. For example, how many different types of people and organizations can provide support? How are the relationships between the person and the different types of people and organizations? What are the relationships like among the different types of people and organization's? How can relationships empower people rather than make them dependent
6. Encourage the participants to think about the different types of links. For example, there might be a formal, professional link between a school headmaster and a community worker. But there might also be an informal.

An alternative way to do a relationships web is to use a ball and string and pass the string around everyone who is connected. This can be done in a real situation (where participants think about their own role) or in a simulation (where they are given a card with the name of a person or organization to represent).

Suggestions for Use

- A helping relationships web is particularly useful for identifying the network of support that is, or could be, available to community members who are in distress, such as orphans, women facing domestic violence and people living with HIV and AIDS.
- Youth can use the tool to map relationships with people they trust and with whom they interact on a regular basis. You can adapt the tool to measure accessibility by asking youth to draw three lines to the people/stakeholders they trust or interact with the most; two lines to people/stakeholders who are averagely accessible for young people; and one line to those people/stakeholders who are hard to reach.

Challenges

- This exercise may leave some participants feeling very isolated. If using these tools with vulnerable children and young people to analyze their personal relationships, be sensitive to those children and youth who have few helping relationships they can map on their diagrams.

References

- Tools Together Now! International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006). P. 94-95
- STAR Facilitators' Guide, ActionAid, 2012. P. 33.

Photo Credit: Image taken from Tools Together Now! International HIV/AIDS Alliance (2006).