

# Ripple Effect Mapping Tool Kit

## *The What, Why and When of REM*

REM is a way to discover the impacts or effects of a community program. The idea is to identify changes or effects in the community and how an intervention caused them. It combines four evaluation methods — one-to-one interviews, group interviewing, mind mapping, and qualitative data analysis.

### Why Use REM

- It's simple and inexpensive.
- It captures the impacts of complex work – both intended and unintended results.
- It can capture changes in relationships between people.
- Both data gathering *and* stakeholder engagement: It's motivating and inspiring; it can create positive energy.
- Participants can see other perspectives and reflect on the project, leaving the session with a better understanding of the work.
- It's an effective communication tool; the result map can help people see what the program does and its impacts

### When to Use REM

- When a program has been operating long enough to have an observable effect on a community
- Hold the session at a time of day that works for the stakeholders
- When you want to learn about the intended and unintended impact of your program
- When you want to gather a group of people to intentionally reflect/evaluate your program or create energy and excitement about the work

### Resources:

**University of Minnesota Extension:** <https://extension.umn.edu/community-development/ripple-effect-mapping>

**Cooperative Extension:** <https://articles.extension.org/pages/73086/ripple-effects-mapping:-an-effective-tool-for-identifying-community-development-program-impacts>

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## *The Inquiry*

### **Developing Research/Interview Questions**

- Ask questions that focus on what changed and how: probe for the story or reason behind what changed.
- The more specific the question the more focused response for example rather than 'What changed because of the program?' ask 'How has your behavior changed?'
- What is the focus and intent of the REM session? How do you want to use it to gather information on the intervention?
- One approach is to structure the questions around the program's core program components and/or logic model and/or Theory of Change
- A benefit of REM is the ability to identify unintended consequences: consider having the last question illicit that benefit: 'What else do you have to share?' or 'What surprised you about the program?'

### **Example questions:**

- Tell a story about how you and/or others have used information (e.g., trainings) from the program.
- Is there anything you are especially proud of you'd like to share?
- Are there any specific achievements or successes you are aware of?
- Have you shared what you've learned with anyone?
- What new resources or opportunities do you (and/or the community) have?
- How has your and/or others' attitudes or behaviors changed?

### **Interview Instructions**

- AI is a Strengths Based approach to collective inquiry, generally focused on strengths and assets
- Interview each other and take notes about what the other person is saying
- Please write legibly and turn in your notes as this is important information
- At least one person per group should be prepared to share out.
- We are interested in both the 'what' and the 'how'. Please record both: 'I've seen the PM program improve leadership' and the specific story of what you saw or experienced to believe that about the program. Specific stories with as many details as possible.

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## *Mapping Process*

### **Steps to Successful Mapping**

1. Ask groups to share one highlight from the interview. Go around the room and have every group share.
2. Then, have people volunteer to share other highlights and react to what is going on in the map.
3. If conducting the session with dual languages, items are added to map in the language they were shared; the translation is then added so there are two post-its for each item.
4. Facilitator(s) keeps the ideas coming, asking clarifying questions and placing the impact/story on the map in the most appropriate category.
5. Keep moving! If it's unclear where something goes on the map or an issue is brought up that might sidetrack the process, put it in the parking lot and return to it later.
6. Team members write the items up on post-its and translate if needed.

### **Follow up questions for interviews or during the mapping process**

- Tell me more about that story or example.
- What did that lead to?
- What lead to that happening?
- How are things different as a result?
- What are people doing differently?
- What effect did participation have on attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and action?

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## *Reflection and Analysis*

### **During the session**

In groups or as a full team, reflect together on the Ripple Map and collect the feedback.

### **Sample questions for reflection:**

- What is most interesting about the map?
- How can we use the map to help tell the story about how we are making a difference?
- Are there gaps in the effects we're seeing?
- Does the map identify unintended consequences?

**End with 5 minutes for a group evaluation of the session.** Use the following to prompt the review.

- What did you like about the REM today?
- What did not work for you?
- What would you change if we did it again?

### **After the session**

- Use the interview questions to gather further data from stakeholders who were not able to attend or were identified during the REM session
- Enter the data from the interviews and mapping into a mind mapping software tool or draw by hand/post-its
- As the data gets entered, connections and causation will emerge so re-categorize and move items around as needed
- Determine if you want to do further coding of the data
- Gather feedback on the completed Ripple Map

### **Attachments**

1. Worksheets 1-4
2. Parent Mentor Ripple Mapping Agenda
3. Example Interview Sheet
4. Example of the Parent Mentor Ripple Map