RESOLVE CONFLICT:

EVERYONE CAN WIN

Skill 8: Mapping the conflict

Extra study materials

Mapping

People are motivated to move towards what they do want, their needs, and away from what they don't want – their fears.

Your map charts the underlying dynamics of a conflict.

Do one alone before a difficult conversation or use the structure within the discussion itself.

Better options may present themselves once your map is done.

While you can map an issue just by thinking or talking it through, it is best written.

You could use a divided format such as that below or list each person's needs and fears on their own separate page or column.
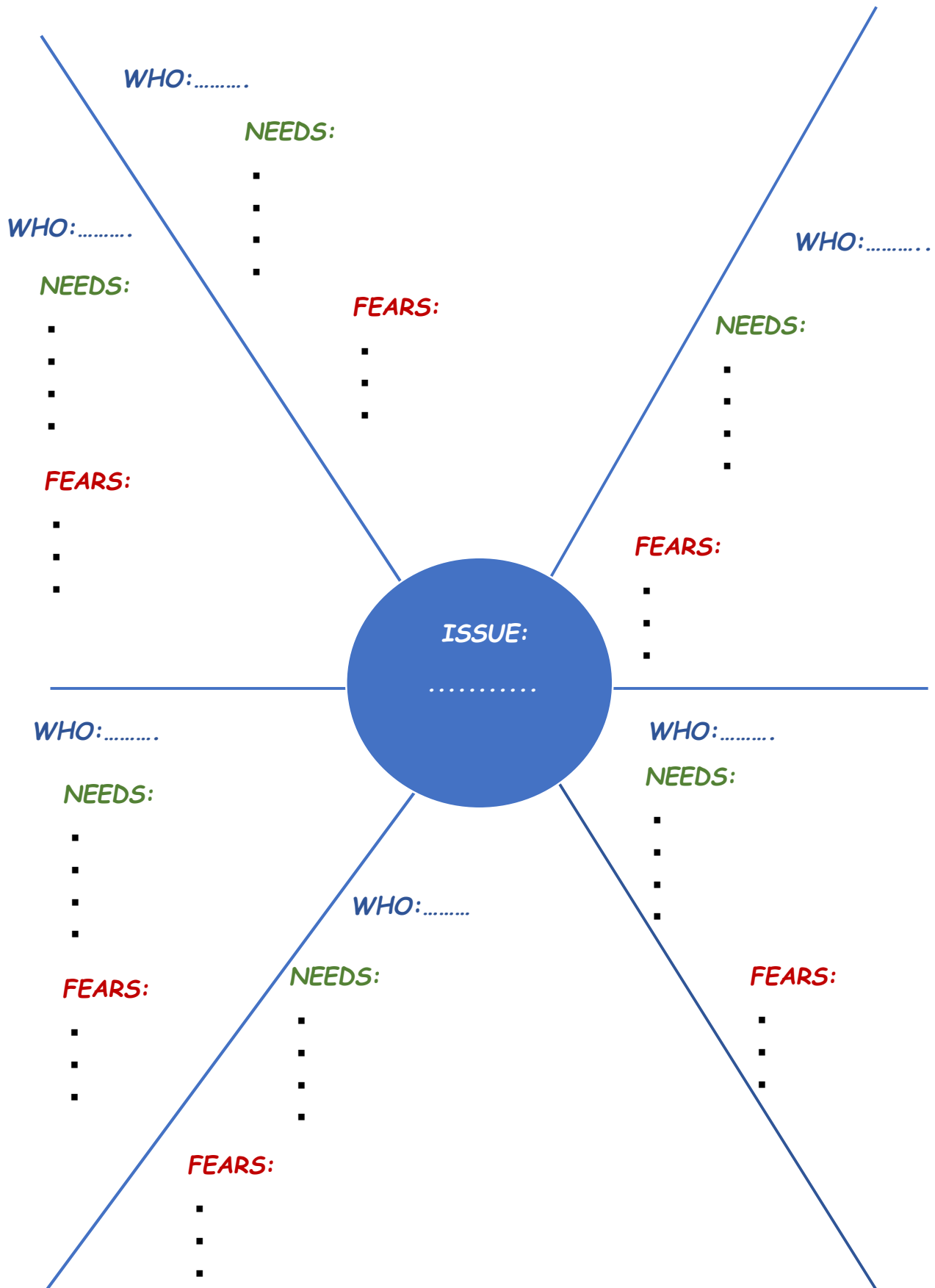
Create a separate area on your map for each person or group you decide to list. In the blank example, the page is divided into six in order that six people can be included. In the sample map called 'Covering reception' two people and one group are listed - so there are three separate columns, with the issue at the top.

You could write the issue either at the top or in the centre of your map.

With a group, use a large sheet of paper, or electronic board and possibly thick pens of different colours.

Mapping the conflict

WHO:……….

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

WHO:……….

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

WHO:………..

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

ISSUE:
…………

WHO:……….

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

WHO:……….

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

WHO:………

NEEDS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪
- ▪

FEARS:
- ▪
- ▪

Mapping the conflict

A section supervisor was particularly uncomfortable about confronting her receptionist.
The receptionist was taking so much time off that other staff members had to cover for her too frequently.
The receptionist was a single mother and often called away over difficulties with her three-year old child.

The issue: **Covering reception**

SECTION SUPERVISOR

Needs

- customers being handled appropriately
- to nurture all the people in her team, including the receptionist
- a happy and productive team
- to manage her group effectively
- overcome her difficulties with being assertive

Fears
- losing efficient control of her section
- losing respect – from her team and from upper management
- does not want to upset the receptionist

RECEPTIONIST

Needs

- to look after her child
- to have an income
- to prove to herself and others that she could cope

Fears
- losing her job
- being unable to respond if her child was sick or baby-sitting arrangements had fallen through
- seeming unprofessional to her workmates

OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

Needs

- their section supervisor to steer them out of the problem.
- to fulfil their own roles without disruption
- to show support – both for the receptionist and for the -smooth running of the office

Fears
- having no choice about covering reception
- being unable to carry out their normal duties well enough because of too many interruptions
- the problem not changing or getting even worse

Four steps to mapping

Step 1:
In the centre or at the top, create a general label – the area or the topic to be mapped. It should NOT point to any solution. It should be neutral, something all would agree they willing to discuss. e.g. "Filing" not "Should Sal do the filing?"

Step 2:
Create separate sectors or lists for each person or group that is directly involved or affected by the issue. Put their name at the top of their 'spot' on the map.

Step 3:
Write down the needs and fears of each person or group you've listed.

1. First consider the person's relevant 'Needs'. Remember, 'Needs' are not solutions. They might be interests, values, hopes, desires, wants – whatever is motivating the person in this situation.

2. Then consider that person's 'Fears' or 'Concerns' relating to this: what they are anxious about and want to avoid. It might be fears, concerns, worries or just anxieties. This second inquiry is to capture other issues that have not already been mentioned while considering needs.

Step 4:
Read your map. Look for and write down:

- New perspectives
- Common ground
- Special concerns

How to Uncover Needs

Introduce Needs Approach

Begin by explaining that we're looking for a solution that allows everyone to have as many of their needs met as possible. Encourage people to shift from their solutions to exploring their needs first. You might just suggest: 'Let's get a clear picture of the situation before we go further. Let's hear everyone's needs and concerns on this issue.'

Testing

Use active listening skills to find the underlying needs. 'Needs' can include interests, values, hopes, desires, wants. On your map, briefly note down each need presented. Check back with the person that what you are writing is an accurate summary. If someone launches into a long background story, redirect them back to current needs. Keep the focus on needs and fears until the map is complete.

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". That's an option. 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 is that important?"

If people start justifying, defending or pushing hard for their solution, you might get your needs conversation back on track by asking them: 'Why is that important to you?' As they explain, they usually express their underlying needs.

Have all relevant needs been included?

If someone holds a very fixed position, the needs that they first think of may be quite narrow. Do they have unrecognised needs they could begin to consider? Can you suggest other needs that they are willing to acknowledge and include on their list?

Consider hidden agendas

Commissions, bonuses, getting the credit, recognition and time out are some of the advantages people like to keep hidden. Legitimise these by including them as needs on the map. 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. For example, if the word 'recognition' comes up, ask: 'from whom?' and 'of what?'

Identify Concerns and Fears

After working on one person's list of needs, develop their 'fears' or 'concerns' list too. You might ask them what they are worried about if this situation doesn't work out well. Even irrational fears might be important to get up on the list if they are actually influencing the person.

Consider stakeholders who are not present

Ask what would the absent people say that their needs and fears are? Recognise that you can only make a guess at these. You might now realise that there are other absent people influencing decision-making e.g. spouse, boss. What are likely to be their needs and concerns in this situation? Should they also have a place on this map?

Reading Your Map

New Perspectives and Insights

What hadn't been seen before? Are there needs or fears you hadn't previously considered?

What now seems clearer?

What elements that should be part of a successful agreement that works for everyone?

Common Ground

Which needs and concerns are held by everyone?

Can you build new areas of common ground? Perhaps there are values, visions or ideals listed by some people that can be shared by everyone?

Special Concerns

What are particularly difficult areas that need attention?

Are there deeper needs and concerns? Unstated intentions or pay-offs?

Consider who needs to save face and how you might go about doing that.

Are there previously unconsidered stakeholders?

If a need listed is intangible (e.g. respect) you might ask what action specifically would flag to the person that their need is being met.

Are there other issues that would arise by some of the outcomes you might choose?

Are there new options you've noticed that are worth following through? Perhaps more information is needed.

Next steps

Highlight the major needs of each participant.

Develop options which incorporate as many of these needs as possible.

Recommended

Books –

Everyone can win: *Responding to conflict constructively* by Helena Cornelius and Shoshana Faire

For professionals

CR Trainers' Manual by Fiona Hollier, Kerrie Murray and Helena Cornelius. Lesson plan on Mapping the conflict (free .pdf download)

Dealing with an Angry Public: *The Mutual Gains Approach to Resolving Disputes* by Patrick Field and Lawrence Susskind

Managing Public Disputes: *A Practical Guide for Professionals in Government, Business and Citizen's Groups* by Susan L. Carpenter and W. J. D. Kennedy

The Conflict Paradox: *Seven Dilemmas at the Core of Disputes* by Bernard S. Mayer