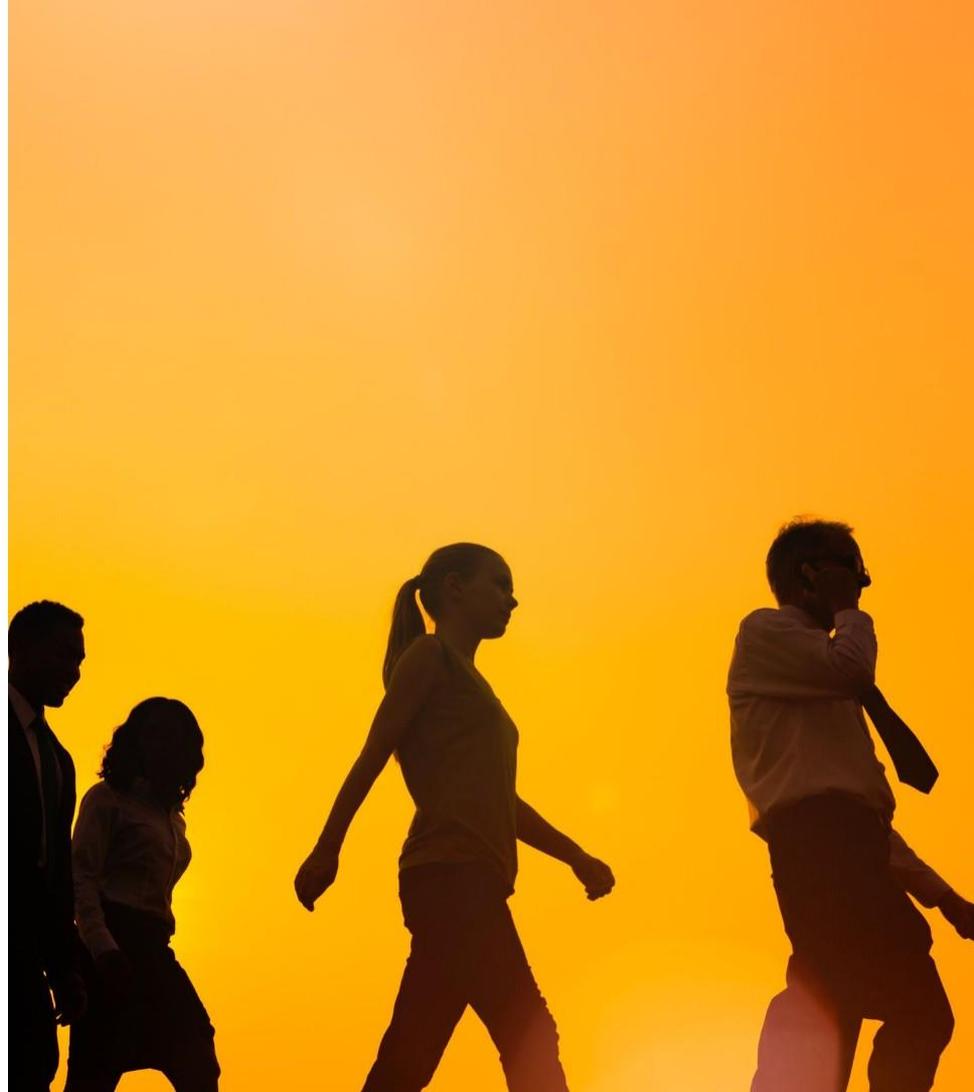


# Client Centered Connections

Using Eco-Maps for Client  
and Agency Understanding

**John Salay, LCSW**  
Clinical Director, Family  
Insight



A young spotted deer (fawn) is the central focus of the image, standing in a lush green forest. The deer has a reddish-brown coat with white spots and is looking directly at the camera with large, alert ears. The background is filled with various green leaves and thin tree trunks, creating a dense, natural setting. A semi-transparent grey banner with a teal vertical bar on the left side is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# **An Ecological Perspective**

A young spotted deer with large ears and a white rump patch is looking towards the camera in a lush green forest. The deer is partially obscured by a semi-transparent text box.

# **Finding our Client's “Ecological” Niche**

Social Workers borrowed from Biology to develop Eco-Mapping. It helps us help our clients to utilize important connections in their lives.

# Why?

## Understanding Complexity

Like the Baby Fawn who is dependent on many complex factors in the environment,

We and our client's depend on a very complex variables in our environment.

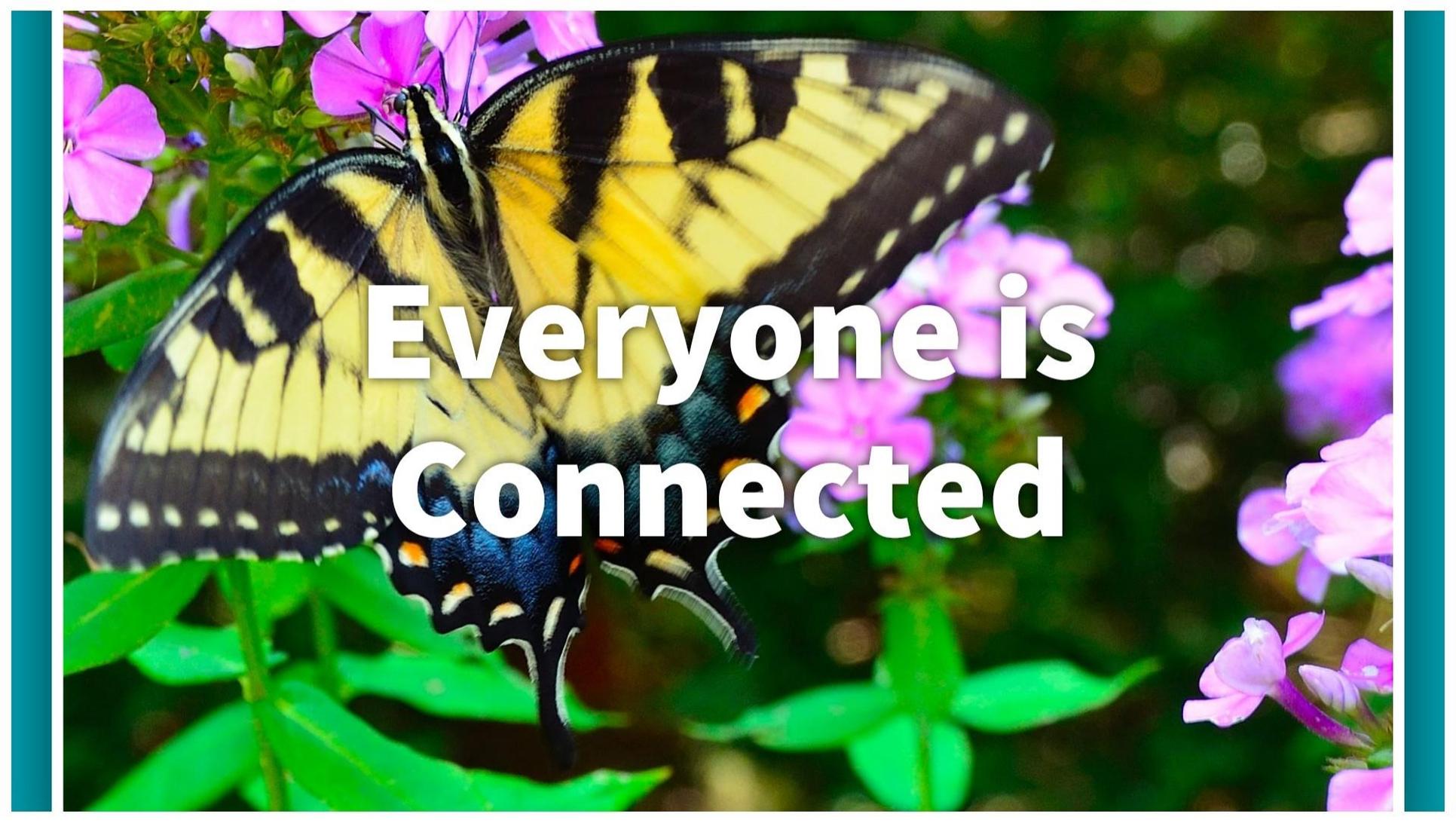
## We are more complex

Unlike the animal and its' niche, We have complex personalities that interact and touch

1000's of others in our lives.

## Remember the butterfly..

Wings flapping metaphor

A close-up photograph of a butterfly with yellow and black wings feeding on pink flowers. The butterfly is the central focus, with its wings spread, showing a pattern of yellow and black stripes and spots. The background is a soft-focus green and pink, suggesting a garden setting. The text "Everyone is Connected" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

**Everyone is  
Connected**

A photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright patch of light breaking through near the horizon, casting a golden glow. The water below is dark blue with some ripples and a reflection of the light from the sky. The entire image is framed by a white border, which is itself set against a teal background.

**A wing flaps, a  
wave moves**

# The Reasoning

- **Systemic orientation: The Individual is part of a greater whole and must be seen as part of their environment.**
  - There are complex interactions, constantly effecting change, with the family at the center.
  - These networks of change effect all of us, but can be particularly important to our clients.

A photograph of two frogs in a pond. The larger frog is on the right, sitting on a rock and looking towards the right. The smaller frog is on the left, sitting on a lily pad and looking towards the left. The water is clear, and the background shows mossy rocks. The text "Where are My Supports? Ideas?" is overlaid in white, bold font at the bottom of the image.

**Where are My  
Supports? Ideas?**



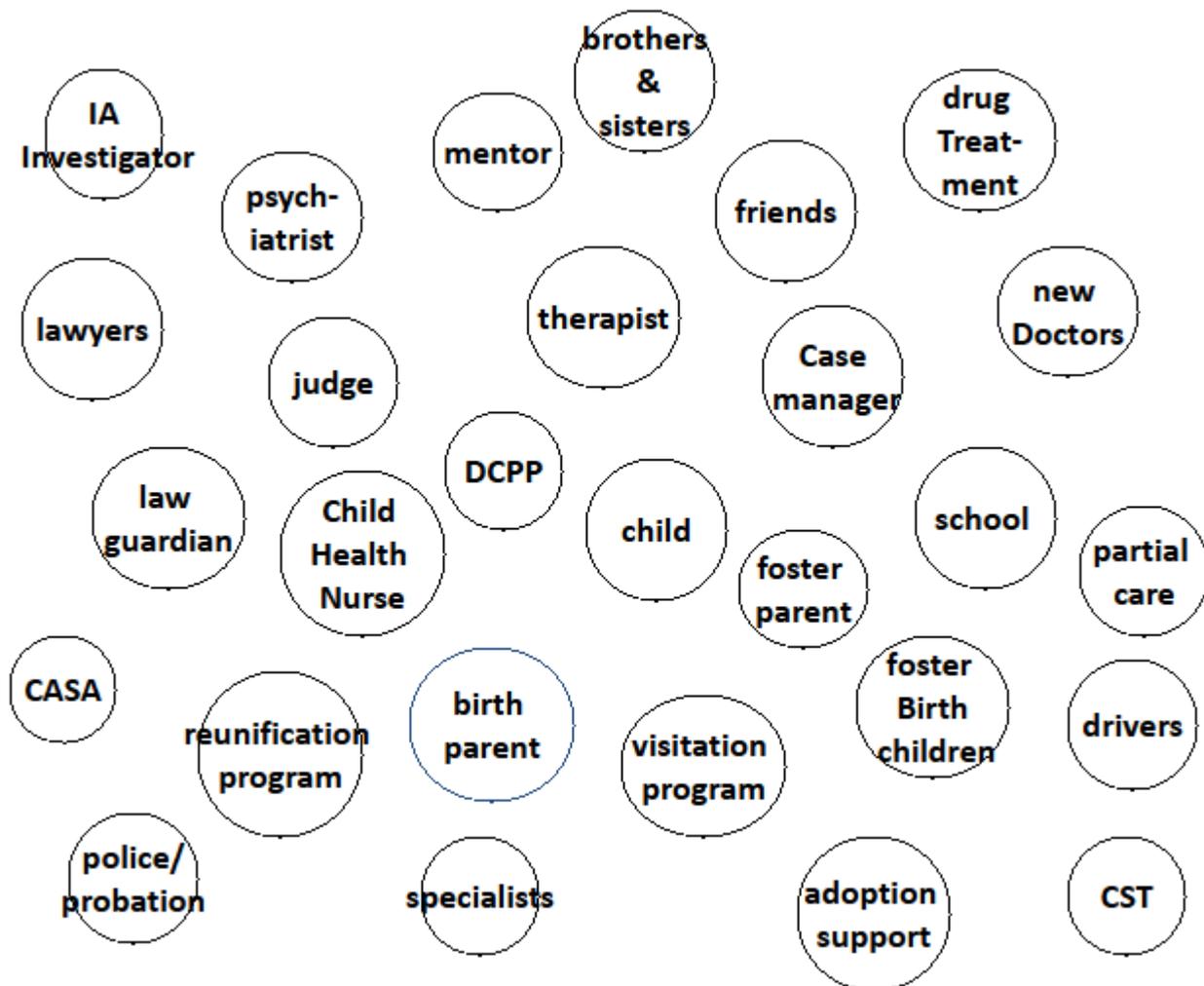
# Connections



A client centered approach requires us to understand what surrounds the center. What touches upon the center?



We recognize a network of complex circles of interactions and connections with the family at the center.



# What can the Eco-Map process do?



Much like a mobile that changes shape when we touch one part of it, any change to part of the system changes all in the system.



The eco-map is a type of assessment that reveals resources, strengths, natural supports, etc.



We can then use it to creatively match the services and entities with the identified needs and issues as well as strengths.

# Outcome: Better planning and interventions



**This process lays the foundation for creatively designing strategies, services, and supports which leads to better service planning, interventions, and outcomes.**

# Care Coordination!

## Insurance

Insurance companies are emphasizing Care Coordination

## Use the Eco-Map process

To make their job of insurance payment easier.

## Social Determinants of Health Care Outcomes

## Help Make the Connections

For you client's and this will help facilitate care on all levels!

**An eco-map is a pictorial representation of:**

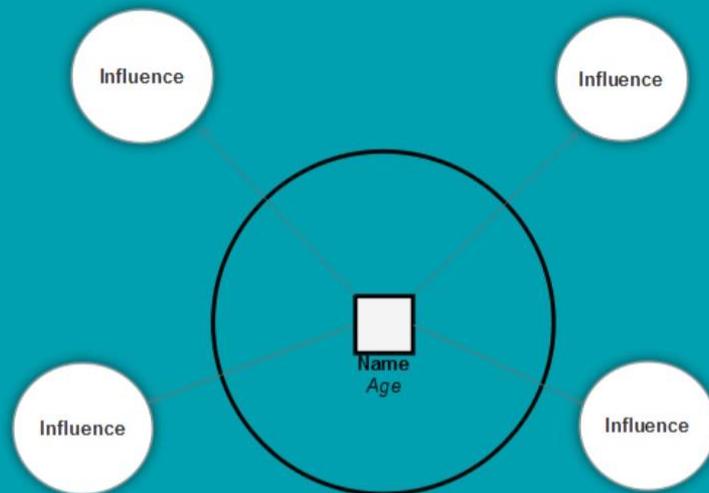


**A family's connections to a person and/or systems in their environment. As in society, patterns represent the areas that carry meaning for behavior and relationships in the family.**

Ecomap Key	
□	Person, Male
○	Person, Female
○	Influence
↔	Strong Connection
→	Strong Connection
◄-----►	Weak Connection
-----►	Weak Connection
+++►	Stress Connection

Anonymous Family  
12/12/2012

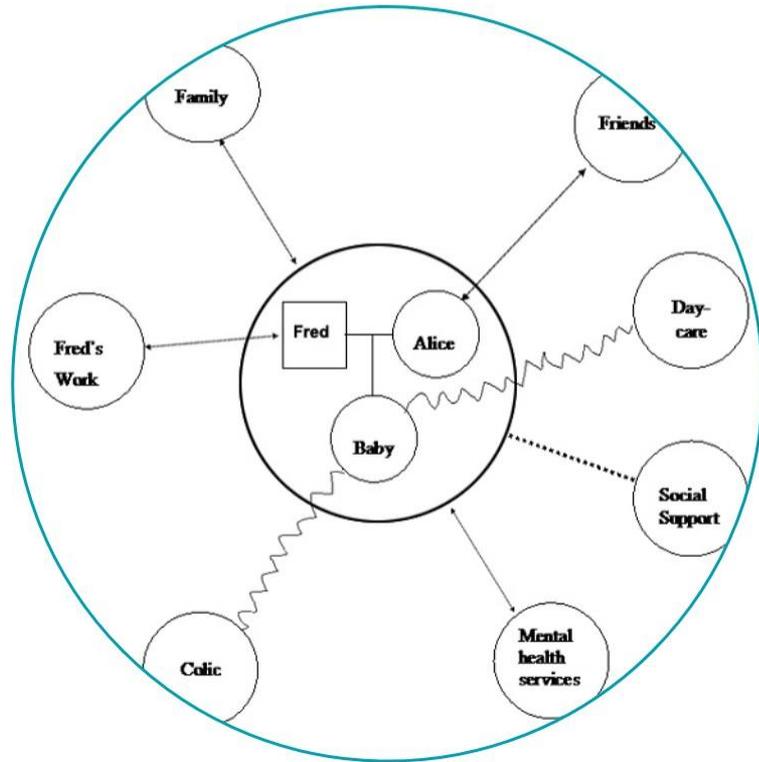
Created By:  
*Your name here*



#### Additional Notes

This is where you would add additional information regarding person/people.

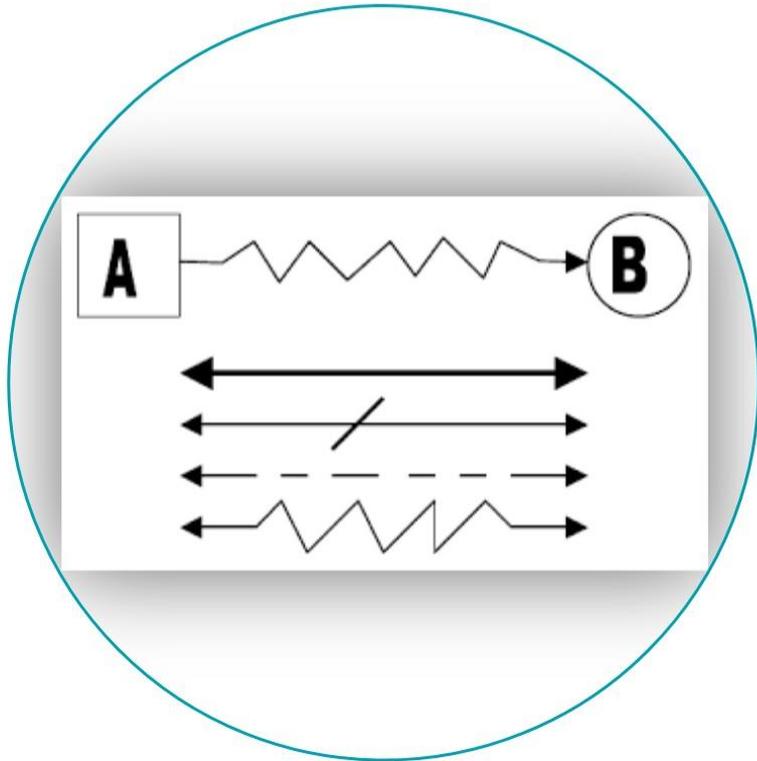
# An Eco-gram is not a genogram, however:



**Like a genogram, the family can be placed in the center circle and represented.**

Use squares for males and circles for females.

# The typical legend:

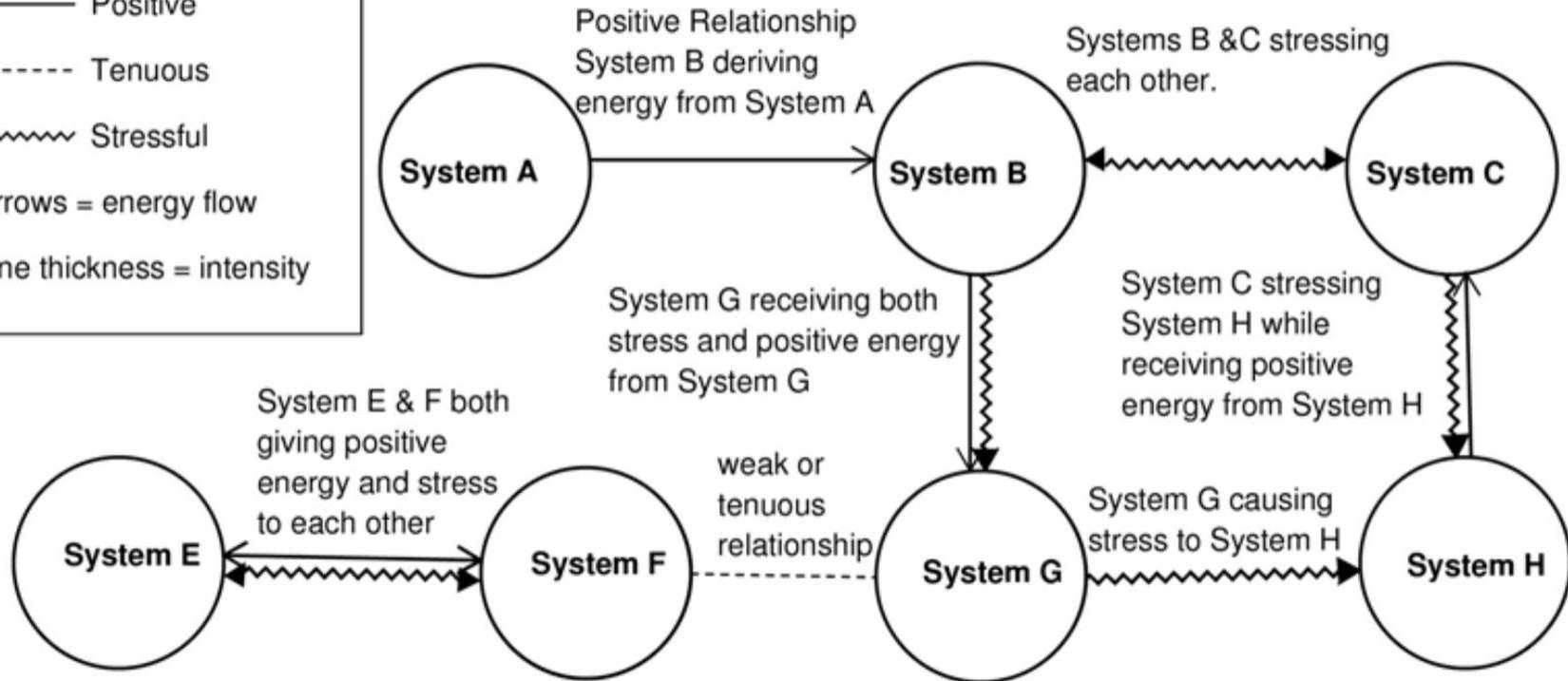
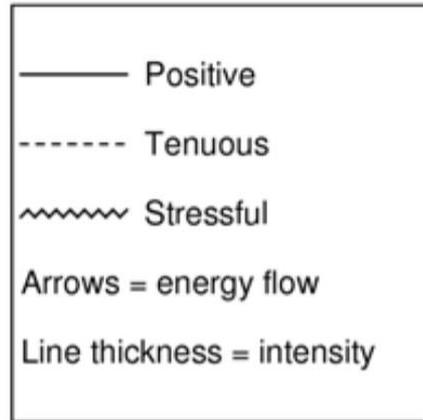


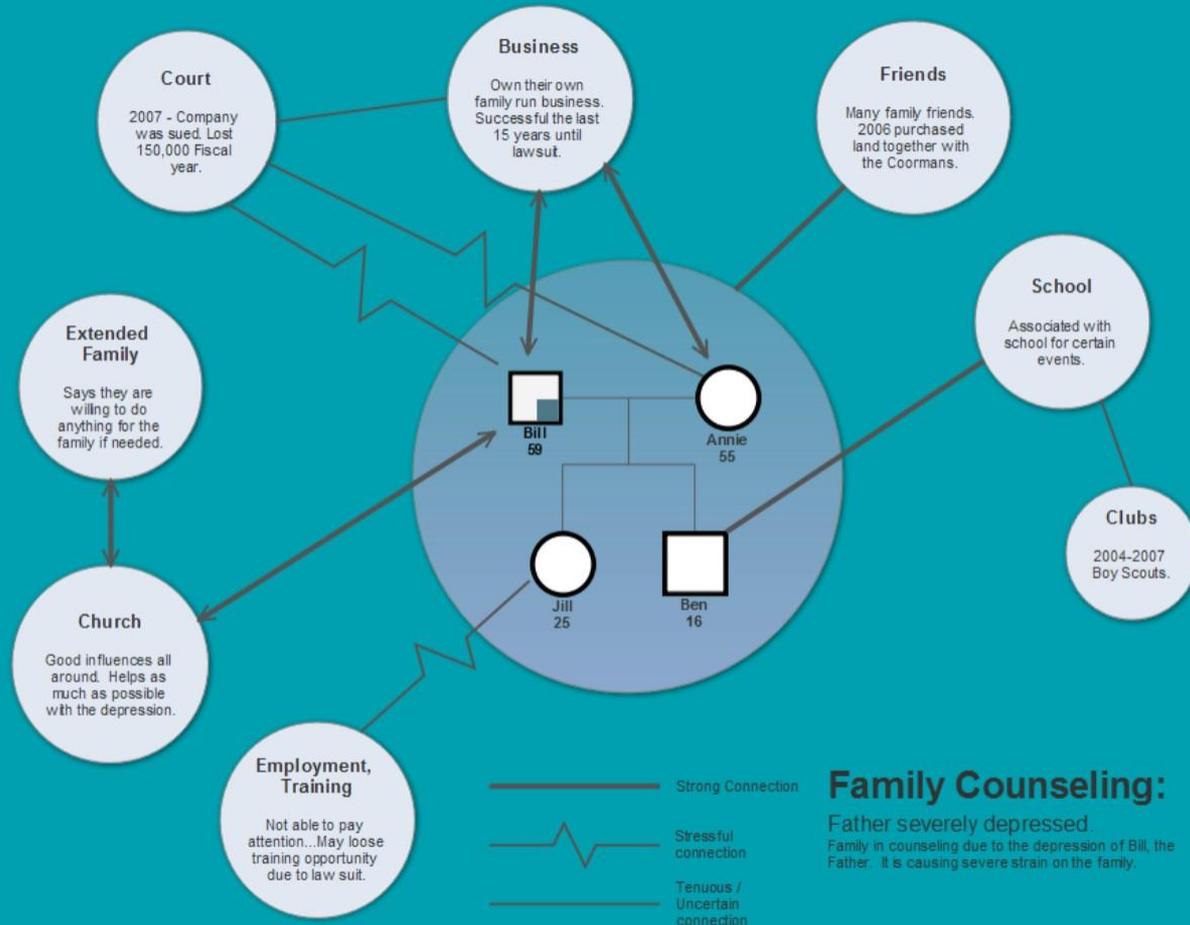
**Lines depict nature of relationships, from weak to very strong, stressed, or broken.**

A very strong relationship can be three solid lines or a very thick one. Arrows represent flow of energy or resources.

Resource importance can be represented by size of Circle.

## Standard Ecomap Symbols





## Family Counseling:

Father severely depressed.

Family in counseling due to the depression of Bill, the Father. It is causing severe strain on the family.

# Date it:

- 1 A family can be seen as a sub-set of society.**

It is reasonable to conduct an “eco-map” type process on your own agency to help elucidate what/who impacts you and vice versa.
- 2 Since families are constantly changing, make sure you add a date to your eco-gram.**

- 3 Involve the whole family. You'll find that their different perspectives of what is meaningful to them, will lead to rich discussion.**
- 4 Their opinions will also change over time.**

# Three separate dimensions for each connection:



1) The strength of the connection, 2) The impact of the connection, and 3) The quality of the connection.

# Components of Connections



The strength of the connection. Is it weak, uncertain, or strong? New sentence who is allied? Who is emotionally closer distance? Where are their coalitions? What are the natures of the coalitions (strong two week, long-term to transient, supportive to destructive, functional to dysfunctional)?



The impact of the connection. Is there any impact? Is it draining resources or energy? Is it providing resources or energy?



The quality of the connection. Is it stressful or not stressful? Is it healthy or unhealthy?

# The eco-map supports understanding of:

- Needs, strengths and interventions. It also supports engagement of the family and a dialogue that can build rapport and buy-in while heightening awareness among all parties.

- What is their opinion of the various agencies that affect them?

How important are they see your agency?

- What entities were previously important in their lives that are no longer influencing them?

For example they'll used to go to the community center.

- How do they feel about their neighbors and neighborhood?

# An eco-map can:

- Provide a consistent base of information to inform and support intervention decisions.
- Allow objective evaluation of progress; workers can observe impact of interventions, both on the family and on other elements of their environment.
- Support discussion of spiritual and value related issues in a constructive way.
- Help support integration of the concept of family assessment as an ongoing process.
- Integrate the values and concepts-and the real power of system theory-in a practical way
- Force the building of interviewing and other skills for staff.

# Rounding out the eco-gram

- Once family members have been able to provide feedback on what's important to them, the worker can suggest other agencies that did not occur to them.
- This can include agencies that might be helpful that are not currently involved in their lives.
- That same should be said of any relatives or friends or even acquaintances that might be willing to help the family system.
- In addition, it is very important to look at known strengths and see where those strengths might be able to flourish.

# What's important to your client?

## Supporting strengths with other resources

For example the YMCA, the YWCA, the local community center, library, community support groups, etc.

## Specific service provider importance

Are there individuals, such as yourself that are very important to the client? Feel free to add them as well.

## Support workers

The family members are really rely on support workers when there's other areas of empowerment for them?

A visual representation of the energy that flows from one to the other can be very important in realizing strengths or weaknesses in these relationships.

## Family boundaries

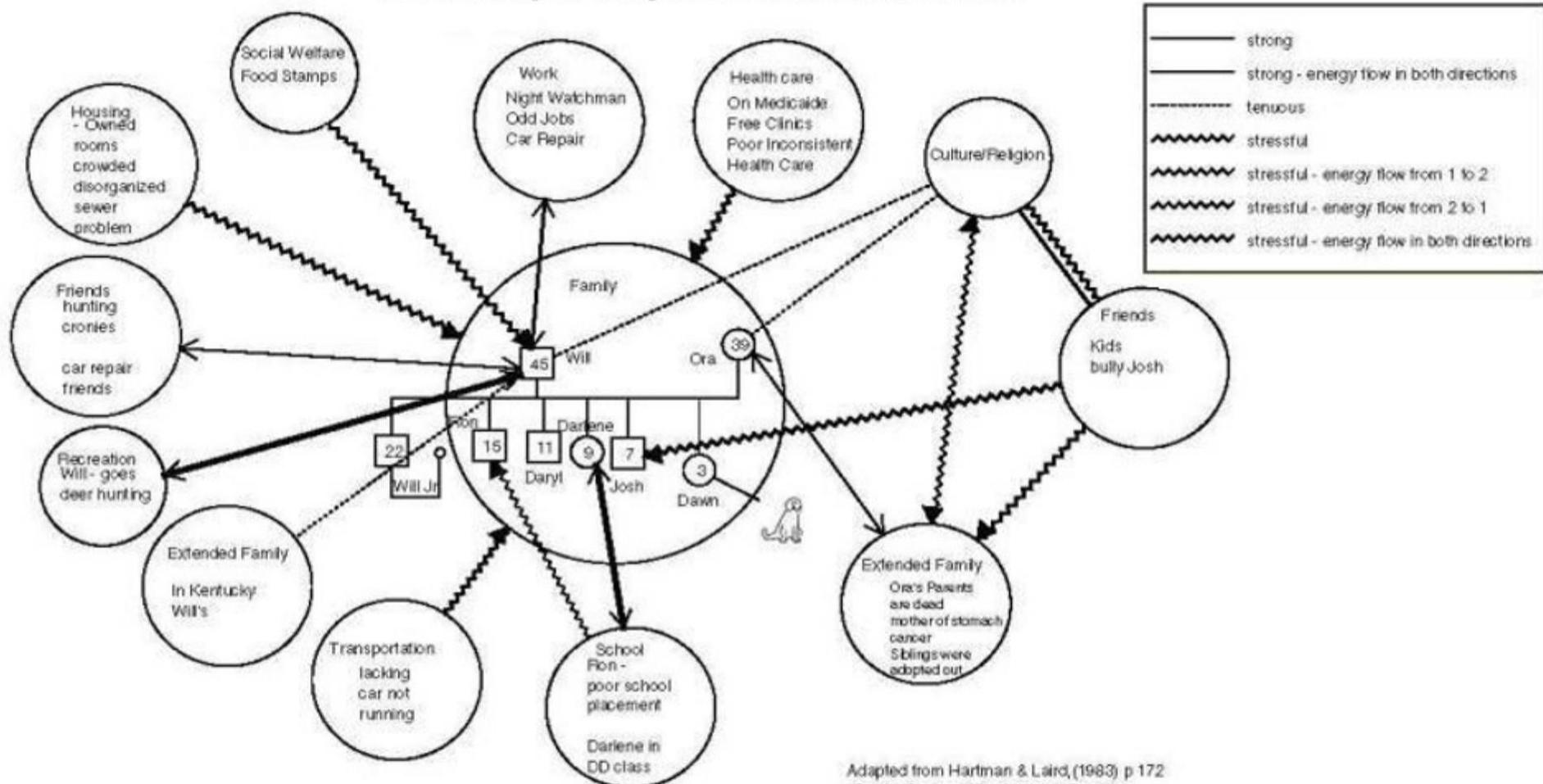
Are they porous or rigid? Are they open to change and new experiences that might be helpful to them? If not, can the map point them in the right direction?

It's not rocket science...



**DIY: Break out Groups:  
Individual (PHI  
protected) or Agency**

# Eco-map Adapted from Hartman



Adapted from Hartman & Laird, (1983) p 172  
 "Family-Centered Social Work Practice",  
 The Free Press, New York

# What connections did you find?

- Support effective presentation of families issues for courts and other interested entities.
- Information on eco-maps is available on many different websites.
- Use Eco maps to help make positive connections for those you serve.
- It will help keep them at the “Center”.