

Community Mapping

Community Mapping is an excellent method for getting the "lay of the land" and get your finger on the pulse of the community. It works best with communities that are geographically defined into neighborhoods or sections. Walking the community to get to know it better is a good way of engaging residents as well. Surveys and questionnaires can be administered while conducting mapping. This kind of mapping can be used as part of doing a needs assessment, identifying safe spaces within the community or in preparation for outreach. Here are five tips for conducting mapping:

1. Let people know why you are there (if anyone asks) - to observe how the community works.
2. Never put yourself in dangerous or compromising situations. Working in pairs is always best.
3. Take good and complete notes at intervals during your observations (stop in a coffee shop or diner).
4. Walk the community at different times of day. This way you can see the different aspects of community life.
5. Note the things outlined on your Community Mapping worksheet (check your worksheet before the observation or when stopped for note taking). Carry a pocket sized note pad to jot down things you don't want to forget.
6. Develop an actual map of the community that identifies the organizations, places people congregated, businesses, residential areas etc.

Community Mapping Worksheet

Identify the organizations that serve the area:

What services are available to people in the community?

Describe the people who live here?

✓ **Racial/cultural groups**

✓ **Languages spoken**

✓ **Sexual orientation**

✓ **Age of residents**

✓ **Economic status**

✓ **Social class**

What kind of people hang out here?

- **Is there a difference? If so, What?**

What recreational sites exist?

Where do people congregate?

Who are the gatekeepers/opinion setters?

What is the physical layout of the community?

- **Kinds of stores or businesses**

- **Street lights**

- **Pay phones**

- **Police presence**

- **Safe places**

- **Unsafe places**

What transportation serves the community?

How would you describe the community?