

METAPHOR MAPS

Recommended use: for individuals or groups to map their world and use their maps to help them reflect on individual or team experiences.

Resources: flipchart paper and coloured markers. Also useful: picture postcards, masking tape, ropes for paths and boundaries, any collage material especially for making the map 3D.

Participants create metaphor maps that represent the kind of places they visit, avoid or seek in their working day. Map-making can be a group or individual exercise.

Places might include: Field of Dreams, Stormy Seas, Safe Haven, Mountains of Work, Pool of Relaxation, Stretch Zone, Swampland, Play Area, Road to Nowhere, Stream of Ideas, Point of No Return, Terra Incognita, Short Cut, Black Hole, Magic Spot, Site of Antiquity, Stadium of Light, Great Wall, Greener Grass, Fountain of Knowledge, Bridge Under Construction ...

Warning: People generally seem to be full of ideas for unpleasant and frightening places to put on a map, so be sure to ask people to check that their maps are reasonably balanced and include places they like to visit and want to visit. It is meant to be a map of their own territory - so it should include 'places' that are familiar as well as a few strange ones.

Map-making is itself a reflective exercise. Once a map is created it can be used as a more focused debriefing tool. Participants tell their story about an experience while tracing their journey across their map with a finger.

The **listener** prompts as necessary to help the person tell their story using the map:

“Did you visit any of these places?”

“Where did you spend most time?”

“Can you trace the journey you took?”

“Do you need to create new places on the map?”.

After the story is told (or during its telling) the listener asks questions that help the storyteller to consider alternative or preferred routes on the map, and how they could succeed in making these journeys.

Sequencing of questions: Metaphor Map is a tool that can be readily combined with most debriefing sequences.

Variations: With more resources and imagination, Metaphor Map can be scaled up to room size or field size. These larger versions allow people to walk around their maps with a facilitative partner. The floor size map is a good scale for demonstrating the method.

Source: Adapted from Roger Greenaway's chapter on Dynamic Debriefing in Mel Silberman's Handbook of Experiential Learning (2007)