

Caregiver Promising Practice Spotlight

Atlas CareMap

About This Series: The National Caregiver Support Collaborative's (NCSC) Caregiver Promising Practice Spotlights highlight a series of innovative, evidence-informed, and evidence-based practices to effectively support older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers. The Spotlights provide an overview of the promising practice and suggested actionable steps for organizations to implement the practice.

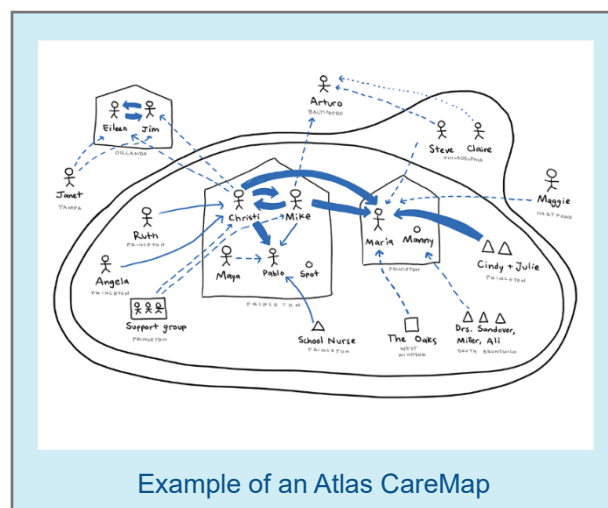


Featured Promising Practice: Encourage older adult, family, kin, and tribal caregivers to map their network of care to spark meaningful conversations about their support networks and needs.

Promising Practice Overview

An Atlas CareMap is a simple diagram, hand-drawn by an individual, that depicts the people involved in giving and receiving care in their lives, along with the relationships and resources that support them. The tool is part of a broader set of resources developed by Atlas of Care, a nonprofit initiative that helps caregivers visualize and better understand their care ecosystems. The Atlas CareMap allows individuals to visualize their support networks, reflect on their current situations, and identify both strengths and areas where additional support may be needed. Aging network organizations can introduce the tool as a way to spark meaningful conversations with caregivers and learn about their unique supports and needs. By encouraging caregivers to draw their own Atlas CareMap, caregivers are able to capture and communicate their personal perspective of their care and support system.

Designed to be adaptable across cultures, languages, and settings—such as community workshops, support groups, healthcare visits, home visits—the Atlas CareMap illustrates connections through creativity and personal expression, rather than a rigid template. For example, in kinship, tribal, and other close-knit communities where caregiving often spans generations, Atlas CareMap allows individuals to represent care relationships in their own terms—often beyond standard definitions or depictions. Its visual format makes it easy for caregivers and care recipients to share their situations with others, fostering clearer communication and encouraging conversations around planning, advocacy, and support.



Example of an Atlas CareMap

Eligibility and Processes

The Atlas CareMap template and instructions are free and publicly available for use by a range of audiences, such as family, kinship, tribal caregivers, and aging network organizations who may introduce the tool to caregivers. Additional resources are available to deepen understanding and strengthen facilitation skills, including introductory videos, free community workshop booklets, and a free self-guided online course. Individuals or organizations can access Atlas CareMap materials on the [Atlas of Care website](#).

While many individuals opt to use the tool independently, organizations can request live or virtual workshops facilitated by Atlas of Care team members. These workshops guide participants through the process of creating and reflecting on their Atlas CareMaps, often in group settings that foster peer learning, shared insights, and collaboration.

Why It Works

- Illustrates the caregiver's support landscape, revealing strengths and gaps, helping identify areas where additional support may be needed
- Facilitates collaborative conversations about care with family, friends, and service providers
- Adapts easily across different cultures, languages, and community norms
- Supports both present and future planning, serving as a tool for mapping care at a singular point in time and helping caregivers envision and prepare for future scenarios
- Encourages reflection and gratitude by uncovering overlooked sources of support and celebrating meaningful connections

"With the rest of my family far away, I always thought that I was alone. But in drawing my CareMap I realized how close I am to the people I work with. They're not just co-workers, they're friends ... in fact they're 'family.' I am not alone. It was amazing to discover this!"

— *Anonymous*

Implementation Tips

- Create your own Atlas CareMap before introducing it to others to better understand its value and processes
- Offer the Atlas CareMap as a self-directed exercise during caregiver intake for support services, or integrate it into caregiver assessments to allow caregivers to engage with the tool at their own pace and comfort level
- Use the Atlas CareMap as a storytelling tool to honor caregiver perspectives, foster connection, and organically gather insights to tailor supports and referrals that complement the caregiver's existing supports and lifestyle
- Promote creativity and personalization by encouraging caregivers to use symbols (e.g., circles, arrows, or icons), incorporate preferred languages into their Atlas CareMap, and include cultural references to make the Atlas CareMap more accessible and meaningful
- Recommend that caregivers revisit and redraw their Atlas CareMap during or after major life transitions to ensure they reflect current realities and align with relevant support and needs
- Partner with community organizations to incorporate Atlas CareMaps into gatherings, workshops, or caregiver events

Learn More

Recommended Resources:

- [Atlas CareMap](#)

Contact:

For more information on supporting older adult family, kin, and tribal caregivers, please contact the NCSC by e-mail (caregivercollaborative@acl.hhs.gov).

Access other Promising Practice Spotlights in this series on the [NCSC website](#).