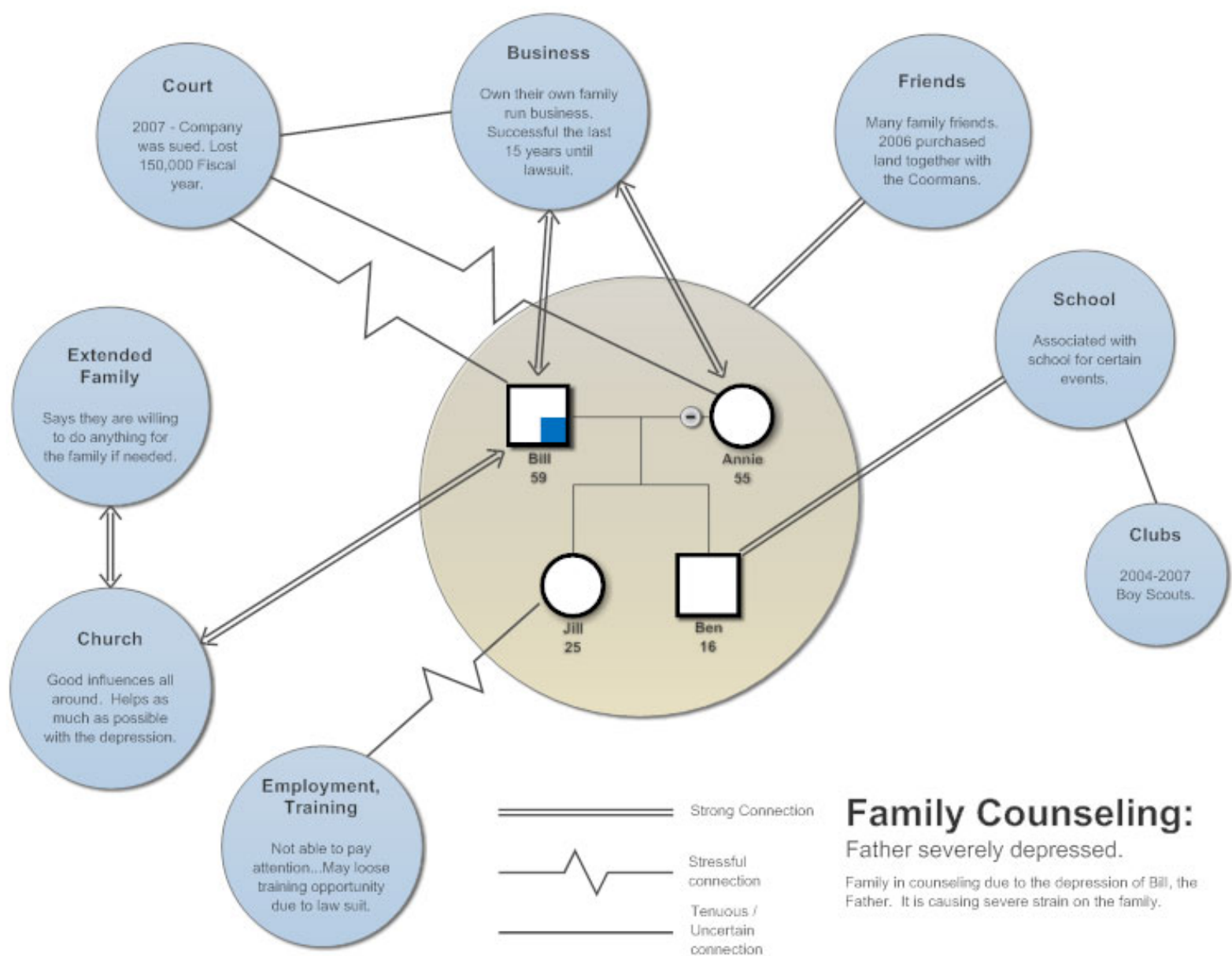


Ecomap Examples →

Ecomap

An Ecomap is a diagram that shows the social and personal relationships of an individual with his or her environment. It is often used in counseling by social workers or nurses. Ecomaps were developed in 1975 by Dr. Ann Hartman who is also credited with creating the [genogram](#).

An Ecomap is sometimes also referred to as an eco-map or ecogram.



How Ecomaps are Used

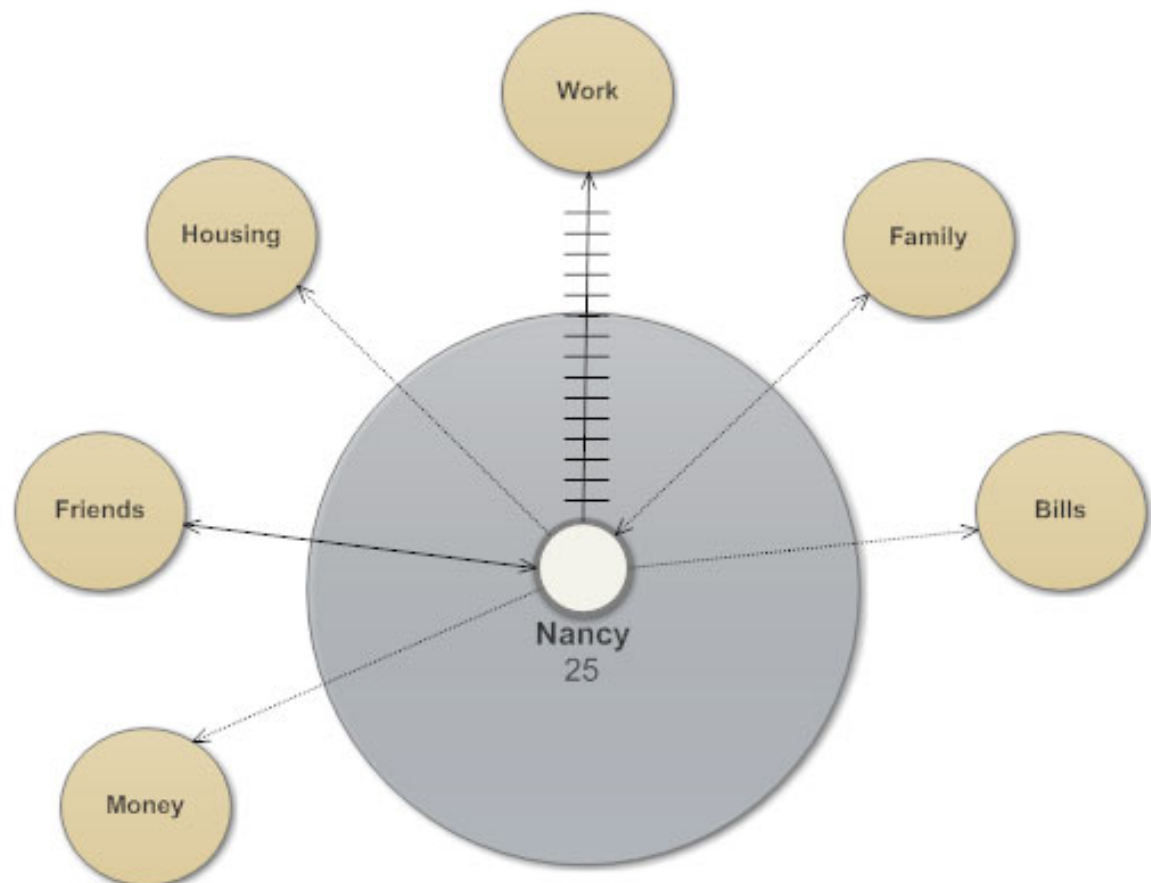
Ecomaps not only document the connections between family members and the outside world, but they also provide a way to visualize the quality of those connections either as positive and nurturing or negative wrought with conflict and stress. Connections can also be considered strong or weak.

An Ecomap can be a powerful tool for discovering possible sources of depression and anxiety as well as uncovering hidden support systems in friends, neighbors, clubs, professional agencies, charities, and social or religious organizations.

Ecomap Key	
□	Person, Male
○	Person, Female
○	Influence
↔	Strong Connection
→	Strong Connection
↔	Weak Connection
→	Weak Connection
≡→	Stress Connection

Additional Notes

Nancy's main stress is her work. She loves what she does, but her need to perfect what she is doing is causing her additional anxiety. She is also not good with her money, letting bills go unpaid.

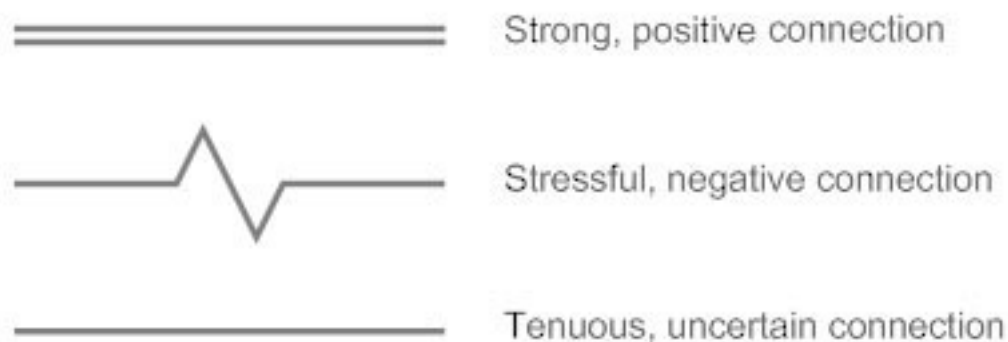


How to Draw an Ecomap

An Ecomap can be drawn by a social worker using information gathered in interviews, but sometimes clients can draw their own Ecomaps.

Start by drawing the family unit or individual inside a large circle. Next, draw circles that represent people or groups the central unit has a relationship with. These could be extended family members, friends, business associates, institutions, and so on.

Finally, as the most important step in creating an Ecomap, draw in the connections between the family unit or individual and the external entities. These connections can be strong and positive, stressful and negative, or uncertain. Each has its own notation. Arrows can indicate the flow of attention and energy.



Best Practices When Creating an Ecomap

- Identify the client(s). Determine whose problem you're trying to solve. Look at both the individual and possible family dynamics. For this reason, most Ecomaps start with a very basic [genogram](#).
- Determine relevant social and environmental systems. Identify individual(s) and organizations who have a family connection or play a role in the client's life.
- Specify the type of relationship. Use lines to represent the relationships within the system. Use different line types for different relationship types.
- Specify direction. Use arrowheads to indicate the direction of influence for each relationship. Arrows pointing towards the client indicate that the system primarily influences the client. If the arrow is pointing from the client towards the system, the opposite is true. In some cases there is a two-directional flow of influence so the arrows point in both directions.
- Add a date. Always add a date to your Ecomap because over time these relationships may change and you may want to re-evaluate or re-map.
- Evaluate the results. Use the Ecomap to gain a greater understanding of the client and the relationships that influence them. It's a good way to start a discussion and ask the right questions in counseling.

More info

- [Ecomap software](#)
- [Genogram maker](#)
- [Family tree template software](#)

Other Diagrams →

