

Working with Groups:

Mind Mapping

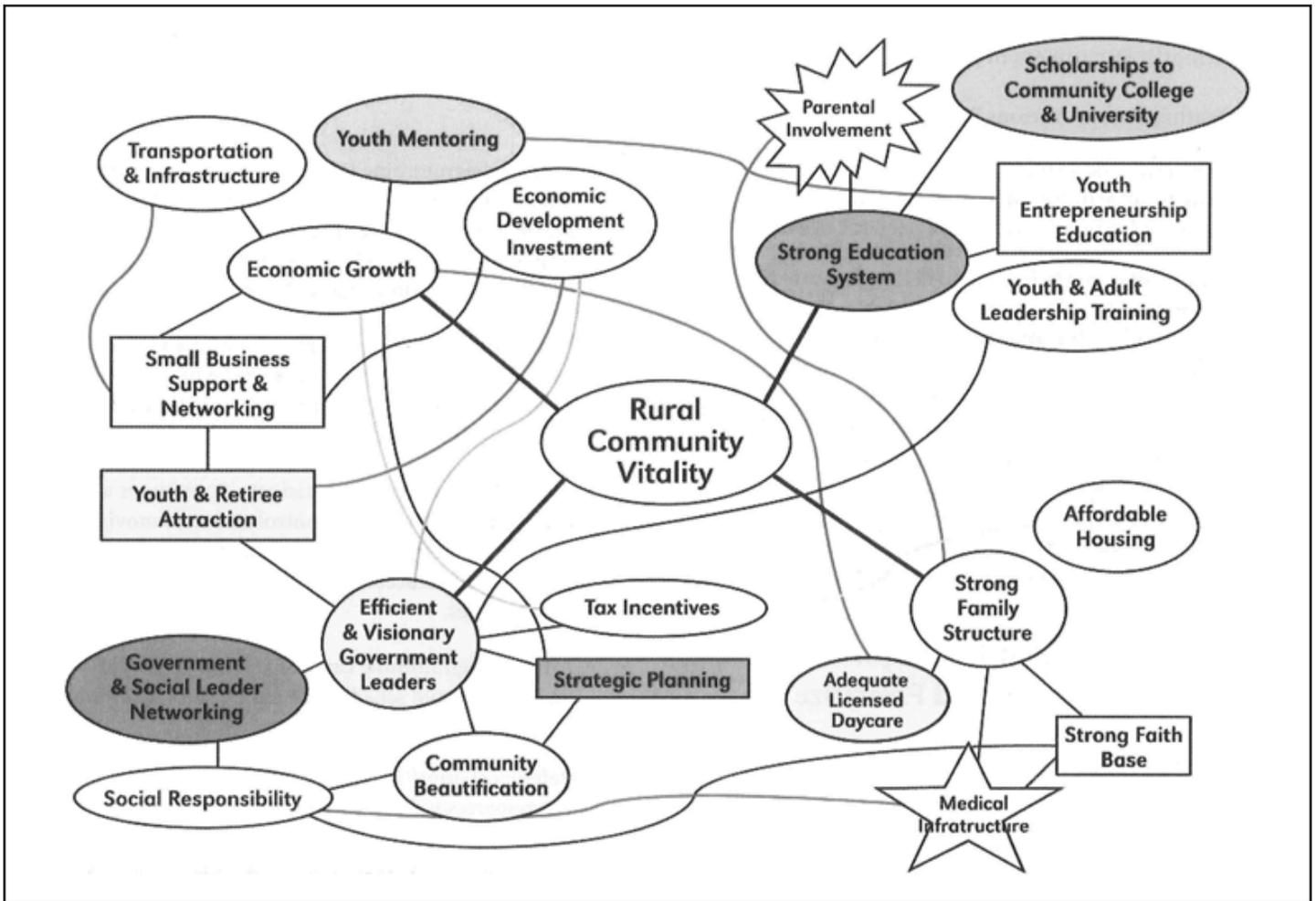
Mind mapping is another graphic technique that allows a group to identify multiple aspects of an issue and show an interrelated connection between several aspects. One of the benefits of mind mapping is that it allows participants to see how the components connect. If you think the issue will benefit from such a display, mind mapping is an excellent technique.

In advance, tape large sheets of paper to a large wall. Easel paper or rolls of newsprint or larger paper should cover a 6- x 10-foot section of the wall.

1. Encourage participants to stand close to the wall so they can see and hear each other.
2. Have a member of the group draw a circle in the center of the paper and write the issue inside the circle. (If you're really creative you can draw an image to depict the issue.)
3. Determine the main themes around the issue. Have a couple of members of the group connect the main themes to the issue by drawing thick "branches" out from the center.
4. Add a second level of thought by creating sub-centers for sub-themes. Connect them back to the main themes using smaller branches or lines.
5. Use color to depict themes and associations and to make things stand out. Think three-dimensionally.
6. Use arrows, icons, or other visual aids to show links between different elements.
7. Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
8. If you run out of space, add paper. Do not start over.
9. Be creative. Creativity aids memory. Don't worry if the mind map looks messy. It should not be black and white or linear.
10. Get involved and have fun. Add a little humor, exaggeration or absurdity if possible.

An example of a mind map is shown on the reverse side of this sheet.

Mind map example



<http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/make-mind-map.htm>

Source: *Working with Groups: Generating Ideas, Making Decisions, and Enhancing Communication*, by Phyllis I. Schoenholz and Cheryl A. Burkhart-Kriesel, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, EC478, 2008, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. Adapted with permission.

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