

Atlas CareMap

Worksheets



Data Collection

Your name:

Who lives with you? Don't forget your pets!

Who cares for or supports you? These could be people who directly care for you (including emotional support), or those who help in ways that allow you the time for your caregiving responsibilities.

a. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

Who else cares for this person?

b. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

Who else cares for this person?

c. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

Who else cares for this person?

d. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

Who else cares for this person?

e. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

Who else cares for this person?

f. Who do you care for?

If this person does not live with you, who else is in their household?

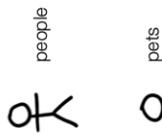
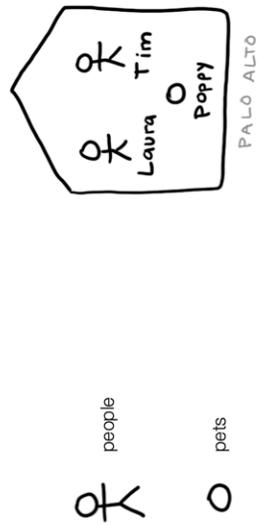
Who else cares for this person?

STEP 2

How to Draw it

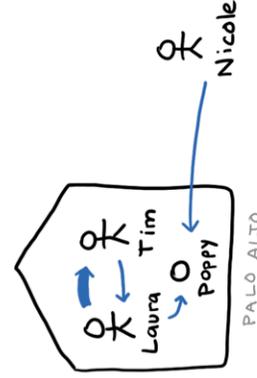
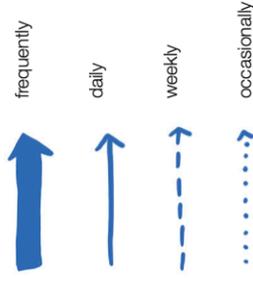
1. You and Those You Live With

Draw yourself and each person you live with in the middle of the page. Draw a house around the group. Label each person and the location where you all live.



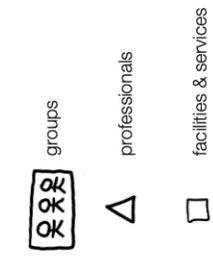
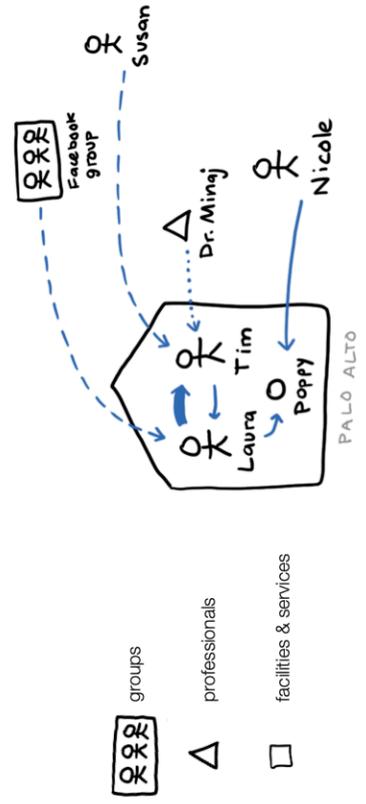
2. Care Relationships

Draw arrows in between people to show who cares for who, indicating how often care happens and in what direction.



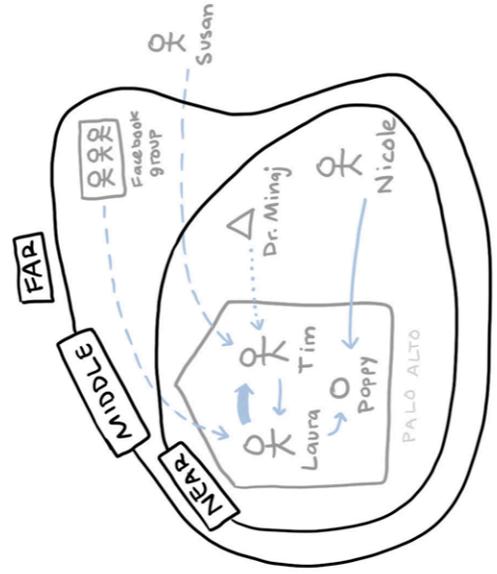
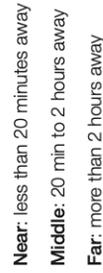
3. Extended Networks

Using the same process, fill in the rest of the drawing with additional individuals outside your immediate household. Draw them close to you if they live nearby, or far away if not. Group individuals if they live together, and draw arrows amongst them and you to represent how care happens.



4. Distance

Once all the individuals are drawn in, draw two concentric circles to indicate distance of other individuals from you.



Data Drawing

Actors: people  groups of people  professionals  pets  facilities & services 

Links: frequently  daily  weekly  occasionally 

Reflection Questions

The process of drawing your Atlas CareMap may have given you a new perspective on your situation. Here are ten questions you can ask yourself, to interrogate your thinking. As you interview yourself, we encourage you to look with soft eyes. Be kind and gentle to yourself, and to others on your map. Look to see, not to judge.

1. Who is indispensable, and what happens when they're not available?

Of the people you have drawn on your map, are there some that stand apart, that feel indispensable to your day-to-day wellbeing? Those whose absence would be most disruptive? What happens when they are absent, perhaps because they get sick, or have to go out of town? How do you manage? Some people have great “back-up systems”; many don't. In either case, it's good to be aware of what the situation is

2. Are the different people aware of each other's involvement?

To what extent do the various people on your map know about each other's involvement, and how important is (or could be) such awareness? In situations of intense family care, people are often well aware of their own efforts and difficulties, but only vaguely aware of the contributions and challenges of others, especially those they don't see. Such non-awareness can contribute to family-strife (“How come he never does anything to help?!”). It can also make helping, especially providing respite to primary caregivers, very difficult, as the person stepping in has no clear idea about who else is involved and what they do, and who to call for what.

3. What are the different kinds of care and skills people provide?

Think broadly, including practical (specialized knowledge and/or direct actions) as well as social (companionship, laughter, comfort, etc.). Consider the people on your map, and their differences on what they have the capacity to do. You might notice that due to personalities, circumstances, relationships, and skills, different people contribute in different ways. Someone nearby and with a flexible schedule may be providing hands-on and logistical support. A geographically distant relative with great management skills may be helping with healthcare research and managing lots of paperwork. Another geographically distant but sociable friend may contribute by phone providing conversation and a sympathetic ear. It is often helpful to recognize and appreciate these varied contributions. It is often helpful to recognize and appreciate these varied contributions.

4. How are responsibilities divided amongst the different people?

Consider how care responsibilities are currently divided amongst those on your map, and whether it is desirable and possible for things to be different. Could a different distribution share the joys and burdens of care more equitably? Could responsibilities be shifted to better fit people's personalities, circumstances, relationships, and skills?

5. How do you communicate, coordinate, and negotiate issues with everyone?

If there are many people on your map, it's easy and natural to say "Isn't it nice that so many people are involved?" However, if many people's efforts overlap and impact each other there is also more overhead — more communication to keep everyone informed, more coordination with more calendars to juggle, and more negotiation with more opinions to consider. Reflect on the current situation, on what is good about how the issues are managed within your care ecosystem, and what could possibly be improved.

6. Have you forgotten anyone important?

Reexamine your Atlas CareMap and consider if you've forgotten anyone important. Spouses, siblings and best friends are often overlooked! This is reflective of the fact that sometimes people are so much a part of our lives, so ever-present, that they and their contributions become invisible.

7. Are there relatives or friends who could be more involved?

Especially in situations of intensive caregiving, when you're involved in the care of someone with significant health issues that requires a lot of time and effort, it's worth considering if there are people who could be more involved. Reflect on relatives and friends who aren't depicted on your map, and on their non-involvement. If they have the capacity to help, what might be preventing their involvement and what could make a change? Sometimes people are not involved because they haven't been asked, they don't know how to offer their assistance, or simply don't know how they could be helpful. It could also be the case they are already busy with other responsibilities or the situation doesn't suit their mindset or skills. Be kind and generous as you reflect on such uninvolved people.

8. Are there professionals or services that are missing and needed?

If you are aware of such valuable-but-missing support, you may find it helpful to include them on your map (perhaps in a different color). Those you share your map with may be able to help get such support. It is also possible that you are simply unaware of potentially valuable resources. Sharing your Atlas CareMap, and helping people understand your situation, may lead to helpful suggestions.

9. How has your situation changed over time?

It can be helpful to reflect on the past (how things have changed over time) and contemplate the future (how the situation may be different). Creating a map of some occasion in the past different than today's has helped people recognize helpful-but-forgotten practices and services, and gain clarity on what has led to today being easier or harder than before. Creating maps of hypothetical futures can help you achieve or prepare for such futures. An exercise in Unit 5 will focus on such future maps.

10. What is good in your current situation; what is worth celebrating?

This is possibly the most important question on this list. People often first approach the Atlas CareMap with the idea that they will get clarity on the currently poorly-met needs, and on how these problems can be addressed. However, after drawing and reflecting, their most powerful emotions are often about the good that already exists in their lives, and about wanting to celebrate, conserve, and build upon those positive things. In fact, to improve the current situation, it is often easier and better to build upon your existing assets (the people, and their skills and relationships) than to bring in new people and/or services to address existing deficits.



Atlas of Caregiving is a California-based nonprofit. Atlas believes in inspiring people to see and appreciate the common humanity in our lives and in our communities so that we can all better care for ourselves and each other. Our mission is to transform how we care for ourselves and our communities through innovative research, practical solutions, and rich collaborations.

www.atlasofcaregiving.com

© 2023 Atlas of Caregiving.

Atlas of Caregiving, Atlas CareMap, and the heart logo are the exclusive trademarks of Atlas of Caregiving.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License