



Process Mapping



A **process map** is a tool to understand how an existing process works or to identify how a new process should work. For continuous quality improvement (CQI) work, teams focus on existing program processes.

A **process** describes the way things get done. It is a set of steps or actions that collectively lead to an outcome.

Example processes in tribal home visiting include steps to –

- ▶ Connect families with home visitors and recruit them into the program
- ▶ Enroll a family
- ▶ Schedule home visits
- ▶ Complete assessments and document results

Process mapping helps teams –

- ▶ Visualize the steps taken to complete a task
- ▶ Document and describe how work is done
- ▶ Observe connections between activities
- ▶ Build consensus on program areas to target in CQI projects
- ▶ Identify areas of complexity and collectively brainstorm ways to strengthen processes to improve goals and outcomes
- ▶ Contribute to conducting root cause analysis on CQI topic (see Fishbone Diagram Tool for more information)
- ▶ Illustrate improvements made through CQI projects





Levels of Process Maps

Process maps can be detailed or done at high level¹ –

	High Level	Detailed
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Birds eye view”• Shows only the basic steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed view• Shows all the steps and activities
What are the advantages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to build• Identifies key participants quickly• Creates rapid consensus in the group• Can inform high-level measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies steps that should be redesigned to improve efficiency
When is it best to use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a first step• When short on time and need a general shared vision of a process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you need to identify specific parts of the process that require improvement

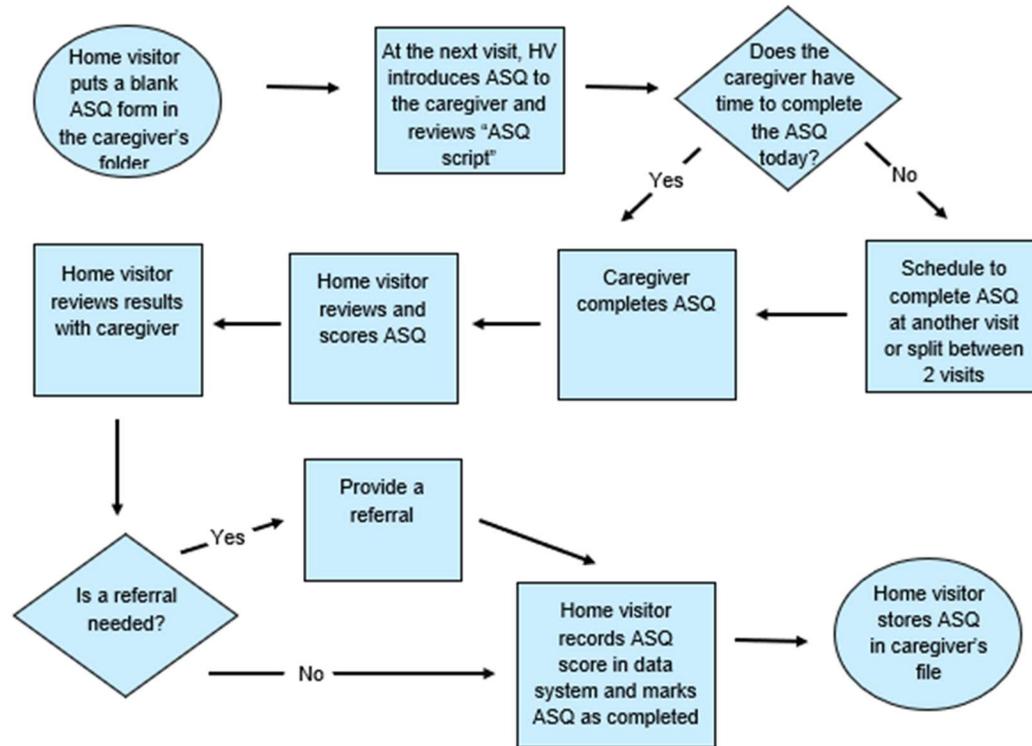


¹ Adapted from Nocito, S. & Zeribi, K. (n.d.) Building a Swim Lane Flow Chart. Tutorial for ImproveCareNow. (n.p.)

High level process map example: Completing an ASQ



Detailed process map example: Completing an ASQ



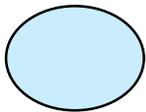


Steps for Process Mapping

1. Assemble your CQI team
2. Determine which process needs to be documented or mapped out
3. Agree on where the process begins and ends
4. Agree on the level of detail that will be displayed
5. Make a list of the steps taken in the current process
6. Create your process map
7. Interpret your process map
8. Ask additional staff to review and provide input on the process map

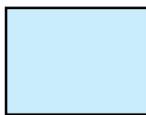
Symbols to use in a process map

Start and End – Oval



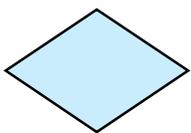
- ▶ Shows the materials, information, or action (inputs) to start the process or to show the results at the end (output) of the process

Activity – Box or Rectangle



- ▶ Shows a task or activity performed in the process
- ▶ Multiple arrows may come into each box but usually only one arrow leaves each box

Decision – Diamond



- ▶ Shows the points in the process where a yes/no question is being asked or a decision is required

Flow – Arrow



- ▶ Shows the direction of the process

Process Mapping Tips

- ▶ There is no single way to do a process map. It is a tool to learn about your organization and processes.
- ▶ If your team is new to process mapping, do a trial run on a simple everyday process.
- ▶ Map the current process.
- ▶ It's okay if team members have different views about how the process works. These differences may lead to discussion of ways to improve the process.
- ▶ Keep steps simple and begin each step with an action verb.
- ▶ Process mapping is dynamic – use post it notes, dry-erase markers, etc. – and revisit the map!



Considerations for interpreting the process map

- ▶ What steps were done differently by different people?
- ▶ What impact do the decision points have on your process?
- ▶ Where in your process do handoffs occur?
- ▶ What steps seem confusing or cumbersome?
- ▶ What steps seem unnecessary?