

Stakeholder Empathy Map

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION Participants map out the different stakeholders involved and/or impacted by an issue (can use Spectrum of Allies). They create empathy maps for each of the key stakeholder groups to identify their positions, concerns and motivations.

PURPOSE To develop an understanding of underlying beliefs, fears and motivations of stakeholders in order to inform key strategies and influence them more effectively

INTENDED OUTCOMES To develop empathy for the motivations of key stakeholders; identify key communication strategies to build allies and support for an issue

SKILLS DEVELOPED Emotional intelligence, empathy, strategy, communication, messaging

TOTAL TIME 1 hour, 30 minutes

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS At least 4

MATERIALS Large roll of paper, markers/pastels, Empathy Map Template (optional)

SETTING Chairs in a circle, space for small group breakouts

INTRODUCTORY FRAME

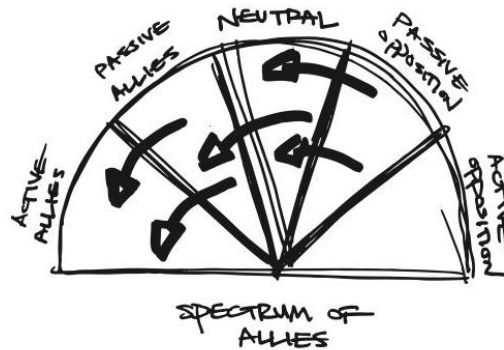
Stakeholders are all beings who are impacted by an issue in some way. In order to create change that benefit everyone and address the different concerns of all stakeholders, we need to first map out who they are and what they care about. The more support we have for an issue, the more power and momentum we have to create change. We need to understand people's underlying concerns, desires, fears, values and motivations in order to connect with them, listen to their perspectives and communicate effectively so that they feel their worldview, needs and concerns are respected in the process. There will also be opponents to creating change – this may be because of cultural traditions and worldviews or it may be because an individual or group of people benefit from the situation as it is. If we have empathy, we can be much more skillful in

our negotiations and find win-win solutions. Below is a process to stand in another's shoes.

PROCESS

First complete the Spectrum of Allies exercise – or brainstorm in the large group:

- Who are the key stakeholders involved in this issue?
- Draw a half pie chart:



Art by Joshua Kahn Russel, Beautiful Trouble

In each wedge you can place different individuals (be specific: name them!), groups, or institutions. Moving from left to right, identify your:

Active allies: people who agree with you and are fighting alongside you

Passive allies: folks who agree with you but aren't doing anything about it

Neutrals: fence sitters, the unengaged

Passive opposition: people who disagree with you but aren't trying to stop you

Active opposition: people who are actively fighting against you and your issue

Identify the most important stakeholder groups you need to understand in order to build support and create change.

Create Empathy maps for these key stakeholder groups.

Optional:

Lay out long pieces of paper (the length of a body) for each stakeholder you want to map. People lie down on the paper and someone uses a marker to trace the outline of their body. Use this body outline to fill out the empathy map with words and images, responding to the following questions: What do they think, see, feel, hear, say and do? What are their pains and fears? What are their needs and desires?

Try to put yourself in their shoes to really understand who they are and what truly motivates them.

Note: You can also fill out an Empathy Map template, instead of tracing a body outline.

Do a gallery walk through the room and each group presents their empathy map of each key stakeholder.

Discuss as a whole group:

- What are the key values and underlying needs and concerns of the people we want to influence?
- What is the most effective message to share with them about this issue to connect and address their concerns?
- Who is the best messenger? Who are they most likely to listen to or be influenced by?
- What previous successful experiences have you had with the stakeholders we've identified? What made them successful?
- What next steps should we take to engage with these stakeholders?

Based on the information you have mapped out and analyzed, make an action plan or incorporate it into your advocacy strategies. Remember that you don't have to transform your active opponents all the way to becoming active allies – but if you can shift stakeholders even one step closer to your position and build your movement of support – you will have a much better chance at changing the political landscape and succeeding!