

Netty Spaghetti Activity

A kinesthetic way to understand just how connected our issues are to one another

Set-up of Social Problems/ Nametags

- The Netty Spaghetti map needs 9 participants, each of whom wears a nametag denoting a particular social problem.
- A template for these nametags begins on page 3 of this document.
 - This template is designed to be printed front/back (i.e. in such a way that when printed, the nametag with “Intimate partner violence” on the front will have “poverty” and “low academic achievement” on the back, and so that the nametag with “Homelessness” on the front has “low academic achievement” and “negative parental-child interactions” on the back, etc).

Set-up of Risk Factors

- The 5 pieces of paper displaying particular risk factors should be placed on the floor text-side up in a small circle/cluster (you don’t need to spread them out very much—each sheet can almost be touching the sheet next to it. You just want to make sure the writing on each sheet is visible and that the yarn is accessible).
- The printouts for these sheets can be found starting on page 7 of this document.
- A different color of yarn/string should be used for each risk factor. The yarn/string can be attached to the risk factor papers with tape, with a brass brad, etc. Each piece of yarn/string should be approximately 100 inches long.
- Each risk factor paper should have the following amounts of yarn attached:
 - The **Negative Parent-Child Interactions** paper has **8** pieces of yarn
 - The **Poverty** risk factor paper has **6** pieces of yarn
 - The **Child Maltreatment** has **6** pieces of yarn
 - The **Low Parental Monitoring** paper has **5** pieces of yarn
 - The **Low Academic Achievement** paper has **4** pieces of yarn
- Although yarn is the cheapest option, it tangles very easily (sometimes to the point where it cannot be untangled after doing the activity one time). We have found that “plastic lacing” is a sustainable alternative.
- Plastic lacing can be found at retailers such as S&S Worldwide (active link as of May 2015: <http://www.ssw.com/item/rexlace-lacing-spools-LA400S/>) or Amazon (active link as of May 2015: http://www.amazon.com/Pepperell-Rexlace-Plastic-Craft-32-Inch/dp/B000XZVV78/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1431363779&sr=8-2&keywords=plastic+lacing)

Facilitator Instructions

- **Step 1:** The facilitator asks the participants to read their social problem aloud to the group so that everyone can hear what problems are going to be represented in the network map.
- **Step 2:** The facilitator instructs each participant to look at the back of his/her nametag to see which risk factors are associated with their particular social problem.
- **Step 3:** The facilitator instructs each participant to pick up a piece of yarn/string that corresponds to each of the risk factors on the back of his/her nametag. *[Note to facilitator: the resultant web will be very, very tangled, and participants do not need to take the time to make the web look “perfect.” In fact, the more tangled the web is the better! If the tangledness causes a participant to be unable to find his/her own piece of string, you can encourage them to just grab onto a string that someone else is already holding.]*
- **Step 4:** Once participants have picked up all of the strings, the facilitator instructs the participants to take a few steps backward until all of the yarn is taut.
- **Step 5:** While the participants are still holding their yarn taut, the facilitator then gives the following “speech” (feel free to use your own words to convey the following concepts):

“The tangled web we’ve just created is based on only a fraction of the risk factors that are associated with these nine social problems. There are additional connections between these problems, but for the sake of simplicity only five common risk factors were chosen for this activity.

“Let’s imagine that representatives from each of the social problems shown here work together to eliminate these risk factors from their community. Let’s suppose that the first risk factor to be eliminated is negative parent-child interactions. So everyone who is holding a [insert color you chose to represent negative parent-child interactions] piece of yarn/string, please let go of that color now.

“Next, let’s imagine that our community works together to eliminate poverty. So everyone who is holding a [insert color you chose to represent poverty] piece of string, please let go of that color now.

“Next, let’s imagine that our community works together to eliminate child maltreatment. Everyone who is holding a [insert color you chose to represent child maltreatment] piece of yarn/string, please let go of that color now.

“Next, let’s imagine that our community works together to address low parental monitoring. So everyone who is holding a [insert color you chose to represent low parental monitoring] piece of yarn/string, please let go of that color now.

“Finally, let’s imagine that our community works together and address low academic achievement. Let’s drop the final pieces of yarn/string now.

- **Step 6:** The facilitator poses the following questions as part of a post-activity discussion:
 - What did you feel as each of the risk factors were eliminated and we dropped a given color of yarn/string? *[Note to facilitator: the answer we are looking for is that the participants felt the weight of the map lighten as each factor was eliminated/dropped.]*
 - Did any of you notice that you felt the web get lighter even when one of the risk factors that was dropped was not one that you had been holding? *[Note to facilitator: the answer we are looking for is “yes.” You may want to emphasize something like “by working together, we were able to reduce each of our burdens because of how intricately of our problems are connected”]*
 - Did any of the connections between social problems surprise you?
 - What are any other impressions about this activity that you would like to share?

**INTIMATE
PARTNER
VIOLENCE**

**TEEN DATING
VIOLENCE**

**YOUTH
VIOLENCE**

**YOUTH
DELINQUENCY**

**SUBSTANCE
ABUSE**

**PERPETRATING
SEXUAL ABUSE**

- Child maltreatment
- Poverty
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Low parental monitoring

- Poverty
- Low academic achievement

- Low parental monitoring
- Child maltreatment
- Negative parent-child interactions

- Poverty
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Low parental monitoring
- Low academic achievement

- Poverty
- Child maltreatment
- Negative parent-child interactions

- Low parental monitoring
- Low academic achievement
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Child maltreatment

HOMELESSNESS

**GANG
INVOLVEMENT**

OBESITY

- Low academic achievement
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Child maltreatment
- Poverty
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Low parental monitoring
- Negative parent-child interactions
- Poverty
- Child maltreatment

Risk factor

Poverty

Risk factor

Negative
parent-child
interactions

Risk factor

Low parental
monitoring

Risk factor

Low academic
achievement

Risk factor

Child

maltreatment