A Guide on Workflow Mapping

LA Net Community Health Resource Network
A Practice Based Resource Network

This is an introductory course on workflow mapping. This session is meant to provide basic knowledge in workflow mapping, while demystifying the process.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the three types of flowcharts
- Explain the use for flowcharts
- Apply the 6 steps used to produce a flowchart
- Evaluate an organizational process using your flowchart

Workflow Mapping

- Workflow maps are also referred to as flowcharts, flow maps, flow diagrams, flow sheets, and process maps
- A workflow map is defined as a visual representation of a process
- A process considers a sequence of operations with a start and end point

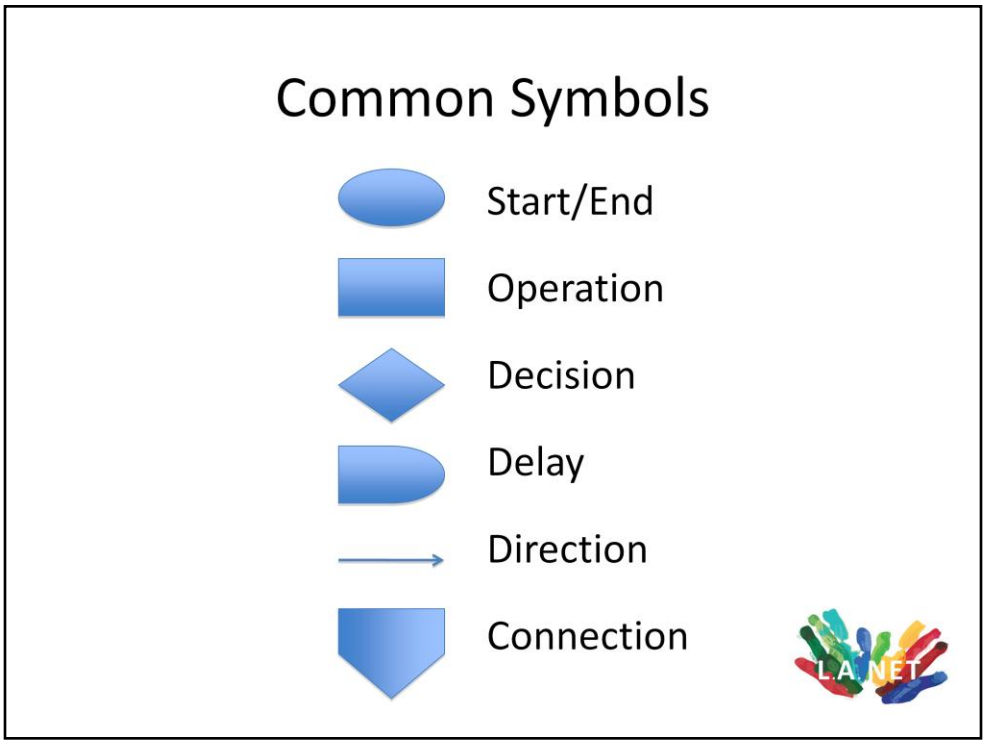
Use for Workflow Maps

- To map current practice flow

  Are we really doing what we say we do?
- Begin to identify areas for process improvement
- Visual aid and representation of roles and responsibilities
- Add-on to an organization's policies and procedures
- Process maintenance

Types of Flowcharts

1. **<u>High-Level flowchart</u>**: is a diagram that provides a brief overview of a process only highlighting major events in the process
2. **<u>Detailed flowchart</u>**: is a map that marks every step in a process, which includes decision points, waiting periods, and feedback loops
3. **<u>Swimlane flowchart</u>**: is a map that displays processes carried out for multiple roles across multiple stages



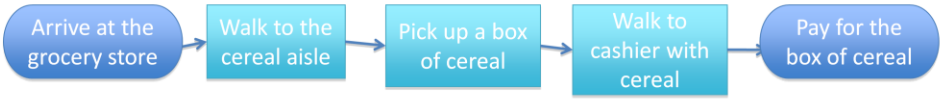
Become familiar with the following symbols. Your team will want to construct its workflow diagram to include these. The symbols offer an immediate visual representation of: start/end, decision point, delay, and direction.

1) Indicates the start or end of a process
2) A specific task or activity performed
3) A point in the process where a decision needs to be made to determine the path in the process
4) Indicates a point in the process where there is delay or wait in line
5) Arrows indicate the direction of flow
6) Use this as a cross reference from a process on another page

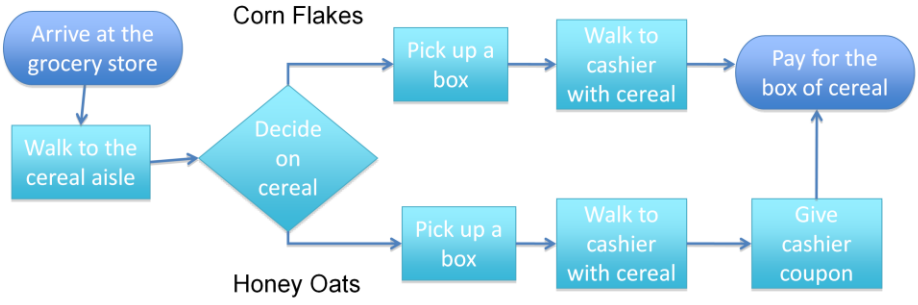
What it looks like

Example: The process of buying a box of cereal.

High-Level Flowchart

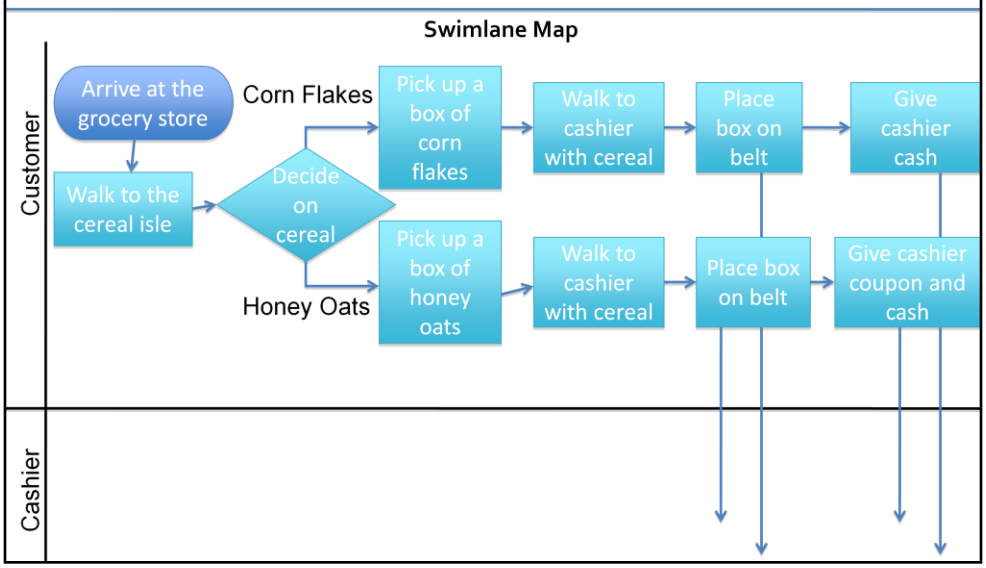


Detailed Flowchart



What it looks like

Example: The process of buying a box of cereal.



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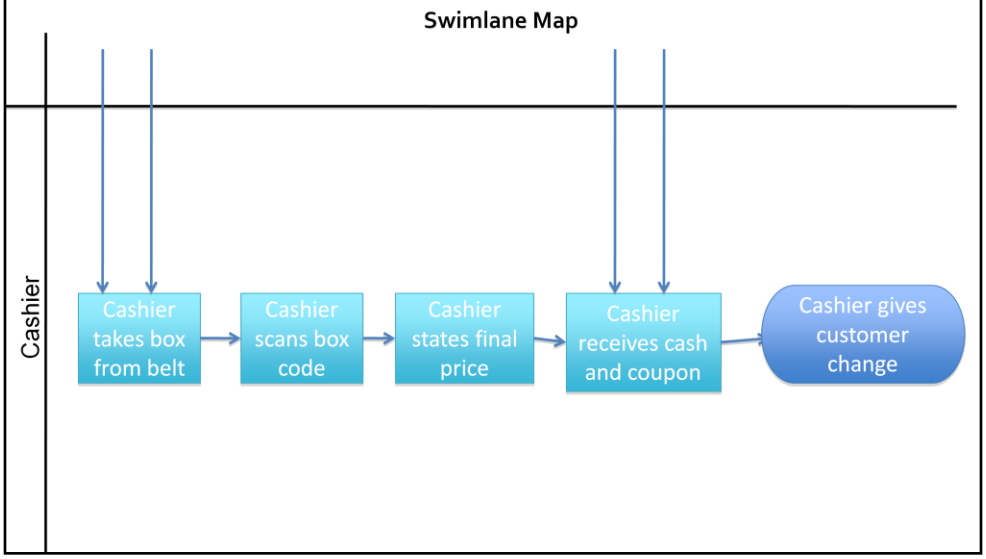

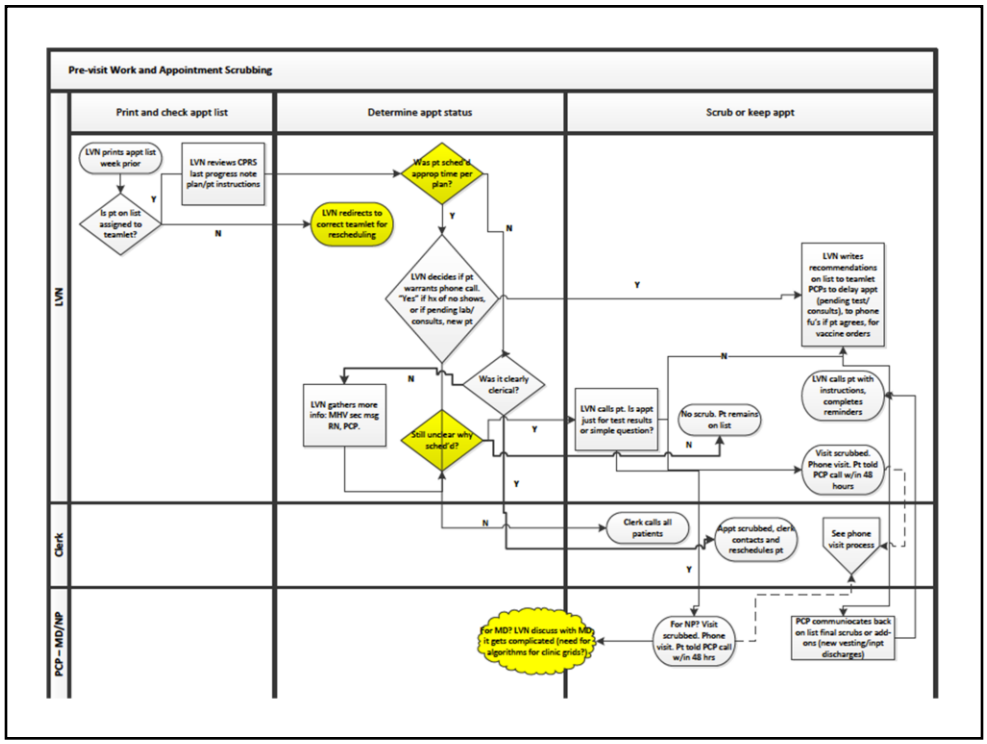

This is an example of what is referred to as a “swim lane map.” A swim lane map displays processes that are carried out for multiple roles across multiple stages.

Each swim lane is representative of a role, in this case: PCP, Clerk, LVN.

The stretch of each lane is marked by the stages in the process. Here they are marked in the following order: 1) Appointment list review, 2) Appointment status, 3) scrubbing

Who is involved?

Involve all those who play a part in the process.

Tips:

- Start with a small group if it's a challenge to start with the entire group
- Pick a champion for this group
- Be sure to have all materials on-hand
- Provide the team with an overview of what the mapping process looks like
- Clearly state the objective and process selected for this exercise

The 6-Step Process

Step 1: Identify a process to map (use the Know Your Process template)

Step 2: Begin with a high-level flowchart

Step 3: Move into a detailed flowchart

Step 4: Walk through the process once or twice

Step 5: Validate the maps to ensure they truly reflect the current process

Step 6: Identify quick fixes and distinguish them from larger fixes (use LA Net's Impact & Complexity Grid)

(REMEMBER: A flowchart captures the process AS IS, not how it is supposed to be)

<u>After Step 6 Your next step will be to PDSA one of the identified fixes for improvement</u>

Step 1: agree on a process to map: (HAVE A PLAN) Consider surveying your staff, patients, or others on which processes are the biggest problems Process that are the most time consuming, most labor-intensive, have the most complaints, etc.

Refer to your "Know Your Processes" assessment template for guidance.

Step 2: agree on a beginning and end IMPORTANT when you start high-level flowchart

Know Your Process Template

12 Know Your Processes- Practice Core and Supporting Processes Assessment: Ask each member of the staff to rate the core and supporting processes using this worksheet. Based on these findings, staff members choose what to work on improving. Rate each process by putting a tic mark under the heading which most closely matches your understanding of the process. Also mark if the process is a source of patient complaints. (**See Appendix, page A14-A16** for the Pareto worksheet and example to help you analyze the data.)
Steps for Improvement: Each of the processes below should be flowcharted in their current state. Explore improvements for each process based on the outcomes of the assessment tool. Once you have flowcharted the current state of your processes and determined your change ideas use the PDSA Cycle Worksheet on **page 26** to run tests of change and to measure. The collection of flowcharts will create your Practice Playbook (**see page 29**).

Processes	Works Well	Not a Problem	Small Problem	Real Problem	Totally Broken	Cannot Rate	We're Working On It	Source of Patient Complaint
Answering phones								
Appointment system								
Messaging								
Scheduling procedures								
Reporting diagnostic test results								
Prescription renewals								
Making referrals								
Pre-authorization for services								
Billing/Coding								
Phone advice								
Assignment of patients to your practice								
Orientation of patients to your practice								
New patient work ups								
Education for patients/families								
Prevention assessment/activities								
Chronic disease management								

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Ask each member of the staff to rate the core and supporting processes using this worksheet.

Based on these findings, staff members chose what to work on improving.

Rate each process by putting a tic mark under the heading which most closely matches your understanding of the process.

Impact & Complexity Grid

- Build Complexity:
  - ✓ Low Complexity/High Impact
  - ✓ Low Complexity/Low Impact
- Next Stage:
  - ✓ High Complexity/High Impact
- Avoid Option #4:
  High Complexity/Low Impact

	Low Impact	High Impact
High Complexity	High Complexity/Low Impact (Option #4)	High Complexity/High Impact (Option #3)
Low Complexity	Low Complexity/Low Impact (Option #2)	Low Complexity/High Impact (Option #1)

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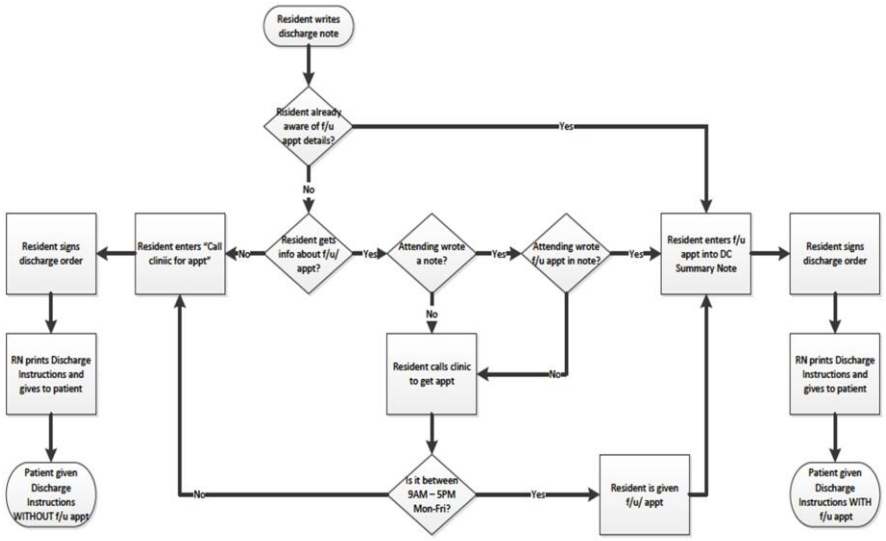
Give 2 examples from needs assessment to conduct

DO NOT USE WITH TEAMLET. Only one right answer. The reason we are showing this to you, is for you to use it and select low complexity processes. If for some reason, you have a highly functional team, then you might consider jumping into a higher complexity process. But what you do not want is taking on if not ready. Digest this.

To be successful, build hope that they can change something. IC should know that not all processes are created equal. Your job as an IC is to help teams

Scheduling PCP Follow-up Appointments for Patients Prior to Hospital Discharge



How to Analyze my Map

You can use your process map to assess problem areas or potential areas for improvement by examining some of the following:

- ✓ Bottlenecks and other sources of delay
- ✓ Rework due to errors
- ✓ Role ambiguity
- ✓ Duplicated efforts
- ✓ Unnecessary steps
- ✓ Sources of waste
- ✓ Variation
- ✓ Hand-offs

Tips on Mapping

- Be sure to map current process
- Get key players involved and their input
- Recognize that any flowchart will take multiple attempts to complete
- Leverage existing experts and experiences

Workflow Mapping Exercise

- Break into groups of 5 to 6
- Be sure to have:
  - Poster board paper
  - Post-its (or 5x6 index cards)
  - Marker
- Pick a leader and a scribe
- Ground rules:
  - State process: Making coffee
  - Define beginning and end points
  - Assumptions: you already have coffee, a coffee pot, and you do not have a Keurig

Questions to Ask

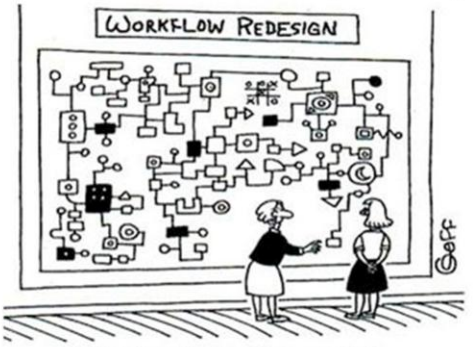
- Who knows what a workflow map is?
- Who has experience in workflow mapping?
- Did you consider your start and end points? What were they and how did your team come to this conclusion?
- How did you deal with process agreements/disagreements?
- Did everyone have input? If not, why?

In Conclusion

- The 3 types of flowcharts include: High-level, Detailed, and Swimlane flowcharts
- Flowcharts are used to map current processes, identify barriers and opportunities to increase efficiency, and to train newly hired staff of a process
- There are 6 major steps in mapping a flowchart
- There are a series of questions that need to be discussed after you develop your map that ask about repetition, role maximization, and decision points

Remember

Workflow maps serve as a tool to improve care for patients, improve efficiency in practice, and redistribute work and job responsibilities.



"And this is where our ED workflow redesign team went insane."

Thank You!

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