

# Self-in-Context Mapping

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Prepared by  
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## Who is Robert S. Wright?

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In the last 18 years I've worked extensively with "at-risk", violent, aggressive, sexually abusive, attachment disordered, conduct disordered youth, and have concentrated my undergraduate, graduate and post graduate studies to better understanding and serving this population

In a word I'm a . . .

**knuckle-head-ologist**

## The Problem

In education, corrections and other youth care settings workers are often responsible for meeting with youth to review "incidents" of inappropriate behaviour. These "discipline" interviews often take one of several forms:

1. Unstructured and unfocussed
2. Structured and often focussed on reviewing the incident in a cognitive behavioural fashion
3. Punitive, taking the form of lectures and threats
4. Completely incidental in nature and not instructive or producing anything that adds value beyond processing the incident

## The Need

Self-in-Context Mapping was developed when:

1. I was a young counsellor of "at-risk youth" I worked in an inner city junior high in Halifax
2. In addition to the systematic, long term case work I was doing I was often asked to conduct "discipline" interviews with youth who were sent to me from class
3. I found that too many of my students were being defined by their negative behaviour
4. I needed a tool for restructuring the "discipline" interviews when youth were sent to me from the classroom because of their misbehaviour
5. I recognized that people's lives are like a jigsaw puzzle and that I was missing most of the pieces when it came to the work I was doing with youth

## Self in Context Mapping is . . .

1. A form of eco-mapping that assists in developing a visual composite of a person's world. A way to get to know and help a person express the multi-facets of their lives
2. A tool that can assist in structuring interviews with youth
3. A way to draw youth into a reflective look at their lives in a non-threatening manner
4. A way to weave narrative therapy approaches into your daily work with youth
5. A way to get to "know" the youth you work with

## The Mapping Exercise

### "The Power of Knowing"

One of the values of the Self-in-Context exercise is that it assists in getting to "know" a youth, and results in the production of a document, constructed by the youth, that is a visual reflection of their life. That this document is constructed and shared with the helper is significant. It is my view that the most powerful tool that we have in working with youth is this "power of knowing".

## Connection to Narrative Therapy

There is a connection between eco-mapping, and Narrative Therapy. Narrative Therapies tend to focus on assisting people to "thicken" their stories. It sees that people's lives, their stories, isn't fully described by their behaviour, or particular incidents in their lives.

Self-in-Context Mapping is a collaborative telling and retelling of a youth's story.

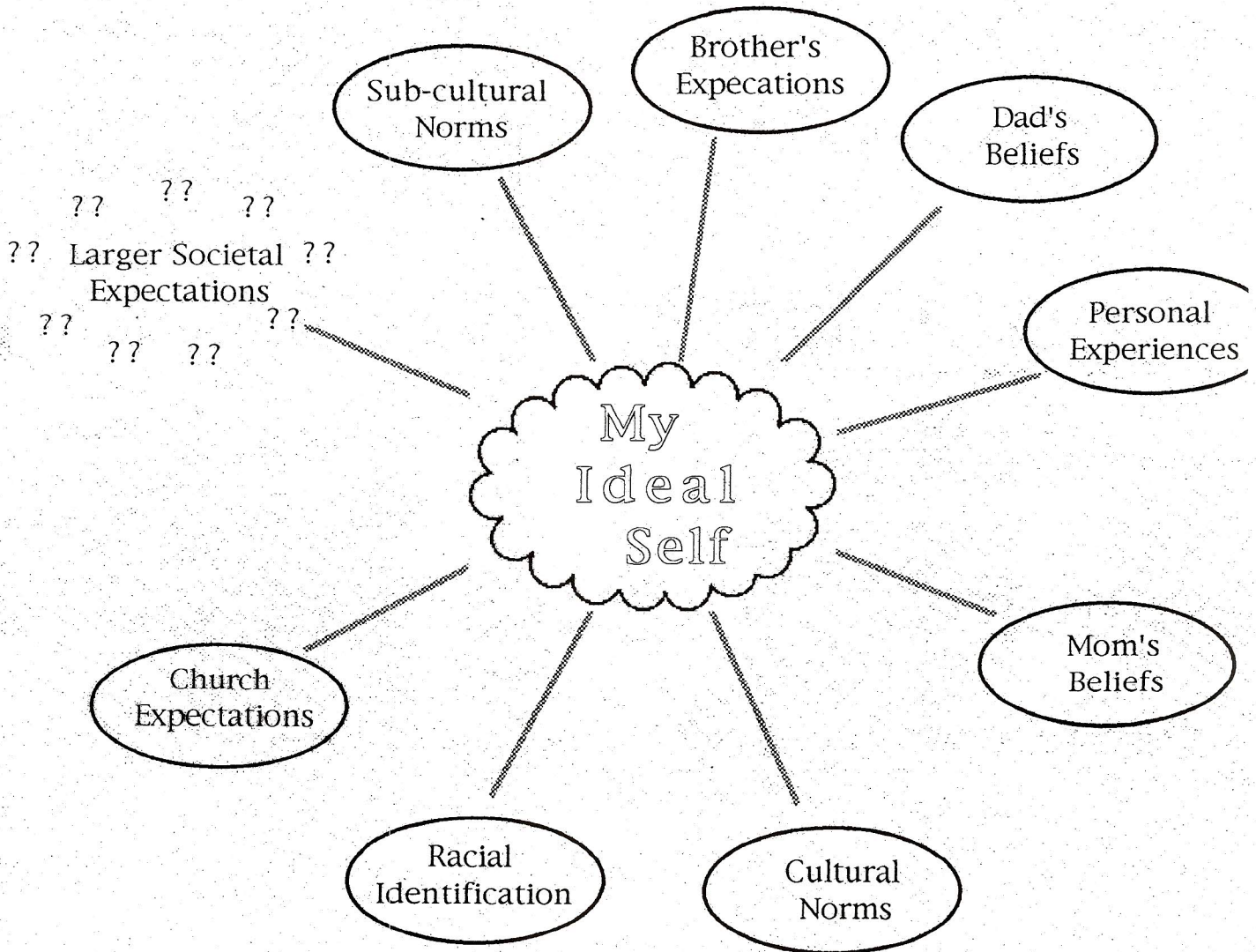
For more, see the Dulwich Centre pages  
<http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au/questions.html>

## Step by Step

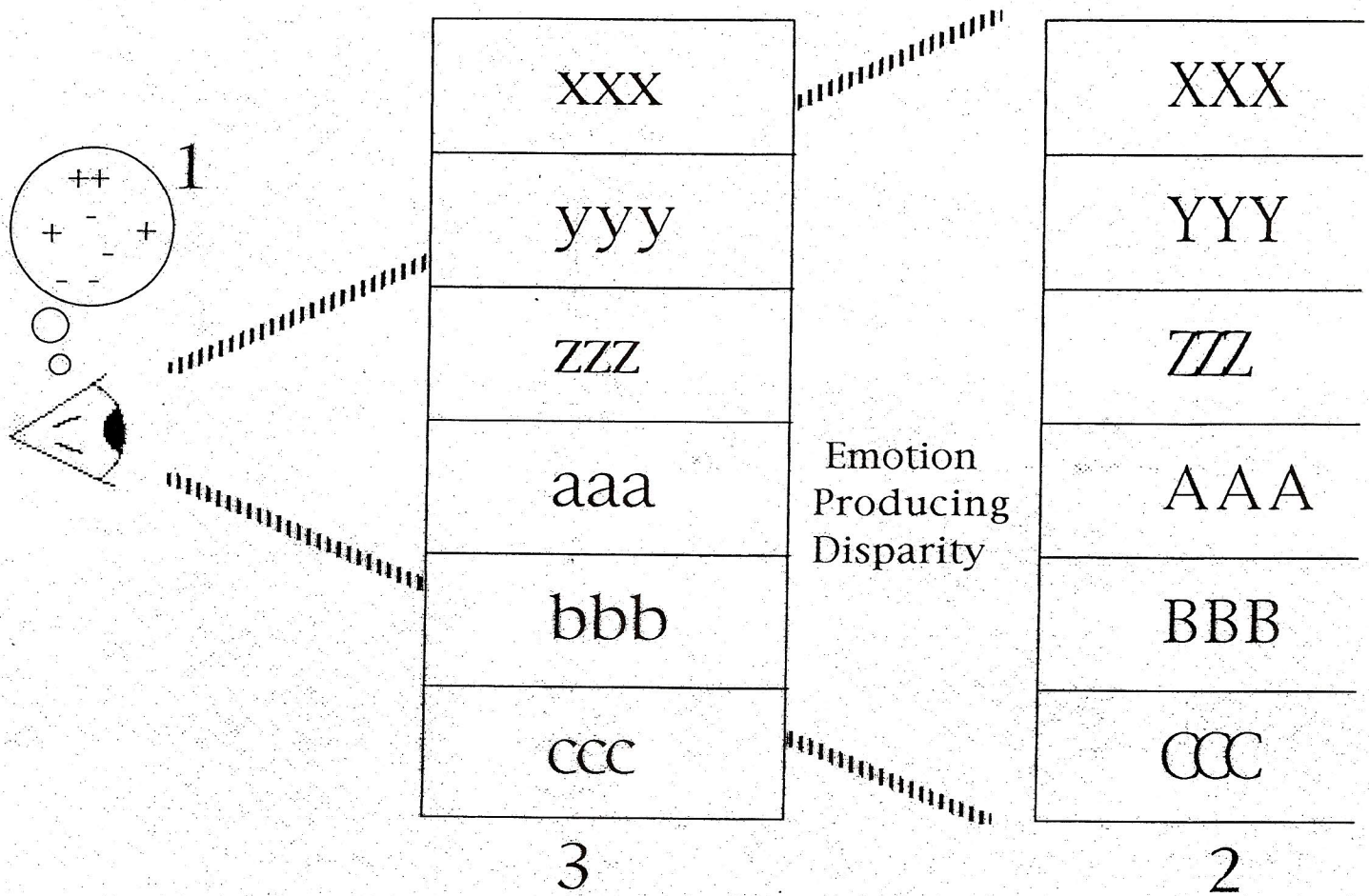
1. Acknowledge the reason for the session
2. Introduce the concept of mapping as an exercise to keep things straight, get to know the youth, understand their world, and yes, eventually reduce problematic behaviour
3. Build the Map from the inside out
4. Proceed in bite size portions (Rome wasn't built in a day)
5. Look for consistencies in the story
6. Look for contradictions or inconsistencies in the story
7. Later, challenge inconsistencies in order to encourage reflection, explanation, articulation of complexity
8. Ask "what can you do to make things right?"

# The Construction of Self

The student's construction of self-concept and ideal self are based on a complex set of values which ultimately must be respected.



# Areas of Intervention



- 1) Thinking and feeling
- 2) Construction of the Ideal Self
- 3) Perception of the Self