Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) is an evaluation tool that helps identify the intended and unintended results of a program for individuals, groups or communities.

**Benefits to using REM for evaluation:**
- Effective way to collect stories and impacts
- Opportunity for participant reflection
- Captures impacts of complex or evolving work
- Group validation of results
- Can be completed: (mid-program and post-program)

**Benefits to participants involved in a REM process:**
- Uses a participatory and asset-based approach that engages the group
- Provides an opportunity for reflection and growth
- More positive and hopeful when participants see what they have done
- Able to see how activities are connected to a larger purpose
- Effective communication tool
- Fun and engaging!

**Steps to Implement Ripple Effect Mapping**

**Step 1 Invite participants**
- Frame it as a celebration – describe the purpose, highlight the benefits to participants and serve food.
- Invitations – bring together those from core group, those peripherally involved, and non-program participants.
- Plan for about 2 hours total.

**Step 2 Appreciative Inquiry interviews**
(15-20 minutes)
- Ask participants to find a partner (not a good friend) to interview.
- Use Post-It notes to record interview highlights using Appreciative Inquiry type questions such as:
  - Share a story of a time when you were very proud of a program you had done. What was happening, what was your involvement, what difference did it make to others?
  - Tell a story of change you have seen in your organization/community related to the program.
  - List an achievement or success you’ve had based on what you learned in the program. What made it possible?

**Step 3 Mapping**
(1+ hours)
- Post a large piece of white paper on the wall and write your program name in the middle of the map.
- Ask each group to report out one story. Begin mapping on the poster paper.
- Draw out several branches from the items identified through Appreciative Inquiry conversations.
- Individual action items are the easiest to start with.
- When mapping, get as detailed as possible. After collecting information for the map there will be opportunities to add additional items.
- Begin brainstorming the immediate results of the program drawing lines to connect things.
- Ask probing questions, “Then what happened? How are things different as a result of the program? What affect did participation have on attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and action?”
- Follow-up interviews can be done at a later date if more clarity is needed.
- Additional facilitator can enter information into online mapping program - xmind.net, mindmeister.com.

**Step 4 Coding and theming**
- Export map to Excel
- Code the items – participants or researchers code after mapping
- Coding frameworks to consider –
  - Community Capitals framework
  - Coalition building
  - Positive youth development (4-H)
  - Short term, mid-term, long-term
  - Policy, systems, and environment.
- Coding to policy, systems, environment –
  - Policy change – passing of laws, ordinances, resolutions, regulations, rules.
  - Systems change – shifting the ways problems are solved. May include development of plans for new processes or technologies, adapting models, creating training or other systems.
  - Environmental change – change to the physical, social, or economic environment.
### Limitations

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<tr>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Risk of bias in participant selection</td>
<td>Put effort into recruitment</td>
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<td>Risk of bias in recoding and reporting impacts</td>
<td>Share the credit, use 3rd party facilitator</td>
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<td>Inconsistent implementation</td>
<td>Use same facilitator, recorder and mapper</td>
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<td>Develop a facilitator guide with prompts and probes</td>
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<td>Participants may not have complete information</td>
<td>Follow-up with interviews to get details and connect with key participants</td>
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<td>Sharing the data</td>
<td>Take a picture of the map. Make poster-sized maps for communities.</td>
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<td>Difficult to balance breadth and depth</td>
<td>Facilitator should be experienced, gather additional details later and always keep three key things in mind: 1. What participants learned, 2. What participants did with the information, 3. How things changed as a result.</td>
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### References


