



Process Mapping

A method to understand the actions, persons and decisions involved in the response to an event or scenario

Part of the SECURE Center Process Pathfinder for Research Security Professionals
Safeguarding the Entire Community in the U.S. Research Ecosystem

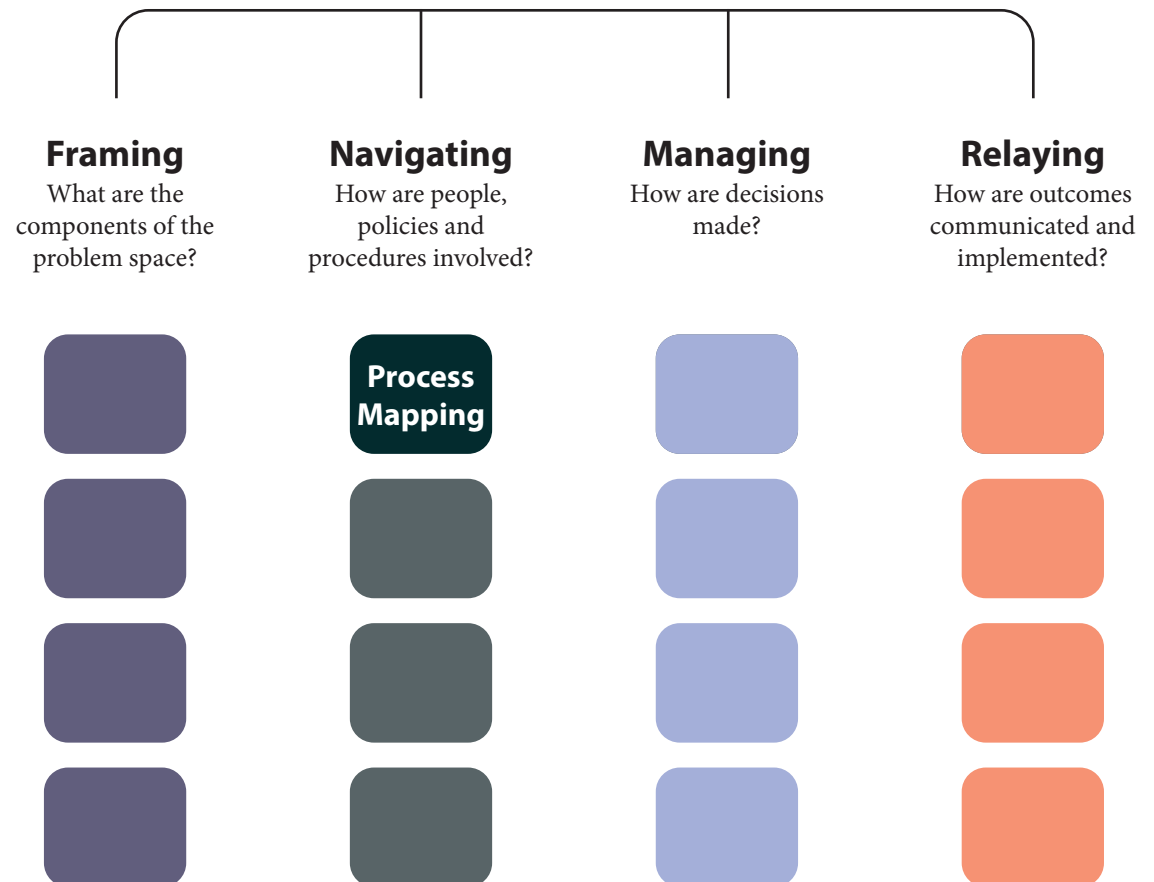
Introduction

The SECURE Center has developed the Process Pathfinder as a means of helping those in research security understand their needs as individuals, departments and initiatives. The methods are interactive in nature, and meant for either digital or analog application with your research security team.

Whether established or emerging as a function, research security functions overlap those of your entire research organization, its ongoing needs and its diversity. This Process Pathfinder is designed to help you think through the complexities your organization may encounter.

Use multiple methods for a more comprehensive view of your problem space.

4 Modes to Address the Needs of the People inside of a Problem Space in Research Security



Process Mapping

Tabletop Materials:

- Markers
- Large Notecards/Post-its
- Large Writing Surface
- Large Roll of Paper

Variations

The SECURE Center uses a variety of tools to facilitate the Process Pathfinder - including digital whiteboards. Any writing surface will do so long as you are able to clearly document the elements outlined by the methods.

- 01** Context - Process Mapping
- 02** How to Use Process Mapping
- 03** What to do With Your Outcomes
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01

Context - Process Mapping

Process Mapping

Process Mapping is a way to detail the interrelatedness and progression of responses to a given scenario.

Participants begin by briefly describing a real-world situation. This is written at the center of their writing space and represents the “current state”. To the left of this current state, participants plot actions that lead to the formation of the current state, detailing each action as well as the persons and decision involved in the formation of that action. To the right of the current state, participants plot actions in response to the current state as well as the the persons and decisions involved with each action. This temporal approach moves the “current state” beyond a fixed point conceptualization and begins to detail the conditions that lead to the event and the conditions that shape responses to the event.

Outcomes

- A qualitative visualization detailing the actions, persons and decisions involved in navigating a scenario
- Details regarding the complexity and interconnectedness of decision making within research organizations in order to reflect upon current state approaches to research security and to inform future approaches

When to Use Process Mapping

Use this method when you need to understand the specific milestones of a given scenario and how it has formed over time.

02 How to Use Process Mapping

Step 1: Choose Your Scenario

Example

Work with your team or a facilitator to develop a one or two sentence description of a real-world scenario. This assists in participant reflection upon the actions, persons and decisions that lead to the scenario's existence, and the actions, persons and decisions that resulted from the scenario's existence.

Place a brief summary of this scenario in the middle of a circle.
This is your starting point.



02 How to Use Process Mapping

Step 2: Drawing Time

Draw a line to the left and right of the circle. This is your timeline. To the left is the before or prior state. To the right is the future or after state.

Example



02 How to Use Process Mapping

Step 3: The Future

Evaluate the future, starting with actions that immediately follow the initial scenario.

Ask, “what happens?” These are action points plotted on the timeline. Document:

- the action (red)
- the people involved (green)
- the motivations for their decisions (blue)

Repeat with each action, asking, “what happens next?” and , “how did we get to this point?”. (There’s always a causality - even if it is unknown in the moment). Take note of the specific roles, departments and functions that are mentioned.

Example

Before



action made

● action description

● people involved

● decision drivers

action made

● action description

● people involved

● decision drivers

action made

● action description

● people involved

● decision drivers

After

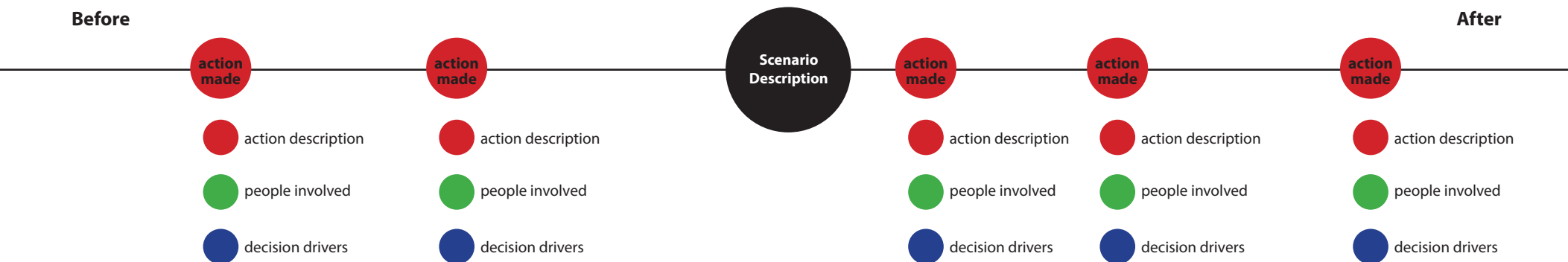
02 How to Use Process Mapping

Step 4: The Past

Evaluate the past in the same manner, asking, "What led to the scenario unfolding like this?"

Document each action, person and decision.

Example



02 How to Use Process Mapping

Step 5: Evaluation and Optimization

Now that all of the data points are visible ask, “Is there a way to improve this?” Using a separate sheet of paper or writing surface, reorganize the actions/persons/motivations to prototype a more effective process. Summarize your process map as a visualization.

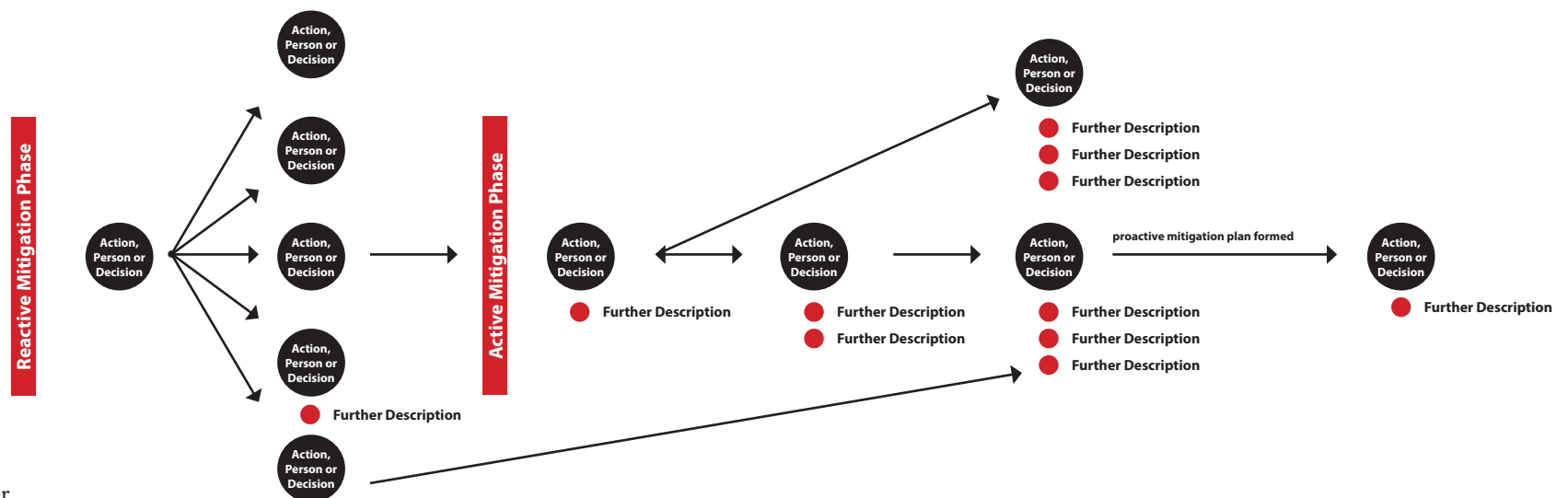
Note:

- Process Maps are composite perspectives of actions, persons and decisions
- There will be gaps in between steps
- Recollections of the past will be fuzzy

Example Summary: Process Map as a Description of Mitigation

In this example, actions were grouped as a series of phases.

Scenario Description



03

What to do With Your Outcomes

What to do with your actions, persons and decisions

You may have many actions, persons and decisions within a scenario. As shown in the preceding example, you may notice specific phases develop in which those actions take place, people interact and decisions are made. Summarize the actions, persons and decisions, making note of what helps the process move along or what might cause the process to rupture or align over time.

What to do with the qualitative visualization of Process Mapping

Your Process Map is a snapshot of how a given scenario unfolds over time and how responses to any single action prompt new actions, people or decisions. Use this visualization as a prototype for **framing**, **navigating**, **managing**, or **relaying** the problem at hand and as a means for identifying patterns of individual and organizational response to a scenario.

There is no “right” process map, only the the most effective path for the scenario under consideration given your organization’s structure.

04

Share Your Feedback

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