3 Mind Maps:
Tammy, an example from the Family Literacy Program

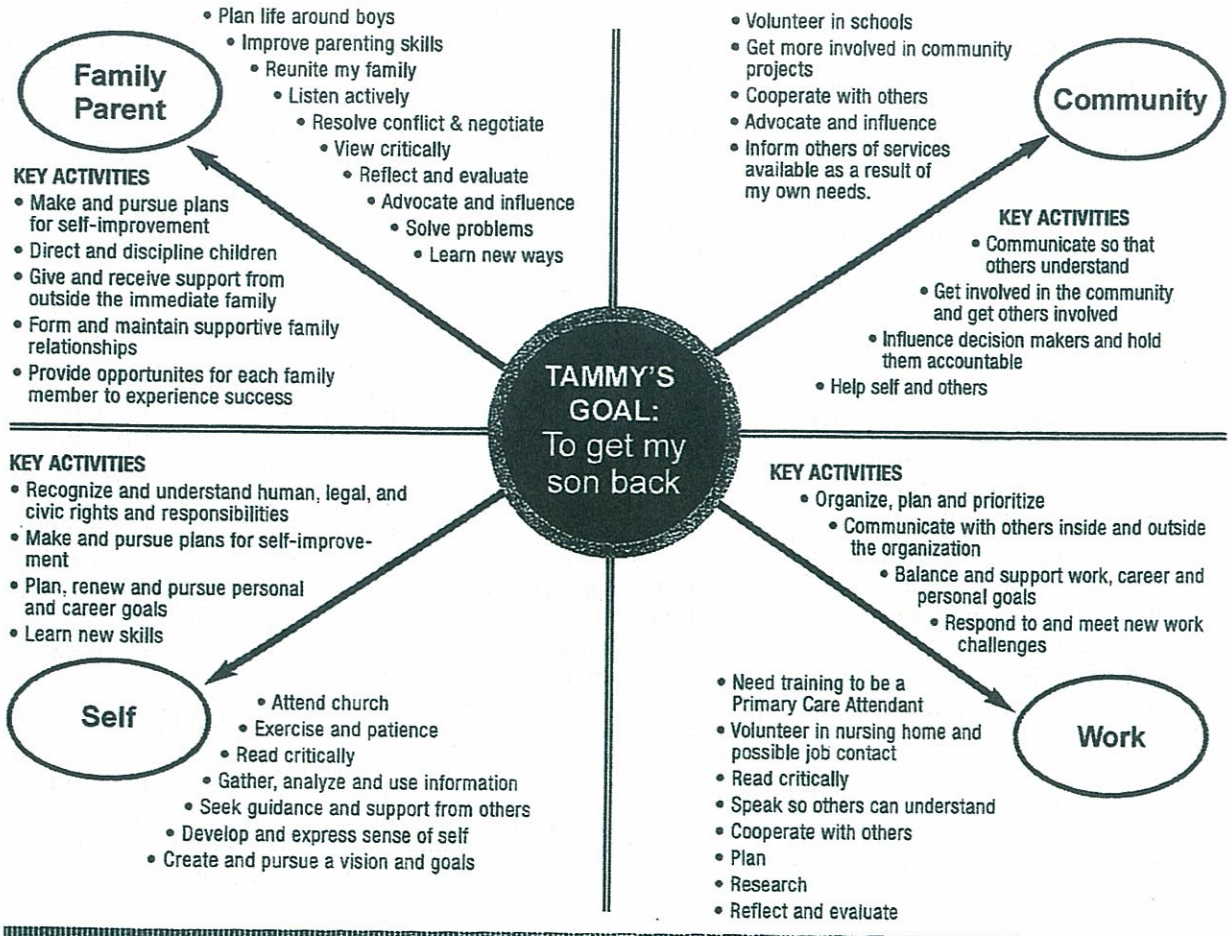
Tammy, a learner in the Farmington (ME) Even Start Program, used the Mind Map to articulate her goals for participating in the program. Although Tammy was able to readily define her goal, she was not clear about how that goal would impact all areas of her adult roles. Over time, Tammy's Mind Map evolved into the one shown below.

Tammy's teachers, Janet Smith and Sue Kelly, asked Tammy what skills she thought would be required to get her son back. Then, together they looked first at the various EFF Role Maps, including the Key Activities listed under each. Through lots of discussion, Tammy began to realize that it would be a big challenge to accomplish her long-term goal. Tammy had to look at the EFF Common Activities and the Generative Skills in order to really understand what performing the Key Activities might entail. Her Mind Map contains a series of smaller goals that will hopefully lead to the achievement of her larger goal.

Tammy feels using the Mind Map is helpful because she now knows what she has to do. It was helpful to set goals with her teacher. "I'm further ahead now than I was a year and a half ago. My main goal hasn't changed, and I have been able to work through smaller goals as they came up." (Tammy is still enrolled in the program and continues to make progress.)

Tammy's major goal has been reunification with one of her sons. Smaller goals included the ability to plan for visits with her son, both for two-hour visits that take place at the courthouse and for overnight visits they were having at home. Other smaller goals included learning how to control her temper at her networking meetings with DHS, counselors,

Continued on page 11



Mandi's Mind Map

Continued from page 6

Common Activities can help learners increase their sense of self when they begin to see that they are already able to perform various activities.

After placing the strengths and barriers lists for each learner together on one chart, Anne Marie looked for commonalities. These commonalities were incorporated into learning activities that included the core English concepts required for a high school credit. Learners' strengths and barriers could be addressed at the same time that English concepts were covered. Ann Marie used this activity as a goal-setting strategy and an initial assessment tool, as well as an icebreaker for consensus building around the curriculum (since an "English credit" can encompass a huge area). (In the next issue of HOT Topics, you will see examples of how teachers designed group learning activities based on learner goals.)

Mandi agrees that learners should have a part of the decision about what goes into the curriculum. "Because we're adults, we should have a say in what is taught in class. Ann Marie let us decide as a group what we wanted to do. We brainstormed ideas, then we compromised and had to give up some things. For my last high school credit, I was able to design my own independent study. I thought it would be easy, but I found it to be hard, and I learned a lot. I could not have done this when I first started in the adult education program. Over time, though, I got more comfortable thinking about choices. In high school we didn't have a say; now that we're adults we should be able to make our own decisions."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mandi was 18 and pregnant when she enrolled in the adult education program. She is now 20, has a Windham Adult Education high school diploma, and is a member of the Windham AE advisory board. She is proud of her accomplishments, just as we are.

The Goal-Setting Form

Continued from page 7

dence of successful performance, it will be difficult to adequately assess progress. (Further discussion on assessment will be covered in future HOT Topics.)

If learners have difficulty thinking outside of the conventional assessment model – "The teacher will tell me if I'm learning" or "I'm making progress because I finished workbook pages 10-25" – ask the learners to describe an activity they would like to do better at home or on the job. Learners think very differently about "evidence" of progress in areas other than the classroom. It means much more to them than the results on a paper-and-pencil test.

This goal-setting form also serves as an initial assessment strategy. The learner can begin to see that, in order to perform an activity, an integration of skills is needed, and begins to think of assessment in a different light. Using this form also shows learners that the responsibility for learning is theirs; they must take action in order to improve.

Tammy's Mind Map

Continued from page 5

and others working with her and her son. To reach her goal of making these meetings more effective for herself, she worked on the EFF skills *Listen Actively*, *Speak So Others Can Understand*, and *Advocate and Influence.*

Over time, Tammy has learned that the same skills that she needs to be an effective worker are needed to be a responsive parent. Her teachers are continuing to work with her on transferring skills and knowledge from one role to another, beginning with learning activities done in the home. When asked whether it was important for teachers to encourage learners to set goals as part of the class, Tammy responded, "Yes, they get you motivated. I can get along better with my teachers if I know they are on my side." Setting and working towards goals help Tammy make connections to her adult roles because it teaches her to look for other resources.

Because the Common Activities are needed for adults to carry out their roles as worker, family member, and citizen, they naturally interconnect. For examples of the links across the adult roles, key activities and the skills adults use to carry them out, visit: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/ common_activities.

Recent research through NCSALL's (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy) Persistence Study Group suggests that a learner's goals are critical to his or her persisting in an adult education program.

Students who were interviewed as part of the research stated four supports that helped them persist in adult education programs:

- Awareness and management of the positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence
- Self-efficacy about reaching their goals
- Establishment of a goal by the student
- Progress toward reaching a goal

EFF "offers an approach to understanding and defining the educational objectives needed to reach the most common goals expressed by adults in this study... It focuses on the broader purposes of education, which include the adult roles of worker, family member, and citizen. Goals related to both work and family are certainly the most common in this study, but other goals such as EFF's category of citizenship are especially important to some learners".

– NCSALL Reports #12, December 1999, p. 9. *Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes*, John Comings, Andrea Parrella, and Lisa Soricone