**The Vortex of Illness**

For many, the overall dynamics of well-being is downward into "the system"

**What is this?**

**The CONTENT - How the suicide prevention system looks to people delivering services - Scotland - 2003**

Organizational challenges
How can problem solving groups, commissions, task forces understand the context and interrelationships of the social mess they’ve been assigned to work on?

Challenge of the issue
How can we develop people who are thinking of committing suicide? How can we do this when it is very difficult to know what is in people’s minds?

Information analysis and display challenge
Part of our process is to identify the project developed. How to portray different views of the social messes that suddenly surfaces usually find they are facing? How to rapidly develop visual common mental models that enable the task?

Solution
Develop a suite of knowledge maps – displayed as murmurs – that provide the groups with successively more detailed and comprehensive views of the issues. In particular, we developed five views of the suicide prevention mess, each shown on separate panels.

View from top management
The first shows the set of organizations and sectors of governance and service delivery as seen from the standpoint of top management, where most organizations were focused on other issues and goals and thus regarded suicide prevention as one of many secondary issues they had to manage.

View of service deliverers: the mess
Another was a "standard" mess map showing the systemic inter-relationships of problems as seen from the points of view of different organizations and sectors in the county.

View of how to predict and find
Another set of diagrams shows how we addressed the thorny issue of how do you identify potential "suicidals"? It is like looking for a needle in a haystack as the old metaphor goes. It may even be looking for the haystack itself.

View of the larger system: the vortex
We also developed a large knowledge maps to show the creation of a rather expressive view of the mental health delivery system from the standpoint of the metaphor of a vortex.

View: Stepping back for commentary
We also used the capabilities of large visual knowledge maps to illustrate various aspects of the vortex system in more detail. (SHOWN AT LEFT)

Client
National Health Service, County Fife, Scotland, UK

Project team

Thirty directors and staff of the different agencies who had some role or part of their mission as suicide prevention.