Atlas of Caregiving

Care Network Diagrams
Diagram Style Rationale

Version 1.2

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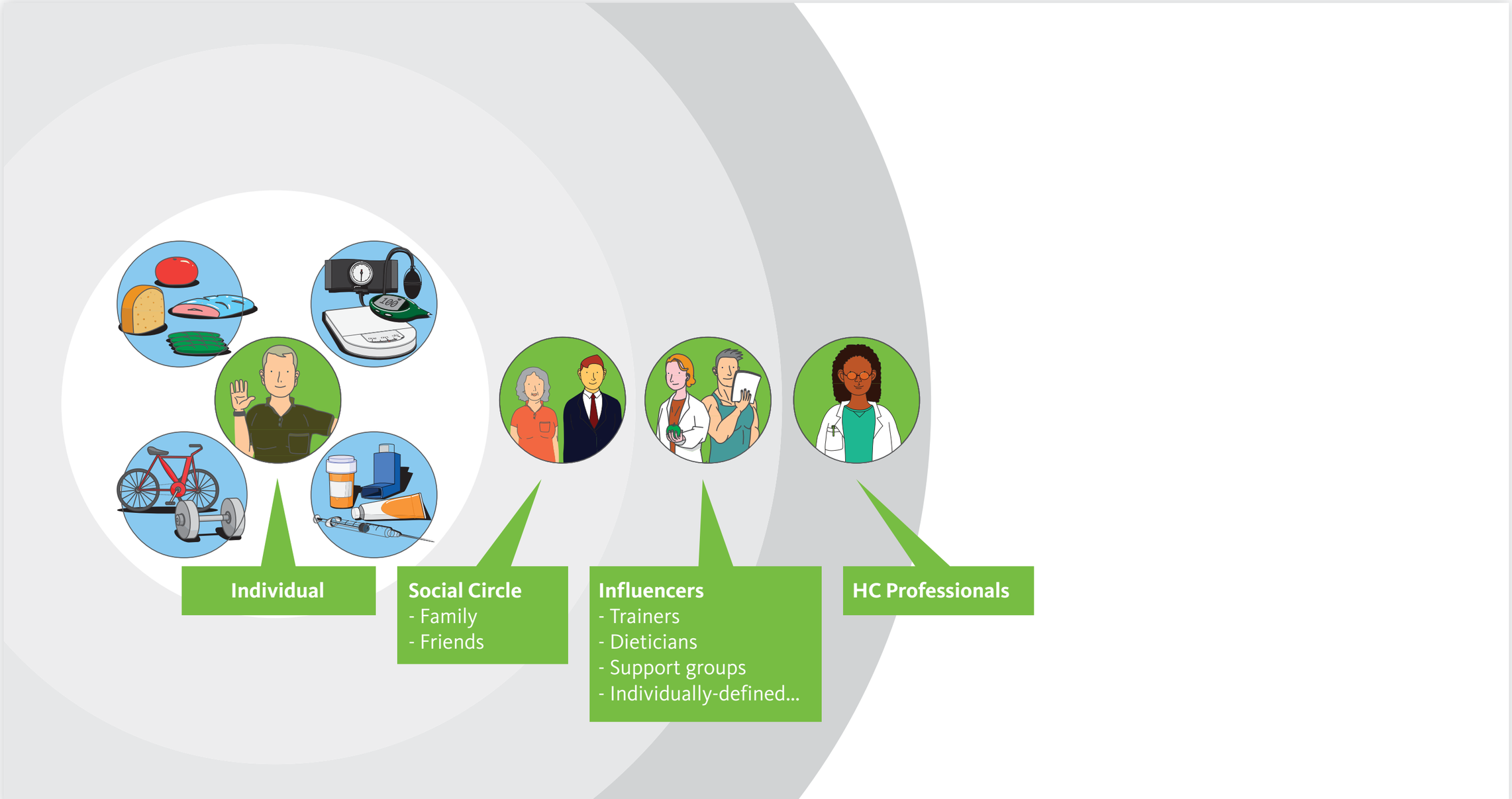
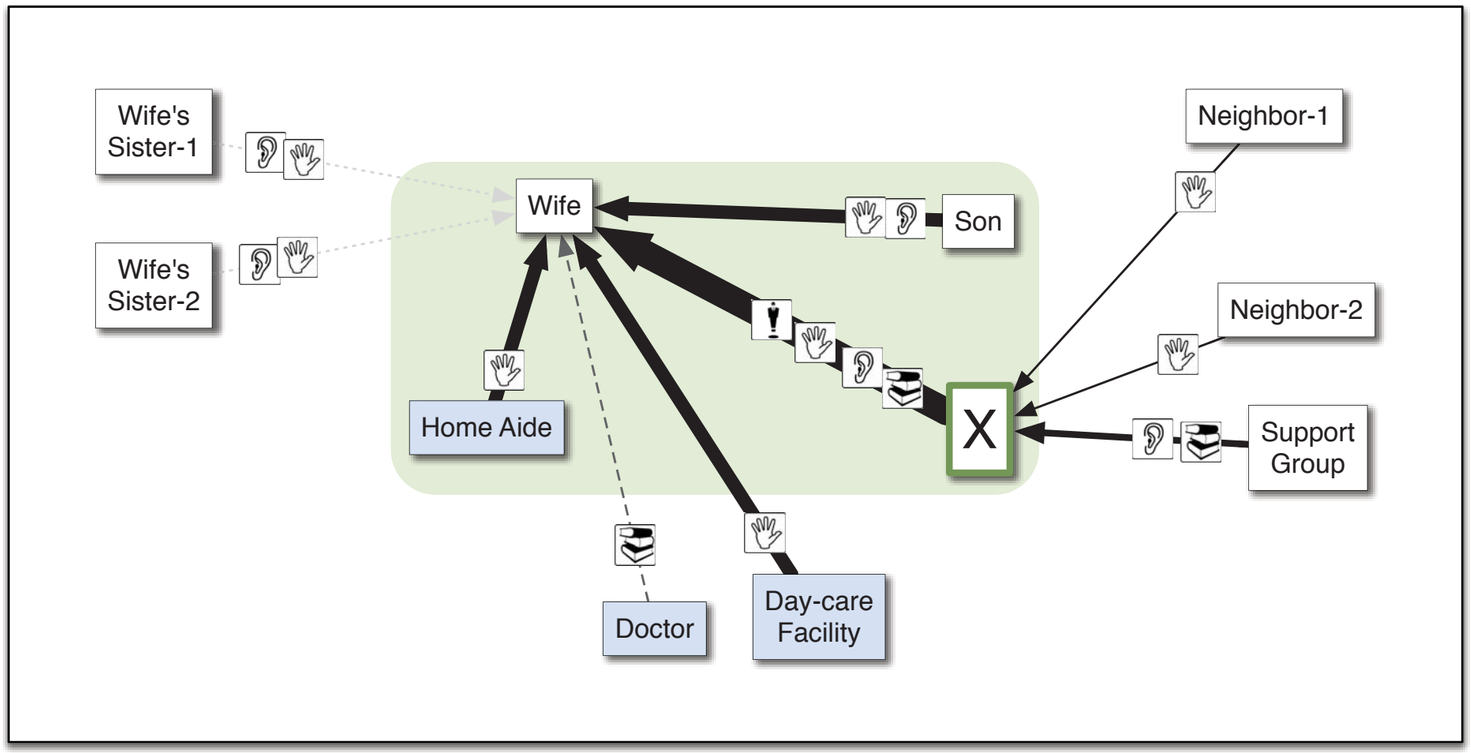
Prepared for
Rajiv Mehta

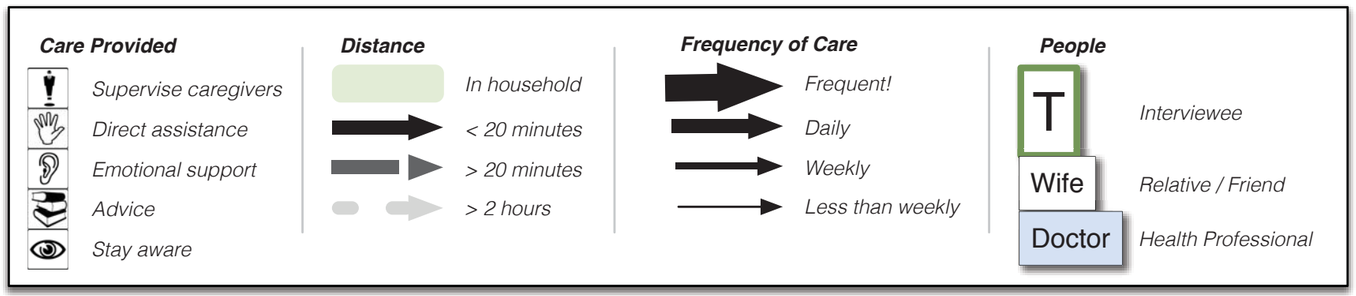
Prepared by
Dubberly Design Office
2501 Harrison Street, #7
San Francisco, CA 94110
415 648 9799

An early attempt to chart care networks from 2009.

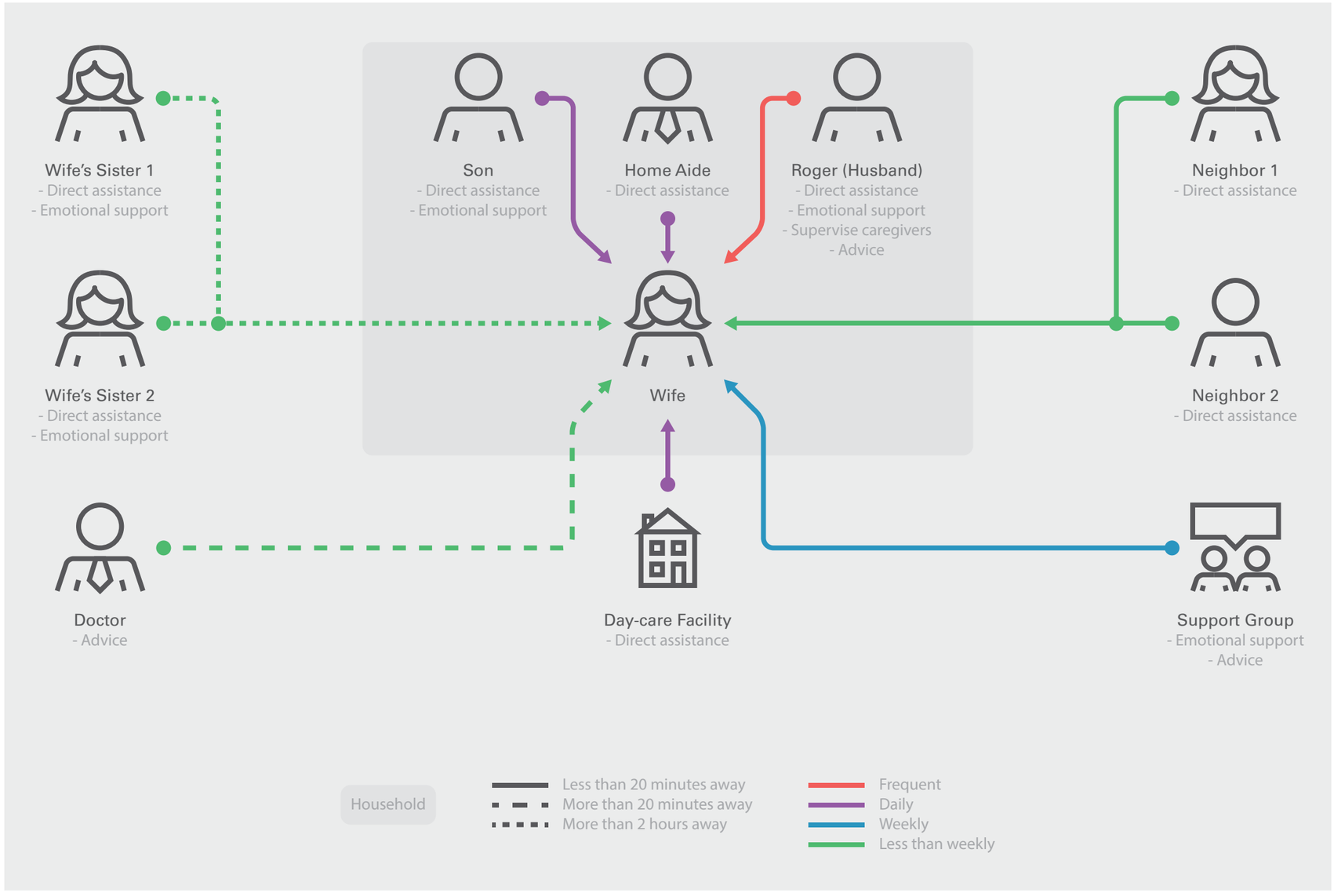


The first set of care network diagrams had a complex key that was difficult to understand.





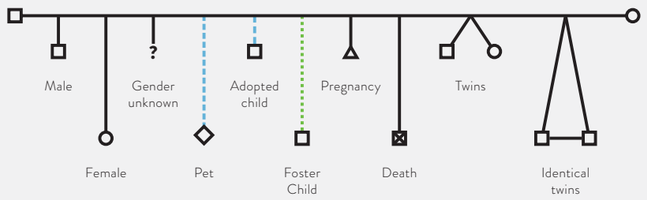
Restructuring the same information with the addition of iconography reduced the cognitive load.



We also looked at genograms, a method for charting complex networks of people and their relations.

Genogram

Genogram symbols



Genograms

A genogram (also known as a McGoldrick-Gerson study, a Lapidus Schematic or a Family Diagram) is a pictorial display of a person's family relationships and medical history. It goes beyond a traditional family tree by allowing the user to visualize hereditary patterns and psychological factors that punctuate relationships. It can be used to identify repetitive patterns of behavior and to recognize hereditary tendencies.

Genograms were first developed and popularized in clinical settings by Monica McGoldrick and Randy Gerson through the publication of a book titled Genograms: Assessment and Intervention in 1985. Genograms are now used by various groups of people in a variety of fields such as medicine, psychiatry, psychology, social work, genetic research, education, and many more. Some practitioners in personal and family therapy use genograms for personal records and/ or to explain family dynamics to the client. Few if any genealogists use them.

Genogram symbols

A genogram is created with simple symbols representing the gender, with various lines to illustrate family relationships. Some genogram users also put circles around members who live in the same living spaces. Genograms can be prepared by using a complex word processor, or a computer drawing program. There are also computer programs that are custom designed for genograms.

Genogram symbols will usually have the date of birth (and date of death if applicable) above, and the name of the individual underneath. The inside of the symbol will hold the person's current age or various codes for genetic diseases or user-defined properties: abortions, still-births, SIDS, cohabitations, etc.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genogram

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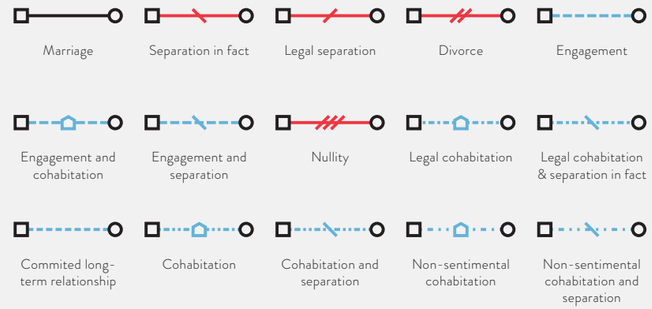
Genogram

Family relationships legend



Genogram content

A genogram can contain a wealth of information on the families represented. It will not only show you the names of people who belong to your family lineage, but how these relatives relate to each other. For example, a genogram will not only tell you that your uncle Paul and his wife Lily have three children, but that their eldest child was sent to boarding school, that their middle child is always in conflict with her mother, that their youngest has juvenile diabetes, that Uncle Paul suffered from depression, was an alcoholic, and a philosopher, while Aunt Lily has not spoken to her brother for years, has breast cancer and has a history of quitting her jobs.

Family relationships

One of the advantages of a genogram is the ability to use colour-coded lines to define different types of relationships such as family relationships, emotional relationships and social relationships. Within family relationships, you can illustrate if a couple is married, divorced, common-law, engaged, etc

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genogram

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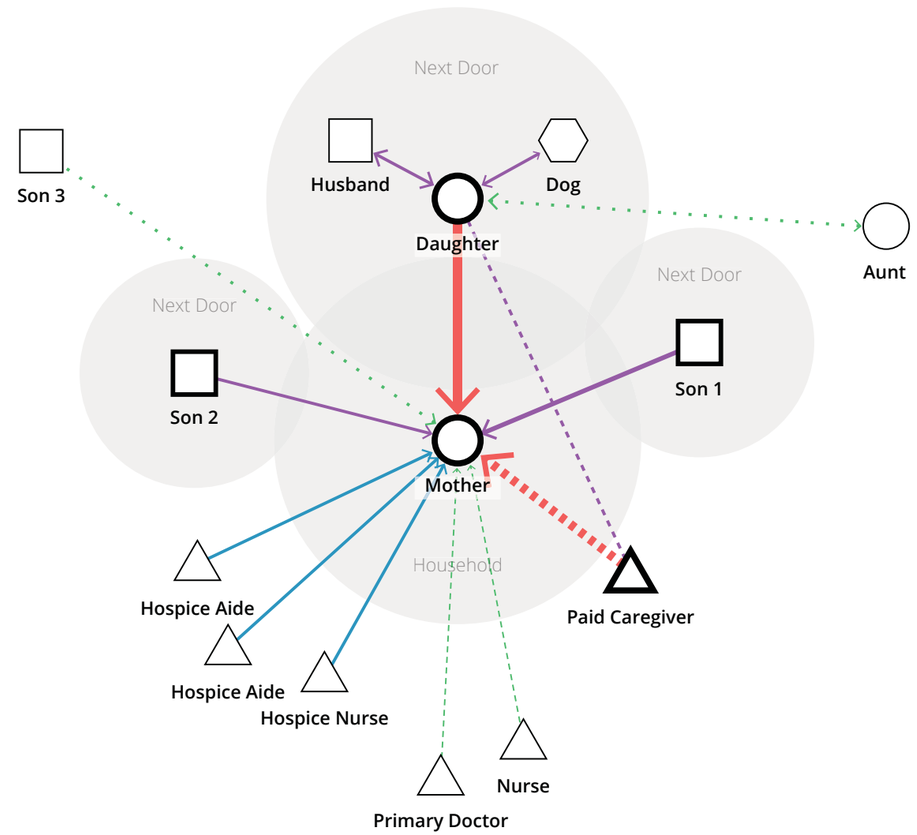
Attempt at using genogram symbols and a programatic approach.
More flexible and a clearer representation of the composition of actors.

Family Care Network | Chantal_150824

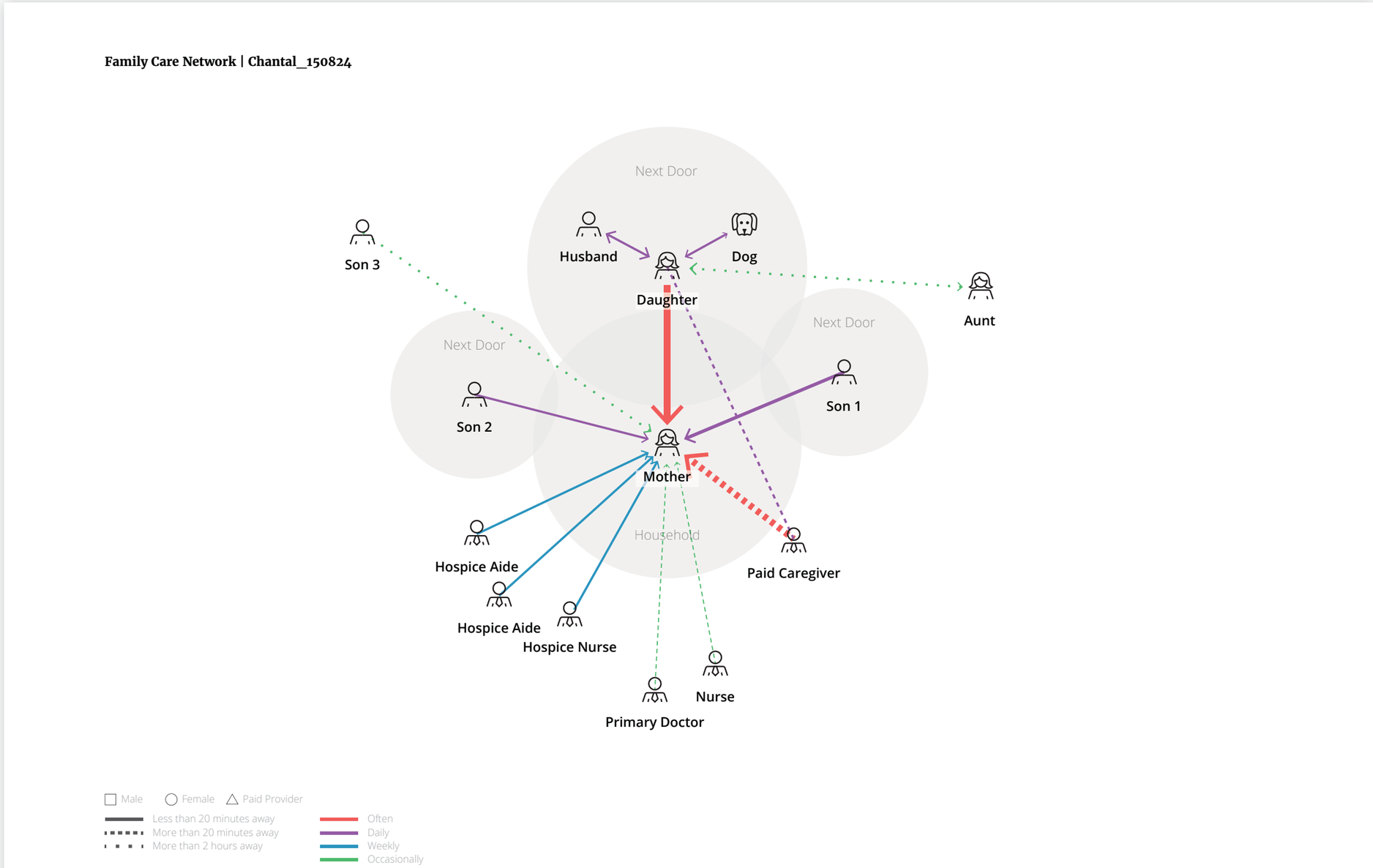


Male Female Paid Provider

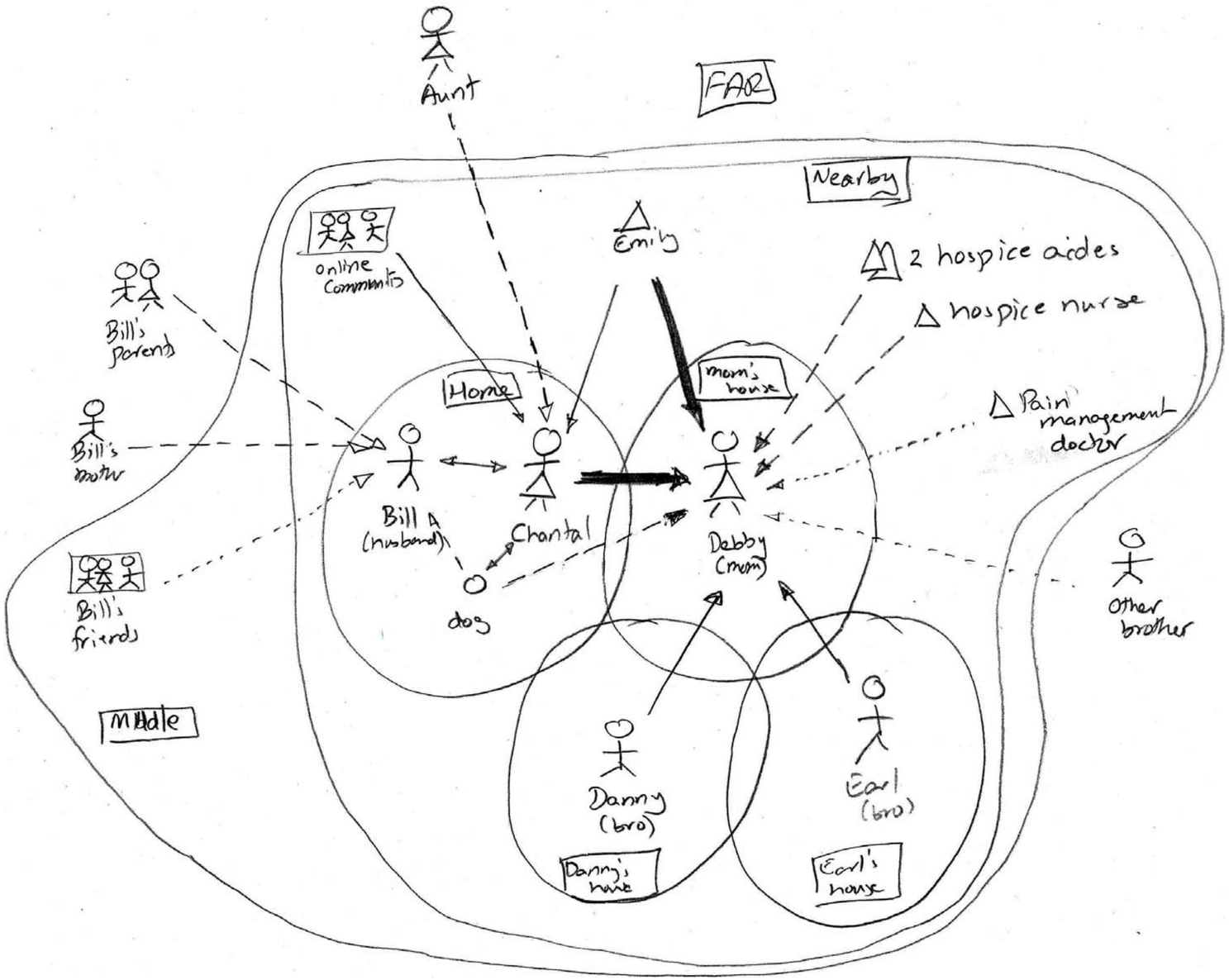
Less than 20 minutes away
More than 20 minutes away
More than 2 hours away

Often
Daily
Weekly
Occasionally

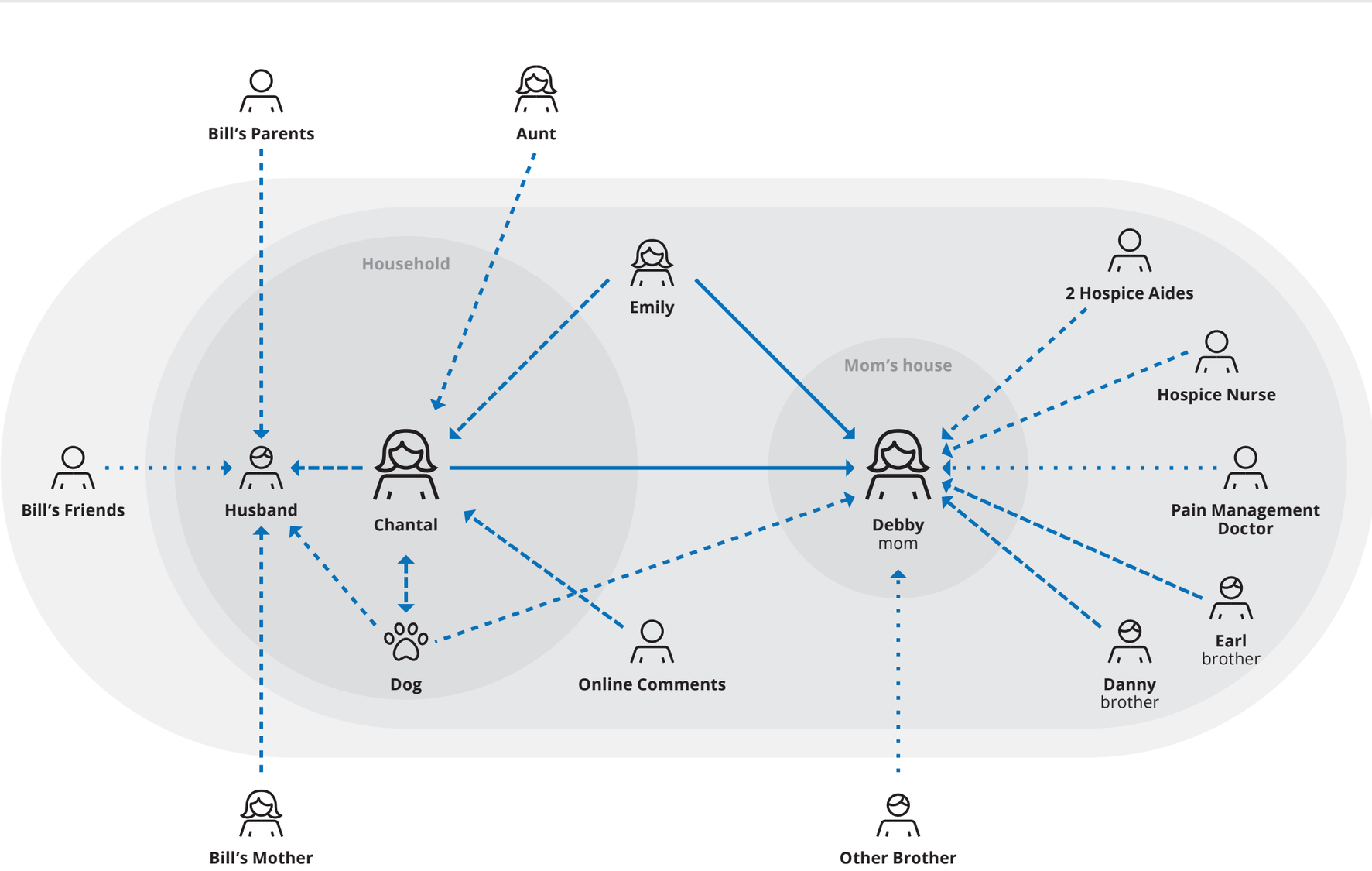
Iconography was re-introduced to humanize the diagrams and make them easier to read.
The two methods for showing distance; relative distance and line style can be difficult to understand.



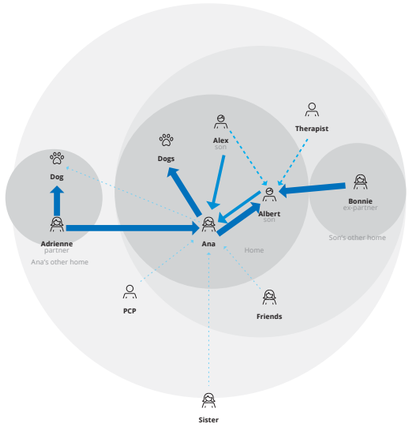
The grouping of actors within circles have now become conflated, indicating both households and distance.

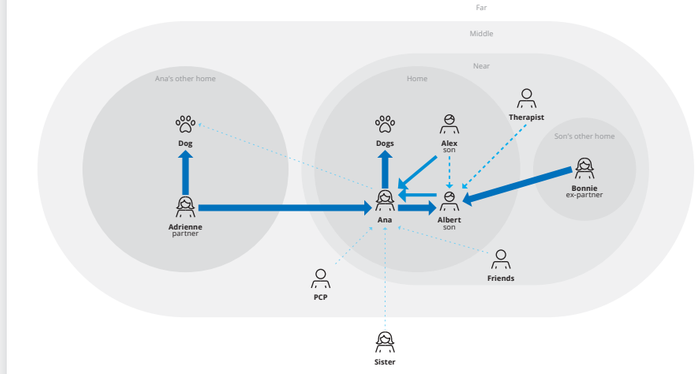


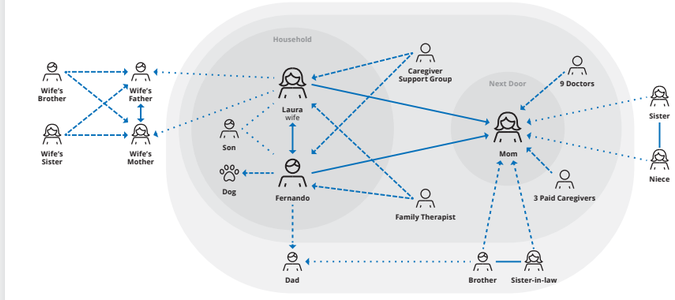
It has become hard to see who the main actors are and get a sense of their situation and support network.



As the diagrams grew in complexity, the circle metaphor for distance started to break.







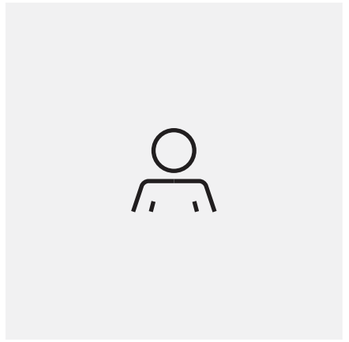
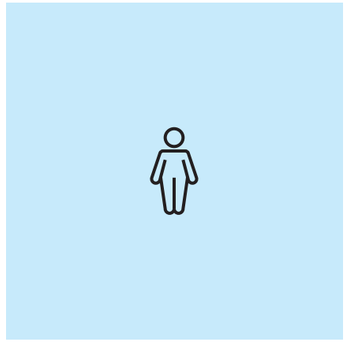
Shifting from indicating distance radially to linearly makes the diagram easier to read and makes for a less restrictive layout.

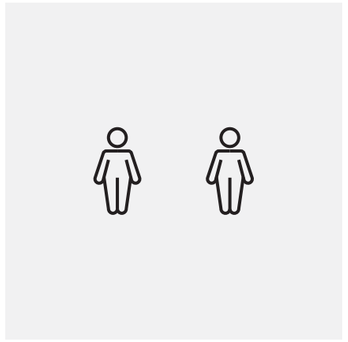
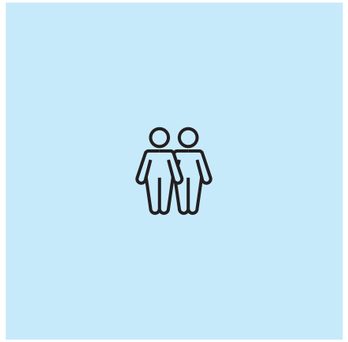
11.1 Radial—Space inefficient and difficult to parse

11.2 Radial—Cropped to become linear—Space inefficient

11.3 Linear with straight edges (fluid width boxes)

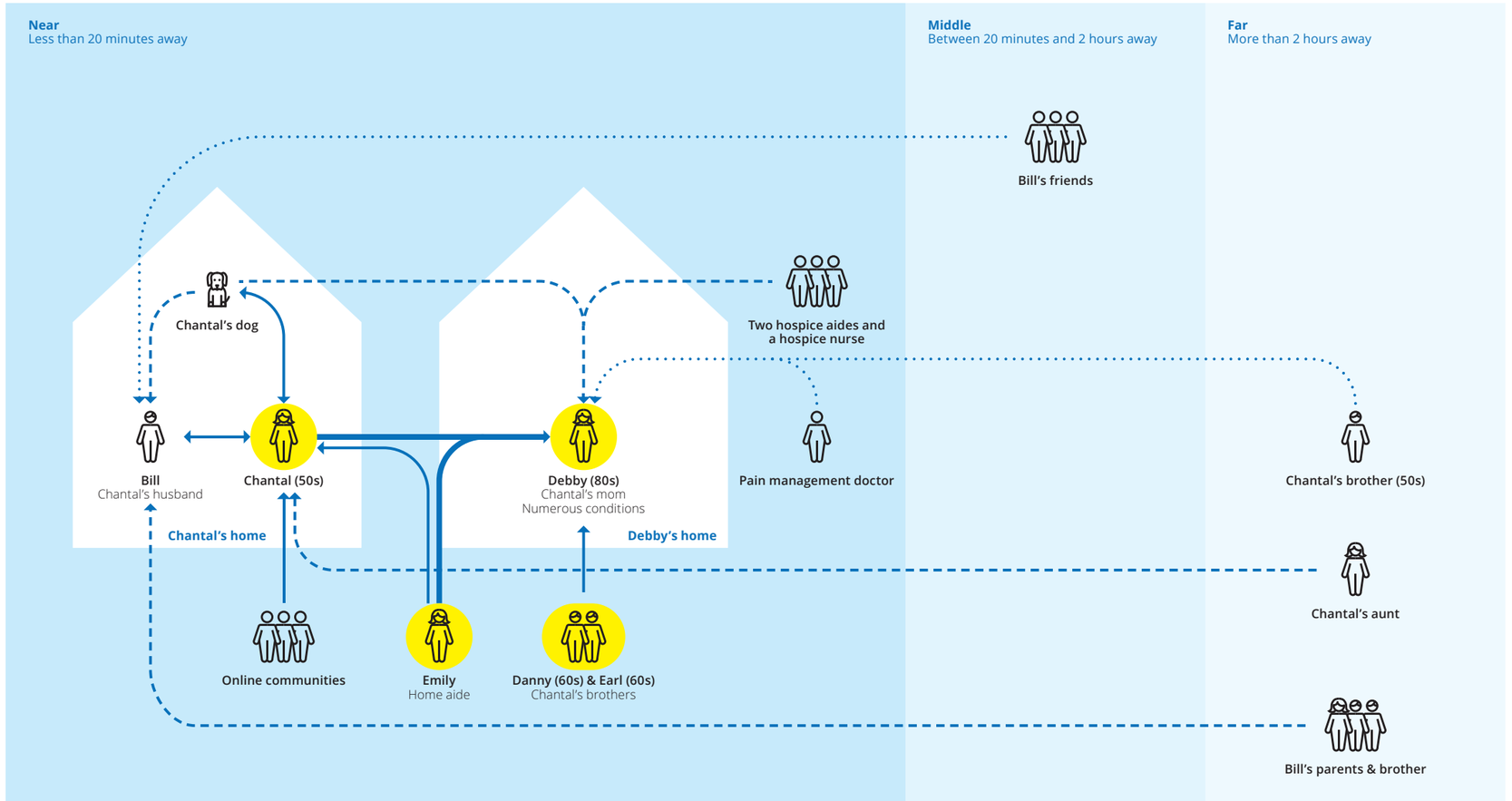
A systematic approach to the guiding principles enables the diagrams to function as a unified set.

Before	After	Description
		Full body representation of actors.
		Houses to represent households.

Before	After	Description
		Group similar actors when possible.
		Indicate distance linearly.

Using a linear device to indicate distance, and reserving the use of shapes to indicate households increases readability. Diagrams now include a short description to aid readers, while also highlighting the primary caregiver and care reciever.

Chantal (50s) has left work to care for her mother Debby (80s) who is in very poor health.
A paid home aide provides significant assistance. Chantal's brothers also help.



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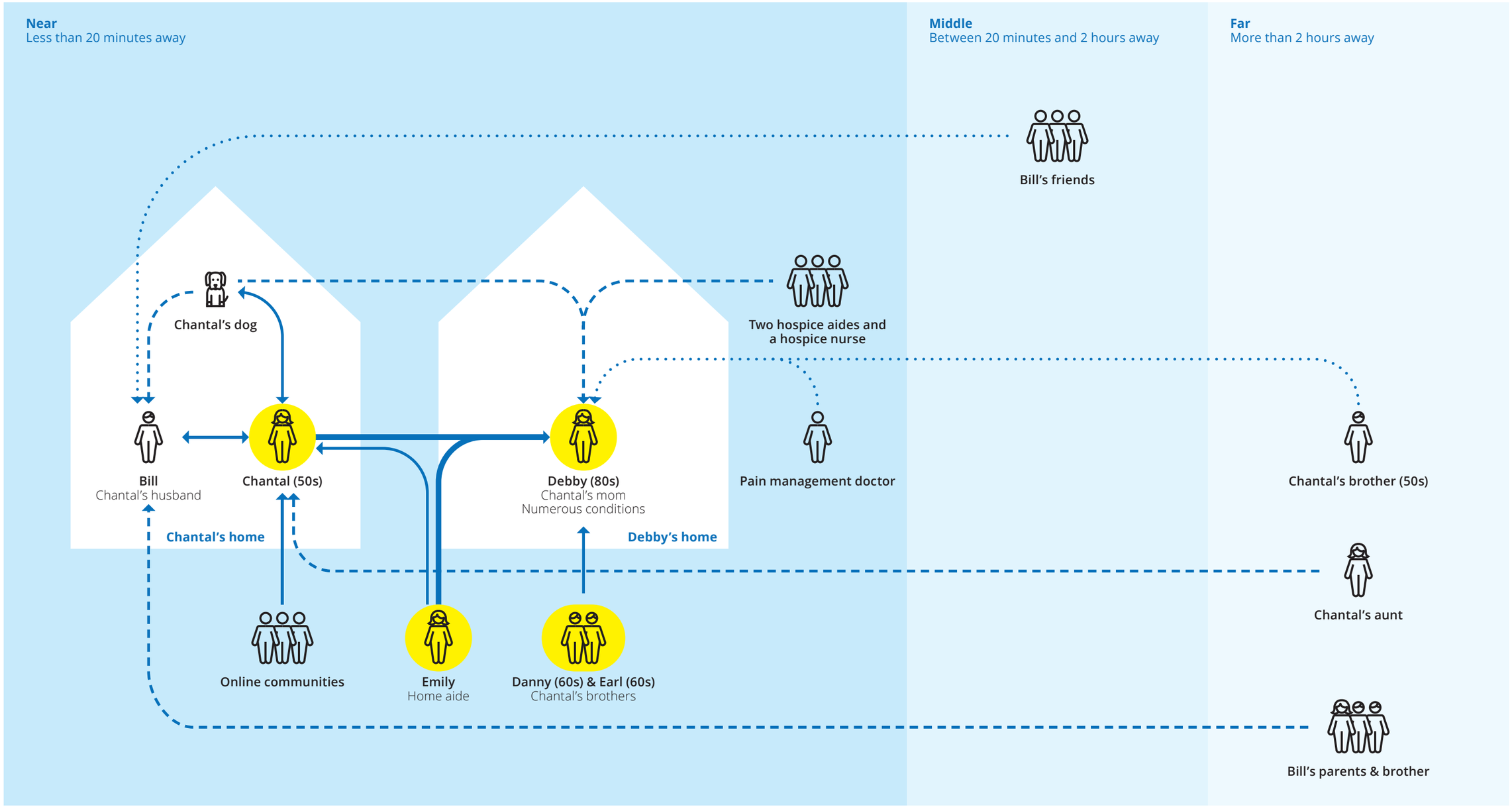
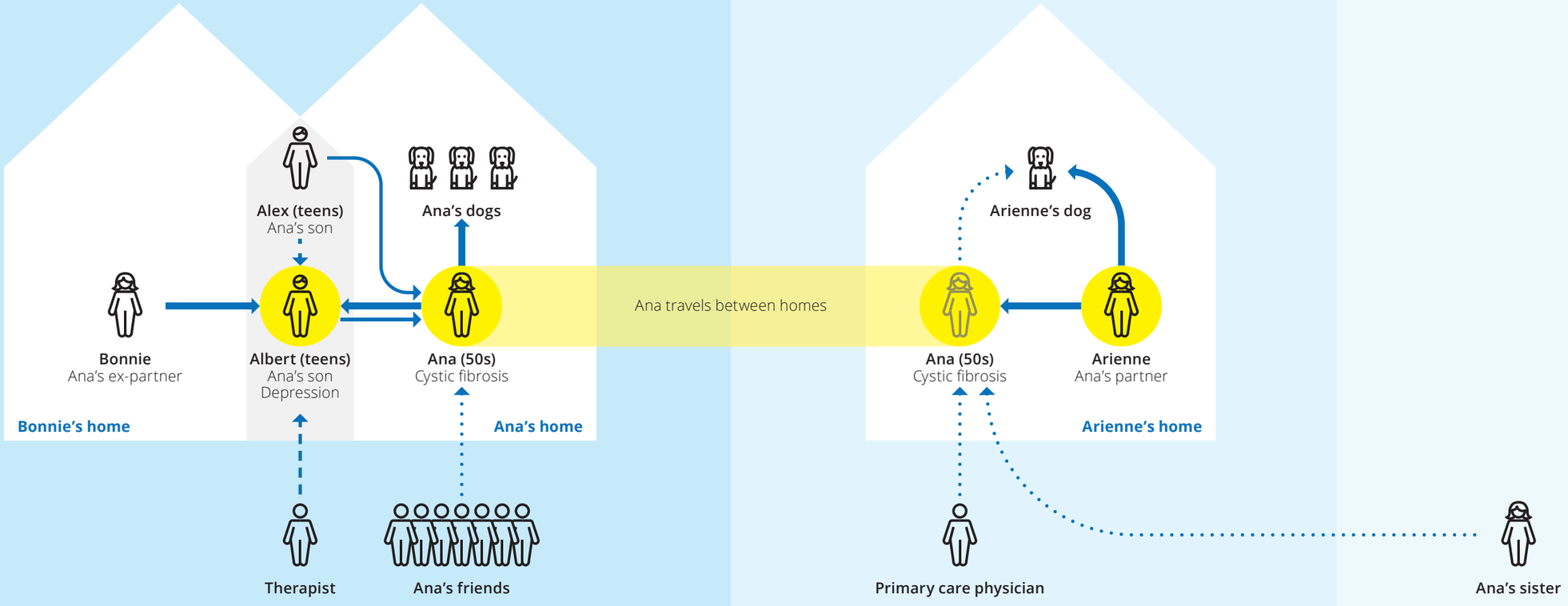


Ana, a woman in her 50s, has cystic fibrosis and mainly takes care of herself.
She also cares of her son Albert who suffers from depression.

Near
Less than 20 minutes away

Middle
Between 20 minutes and 2 hours away

Far
More than 2 hours away



Frequency Hourly Daily Weekly Occasionally

Only-child Fay (30s) cares for her mother Josephine (70s) who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.
With no one to help her, she has put her career on hold to provide 24x7 care.

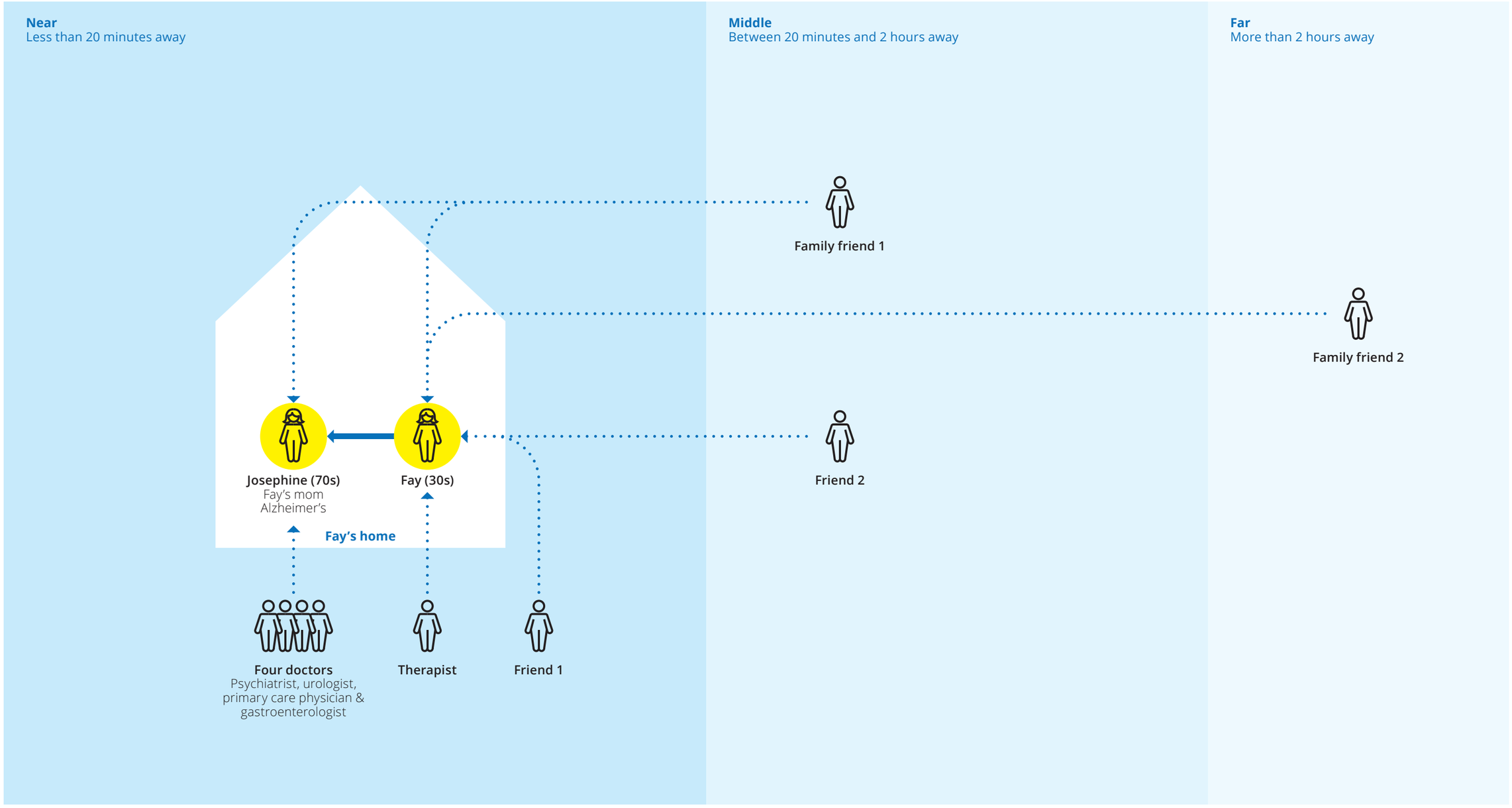
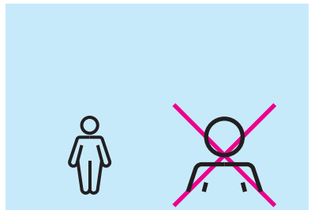


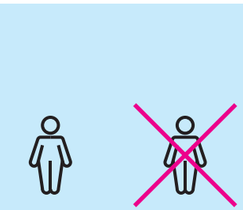
Diagram Principles: Actors

Icon type



Use full body representations of actors.

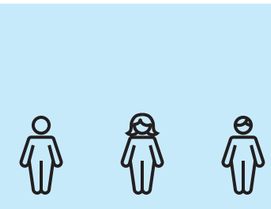
Selection



Only include actors that relate to the story being told.

Everyone sees a Dentist on a semi-regular basis; do not include actors unless they relate to the chronic condition or care.

Gender



Only assign an actor a gender when it is known.

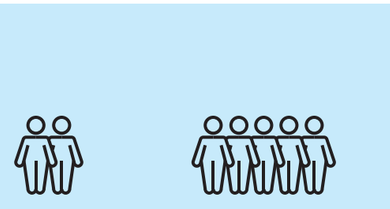
Description

Use first names and age when known to describe actors.

List chronic conditions.

Define relation to primary actor.

Grouping

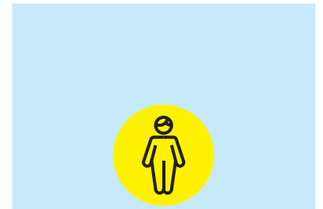


Group secondary actors when possible, but only when they share the same connections and type (e.g. do not group a doctor and an aunt).

Each group member must be represented in the icon.

If the group grows large it is permissable to have the first line read "5 doctors" and list them all out on the following lines with the subtitle style.

Highlight



Highlight the primary care giver(s) and recipient(s)

Diagram Principles: Households

Shape

Only include households that relate to the primary caregiver or recipient, or otherwise play an intrical part in the story.

The proportion of the house can change to accomodate different household structures and members

Naming

Households must be named. Name should be from the primary actor's point of view.

Position of the name can move to accomodate connections. Most desireable placements are bottom left, bottom middle, and bottom right.

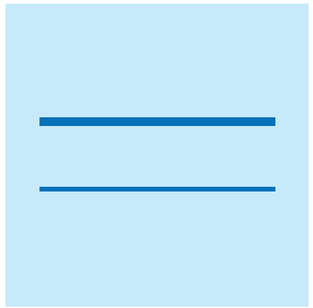
Overlap

Households can overlap.

This can be used to indicate settings such as divorced parents who have shared custody of their joint children. The children would be in the overlap, and their parents on their respective sides. The goal is to not duplicate actors.

Diagram Principles: Connections

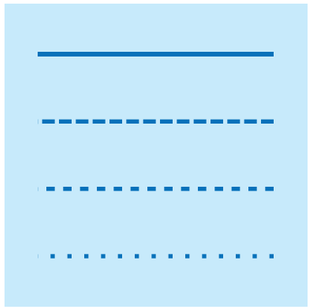
Line thickness (responsibility)



The thickness of the line represents the responsibility of the caregiver. The ticker line represents a primary caregiver, while the thinner represents a secondary caregiver.

There can be multiple primary caregivers, but the majority of actors will fall into the latter category.

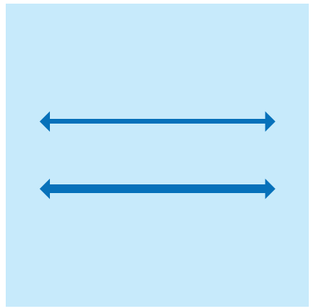
Line style (frequency)



The style of the line represents the frequency of the care provided.

From top to bottom there lines represent hourly, daily, weekly and occasional care.

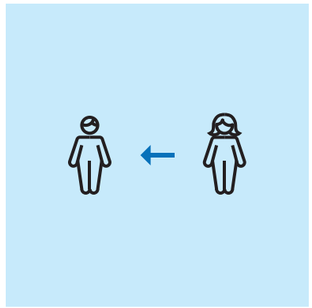
Arrow style



The arrows indicate the direction of care. It is also possible for a line to have two arrowheads for reciprocal caregiving.

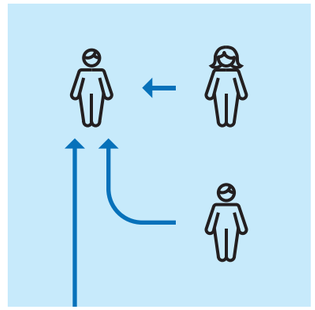
All allowheads are the same size, no matter the responsibility of the caregiver.

Straight line



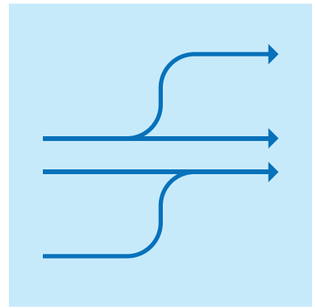
Use straight lines following the cardinal directions (horizontal or vertical) whenever possible.

Curved lines



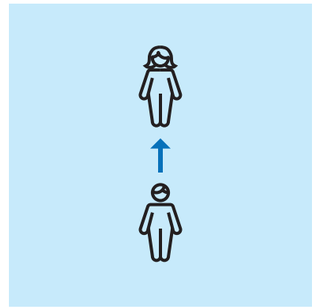
If a straight line is not possible use a curved line.

Forks and merges



It is permissble for connections of the same type to both fork and merge if it aides readability.

Direction



On the vertical axis try to position care providers at the bottom and recipients on the top when possible. Care flows up.

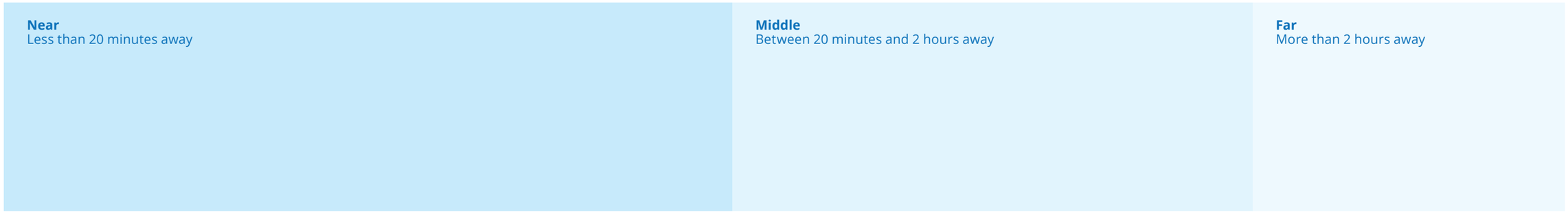
Note

Avoid crossing lines when possible. Unless is obstructs the readability of the diagram.

Only include connections pretaining to that of the condition / caretaking. It's implied that a married couple cares for each other.

Diagram Principles: Distance

Distance is represented by time (e.g. hours) rather than miles



Distance is described linearly, with three increments.

If an actor is near the edge of the boudry, it doesn't necessarily mean they're further away.

It's ok to resize the fields as needed to optimize for readability.

The diagram should have less detail towards the right of the diagram. Typically there are fewer actors and households farther away.