ROLES THAT PEOPLE PLAY
Additional Handouts for Leading Well with Others

An exercise to help you identify the differing ways in which people influence and support you at present, and to identify the gaps, thus highlighting possible areas for action in the future. Relationships are a major factor contributing to our development and well-being, and it is often useful to look at people in terms of the roles that they play in our lives – remembering that one person may play several roles.

Write the names of people that you know under each category and make a few notes about why they are there.

1. **Energy givers – people who give you something positive.**
   We all need these people – they give you the warmth and reassurance to keep going when life gets tough, and give you comfort when you fail. Their warmth restores you. They are easy to be with. They boost your confidence because you know they are on your side. They increase your enthusiasm for life and work.

2. **Energy drainers – people who drain your energy.**
   These people don't realise the effect they have on you, but being with them either makes you feel ineffective and frustrated, or exhausted and apathetic. They may be nice, well-meaning people, but they take away your energy. They may be over bright and chatty or dull and gloomy. They take up too much of your time and sap your confidence and zest.

3. **Role models – people who have set the precedent.**
   These are the people who have done what you are thinking of doing and against whom you may be compared (or compare yourself). They can be a positive influence – perhaps offering creative, innovative, visionary, pioneering ways of working that you aspire to. Or they can be negative – perhaps setting standards of behaviour or ways of working which you don't value.

4. **Heroes and heroines – people who inspire you.**
   These may be people you know or could also be people who you don't know personally. They can be alive or dead, real or fictitious. They contribute to your sense of purpose and your determination, and can help you see where your goals for the future lie or inspire ideas of what you may do or become.

5. **Neutral people – those who will help if you ask them.**
   These are the people who aren't particularly interested in you, but will help if you take the initiative. You will have to ask for their advice, ideas and information, but they will be quite happy to give it. This is likely to be a large category and may overlap with many of the others. They are not telepathic so you will need to tell them what you want.

6. **Enemies – people who actively oppose you.**
   These people don't like you or what you stand for. They may resent your leadership or feel threatened by what you are trying to do. You may not have anyone opposing you quite so strongly as this implies, but you may know of people on the edge of this role. Enemies put you down, undermine the support you get from others and the confidence you build up. They may be acting on a prejudice.

7. **Mentors – people who believe in you more than you believe in yourself.**
   Mentors/spiritual directors/soul friends/coaches listen, support you, give you advice, challenge you, understand your situation, and believe in your potential. It is important that they can see you objectively, and give you constructive feedback.

ARROW RES 1 ©CPAS

8. **Gardeners – people who grow you.**
   These are the people who have a reputation for giving people opportunities and for stretching them. After that – it's up to you! If you grab the opportunities offered, you can develop more quickly. If you haven't come across one of these, keep your eyes and ears open! Gardeners are good at involving people and using people's gifts and enjoy seeing others do well.

9. **Apprentices – people to whom you are especially helping and encouraging.**
   Who are you opening doors for? These people will be the special few whom you are encouraging, believing in, fostering their potential. They look to you for encouragement and may regard you as a mentor or role model. These people are important because they can free you up – you may be able to involve them as part of your team and use their special skills, gifts and enthusiasm.

THINK ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS:

- Are there any categories predominating? If so, which?
- How do you feel about this?
- Are there any categories totally missing? If so, which?
- Do you want to do anything about this?
- Are you inspired?
- Where is your main help and support coming from?
- Who is giving you constructive feedback?
- Do you want to alter or expand this?
- Is the path ahead helped or hindered by the precedent that has been set?
- Are you getting enough objective advice and feedback?
- Are you being challenged enough?
- Are you getting enough warmth?
- Is your access to information and ideas wide enough, or are all your ideas coming from one area?
- What do you want to change?

Adapted from Springboard Women's Development Workbook, Liz Willis and Jenny Daisley