

## **Ecomap, Facilitator Note and Worksheet**

This activity is one which can be used in one to one sessions with young carers. It is especially helpful if working with a young carer who feels they need help in coping with various people in their life. Help them identify what people they have in their life and then to work out if that person is a strong link for them or is it someone who they like being around but wouldn't really use them for support. It may be that the person causes the young carer stress and so is a stressful link for them. You can then work with the young carer on how best they could handle the situation and the person.

Remember that part of looking after ourselves is about having good, healthy relationships with those around us, including friends. Part of having good self-esteem is about feeling secure with those in our lives. That may mean that some people are not that "healthy" for us so we need to look at ways of managing this and reducing the impact that person has on us. Sometimes for young carers, the person causing the stress can be the person they care for. In this situation it is not easy for the young carer to remove themselves from that person. In this case you could help the carer look at ways of reducing the stress this person causes them, encourage the young carer to come up with coping strategies for dealing with the person. It might be that extra help for the young carer is needed to look after the person, or the young carer may just want to have someone to talk to when things get bad. Try and guide them through this so that they come up with solutions which are workable for them

This activity can also be used in group setting to look at friendships, especially where circles of friends could be damaging to the person, e.g. causing them to be involved in gangs or anti-social behaviour. You can encourage the participants to look at who in their circle of friends they find the most stressful to be around and what can they do to reduce that impact.

Another use for the activity can be to build a network of support and the links can identify the strongest places or people to go to for help, right down to those places or people that are the weakest to use for support and help.

Key to Links:

----- = Strong Link

- - - - - = Weak Link

..... = Stressful Link



## Ecomap: Worksheet

