

## 6. Reflecting on work relationships

**Aim:** This activity explores the different types of relationships we have with our colleagues. To encourage objectivity about how we relate to others and to the things and circumstances that enable and constrain what we do as part of our practice.

1. Consider the following four descriptions of different types of possible relationships. To widen the application, mentor can be substituted with supervisor, head of department, coordinator, assistant principal, principal etc.

### **Transactional relationship**

The relationship you have with this person is essential for your practice as a mentor and/or teacher. You know little about this person but know that this person at your school can help you with your mentoring and/or teaching practice in order to achieve the job. You do not naturally choose to spend time with this person.

### **Reciprocal relationship**

The relationship you have with this person is based on mutual support and friendship. This person is essential to your practice as a mentor and/or teacher. You know this person well, enjoy being with them and this person is fundamental to achieving your mentoring and/or teaching practice. It is a person from your school that you share ideas, knowledge and experience.

### **Casual relationship**

The relationship you have with this person is not essential to your practice as a mentor and/or teacher. You know little about and rarely come into contact with this person while at school. The feelings you have for this person is likely to be neutral.

### **Social relationship**

The relationship you have with this person is not essential to your practice as a mentor and/or teacher. However this relationship is more like a friend as you know each other on a more personal level. It is a person from your school that you choose to spend time with, whom you share ideas, trust and respect.

Adapted from a model developed by Dent (2008).

### **2. Instructions**

Individually complete the “Work relationships data collection sheet” before sharing with others in the group.

- Select one person from the work place for each of the four quadrants on the “Work relationships data collection sheet”. Note their name and a reason for each choice.
- Consider each person and describe how the relationship looks, feels and sounds like in every day practice? Add this information to each quadrant or use a “Y- Chart” (see Activity 9).
- Then share your findings with another person or a small group.

### **3. Group reflection**

Why do some relationships enable what we do and others constrain our practice as mentors and/or teachers? Consider how a constraining relationship can be changed to become one that enables your practice.

### **4. Further reflection and /or discussion**

To move the relationship into a different quadrant, what changes need to be made in the relationship?

