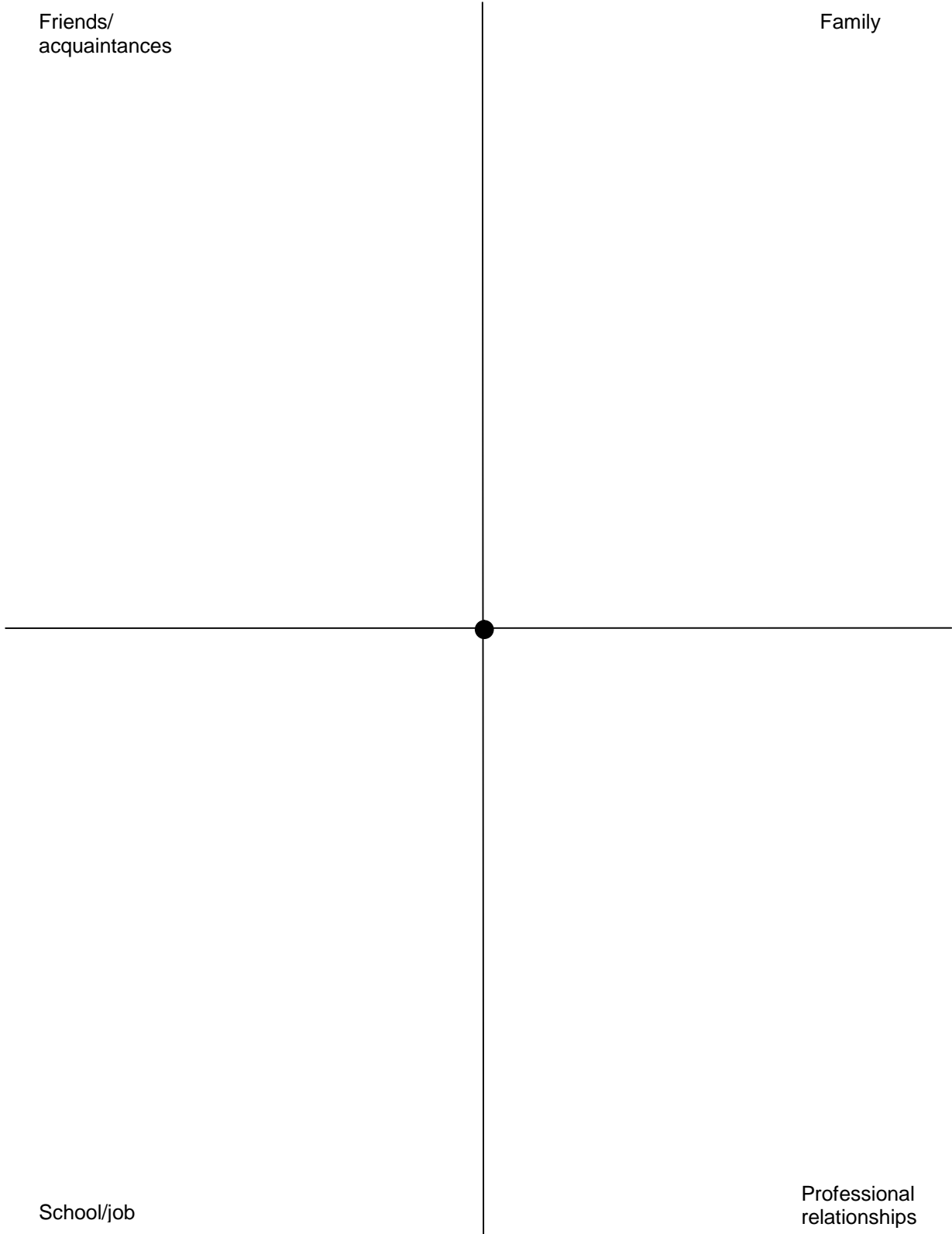# Network diagram

for:_____

Friends/
acquaintances

Family

School/job

Professional
relationships

Instruction – Network diagram

Aim

- Visualisation of the support networks of clients; visualisation of the life-immanent integration of clients in a social network

Scope of application in connection with the "Intense-Assessment"

- Continuation and deepening tool to "Social relationships"

Handling

The network diagram focuses on the **intensity of the relationships** (the intensity of the exchange), not on the quality. This tool should also be applied for very sparse networks – without broaching the issue of something that cannot be changed.

- The client is in the centre of the network (black spot).
- The graphic of the network is created **together with the client.** The career guidance officer draws based on the instruction of the client – he/she uses a pencil in order to adjust, if necessary.

  Persons in the social environment are then added: if the contact to a certain person is very intense the symbol is drawn close to the person. In case there is a contact, a line, starting at the person is drawn to the recorded person

- Persons who are in contact with each other are linked by lines.
- General persons (e.g. parents) are always drawn in, even if there is no contact.
- Deceased persons, pets, God, are drawn in and marked with symbols; no lines are drawn so that it becomes apparent that they are not "contact persons."
- In case a person has a double role, e.g. friend and colleague at work, the following questions can be posed: What is dominating? Would you keep in touch with the person if you were not colleagues at work anymore?
- If it is not clear what role is dominating, the person is recorded with colour in the respective sector.
- As far as possible, persons and not institutions should be recorded.

Interpretation

The network should be looked at under the terms of change:

      [What can I get from whom?

      [Should a person be closer to me or further apart from me in the network

Answering the following questions serves to assist in the interpretation:

- Does the network mainly focus on one or on several sectors?

- What about the denseness of the network? – A high density (many links between members of the network) can be disadvantageous for the clients: limitation of the autonomy; social pressure.

- Are there persons in the network that stand out due to many links to other members of the network (=star)?

- Are there persons who do not have relationships to other members of the network (=isolated)? An isolated person is, for instance, the hairdresser: I can tell him/her something and the environment does not know about it.

- Are there two groups within one sector that are linked through a person (=liaison)? For instance, paternal family members represent a group that is linked through one person with the maternal family members.

- Are there relationships with low intensity in the network? So-called weak relationships do often have a special quality (e.g. know something about job offers).

- Is the network homogeneous or heterogeneous?

- Are there many independent social relationships that fulfil a certain function for the respective person (uniplex)?

- Are there intensive permanent relationships that are only differentiated to a small degree and which rarely have outward links (multiplex)?

- Does the danger exist that the network of a sector collapses (e.g. end of the probation service)? – stability of the network

- What resources and dangers become apparent from the network?

Literature
Pantucek, P. (2005). Soziale Diagnostik. Verfahren für die Praxis Sozialer Arbeit. Fachhochschule St. Pölten (Hrsg.). Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.
Materials/book can be downloaded at: www.pantucek.com (12-03-2007)