

Exercise: Working Out Gains and Strains in Our Lives

(based on Uri Brofenbrenner's bio-ecological model illustrated)

1. Personalise the below diagram for you and your life – put your name in as 'the individual child', relabel or add in more labels as required e.g you may want to divide 'Family' down into 'mother,' 'father', 'partner' 'children' etc
2. Working your way from you to all the other relationships, draw a line and grade the relationship as a *gain* (= '+' sign) or *strain* ('-' sign). Note some relationships can be both so in these cases, assign and over all '+' or '-'.
3. When complete, note how you feel about the results mapped out.
4. In times of stress or low energy, try to minimise time spent with *strains* and maximise time spent with *gains*.

