

**corrymeela** 

# Shared Education in Youth Work

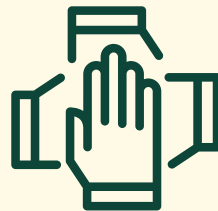
## Activity Guide





# In Brief

This resource seeks to:  
**inspire and guide youth  
groups to build sustainable  
shared education  
partnerships, empowering  
children, young people,  
& youth workers to create  
a shared future.**



**Written by the Corrymeela Community  
& funded by the Education Authority**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>04</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>05</b>
<hr/>	
Health and Wellbeing	06
Learn and Achieve	07
Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity	08
Participation	09
Living in Safety and Stability	10
<hr/>	
<b>Facilitation</b>	<b>11</b>
<hr/>	
Discussion Techniques	13
<hr/>	
<b>Activity List</b>	<b>15</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Activity Instructions</b>	<b>16</b>
<hr/>	

# Introduction



**The activities within this resource are designed to stimulate discussion and connection between children and young people involved in shared education programmes.**

---

This activity guide is aligned with the areas of enquiry set out in the Education Authority’s Regional Assessment of Need. These areas of enquiry were identified with reference to key policy directives and the views of children and young people. (Education Authority, 2019a: p. 9). Each activity relates to a primary theme, although many activities will explore multiple areas of enquiry. The relevant themes are explored in the following pages.

Shared education is open to all young people attending all manner of youth groups. The activities within this resource cover a wide age range, from 4 to 18 years old. Activities for younger groups tend to be shorter and more experiential. Activities for older participants seek embrace to discussion on themes such as identity or community as hooks for shared education engagement. Due to the broad nature of youth provision the activities may require adaptation across different contexts.

We encourage you to share your own ideas and skills with others in your partnership.

This resource was funded on the basis of providing activities engage a wide range of groups and ages on a variety of topics. We are aware that this breadth limits its relevance for individual age groups and contexts. At the end of this document, we have included a list of further resources that explore good relations themes in more detail.”

This guide seeks to offer ideas for activities when beginning shared education programmes but shared education partnerships which focus on their own programmatic strengths are most likely to succeed. Many youth groups may have access to longstanding practice and programmes as part of their membership of a wider organisation. School partnerships have often linked shared education activities to their ongoing classroom activities, while allowing young people the space to build friendships. The same principle can be applied within youth work.

Whether you are a full-time, part-time, or voluntary youth worker, and whether you are setting up a youth work partnership for the first time or deepening existing partnership engagement, we encourage you to use this resource in whichever ways are most relevant to your context.

# Themes



The five areas of enquiry outlined in the EA Regional Assessment of Need 2020-2023 are:

---



# Themes: Health and Wellbeing



Promoting positive health and wellbeing has become a central goal of educational services in recent decades. In a recent survey, 99% of youth workers stated their belief that youth services should ‘[promote] positive Health & Wellbeing’ (Education Authority, 2019a: p. 15).

This theme applies to physical and mental wellbeing and acknowledges their interlinking nature. Positive wellbeing can contribute to wider benefits for young people such as increased educational attainment, stronger relationships, and greater openness to future opportunities.

Of particular concern to practitioners is the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people. Increased isolation and stress during the pandemic have further impacted the mental health of children and young people (ARK, 2022: p. 3).

A recent report on young people’s mental health found that 76% of respondents felt that ‘young people are afraid to talk about mental health’ (Northern Ireland Youth Forum et al, 2020: p. 13). Further, this report highlighted the lack of positive language within current discussions on mental health. The activities within this resource seek to highlight tools for resilience, empathy, and wellbeing within a positive framework.

Programmes that focus on building positive relationships and increasing resilience can be successfully run within a shared education context.

Meeting another youth group can be challenging for young people, especially for those who experience high levels of anxiety. Overcoming this challenge and developing new friendships can provide young people with a more secure sense of self-confidence. New relationships, built through shared education partnerships, can also provide a greater sense of opportunity for the future.

# Themes: Learn and Achieve



There is a broad range of educational opportunities on offer within local youth services. This variety seeks to ensure that the education system meets the needs of all children and young people. The engagement with a broad range of learning styles is of particular importance to those young people who may feel detached from formal education.

Successful youth work seeks to empower young people and prepare them for adulthood. It engages young people in experiences that will develop their communication and social skills while striking a balance between healthy challenge and safety.

Shared education programming can add value to current activities that encourage the learning and achievement of young people.

Shared groups more accurately reflect the wider society and future workplaces. Activities, qualifications, or courses can be more successful if completed in shared settings. In this context, inter-personal skills, valued by employers can be developed. Similarly, employment or careers advice sessions can increase their potential reach as part of a shared education programme.



# Themes: Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity



This theme applies to activities that seek to encourage good relations between individuals and communities. Good relations are said to exist when ‘there is a high level of dignity, respect and mutual understanding and an absence of prejudice, hatred, hostility, or harassment’ (Education Authority, 2022: p. 70).

The history of conflict and current reality of segregation make this priority particularly relevant within Northern Ireland. Despite the relative peace of recent decades, political instability and community violence impact the lives of young people. Further, Northern Ireland has become increasingly diverse in recent years and educational services must be responsive to demographic change.

Building a culture of inclusion, respect for diversity, and equality of opportunity within this context is a necessity.

Shared education brings young people from different backgrounds together. One of its primary goals is encouraging good relations across diverse views and backgrounds. Learning within a shared context allows young people to test their own beliefs and values in a diverse group. Partnership programmes create space for meaningful and sustained contact. Relationships formed through these programmes can shape the attitudes and beliefs of those involved. Across different project activities, it is vital to build an atmosphere of inclusion and respect for difference.





# Themes: Participation



Participative approaches within youth work seek to engage young people within relevant decision making processes. Participatory structures create space in which young people can express their views and generate change.

Within a youth setting, these decisions may allow young people to shape the direction, content, and form of youth programmes. Investment in participatory approaches will give young people experience of collective decision making useful within broader society. As Hart writes (1992: p. 5), ‘participation is the fundamental right of citizenship’.

Shared education partnerships offer youth workers and young people a chance to participate in more representative structures. Due to segregation in housing and education, only a limited number of young people have the opportunity to engage with one another across traditional community divides.

Shared education, and the institutional relationship between youth groups, seeks to bridge this divide. Partnerships can also be fertile ground for youth advocacy. Efforts to positively impact the society around them, can be more powerful if young people are speaking with a shared voice.

**Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.**

Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Council of Europe, 2003: p. 5)



# Themes: Living in Safety and Stability



Safety and stability are required for many aspects of young people’s development. Youth centres are key spaces in which young people can meet, interact, and enjoy themselves. During programmes activities, the youth service should seek to create affirming spaces in which young people are free to express themselves.

Young people have expressed support for ‘a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, sectarianism and racism to reassure and alleviate fears they may experience’ (Education Authority, 2022: p. 79). Young people, particularly in urban areas, have also reported experiential knowledge of paramilitary groups and associated risks. 19% of young people living in urban areas agreed that ‘paramilitaries had a controlling influence on their neighbourhood’ (Education Authority, 2022: p. 79).

Identity and inclusion are linked to young people’s sense of safety. A recent survey (ARK, 2022: p. 4) reported that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to state that they felt ‘very safe’ in the area in which they lived. Similarly, members of the LGBTQ+ community reported feeling less safe in their local area (ARK, 2022: p. 4).

In this way, prejudice and discrimination can clearly impact young people’s sense of security in their everyday life.

Participation in shared education programmes may expand young people’s sense of safety. While many young people feel safe in their own community, as discussed previously in this resource, they may feel unsure or unsafe when visiting an area that is unfamiliar or associated with another community. Programmes which connect young people and facilitate their crossing of boundaries can counteract this fear.



# Facilitation: The facilitator's role



**The facilitator's role is to support the group in the process of learning. At some times, the facilitator may take on a leadership role, clearly outlining expectations within the group.**

---

In other situations, the facilitator may encourage group members to take responsibility for the learning process. Younger groups or groups at the beginning of their partnership journey may benefit from more guidance from the facilitator.

At the start of any shared programming, structure and leadership will be vital. Engaging activities will encourage young people to feel safe in a new environment and to trust the process. Some groups may benefit from being given more space by the facilitator. As young people become more comfortable and confident in shared groups, facilitators can encourage them to take more ownership of the programme and explore relevant themes with greater depth.

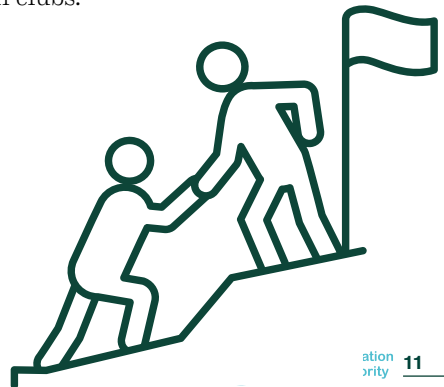
The activities in this resource will only comprise one section of a young person's experience of shared education programming.

Young people's interaction outside of facilitated activities is of central importance. Facilitators, therefore, should be aware of creating space for conversation and exploration during breaks or at the end of scheduled activities.

The importance of play and creativity in building relationships cannot be understated. While being fun, these spaces allow young people to explore relationships on their own terms.

## Reflection

To support the learning aims of the programmes, youth workers should consider building intentional reflection time into the programme. This can take place in shared groups or individual youth clubs. Kolb's Cycle of Learning, explored in the previous section of this resource, highlights the importance of evaluation and reflection within the learning process (Kolb, 1984). After activities, young people should be encouraged to contrast their new experiences with their beliefs and attitudes. In this way, the learning that occurs in shared sessions can be developed and expanded upon while young people are in their separate youth clubs.



# Facilitation: Discussion Techniques



**A significant element of successful facilitation relies upon guiding participants through complex discussions as a group. Group members will look to the facilitator to stage this journey, encourage participation, and ensure individual safety.**

---

Below are some techniques to consider during discussions:

**Paraphrasing:** the facilitator repeats a contribution in their own words, checking for clarity

*“What I heard you say was this. Is that right?”*

---

**Zooming out:** the facilitator asks the group to share general ideas quickly that may frame more focused discussions which follow

*“For the next two minutes, I’d like to note as many words related to conflict as possible. Can anybody start us off?”*

---

**Pulling a thread:** the facilitator paraphrases and asks the participant an open-ended question to encourage them to speak further

*“Can you say a little more on that point?”*

---

**Opening:** the facilitator opens space for broader participation from the group

*“Does anyone have a related point they’d like to share?”*

---

**Naming:** the facilitator non-judgementally states something that they have noticed within group dynamics, potentially to defuse tension

*“I’ve noticed that we’re starting to focus on a specific detail. How do we think this relates to our overall aim?”*

---

**Countering:** the facilitator opens space for alternative views or disagreement

*“We’ve heard a few similar viewpoints. Does anyone else have a different view that they would share?”*

---

**Ordering:** the facilitator pauses, acknowledges that multiple participants are seeking to contribute and orders these contributions

*“I see a few people have points, could you raise your hands? Okay, Jack you go first, then we’ll hear from Niamh etc..”*

---

**Summarising:** the facilitator closes by providing a brief summary of the discussion, checking for understanding

*“Before we finish, I heard these points. Does anyone have any final questions or comments?”*

---

For further background on facilitation and group work, refer to

**Lynagh, N. & Potter, M (2005)**  
*Joined-Up: Developing Good Relations in the School Community*”



# Activities

## The Activities role

**These activities explore a selection of themes across a broad age range. They are designed to encourage connection and spark conversation between shared groups. These activities are better viewed as independent examples that can be used across multiple settings, rather than a pathway of activities for a specific context. Some activities may suit your youth work context better than others due to the wide age range of the activity guide. We encourage you to adapt and edit the activities where necessary.**



# Activity List



<b>Name</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Primary Theme</b>
<b>Group Agreement</b>	16	4-18	Participation
<b>Community Mapping</b>	17	14-18	Living in Safety and Stability
<b>Conflict Styles</b>	18	9-18	Living in Safety and Stability
<b>Day at the Zoo</b>	20	4-8	Learn and Achieve
<b>Desert Island Seven</b>	22	9-18	Participation
<b>Emotion Relay</b>	23	9-13	Health and Wellbeing
<b>Empathy Explorers</b>	24	4-8	Health and Wellbeing
<b>Feeling Online</b>	25	14-18	Health and Wellbeing
<b>Five Leaf Clover</b>	27	4-8	Living in Safety and Stability
<b>Helium Stick</b>	28	9-18	Learn and Achieve
<b>Identity Signs</b>	29	11-18	Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity
<b>Line-Ups</b>	31	6-18	Participation
<b>Make it Rain</b>	32	7-13	Health and Wellbeing
<b>My Emoji</b>	33	4-8	Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity
<b>One Step Forward</b>	34	14-18	Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity
<b>Paper Islands</b>	37	9-18	Participation
<b>Who Am I?</b>	38	9-18	Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity



# Group Agreement



## At a glance:

Form a shared group agreement based on the needs and expectations of participants

## Outcomes:

Encourage development of a safe space and agree on explicit expectations at the start of the programme

**Participation**

**All ages**

**20-30 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Instructions:

- Outline the purpose of a group agreement: to encourage development of safe space; to make group expectations explicit; to encourage participants to take ownership of, and responsibility for, their learning process; and produce agreed upon goals and expectations that can be referred to later in the programme
- Split participants into several small groups for discussion
- Ask groups to discuss these questions and write their feedback on flipchart paper:
  - What do we need to work well together individually and as a group?*
  - What guidelines can we identify that will help us achieve our aims?*
  - What do you need to feel safe and included within the group?*
- Collect the feedback in a large group setting, asking clarifying questions and checking understanding where necessary
- Summarise and compile the group's feedback into specific points that make up their group agreement
- Gain agreement from the group on each point of the group agreement and ask each young person to sign it if possible
- Explain that the group agreement will be referred to throughout the shared programme and that it can be reviewed or changed if necessary

## Variations:

For younger groups, more guidance may be necessary, and it may be easier to facilitate discussions in a large group setting to minimise potential for misunderstanding.

## Notes:

**Hold onto to the final group agreement for use during future activities. If new members join the group, ensure they have been shown the group agreement.**

# Community Mapping



## At a glance:

Young people explore the positives and negatives of their community

## Outcomes:

Young people critically analyse their communities and become more aware of associated opportunities or challenges

**Living in Safety and Stability**

**14-18 years old**

**45 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Preparation:

- Ensure that participants have created a group agreement and refer to relevant principles, such as respect & listening, before beginning this activity

## Instructions:

- Ask participants to define what community means to them in a large group setting, including the geography, people, and institutions in their area
- Split participants into small groups with 8-12 participants in each
- Ask them to map their community on flipchart in these groups
- If the participants within small groups are from different local areas, encourage them to use to sides of the same page to map their communities
- Ask the small groups to consider the following questions to prompt discussion:

*What buildings are key to our community? - these can be youth centres, shops, schools, sports pitches*

*Which people are visible in our community? Which people are less visible?*

*What are the barriers within or between our community or communities?*

*What are the challenges or issues in our community?*

*What are the opportunities within our community?*

*Where do you feel safe in our community? Where do you feel unsafe?*

*What would you change about our community?*

- Ask the participants to respond to each of the above questions in different coloured pens to structure their feedback
- Ask each small group to present their community map to the other participants
- Draw out themes that are similar or different across the small groups and ask groups



# Conflict Styles



## At a glance:

Young people reflect on conflict styles and their own range of responses to conflict

## Outcomes:

Increase awareness of different uses of conflict styles and increase ability to respond to conflict constructively

**Living in Safety and Stability**

**9-18 years old**

**45-60 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Preparation:

- Gather flipchart paper, post-it notes, pens, and conflict inventory pages
- Write up the five conflict styles (avoid, accommodate, compromise, force, collaborate) on flipchart paper and stick these around the room

## Instructions:

- Ask participants to identify different words they associate with conflict in a large group setting
- Talk through this list of words, drawing out themes such as intensity of conflict, different groups or individuals involved
- Split participants into 5 small groups each given flipchart paper and conflict inventory pages
- Explain that there are 5 conflict styles that we can use to manage conflict
- Each of us can use all five conflict styles but we tend to have favourites. No one conflict style is best, each has different benefits or drawbacks depending on the situation.
- Ask each small group to read the conflict styles sheet and briefly explain each style

- Ask participants to focus on each style in turn and write down a situation in which using each style would be good or bad
- Ask each small group to share some of the situations they've created with the large group
- Encourage participants to consider which style they use the most and which they use the least
- Ask participants to move around the room putting a tick on the flipchart paper of their favoured style and an X on the style they use least
- Debrief activity encouraging participants to reflect on the range of responses to conflict and how they can use these in their everyday life



## Notes:

**You can encourage participants to scan this QR code and take the conflict styles quiz to find out their preferred conflict style(s)**

# Conflict Styles Worksheet



## **Competing**

When you compete, you are focused on getting your own way. You are likely to be clear on what you want and unwilling to change your mind.

## **Avoiding:**

When you avoid, you try to steer clear of conflict. If a conflict emerges you may try to gloss over differences or not engage with the issue at all.

## **Compromising:**

When you compromise, you seek to find the middle ground between two goals. You will likely have to give up on some of your desires to agree on a solution.

## **Accommodating:**

When you accommodate focus on the needs of others and are likely to set aside your own needs. In conflict situations you won't often get your way, but this may not always be an issue to you.

## **Collaborating:**

When you collaborate, you take the time to discuss your needs and the needs of others. You will aim to find a solution to the conflict that suits everybody or that can be viewed as a win-win.

# Day at the Zoo



## At a glance:

Young people try out different personality types by acting as animals

## Outcomes:

Develop an understanding of and empathy for different social styles

**Learn and Achieve**

**4-8 years old**

**30-40 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Instructions:

- Introduce the activity by discussing the ways in which we are different, including reference to different moods or social styles such as social, shy, distracted, relaxed

*Explain that none of these moods are better than the others and that each of us may feel many different moods throughout the day*

- Split participants into four small groups and assign one animal to each group from parrots, pandas, mice, and goldfish
- Assign one youth worker to each small group and ask them to read from the animal profiles below
- In the small groups, discuss with participants how they might get into character as their group's animal
- Ask the groups to move together and interact with one another
- After a few minutes call the participants back to the front of the room to debrief

## Debrief:

- Ask members from each group to feedback with the following questions:

*How did you feel during the activity?*

*In what ways was it easy or hard to act like your animal?*

*How does this activity relate to our different moods or personalities?*

*How can we be welcoming to these different personalities?*

- Try to get an equal amount of feedback from across the groups

## Variations:

- This activity can be adapted for older groups if the facilitator replaces the animal names with general personality descriptors

# Day at the Zoo Animal groups



## The parrots

You are the parrots. You love to chat to new people and are very smiley. If new people don't talk much, you're happy to tell them about your day and will talk for hours! You don't need the rest of your group to feel comfortable but if someone walks away while you are talking you might feel sad.



## The pandas

You are the pandas. You are very relaxed and don't like to move too much. You tend to wait for other people to talk to you. You are a very good listener and nod a lot to show that whoever you are speaking has your full attention. You like to give thumbs up to the other pandas to make sure everyone is feeling calm.



## The goldfish

You are the goldfish. You are quite smiley but may not be always paying attention to what is happening. You get distracted easily and often say whatever pops into your head. You often forgot what you were saying halfway through a sentence. You move round the room humming. Sometimes you just leave a conversation suddenly.



## The mice

You are the mice. You are quite shy and when you meet new people, you're often uncomfortable. You like to stay towards the edge of the room with your mice friends. You do like to talk to people one at a time as long as they are quiet. If something is too loud you may get scared and run away.



# Desert Island Seven



## At a glance:

A simulation exercise asking young people to consider the tools they would need on a desert island

## Outcomes:

Young people will work together in small groups, reach agreements and speak about these to the large group

### Participation

9-18  
years old

30  
minutes

Trust level:  
Low

## Preparation:

- Prepare flipchart paper and markers for each group

## Instructions:

- Split participants into 4-6 small groups and hand out flipchart paper and pens to each group
- Explain that they have ten minutes to agree on seven items that they'd take to an uninhabited island
- Explain that they will be presenting their choices to the rest of the participants after this
- Encourage participants to think about their skills as a group as this may influence the items that they would take
- The facilitator may have to answer questions on eligibility or suitability of certain items
- After ten minutes, ask each group to present to the large group in turn, explain their justification for their item list

## Debrief:

- How well did you work together during the activity?
- How did you make decisions about what items you would take to the island?
- Were there any disagreements over the items? How did you deal with different views as a group?
- How do you think your group would fare on the uninhabited island?

# Emotion Relay



## At a glance:

A quick game to introduce difference emotions and non-verbal communication

## Outcomes:

To introduce the concept of empathy and practice its use

**Health and Wellbeing**

**7-13 years old**

**20 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Preparation:

- Write down several emotions on separate pages (e.g. happy, shy, frustrated)
- The amount & complexity of these emotions can be tailored to the age & size of the group
- Explain to the group that they will be using their empathy skills during this activity
- Ask the group if they can tell how other people might be feeling just by looking at them. If they can, ask how?  
*By looking at their faces (eyes, mouths, etc.) & their bodies (arms, posture, etc.)*

## Instructions:

- Split the participants into two or three even lines
- Explain to the group that they will be asked to pass or “relay” a certain emotion along their line using their faces & bodies - that means no talking!
- Show the participant at the top of each line one emotion word ensuring other participants cannot hear

- This young person returns to their place at the top of the line and tries to mime the emotion the person next in line
- The emotion is passed on from participant to participant along the line with no talking or skipping participants
- Once the emotions have moved along the line, the last participant is to shout out what they think the emotion is – other groups should continue to play
- When all groups have finished, reveal which emotion word was shared at the start of the activity
- Repeat as necessary and debrief activity

## Notes:

**This activity can be difficult to explain and may need to be trialled with participants before its official beginning**

# Empathy Explorers



## At a glance:

Introduce and practice empathy – our ability to understand other people’s experiences and feelings

## Outcomes:

To use empathy skills and give language to its everyday use

**Health and Wellbeing**

**4-8 years old**

**20-30 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Instructions:

### Part 1

- Begin the activity by introducing the word empathy - our ability to understand how other people might be feeling
- Read out the scenarios below and ask participants to think how they would be feeling after each
- Write the feelings that the participants share on some flipchart paper - you can add more feelings or scenarios that may be relevant

### Scenarios

- I lose at my favourite sport or video game
- I see my best friend after I've been on holiday
- Someone shouts at me in the playground
- I win a prize for my artwork in school

### Part 2

- Split the participants into two teams and explain each team will be trying to guess how the other team is feeling
- Give Team 1 a feeling from the flipchart paper to act out, ensuring Team 2 cannot hear
- Give Team 1 a chance to try out some different actions with help from a facilitator
- Once Team 1 is ready, bring groups together and count “3, 2, 1, GO” as Team 1 uses their faces and bodies to show the feeling to the Team 2
- Share a new feeling for Team 2 to act out and repeat as many times as appropriate

### Debrief:

Explain how this relates to empathy – we are often able to read other people’s emotions by looking at them. When we empathise and think of how other people are feeling, we can change our behaviour and make them feel better.

Ask participants to identify situations in which their empathy skills would be useful.

# Feeling Online



## At a glance:

A discussion on online experiences and building digital resilience

## Outcomes:

Encourage self-reflection and explore identity in a shared group

**Health and Wellbeing**

**14-18 years old**

**20-30 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Preparation:

- Print out the Feeling Online Worksheet and prepare pens to complete it

## Instructions:

- Introduce digital resilience as the topic for today's session - it can be important to discuss this as we often interact with the digital world when we're on our own
- Explain the concept of resilience - the ability to recover from negative emotions or stressful situations

*You can use an elastic band or a soft ball to demonstrate resilience - if these objects are stretched or put under pressure they can return to their normal shape*

- Split participants in small groups to complete the worksheet
- Hand out the 'Online Experiences' worksheet below and ask young people to consider what they would feel and respond in each situation

- Ask each group to come up with two situations of their own and write these in the empty rows of the table
- Ask participants to share their responses and new scenarios with the rest of their small group

## Notes:

**Ensure that young people are aware that this activity is not intended to be judgemental of their digital habits. It's aim is to promote conversation on digital situations that are often experienced privately.**



# Feeling Online

## Work Sheet



What happened?	What did you feel?	What can you do?
<p>You see pictures from a party that you weren't invited to?</p>		
<p>Your best friend shares a picture of you both on your birthday</p>		
<p>Nobody responds to your message in a group chat</p>		
<p>Your friend shares a picture of you that you don't like</p>		
<p>A post you share gets lots of likes</p>		
<p>A fake account uses your pictures and information</p>		
<p>You find out your friends are in a group chat without you</p>		

# Five Leaf Clover



## At a glance:

Young people make their own emoji that reflects their personality

## Outcomes:

Encourage self-reflection and explore identity in a shared group

**Living in Safety and Stability**

**4-8 years old**

**30-40 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Preparation:

- Gather arts and crafts resources such as paper, pens, pencils, scissors, and glue sticks
- Cut out leaf shapes for participants to use - around 5 for each participant
- Draw the outline of a tree on a large piece of paper or card - one for each small group

## Instructions:

- Explain to participants that they will be creating leaves that represent the important people in their lives
- Ask participants to name some of the people that are important to them - these can be family, friends, teachers, youth workers, etc.
- Split participants into small groups of 6-10 and ask them to find a space in the room
- Ask participants to decorate five leaves each showing an important person to them - they can draw and write on each leaf

- After 15 minutes of decorating the leaves, invite each member of the small group to talk about their leaves while placing these on the tree outline
- Once everyone has had the chance to share, stick the leaves to the tree outline to represent everyone's contribution
- Ask participants to compare the previous outline of the tree with the new, colourful tree with their leaves

*What does this tell us about the important people around us?*

---

*Are all the leaves the same? Why is that?*

---

*How can the different people we've placed on our leaves help us?*

---

# Helium Stick



## At a glance:

The group works together to put a hula hoop (or stick) on the ground

## Outcomes:

Practicing teamwork, resilience and group problem solving skills

**Learn and Achieve**

**9-18 years old**

**20-30 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Preparation:

- Find hula hoops or light plastic sticks ahead of this activity
- You will need one hoop or stick for each small group of 8-10 participants

## Instructions:

- Split participants into small groups of 8-10 participants
- If using a hoop, ask group to form a circle and if using a plastic stick, ask the group to form two lines facing each other
- Have the participants hold out both index fingers out in-front of them
- Lay the hoop/stick on top of everybody's fingers
- Explain that the aim is for the group to lower the hoop/stick to the ground
- Outline the following rules:

*Everyone must have their index finger touching the hoop/stick at all times*

*They must not grab or hook the hoop/stick (fingers can only be under it)*

*If the rod is hooked or if more than one person's finger comes off the hoop/stick at a time, the task will be restarted*

- The stick will usually rise at the start since the upwards pressure created by everyone's fingers tends to be greater than the weight of the stick
- Encourage the group, when necessary, as this activity can be frustrating

## Debrief:

- What worked well? What helped you achieve your goals?
- What was difficult about the activity?
- How did you work as a team? How can communication be improved?

## Variations:

- Further restrictions such as silence or closed eyes can be added if the activity is unchallenging

# Identity Signs



## At a glance:

Young people consider the importance of different aspects of their identity

## Outcomes:

Encourage conversation and empathy on identity and the many roles each young person plays

**Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity**

**9-18 years old**

**30-45 minutes**

**Trust level: High**

## Preparation:

- Write down different aspects of identity on separate pages and stick these up around the room, evenly spaced – these are your **identity signs**
- Ensure that participants have created a group agreement and refer to relevant principles, such as respect & listening, before beginning this activity
- Prepare the participants by telling them that you are going to read some statements and they should go to the one **identity sign** that best fits with the statement
- Remind participants to treat one another with respect and to only share what they are comfortable with

## Instructions:

- Introduce the activity by stating that each of us have multiple aspects of identity that can be important in different ways
- Ask participants to look around the room at each of the **identity signs** and encourage participants to ask questions if any of the terms are unclear
- Let participants know that if they aren't sure which sign to go or would rather not answer any question they can stay in the middle of the room
- Read the prompts one-by-one, stopping for feedback from members of the group who wish to share
- Debrief with some of the suggested questions overleaf
- Show participants the not sure sign that they can use if they would rather not answer a specific question



# Identity Signs: Identity Signs - My...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Gender</b></li><li>• <b>Race</b></li><li>• <b>Sexual Orientation</b></li><li>• <b>Class</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Where I live</b></li><li>• <b>Religion</b></li><li>• <b>Family</b></li><li>• <b>Friends</b></li><li>• <b>Achievements</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Hopes for future</b></li><li>• <b>Nationality</b></li><li>• <b>Physical Appearance</b></li><li>• <b>Talents/Hobbies</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Intelligence</b></li><li>• <b>Values</b></li><li>• <b>Personality</b></li><li>• <b>Community</b></li><li>• <b>Culture</b></li></ul>
--	--	--	--

- The above are suggestions and should be adapted for different groups or age ranges  
*Concepts such as sexual orientation, community, class or hopes for the future may be used only with older groups*
- 

- Depending on the group, some detail can be written on each sign

## Statements to read

- The part of my identity that others are most aware of when they first meet me is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The part of my identity that is most important in school is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The part of my identity that is most important at home is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity that I wish I knew more about is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity that I wish others knew more about is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The part of my identity that provides me with the most benefits/privilege is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity that is often misunderstood by others is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity I find difficult to talk to people who are different is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity that I sometimes feel insecure about is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A part of my identity that I am proud of is \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Debrief Questions

- What was that activity like?
- Was it hard to just pick one identity sometimes? Why?
- Are there any **identity signs** that you think should be added? What were they?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say before we move on?



# Line-Ups



## At a glance:

Young people form human lines related to different categories

## Outcomes:

Young people get to know each other while working on their communication and teamwork

<b>Participation</b>	<b>6-18 years old</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>	<b>Trust level: Low</b>
----------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	-------------------------

## Preparation:

- This activity can be completed as a large group game or in separate small groups and is more difficult with more participants
- The standard size of group would be 10-20 participants
- More subjective statements can also be used, such as:

*Line up from most introverted to most extroverted*

---

*Line up from least daily screen time to most daily screen time*

---

## Instructions:

- Split participants into small groups if necessary
- Ask each group to form a straight-line side-by-side in order according to some of the following statements:

*What was difficult about the activity?*

---

*Line up according to your age:  
youngest to oldest*

---

*Line up according to your shoe size:  
smallest to largest*

---

*Line up according to your first name: A to Z*

---

*Line up according to house number:  
smallest to largest*

---

## Variations:

- For a more difficult variation ask participants to complete the task in silence or to stand along a string or strip of tape, as they move, they cannot be out of contact with the line

# Make it Rain



## At a glance:

Create your own relaxing rain stick during this mindful activity

## Outcomes:

Create a visual and auditory remainder of relaxation with young people

**Health and Wellbeing**

**7-13 years old**

**30-60 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Preparation:

- Gather your resources including cardboard tubes, paper, tape, tin foil, colouring pencils or pens, and rice, beads, or seeds
- Split participants into small groups with a helper in each and hand out your resources to each small group

## Instructions:

- Open with a brief demonstration at the front of the room - make sure you've tried to build your own rain stick before!
- Instruct the groups as follows:

*Tape some paper/card to one end of the cardboard tube*

*Form a thick spiral of tin foil of a similar length as the tube*

*Push the tin foil into the tube, trying to keep its spiral shape*

*Pour the rice, beads, or seeds into the tube*

*Tape some paper/card to the top of the tube*

*Check the sounds of the tube and add more foil if needed*

*Decorate the outside of the tube*

- Ask the group to come together to show off their finished rain sticks
- Encourage the group to think about how they might be able to use their rain sticks to support their health and wellbeing

## Notes:

**This can be a tricky activity so ensure you have enough supervisors in each small group - the key is to ensure that there is a robust spiral of tin foil within the cardboard tube.**



# My Emoji



## At a glance:

Young people make their own emoji that reflects their personality

## Outcomes:

Encourage self-reflection and explore identity in a shared group

**Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity**

**4-8 years old**

**30-40 minutes**

**Trust level: Low**

## Preparation:

- Prepare pieces of paper, pencils, and pens for each small group

## Instructions:

- Explain that participants will be making their own emoji that represents their identity and personality
- Split participants into shared small groups and encourage them to work in a circle
- Ask the participants to draw a big circle on their piece of paper
- Encourage them to be creative and decorate their emoji to show aspects of how they look and how they feel
- When finished, ask participants to share their emoji in the small groups and speak about why they decorated it in this way

## Variations:

- If you have other resources such as stickers, participants may use these
- If you have more time, you can ask participants to make emojis that show different feelings such as happy, sad, or calm





# One Step Forward



## At a glance:

A role play activity that explores multiple layers of power & privilege

## Outcomes:

Young people will reflect on their own position in society & assumptions about others

**Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity**

**14-18 years old**

**45-60 minutes**

**Trust level: High**

## Preparation:

- Print and cut out **Role Cards** ahead of the activity
- Ensure that participants have created a group agreement and refer to relevant principles, such as respect & listening, before beginning this activity
- Emphasis that this activity is not competitive, rather it is designed to create a conversation around privilege
- and get into the mindset of this individual
- Explain you will be reading out several statements with the instruction of “step forward if...” or “step backwards if...” - it these do not apply stay where you are
- After reading all the statements ask participants to look around and consider their position relative to others

## Instructions:

- Introduce the term privilege to participants:  
*‘a special right or advantage only available to a particular person or group’*
- Ask participants to think of & write down different aspects of identity that can be relevant in conversations about privilege
- Give each participant a Role Card, ask them to form a straight line facing in the same direction and read their card privately
- Tell the group that they each represent an individual in society and to take a few moments to try

## Debrief Questions

- Was it difficult to get into character? How comfortable were you making assumptions about your character?
- How did you feel when you were able to take a step forward?
- What was the purpose of this exercise?
- Did you experience any negative emotions, such as frustration, during this exercise?
- How does this activity relate to our society?
- What is one thing you might take away from this activity?

# One Step Forward: Role Cards



## Roleplay 1



**You are a**  
19 year-old single  
mother. You moved  
away from your  
hometown and  
parents and don't  
speak to them often.



## Roleplay 2



**You are a**  
16 year-old boy living  
in the countryside. You  
are the youngest in  
your family and often  
feel picked on.



## Roleplay 3



**You are an**  
18 year-old woman  
preparing to go to  
university. You are  
nervous about meeting  
new people.



## Roleplay 4



**You are a**  
teenage boy living  
with your mother &  
grandmother, who  
were both born in  
Lithuania. You are  
good at sport.



# One Step Forward: Role Cards



## Roleplay 5



### You are a

14 year-old boy living in Belfast. You spend most nights outside with friends, often getting into fights. Your parents don't notice



## Roleplay 6



### You are a

21 year old man, who has just finished university and can't get a job. You have moved back in with your dad. You're gay but haven't told him.



## Roleplay 7



### You are

19 years old and like to socialise every weekend. You are popular but when you're on your own you feel depressed



## Roleplay 8



### You are a

13 year-old girl who arrived in NI with your family 2 years ago. You left your country due to war and miss it. You are teaching your father English.



# One Step Forward: Role Cards



## Roleplay 9



**You are an**  
18 year-old woman  
who has just started an  
apprenticeship with an  
engineering company.  
All your colleagues are  
male and they often  
make you uncomfortable.



## Roleplay 10



**You are a**  
17 year-old girl. Your  
father pressured you  
to drop out of school  
and work in his  
company. You are  
paid well.



## Roleplay 11



**You are**  
16 year-old living in a  
small town and you  
do well in school. You  
don't talk about your  
home life. Your dad  
often shouts at you.



## Roleplay 12



**You are a**  
14 year-old who  
has been off school  
for some time due  
to illness. You are  
waiting for treatment.  
You love to play video  
games.



# One Step Forward: Role Cards



## Roleplay 13



**You are a**  
19 year old and identify  
as non-binary. You  
have grown distant  
from your school  
friends and have  
decided to move..



## Roleplay 14



**You are a**  
18 year nold who has  
just moved to NI to  
live with your auntie.  
You previously lived  
in England and your  
family is originally  
from China.



## Roleplay 15



**You are a**  
teenage girl who  
often gets in trouble  
in school. You have  
trouble concentrating.  
You feel your parents  
put you under  
pressure.



### Notes:

- Further identity cards can be added for use with a larger group or to focus on specific themes
- You can use the same card for different people in the same group, or ask participants to form pairs if the group numbers are large
- Different identity cards can be used if some themes are not age-appropriate

# One Step Forward: Statements



## Step forward if...

- You are supported by your family
- You are supported by your friends
- People's opinions don't bother you
- You can talk openly about problems you are having
- You can speak another language
- You feel able to express yourself
- You are confident your life will get better in the future
- You are financially secure
- You feel safe when walking outside on your own

## Step backwards if...

- You've ever tried to change your accent or mannerisms to fit in
- People have made fun of how you look or your identity
- You often don't share your opinions with others
- You have to support other members of your family
- You feel misunderstood
- You worry about the future
- You've ever been ashamed about your clothes, house or family

**NB:** This activity can be a challenging and emotional experience for young people. While engaging with their character young people may respond personally to some of the prompts. Ensure the participants know that they are welcome to step away from the activity and signpost appropriate support after the activity if necessary. This activity should be facilitated by a youth worker who feels comfortable handling sensitive issues during and after the activity.

# Paper Islands



## At a glance:

A musical chairs style game with sheets of paper

## Outcomes:

To build energise participants and encourage participation, cooperation, and teamwork

### Participation

9-18  
years old

10-15  
minutes

Trust level:  
Low

## Preparation:

- Place paper sheets of different sizes on the ground
- Ensure you have sufficient space within the room

## Instructions:

- Ask participants to stand around the edge of the room
- Explain that the paper sheets are the safe islands, and the rest of the room is a shark-infested sea
- Ask participants to move or 'swim' around the room
- When the facilitator shouts "shark attack", participants should jump onto an island
- Whoever is not standing on the paper is eliminated
- Repeat this process taking away more paper each time
- Repeat until there is one winner

## Variations:

- For more mature groups, the facilitator can pick some volunteers to be 'sharks' at the start of the game
- Sharks must try and catch other participants before they make it to safety
- If the facilitator is concerned about safety, they can instruct that sharks are not allowed to run during this activity

# Who Am I?



## At a glance:

An introduction to the layers of our identity & the multiple 'roles' we play

## Outcomes:

To encourage reflection & understanding on the identity of participants

**Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity**

**14-18 years old**

**45-60 minutes**

**Trust level: Medium**

## Instructions:

- Introduce the activity by telling participants that the question 'Who am I?' includes many other questions and elements

*E.g. How we look; How we act; Where we live/are from; What we do; What we like; Who we are close to.*

- Share 10 sentences about your own identity with the group with a broad range of descriptors  
*the complexity or depth of these sentences can be tailored to the age or size of the group*
- Ask the participants to write down 10 sentences that describe who they are

- After 10 minutes ask the group to rank their identity sentences from most to least important
- Ask each participant to share their **'Who am I?' sentences** in small groups if appropriate

## Debrief:

- How did you find writing down 10 sentences about yourself?
- Did you write anything that seemed special?
- Was ranking your identity sentences difficult? Were there any rankings that surprised you?

## Notes:

**Example for the facilitator's identity sentences:**

- I have brown hair
- I like to listen to music
- I have two brothers

- I am a youth worker
- I used to live in Australia
- I am scared of heights
- I want to learn the piano

- I am a mother
- I love the summer
- I like to help other people



# Reference list:



**ARK (2022)** *Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey: Summary of Results 2022*, ARK. <https://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/2022/summary2022.pdf>, Accessed: November 2022

**Council of Europe (2003)** *Revised European Charter on the Participation of 201 in Local and Regional Life*

**Department of Education (2003)** *Youth Work: A model for effective practice*. Update 2003. Department of Education, Northern Ireland

**Education and Training Inspectorate (2018)** *Developing Shared Education: A Framework for Youth Provision Partnerships*

**Education Authority (2019a)** *Regional Assessment of Need 2020-2023*, Education Authority Youth Service

**Education Authority (2019b)** *Regional Youth Development Plan*, Education Authority Youth Service

**Education Authority (2022)** *Regional Assessment of Need 2023*, Education Authority Youth Service

**Kolb, D. A. (1984)** *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

**Northern Ireland Youth Forum, Belfast Youth Forum & Children's Law Centre (2020)** *Elephant in the Room: Exploring young people's awareness of mental health in Northern Ireland*

## Further resources:



**Cara-Friend** (2018) *A Youth Worker's Resource: Encouraging LGBTQ+ Inclusive Practice*, Available at: <https://cara-friend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Cara-Friend-Youth-Workers-LGBTQI-Resource.pdf>

**Education Authority** (2019) *Good Relations Resource Pack*, Available at: <https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-03/EA%20Good%20Relations%20Programme%20Web.pdf>

**European Commission and Council of Europe** (2012) *T-Kit: Youth transforming conflict*, Available at: [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261899/T-Kit12\\_EN.pdf/9791dece-4a27-45e5-b2f1-b7443cb2125b](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261899/T-Kit12_EN.pdf/9791dece-4a27-45e5-b2f1-b7443cb2125b)

**Lynagh, N. & Potter, M** (2005) *Joined-Up: Developing Good Relations in the School Community*, The Corrymeela Press, Available at: <https://www.corrymeela.org/cmsfiles/resources/PeaceandConflict/Joinedup.pdf>

**National Youth Council of Ireland** (2012) *Access All Areas: A Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector*, Available at: <https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Access-All-Areas-Full-Version-2022.pdf>

**National Youth Council of Ireland** (2019) *Beyond Hate: A Journey with Young People Toward Inclusion – An Activity Pack for Youth Workers*, Available at: <https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/PX3815-Beyond-Hate-V2.pdf>

**National Youth Council of Ireland** (2022) *Future Generations: How to Create Change at the Local Level*, Available at: <https://www.youth.ie/documents/how-to-create-change-at-the-local-level/>

**Save the Children** (2015) *Facilitator's Handbook: Life Skills Workshops for Youth*, Available at: [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/facilitators\\_handbook\\_oco\\_life\\_skills\\_workshop\\_for\\_youth\\_web.pdf/](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/facilitators_handbook_oco_life_skills_workshop_for_youth_web.pdf/)

**The Corrymeela Community** (2013) *UP Standing: Stories of courage from Northern Ireland*, Available at: <https://www.corrymeela.org/cmsfiles/programmes/legaciesofconflict/Upstanding/Storybk.pdf>

**The Corrymeela Community** (2020) *The Choices We Made: Bystanding and conflict in Northern Ireland*, Available at: <https://www.corrymeela.org/cmsfiles/resources/PeaceandConflict/TCWM-Ed-Guide-Final-for-WEB.pdf>

**United Nations** (2021) *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook*, Available at: [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yps\\_programming\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yps_programming_handbook.pdf)

**YMCA Europe** (2015) *Peace Work Institute Handbook*, Available at: <https://fr.ymcaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Peace-Work-Institute-Handbook-web.pdf>

**YouthAction** (2019) *I Haven't Been Affected by the Conflict But...Voices from young people in Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland*, Available at: <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/11ec25d7/files/uploaded/6644%20YouthAction%20I%20haven't%20been%20affected%20by%20the%20troubles.pdf>

# Shared Education in Youth Work

*Together is better*

---

corrymeela<sup>+</sup>  ea Education  
Authority

