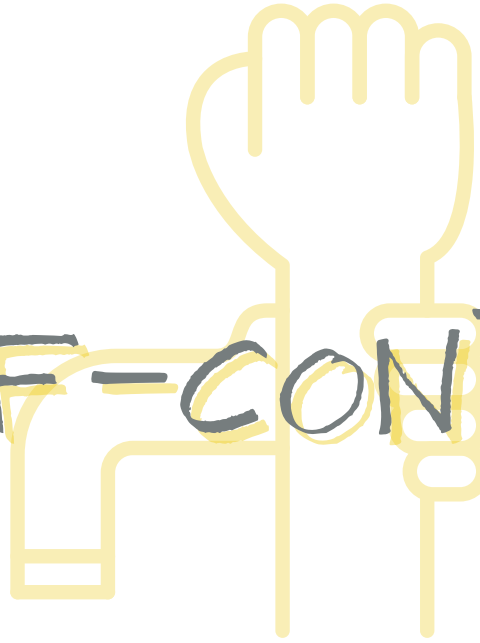
SELF-CONTROL



Self-control involves knowing how to manage and regulate thoughts, feelings and actions in response to different life situations. Encouraging young people to think about the existing links between thoughts, feelings and actions. This is an introduction to young people to useful skills which can challenge unhelpful thoughts.
This aims to assist young people to understand and acknowledge the skills associated with self-control.

Building upon these skills is especially important to prevent young people from acting upon their emotions in a negative way, which may harm or negatively impact upon themselves or others.

Thoughts and feelings are very powerful, having a greater impact on the way people interact and act in a situation. Unhelpful or negative thoughts can take control over people who experience them often. Unhelpful thoughts can put off or stop a young person from achieving their full potential and lead them to act emotionally or unreasonably in situations.

However:
people who understand how to challenge unhelpful ways of thinking and turn their negative self-talk into a positive are more likely to exhibit higher resilience in the face of adversity or challenging times. Increasing young people's awareness that everyone experiences unhelpful thoughts from time to time, sometimes it cannot be helped.

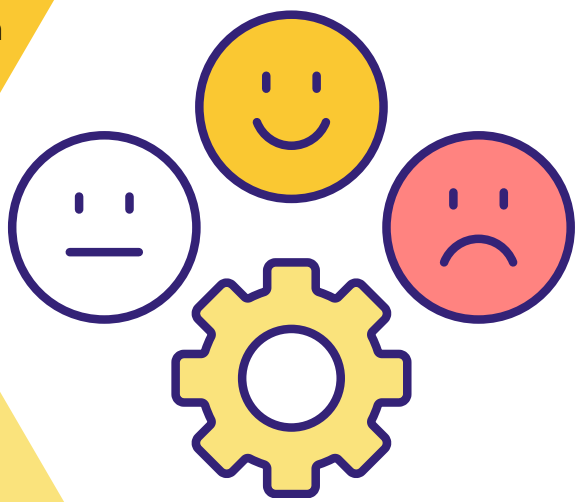
Learning outcomes:

Young people will be able to:

- Practice mindfulness and breathing techniques,
- Demonstrate kindness and compassion to others and themselves,
- Be able to identify when others or themselves is being treated unfairly in their social groups,
- Be confident in speaking out about unfair treatment,
- Identify things they are grateful,
- Practice techniques for gratitude.

Equipping young people with skills and attributes to be aware of their thoughts and how to challenge them.

Learning how to challenge and overcome unhelpful thoughts will help young people become more resilient and increase confidence in their capabilities



Defining Terms:

Emotional Regulation: Means being able to modify how intense the emotion you are experiencing is. Being able to stop oneself from acting on an impulse. By regulating your emotions, you are better able to deal more effectively with situations as they arise in your life.

Activity 1



‘Self Control’

Purpose: To introduce the topic of self control to the young people

Objectives: Young people will think about self control and reflect on a time when they used or could have used self control



Resources: Flip-chart, markers, pages, ‘Twins fail fruit snack challenge’ video

Note:
‘Twins fail fruit snack challenge’ video (Youtube)



Steps:

1. Introduce the activity by informing young people that they will be looking at the topic of self control
2. Ask the young people what comes to mind when they think of ‘self control’ and jot them on a flip-chart page to present throughout the session
3. Play the group the ‘Twins adorably fail fruit snack challenge’ video
4. Ask the young people for feedback on the children's self control
5. Tell the young people to take a few minutes to think about a time where they used self control. Have them think:

- What did I think in this situation?
- How did I feel in this situation?
- What did I do in this situation?
- What could I have done better in this situation?

6. Instruct them to feedback to the group (if comfortable) about the situation they faced and what their thoughts, feelings and actions were.

Processing questions:

- How did you find this activity?
- Why is it important for people to have self-control?
- Do you think most people have good self-control?
- Did you learn anything in this activity?

SCAN ME

Activity 2



Purpose: To allow young people to understand that they have a control over what they say

Objectives: Young people will analyse thoughts and decide wither or not they are something that should be said or not

'T.H.I.N.K before you speak'



Resources: T.H.I.N.K worksheet, pens

Note:
These thoughts can be adapted to be more suitable to the group



Steps:

1. Give each young person a copy of the 'T.H.I.N.K' worksheet
2. Ask the group to fill them in individually or in pairs
3. Explain that the young people must read each thought and decide wither it is something that should be said out loud or kept to themselves and fill it out accordingly
4. Have the group feed back individually of what they put down and why, if people have different responses ask them why and encourage discussion.

Processing questions:

- How did you find the activity?
- Have you struggled with filtering your thoughts before?
- Do you think you will be able to filter your thoughts better after this activity?
- Did you learn anything in this activity?
- Will you use the T.H.I.N.K filter after this activity?

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‘T.H.I.N.K before you speak’

Look at each thought in the top boxes. use the THINK filter to help decide if those thoughts are ones that should stay in your head or if they should come out. In the bottom boxes, write if the thought should come out of your mouth or not.

“Why are they talking to me again? They’re so annoying”	“If they kick my chair one more time, I might punch him”	“I actually really liked the activity the teacher did with us today”
“I want to tell everyone about my new Xbox game”	“This class is so stupid. I don’t need to know any of this”	“I really like their shoes, I wonder where they got them from”

THINK

Is it **T**rue?
Is it **H**elpful?
Is it **I**mportant?
Is it **N**ecessary?
Is it **K**ind?

Activity 3

'Actions Vs Consequences'



Purpose: To allow young people to understand that there are consequences for their actions

Objectives: Young people will work in teams to identify what consequences can from actions, both good and bad.



Resources: 'Action vs consequence' worksheet, pens

Note:
This activity can be adapted to suit the group you are working with - think of some relevant actions and consequences tailored to them



Steps:

1. Give each young person a copy of the 'Actions Vs Consequences' worksheet
2. Ask the group to fill them in small groups of 3/4 depending on the size of group
3. Explain that the young people must list as many consequences as they can (both good and bad) for the action that they have been provided on the worksheet
4. Have one person from each smaller group feedback what they have listed, encourage discussion if there are overlaps/differences of opinion
5. Ask if any young people can think of their own action that they have experienced where there was consequences

- What were the consequences (good or bad?)
- Did you learn from your action based upon the consequence it had?
- If you were to be in the same situation again what would you change?

Processing questions:

- How did you find the activity?
- What did you learn from this activity?
- Why is it important to take consequences into consideration when making decisions?
- Do you always think of the consequences of your actions before doing it?
- Do you think it is better to think of the consequences before doing something over regretting an action/decision?

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'Actions Vs Consequences'



Write as many consequences as you can (positive and/or negative) for each action

Action	Vs	Consequence
You stay up late playing video games	→	
You clean your room when asked	→	
You skip class	→	
You don't know the answer on a test so you copy from someone else	→	
Someone makes fun of you so you hit them	→	
You tell the truth about something you did	→	

Activity 4



‘Mindful Breathing’

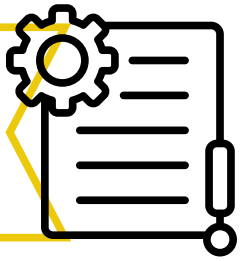
Purpose: Introduction to the “Take 5” strategy to become more in control of emotions.

Objectives: Young people will be able to identify and use the “Take 5” strategy to overcome emotional challenges and make better decisions.



Resources: Quiet space, video access & headspace video (optional)

Notes:
Search for other apps which may be useful to re-center emotions and help calm your mind as a group



Steps:

1. Explain that experiencing a range of strong emotions is a normal part of life
2. It is important to know what to do to manage these feelings when they arise
3. Discuss what may happen if a person does not manage strong feelings – they may act or behave in a way which may cause hurt or harm to themselves or others
4. Explain that “Take 5” means taking a break or a step away from what is happening in that moment, finding a place to relax and calm emotions. It allows you to take time to become more aware of thoughts
5. Breathing activity:

- Sit back into the chair with your feet on the ground
- Arms and hands resting on the lap
- .Relax your body into the chair
- Close your eyes or look down onto your lap
- Focus on your belly and imagine a small balloon in that space
- Breathe slowly and deeply through the nose, imagining the balloon slowly getting bigger as you breathe in
- Hold your breath for 3 seconds
- Slowly exhale by blowing air out through your mouth, as if blowing out a candle.
- And hold for 2 seconds.
- Repeat this at least 10 times.

6. Place a hand over your belly to feel it go up and down as you breathe in.
7. Alternatively, play this headspace video - Headspace | Mini meditation | Breathe - YouTube

‘Mindful Breathing’

Processing questions:

- How did you find this activity?
- How does your body feel after this breathing exercise? - Calm? Tired? Tense?
- Can you see this breathing exercise as being helpful if you are experiencing strong emotions?
- Did you learn anything from this activity?
- Do you know of any other apps that can help with these kinds of emotions?

1. Headspace
2. Frantic World
3. Take a break!
4. Calm

Tips:

IIf your group reacts well to this exercise, it might be a good idea to repeat it during another session or use it as an opening to another session.



Activity 5

Purpose: Young people will become more aware of the link between emotional health and physical health

Objectives: : Young people will be able to outline where they feel emotions in their body

'Where Do I Feel Emotions?'





Resources: Body map, markers

Notes:
This is a personal activity; some young people may need encouragement and support to complete



Steps:

1. Give each young person a body map and markers
2. Ask the group to complete this activity individually.
3. Ask the young people to colour in the part of the body where they feel the specified emotion with the colour marked on the worksheet:

- Sadness - Blue
- Happiness - Green
- Fear/anxiety - Yellow
- Anger - Red
- Love - Pink

4. Ask the young people who feel comfortable to feed back to the group where they labelled each emotion
5. Follow up with the processing questions

Processing questions:

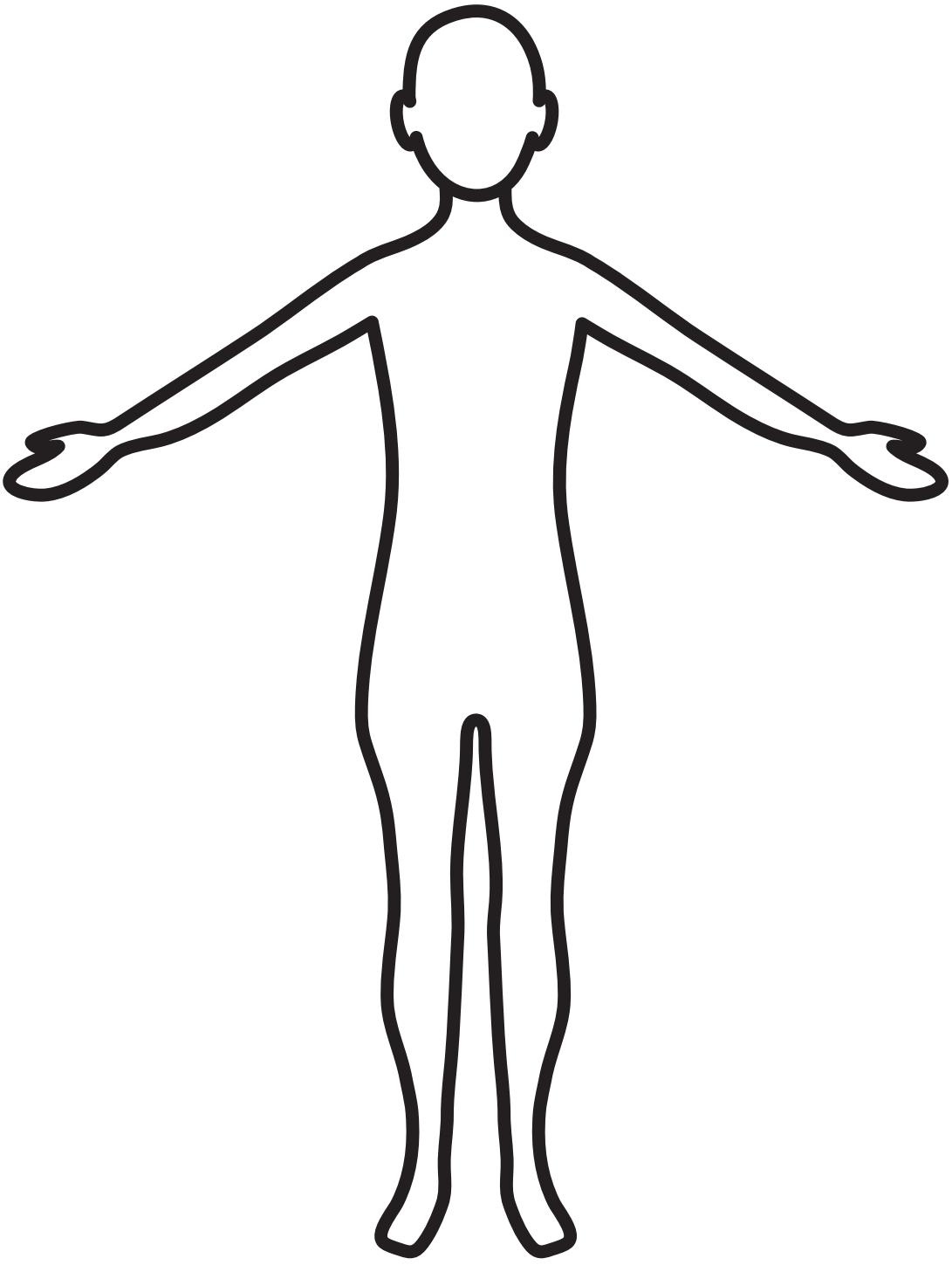
- Did you learn anything from this activity?
- Why do you think it is important to be aware of where you feel your emotions?
- Do you think it's helpful to understand how your body reacts to emotions? Why?

‘Where Do I Feel Emotions?’



BODY MAP- Where do I Feel?

We can recognise emotions by feeling them in our body. Colour in where you feel each emotion



Sadness	Happiness	Fear/Anxiety	Anger	Love

Activity 6

Purpose:
Young people will be able to identify ways in which their body reacts when feeling overwhelmed

Objectives: : Young people will identify the impacts of feeling overwhelmed on a person and themselves, having the opportunity to think about the physical results of being overwhelmed

.

'Overwhelmed' Part 1



Resources: 'What happens to my body when I am overwhelmed' activity sheet, pens

Notes:
Young people can add as many feelings/reactions as they want on the back of the worksheet



Steps:

1. Explain to the young people that this activity will be looking at the feeling of being overwhelmed
2. Ask the group to shout out words that they think of when they hear the word 'overwhelmed'
3. Jot these words/terms on a flip-chart page and keep it presented throughout the activity
4. Give the young people 'What happens to my body when overwhelmed worksheet'
5. Ask them to work individually or in pairs to fill out the worksheet -
6. They must individually tick which descriptions best match how they fee;/react when they are overwhelmed by something
7. Each young person must then write three of their own in the empty spaces provided

Processing questions:

- Did you learn anything from this activity?
- Why is it important to know how the body can feel when being overwhelmed?
- How did you feel putting yourself into your own shoes when feeling overwhelmed?
- Are there anyways in which you can stop yourself from feeling overwhelmed?

What happens to my body when I feel overwhelmed?

Tick which reactions to being overwhelmed applies to you. Add three more feelings or reactions that you have when you are overwhelmed

- [ ] Your thoughts feel jumbled
- [ ] You struggle to make decisions
- [ ] Your appetite changes
- [ ] You Struggle to sleep
- [ ] Your body feels tense
- [ ] You get headaches
- [ ] You feel like you dont want to talk to people
- [x]
- [x]
- [x]

Activity 7

Purpose: Young people will be able to identify ways in which they can calm down when feeling overwhelmed

Objectives: : Young people will identify specific things that they enjoy that they can use to regulate their emotions when feeling overwhelmed

.

'Overwhelmed' Part 2



Resources: 'Learn how to deal with being overwhelmed" poster, 'What can I do when I am feeling overwhelmed" activity sheet, pens

Notes:
Young people can add as many feelings/reactions as they want on the back of the worksheet



Steps:

1. Explain to the young people that this activity will be looking at the feeling of being overwhelmed
2. Print and present the 'learn how to deal with being overwhelmed' poster in the group - tell the group these are ideas of things people can do when feeling overwhelmed in order to regulate their emotions but each individual has different ways that work for them
3. Give the young people a copy each of the 'What can I do when I am feeling overwhelmed' worksheet
4. Ask the young people to fill out the worksheet individually, they must identify what activities they can do to calm them down when feeling overwhelmed. Give them the examples:

- Go for a walk
- Talk to friends
- Take deep breaths

Processing questions:

- What did you learn from this activity?
- What do you usually do when feeling overwhelmed?
- Do you usually use positive interventions e.g. going for a walk when feeling overwhelmed?
- Why do you believe it is important to focus on things you enjoy when you're feeling overwhelmed?

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BREATH



MOVE



TALK

LEARN HOW TO DEAL WITH BEING OVERWHELMED



LISTEN TO MUSIC



ASK FOR HELP



GO OUTSIDE



PICK UP A HOBBY



RECOGNISE YOUR EMOTIONS

What can I do when feeling overwhelmed?

Usually when I feel overwhelmed I:

What do you usually do when you are feeling overwhelmed? Anything?

Does this usually work?

○ YES ○ NO

When I next feel overwhelmed I can:

Think of some activities you can do to make you relax. What calms you down most?

Activity 8

Purpose: This exercise considers assertive, aggressive and passive responses to a set of scenarios, exploring the likely consequences and reactions of others to each communication style.

Objectives: Young people will be able to identify their own communication style.

'Asserting Myself'

Resources: *Flipchart & Markers, Asserting yourself cards*

Note:
Scenarios can be built around current situations young people may be facing within the group

Steps:

1. Open the session by sharing this example: "You are waiting in a queue for a burger when someone pushes in front of you." Now pose the question:
2. What do you do?

- Passive: does nothing
- Aggressive: verbally attacks the person and tells him or her what to do or where to go, in a loud and agitated way
- Passive-Aggressive: does nothing directly, but makes comments to other people in the queue
- Assertive: uses the three steps to assertive communication saying:

3. Describe: "Excuse me. There is a queue and we have been waiting for some time."
4. Express: "I don't think it's fair for you to jump in."
5. Specify: "and I really think you should be fair and go to the end of the queue."
6. Write up 'Passive', 'Aggressive', 'Passive-Aggressive' and 'Assertive' up onto flip-chart paper to remind the young people.
7. In another colour write underneath Describe, Express and Specify as a prompt.
8. Divide the young people into threes and hand each a set of Asserting Yourself Cards and some paper/pens.
9. Ask them to look at the four scenarios and come up with a passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive response for each one.

‘Asserting Myself’



14.The assertive response should show these different steps - Describe the situation or idea as clearly and specifically as you can.
15. Express how you feel about the situation. (Note: Use "I" or "My" statements to refer to how you are feeling and what you are thinking.)
16. Specify what you want. Include a specific deadline.
17. Share ideas from each group and then, still working in threes, ask the young people to share what happened the last time they were in conflict with someone.
18. This may have been a partner, friend, a family member or even a member of the public.
19. Work through what might have happened applying the assertiveness principles from before.
20. Conclude that being assertive doesn’t automatically mean that you will get what you want, but it is more likely that you will be understood and respected whatever the outcome.
21. Agree to be assertive over the next week to resolve a situation and to share the outcomes in the group.

Processing Questions:

1. Do you think there are pro's and con's to each style of communication?
2. Can one person have more than one style of communication?
3. Did you learn anything about your own style of communication through this activity?

‘Asserting Myself’



You are trying to buy a student's rail ticket, but the ticket clerk won’t accept the ID you have to prove your age

You have taken back a faulty item to the shop you bought it from, but they refuse you a refund

You take back an item of clothing to the store as it does not fit, the store assistant is reluctant to take it back, even though it is within the timeframe

A sales assistant is putting pressure on you to buy an iPad on Interest Free Credit, but you need time to think and budget

Activity 9



Purpose: To enable young people to discuss preventive measures on angry outbursts

Objectives: Young people will use a scenario to identify what causes an angry out bursts and discuss what could ahve been done to prevent this from happening again

'Kayleigh's Day'

Resources: An inflatable ball, Kayleigh's day handout, flip-chart & markers

Note:
Young people can choose roles and act out in front of the group or it can be read together

Steps

1. Pass a ball around the classroom. When a young person holds it, they can say something that someone might find frustrating. It can be something big or small. Note the different things that people find frustrating on a flip-chart
2. Talk in small groups about something they have heard in person or online about someone being aggressive , road rage or public arguments. Share some of these
3. Ask them to consider the things that might have been going on (we have to make some assumptions or talk more generally about what can create feelings of anger) How do people react to feelings of anger or frustration?
4. Read through Kayleigh's day either as a role play in groups or together as a whole group
5. Discuss in pairs: What 'things' affected Kayleigh's feelings through the day?
6. Discuss the following in groups: What could Kayleigh have done before hand to prevent pressure from building up? What else could have been going on for Kayleigh (we don't know everything)? Decide two top tips for Kayleigh to prevent a repetition of this day.

Processing Questions:

1. Did you resonate with Kayleighs story? How?
2. Did you learn anything about yourself in this activity?
3. Why is it important to have control over your feelings of anger?



‘Kayleigh’s Day’
Role Play

Narrator: It was a beautiful sunny day in Belfast, and Kayleigh was just getting ready for school.

Kayleigh: (Yawns). I wonder what time it is, I was having a really weird dream. (looks at clock) Oh No! I’m going to be late for the bus!

Narrator: Kayleigh realised that she had overslept, and quickly jumped out of bed.

Kayleigh: (swinging legs out of bed) Aagh, my toe!! Who left that rock there?

Narrator: Kayleigh had been collecting rocks at the weekend, and still had them lying all over her bedroom floor.

Kayleigh: Ok, where is my school tie? Where is it! (frantically searches all over her room, moving piles of clothes as she goes). Gods sake! I’ll just have to go without it and hope Miss Keene doesn’t see me.

Narrator: Kayleigh managed to get dressed quickly and grab her school bag before she flew out of the door without getting a chance to eat breakfast.

Kayleigh: (running for the bus) Wait! Wait! I’m here!

Narrator: Kayleigh managed to catch the bus and slumped down in a seat next to her friend Ben.

Kayleigh: Phew. Glad I caught it; my mum is working today, so she couldn’t have given me a lift if I’d missed it. Come to think of it, I haven’t seen her to talk to properly for a few days, she’s been so busy with this conference thing that she’s been organising. I haven’t even got that thing signed to say I can go on that Geography trip today. Oh well, maybe they won’t ask for it.

Narrator: Unfortunately, her form tutor did ask for it, and Kayleigh wasn’t allowed to go out on the trip without a signed consent form. Instead, she had to join another class and do research in the library. *Also* …

Miss Keene: Kayleigh Morrison! Come here please.

Narrator: Miss Keene happened to be standing outside the Sports Hall at break time, just as Kayleigh was walking past.

Kayleigh: (muttered under her breath).Oh no! That’s all I need. (louder to Miss Keene). Yes Miss Keene?

Miss Keene: And where is your school tie?

Kayleigh: I'm sorry Miss, I couldn't find it this morning, I'm sorry.

Miss Keene: You know the rules Miss Morrison. Lunch time detention in my classroom, 12.30 sharp!

Kayleigh: Yes Miss Keene.

Narrator: Things weren't going too well for Kayleigh today it seemed, but she was coping ok with it. That was, until Josh Black came along.

Josh: (teasing) Ok 'K'? Nice pic of you on Tanya's socials … not! Ha ha!

Kayleigh: What!?

Josh: You know, the one from Tom's party of you playing the baby game with a dummy and a frilly hat.

Kayleigh: Noooooo! She didn't put that on her socials did she?? Oh no … I'll never live it down (plunges her head into her hands).

Narrator: Things really weren't looking too good for Kayleigh today. But only another 2 lessons to go until home-time.

Kayleigh: Ok. So today has been a disaster. Never mind, it's nearly home-time, and I can just watch TV when I get in and message a few friends.

Narrator: Later that day, Kayleigh arrived back home to find that she was locked out and didn't have her key.

Kayleigh: I just don't believe it! I'm cold and hungry, and all I want to do is just sit down and get today over with.

Narrator: After an hour of sitting on the doorstep, Kayleigh's mum arrived home with several bags of shopping.

Mum: Kayleigh? Forgot your key? Oh sweetheart, how long have you been sitting there?

Narrator: That was the last straw, Kayleigh snapped.

Kayleigh: (shouting) LONG ENOUGH!! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT! IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SITTING HERE FOR AN HOUR FREEZING MY BACKSIDE OFF. IT'S YOUR FAULT I COULDN'T GO ON MY SCHOOL TRIP. AND I GOT A DETENTION BECAUSE YOU LOST MY TIE!!! I HATE YOU!!!

Activity 10



'Anger: Managed'

Purpose: To help young people recognise and manage their anger in constructive ways, fostering emotional regulation and healthier interpersonal relationships.

Objectives: Young people will be equipped with anger management skills, including recognizing triggers, using coping strategies, and promoting effective communication to address anger-related issues.



Resources: Anger managed worksheet
sticky notes

Note:
Young people may feel very vulnerable when discussing their anger - allow for some personal time if neeeded



Steps

1. Give out the 'Anger: Managed" worksheet
2. Using the handout, consider a few things that the group find can instigate angry feelings or aggression e.g. people riding bikes on the path, someone pushing in front of me. For each one of these, what they could do to help ease those feelings and help work towards a more positive outcome. Discuss what the person was thinking and therefore feeling. What needs to change to help manage the situation without developing angry feelings and the possibility of aggression.
3. Feed back as a group and share ideas. Which ones did they think were the most realistic or best ideas? Go through the fact sheet and share good ideas with the class. If there is time, practice some of these.
4. Ask young people to think of something privately which makes them feel angry or aggressive. Consider how they can think about it differently and what they could do to address those feelings. Write what could be done differently to improve the situation. Share these.



‘Anger: Managed’

Situation	Alternative Activites

Activity 11

'Peer Pressure'



Purpose: Young people will gain knowledge and skills to navigate peer pressure situations and make choices aligned with their values and well-being.

Objectives: To empower young people to recognise and resist negative peer pressure, make informed decisions, and build their self-confidence.



Resources: Scenarios or case studies related to peer pressure, whiteboard or flip-chart with markers

Note:
These scenarios can. be-made specific to the young people at your youth organisation



Steps

1. Begin by discussing the concept of peer pressure with the group.
2. Define peer pressure as the influence that friends or peers can have on your decisions and behaviours.
3. Emphasise that peer pressure can be positive (encouraging healthy choices) or negative (pushing you to do something against your values).
4. Divide participants into small groups.
5. Provide each group with a scenario card.
6. Instruct each group to create a short role-play based on the scenario they receive.
7. Encourage them to include the peer pressure dynamics and different responses.
8. Have each group present their role-play to the whole group.
9. After each presentation, facilitate a brief discussion with the audience about what they observed in terms of peer pressure and the choices made by the characters.
10. Lead a group discussion about the role-plays and the strategies used by the characters to handle peer pressure.
11. Encourage participants to share their thoughts on what they would do in similar situations.
12. Discuss assertiveness as a healthy way to respond to peer pressure. Explain that assertiveness involves respectfully standing up for one's beliefs and boundaries without being aggressive or passive.

‘Peer Pressure’



Scenario 1: Study Group Encouragement (Positive Peer Pressure)

Scenario: Your friends suggest that you join their study group to help each other study and excel in your subjects.

Roles:
Student A: The student facing academic challenges.
Student B: The friend encouraging the study group.
Student C: Another friend who is also part of the study group.
Discussion Points: Discuss the benefits of joining a study group, the positive aspects of peer support, and the impact on academic performance.

Scenario 2: Party with Underage Drinking (Negative Peer Pressure)

Scenario: Your friends pressure you to attend the party, saying it will be a great time and that everyone else is going.
Roles:
Teen A: The teenager invited to the party.
Teen B: The friend encouraging attendance at the party.
Teen C: Another friend who supports going to the party.
Discussion Points: Explore the risks associated with underage drinking, refusal strategies, and the importance of setting boundaries.

Scenario 3: Skipping School for a trip into town (Negative Peer Pressure)

Scenario: Your friends tell you that it's just one day, and they promise it'll be more fun than school.

Roles:
Student X: The student with the test at school.
Student Y: The friend suggesting skipping school for the town.
Student Z: Another friend who supports the idea of skipping school.
Discussion Points: Discuss the consequences of skipping school, time management, and the importance of prioritising responsibilities.