

# Basic Life Skills Course Facilitator's Manual





**Basic Life Skills Course  
Facilitator's Manual**

**Ministry of Youth and Sport  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**UNICEF Azerbaijan**

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# INTRODUCTION

**Target Audience and Intended Purpose:**

This manual is for MoYS staff facilitating life skills lessons in Youth Houses across Azerbaijan. This manual contains step-by-step instructions for delivering lessons that will strengthen youth’s skills and capacities so they can feel a sense of achievement in their current and future personal and professional endeavors.

In the future, this manual and its contents can be modified for use with youth in other settings -- including schools, sports initiatives, parenting classes, internally displaced camps, and a wide variety of programs tailored to the needs of various subsets of vulnerable children and youth. The main goal is that this program will meet the needs of a diverse population of children and youth, including reaching society’s most vulnerable populations.

**Development of this Manual:**

This manual was developed by a UNICEF Youth and Adolescent Development consultant in close collaboration with the MoYS. Before creation of this manual, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews were conducted in 3 districts in Azerbaijan. Several youth were interviewed in order to determine which life skills topic areas are most relevant and useful to youth across Azerbaijan. Based on the outcome of those meetings and interviews, as well as a thorough literature of best practices in life skills, it was determined that youth need transferable skills that can be practically applied to help youth make the transition to adulthood and lead more fulfilling and peaceful lives.

**How to use this manual:**

This manual consists of lessons in 16 topic areas. Each lesson is 90 minutes in length. Ideally, 2 lessons will be administered in a single week, so the entire package can be delivered in an 8-week session. However it is up to the Youth House to decide how many lessons can realistically be delivered per week. It is strongly encouraged that youth commit to attending all 16 lessons, rather than youth “dropping in” for single lesson(s).

All lessons can be adapted to meet the needs of ages 10-24. The facilitator should use their professional judgment and expertise to tailor examples and sample scenarios to meet the unique needs of the students in your group.

Each lesson plan describes the learning objectives of the lesson, the materials required for the lesson, and the specific steps to facilitate the lesson. Each lesson includes scripts, recommended discussion questions, and occasional graphics. Facilitators are permitted to adjust and change lessons as necessary, so long as the essence of the lesson remains intact.

In order to best understand the true meaning of each lesson, it is recommended that the facilitator work through the lesson and the activities in the student workbook prior to the lesson. This will help give the facilitator be more prepared and have a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

**Sources:**

Some of the lessons included in this manual were adapted and modified from several existing life skills and counseling resources, as cited in footnotes. Each lesson was further contextualized to meet the unique needs of youth in Azerbaijan. Existing lessons and activities were further infused with youth-centered approaches that build resilience.

## LIFE SKILLS 101

**Why are Life Skills Important?**

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) linked life skills to education, stating that education should be directed towards the development of the child's fullest potential.

The 1990 Declaration on Education for All (EFA) included life skills among the essential learning tools for survival, capacity development and quality life.

The 2000 Dakar World Education Conference on EFA also documented that all young people and adults have the "human right to benefit from an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be and included life skills in goal 3 which talks about 'promotion of life skills for young people and adults' and goal 6 which highlights 'improvement of the quality of education in all aspects', aiming for a situation where men and women, boys and girls can achieve excellence."

**What are Life Skills?**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the leader in defining best practices in life skills. They have set the global standard. Their definition of life skills is as follows: "Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills may be directed toward personal actions or actions toward others, as well as toward actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health."

Bearing the WHO definition in mind, the proposed definition for Life Skills in Azerbaijan, is as follows:

The Basic Life Skills curriculum offers youth the emotional, social and intellectual tools needed to achieve success in life - on a personal level, an interpersonal level, and within their community and work places. The life skills package for Azerbaijan Youth Houses offers direct instruction in 3 main areas:

- The skills of knowing and living with oneself (self awareness)
- The skills of knowing and living with others (interpersonal skills)
- The skills of making effective decisions (thinking skills)

Each of these areas are "transferable skills" that can be applied, directly or indirectly, to a diverse array of daily challenges and life experiences.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BASIC LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

The life skills package provides youth with new knowledge and the opportunity to apply novel skills in a safe environment. This package aims to shape youth's attitudes and beliefs in a positive manner so that they contribute to Azerbaijani society by making productive life choices, manage their emotional wellbeing, and achieve personal success as they transition to adulthood, and, eventually, the work world.

This life skills package also aims to shift harmful social norms that have led to gender and socioeconomic inequality. It is hoped that youth who complete the basic life skills program will be more open minded, respectful of others, and be more aware of their "privilege" so that they can do more to lift others up, and help balance society's gender and socioeconomic inequalities.

There are 3 overall "themes" of the basic life skills package, with 16 lessons collectively falling under the umbrella of the 3 themes.

The 3 themes are:

- **Self-Awareness:** this theme covers topics that foster the student's relationship and understanding of themselves -- including their thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- **Interpersonal Skills:** the lessons in this theme explore how to establish healthy, respectful relationships; lessons highlight the use of non-violent communication, assertiveness and dispute resolution.
- **Thinking Skills:** the skills taught in this theme include concrete ways of thinking and executing tasks so that youth will make effective decisions, set relevant goals, and be informed consumers of information.

Self-Awareness	Interpersonal Skills	Thinking Skills
1. Stress Management	5. Empathy	11. Goal Setting
2. Emotional Regulation	6. Listening Skills	12. Decision Making
3. Positive Thinking	7. Interpersonal Effectiveness	13. Problem Solving
4. Self-Esteem	8. Handling Disputes	14. Critical and Creative Thinking
	9. Managing Relationships	15. Executive Functioning Skills
	10. Confident Communication	16. Resilience (bouncing back from adversity)

### Main features of the curriculum:

- Each lesson runs for 90 minutes so there is sufficient time for student activities, discussions and group learning
- Lessons can be tailored to meet the needs of youth ages 10 to 24
- Each lesson builds on skills taught in prior lessons. Students are expected to attend all 16 sessions
- Lessons are based in evidence-based psychosocial methodology including cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness and resilience-building activities

- The manual includes scripts for the facilitator's ease of use

-The curriculum is "Youth Centered" meaning, youth are taught in a way that is positive, respectful and practical to the challenges of their everyday lives. Facilitators should present as warm, caring, open-minded and non-judgmental – this will require facilitators to be open to learning from the students just as the students learn from the facilitator.

## Facilitator Guidelines for Implementing Basic Life skills Activities with Youth

### 1. Read and work through each lesson -- in both the facilitator's manual and the student workbook

It is important to familiarize yourself with the lesson and make any necessary preparations in advance of the lesson. The best way to do this is to read the entire lesson, including the student workbook. Ideally, you should also work through the activities in the student workbook, so that you understand what will be asked of the students. You may read from the script during the lesson. If you encounter specific language or examples that are awkward to you, you may adjust the language and examples so that they are more natural.

### 2. Tailor the language and examples for your audience

Since lessons are for a wide age range (10-24) it is crucial that the facilitator come up with scenarios and language that fits each audience. For example, some scripts may make mention of Baku – however for those working outside of Baku please change this to the regional towns and hubs that are most relevant to your region. Likewise, for the scenarios please choose examples that meet the needs of your audience. For example, if facilitating the curriculum in a rural agricultural hub, you would not want to cite examples of getting a job as an investment banker. With time, you will learn which challenges are most relevant to your group – feel free to tailor scenarios so that youth can work through their real life dilemmas.

Tailor the language to the literacy level of your group. If a group has a low literacy level, it is fine to change language, so long as you are staying true to the lesson's learning objectives. Likewise, if you are working with young students, you may make the language simpler.

### 3. Provide a safe environment

Before each lesson, it is crucial that facilitator bring student's attention to the group rules included in each lesson plan. These rules are meant to keep the group safe – and to establish the expectation that youth behave and speak in a respectful manner. In addition, the group conversations are confidential. If anyone is disrespectful of their peers, then talk to the problematic student alone – and inform your supervisor of the situation. If a student is repeatedly disrespecting others, they may need to be removed from the group.

### 4. Guide discussions

During class discussions, many youth may want to share at the same time. It is important to create an environment where they are free to share – but it is also important to make sure that no single person – or few people -- are dominating the conversation, or talking at length.

When necessary, you may need to guide participants to take turns and listen to what peers have to share. If interruptions are problematic, consider the use of a designated item, such as a talking stick, "sharing hat," a feather or other object. When that item is held by a student, he/she has permission to talk, and no one else does. You may also need to be direct with students if they begin talking

about things that are only loosely related to the lesson or off topic completely.

On the other hand, there may be times when you have a quiet group that prefers to listen rather than discuss. Accept this. Students should not be forced to talk during the discussions. It is hoped that with time, students will feel more comfortable to speak up.

While listening to students, you may hear an individual express an incorrect understanding of a concept. Validate their opinion/beliefs, and then state the accurate information without harshly criticizing the student. By hearing consistent information, the entire group will gain better understanding of the concepts taught in these activities.

### 5. Be positive. Encourage and praise

Facilitator encouragement and praise is essential to run an effective group. Youth should be offered encouragement when they talk about their beliefs and feelings with classmates and friends. Encouragement and praise will encourage youth to contribute to discussions, and share with their peers while working on group activities. This will make students feel that what they have to contribute is worthwhile.

### 6. Be "nonjudgmental"

The facilitator should model being nonjudgmental. Simply put, refrain from judging others. Many of the concepts in this curriculum shift our thinking away from "black and white," "right and wrong" "all or nothing" thinking. As the leader of the group, it is important for the facilitator to refrain from thinking of terms of "right or wrong" and "black and white."

This curriculum provides students the opportunity to understand that there are usually several solutions to a problem -- just as there are several different ways of looking at a situation. All perspectives from others – no matter how different from one's own – should be heard. It does not mean that you have to agree with other perspectives and/or ideas. But students should learn how to respectfully listen to new ideas in order to better understand others.

### 7. Demonstrate flexible thinking

Along with being nonjudgmental, these lessons encourage students to have "flexible" thinking – so that they can better solve problems and make decisions. There are usually several ways to solve problems and make decisions. There is rarely just "one way." Therefore, as the facilitator, refrain from making statements about "right or wrong." For example, attending University is not the "best" thing for youth of a certain age to do. There is nothing wrong with attending vocational training, or doing something else with one's life other than going to University and studying to be a lawyer, doctor, etc.

### 8. Teach, practice and reinforce the ideas taught in the manual

Research shows that the best way to learn is through practice. There are practical hands-on activities and worksheets throughout this manual. Some of the skills in this life skills package may repeat and reinforce other skills. Presenting a concept in a different way with different language and different activities helps youth learn.

**9. Resist the urge to lecture**

Since lessons are very practical, please resist the urge to talk too much (like a lecture) without giving time for discussion and application of the skills. This is a VERY different way of teaching. Research shows that when students are lectured at (this is called “passive learning”) they do not retain information. Learning must be active and practical.

**10. Manage your time.**

As facilitator, you will need to manage your time to try to get through as much of the lesson as possible. This means that you may need to limit some conversation to just a few examples from students. You may also have to limit students who tend to speak at length and/or dominate conversations. Also, if students start going off topic, it is important to re-direct the conversation back to the topic of the activity.

**11. Be aware of your own reactions and beliefs**

Be aware of your own opinions, feelings, and personal beliefs as you guide youth through the lessons. There will be students who you like, and others you do not. There will be students that you agree with -- and others you disagree with. There will be students who have a similar identity to yours -and others who may seem very different from you. This is normal, however it is important to treat everyone the same. You can better do this if your mind is in a positive, place. Be sure to “practice what you preach” and embody the life skills taught in the lessons.

**12. Be mindful of gender differences and gender inequality.**

Do not perpetuate gender inequality by assuming that all girls or boys must think or act one way or another. Be mindful of the impact of your gender and be sensitive to the fact that you may not fully understand what the other gender experiences.



# PART 1: SELF-AWARENESS

# LESSON 1: STRESS MANAGEMENT



# SESSION 1: STRESS MANAGEMENT

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

## Learning Objectives:

After this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Define “stress”
- Discuss common situations that cause stress
- Recognize symptoms of stress
- Experience a breathing activity
- Understand how “mindfulness” (being in the moment) decreases stress

## Materials to run this session:

- Activity book (1 for each student)
- White board or flipchart with pens/markers or a blackboard with chalk/eraser
- Poster board with group rules clearly written
- The script for delivering this session is in italics below

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take time to introduce and welcome students to the Basic Life Skills Program</b></li> <li>• <b>You may use a script such as the one below, or modify this script to explain the following in your own words:</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Welcome to the pilot program for the Basic Life Skills course!</i></p> <p><i>Before we get started today I want to explain to you how this program came to be.</i></p> <p><i>The Ministry of Youth and Sport has partners with UNICEF to create a series of “life skills” classes.</i></p> <p><i>You may be wondering, what are life skills?!</i></p>	<b>15 minutes</b>

*They are a set of skills that can help youth better understand themselves, get along with others, and gain tools to cope with life’s inevitable difficulties.*

*The transition from adolescence to adulthood is not an easy time. It is difficult, and these challenges are unavoidable. However we want to give you tools so that you can better handle life’s inevitable difficulties.*

*UNICEF created this series of lessons after interviewing youth across Azerbaijan. What youth reported was that they are dealing with significant stress. The stress was often due to parental pressure, and finding meaningful and personally satisfying employment.*

*We hope that these lessons will give you skills to manage stress and build your confidence so you feel safe to discover what sort of career and life you would like to pursue as you transition to adulthood.*

- Since this is the first session, do a brief icebreaker activity to set a tone of support, respect and camaraderie
- This ice breaker can be something as simple as partnering students up with someone they do not know, giving them 30 seconds to learn something about the other person, and then taking turns to introduce that person to the entire group
- Next, it is crucial to establish group rules:

*Before we get started, let’s go over some of the rules for our group” (come with these written on poster board)*

- Use respectful communication and behavior
- The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance
- Listen to each other
- Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to
- Be supportive of one another
- Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential

- No verbal abuse or violence
- Cell phones should be put on silent and in students' bags – students are not to text in class!

*This class will be very different from what you are used to at school or University.*

*You and I are entering into a partnership. I will learn just as much from you as you will learn from me.*

*For that reason, group discussion and sharing is important.*

*At the same time, there may be times where I have to limit or re-direct discussions if they are going off topic, or if any one person or people are dominating the conversation, and not letting others share.*

*Also, there are activities that you will work on in class. Some tasks are independent, others are completed with a partner, while others require small group participation.*

*Along with that there will be activities that you do at home, between classes. This is not homework. They are "home exercises." We do this because we want you to truly learn the concepts we discuss in class. Without practicing the concepts/ideas at home, your learning will be limited.*

*Therefore, it is essential that you bring your student workbook to session (point to the workbook that you will soon distribute), and do all of the assigned home exercises.*

*Say: Today we will start by talking about stress management. We are starting with this topic, since it was frequently mentioned in our interviews as one of the most common issues impacting the wellbeing of youth in Azerbaijan.*

*Stress is an unavoidable part of life. Sometimes stress can appear to be overwhelming—this is especially true during times transition, such as shifting from childhood*

*to adulthood, and when you are learning to navigate the demands of adult obligations and responsibilities.*

*Everyone suffers from stress on some level. No one escapes life without stress. Sometimes stress levels are higher and sometimes they are lower. Everyone is different.*

*Today, you will learn more about what stress is, what causes it, and one good way to manage it.*

*As I mentioned earlier, we can't eliminate stress from life, but we can learn to manage it. This lesson is just the beginning of the conversation about stress. We will again discuss stress in the future lessons.*

**Defining Stress**

- Ask participants to define stress.
- Write accurate key words and brief phrases on the board.
- You can sum up the students ideas by stating,

*"Stress is a difficulty that causes worry or emotional tension"*

- Feel free to adapt definition for your students' literacy level. Students over 18 can understand a deeper definition such as, "Stress is our body's physical and emotional reaction to circumstances or events that frighten, irritate, confuse, or excite us and place demands on our body and mind."

*What do you have stress about? There is no right or wrong answers here. It's different for everyone.*

- Take student responses, writing key phrases on the board
- Make note of common or frequent causes within the group

*Stress can be a result of any change that takes place in one's life, whether the change is positive or negative.*

**15 minutes**

**Stress Triggers**

Say: *Do you know what a stress trigger (source of stress) is?*

- Request that a student or 2 volunteer a definition

*A stress trigger is an event, thing, person or idea that leads to stress. It is the source of our stress. Sometimes, we don't even know what our triggers are.*

- Direct students to turn to Lesson 2 Activity A in their workbooks

*In your workbook is a list of things that can lead to stress.*

*First, read the list, and circle the items/situations that cause YOU stress.*

*In the space provided below the list, add any other items that cause you stress that are not on the list.*

*When you are done. You will briefly discuss the person seated next to you,*

- If there is time, you can have students share their thoughts with the whole group

Sum up this activity by saying: *It helps to know what our "triggers" are so that when we are in stressful situation that trigger us, we can take action to manage our stress - rather than impulsively reacting to stress.*

**15 minutes****Physical symptoms of stress**

Say: *It's Sometimes difficult to know what is causing us stress. We just spoke about times when we do know what has triggered us. However, there will be times that we do not know or realize that we have been triggered. But when we do not know, our body will tell us when something is not right. Our body actually sends us "warning signs" of stress.*

*It is important for us to know our own personal physical warning signs of stress.*

*Try to think of a time of stress - what did you feel in your body (Note: you are not asking*

**15 minutes**

them what they thought - you are trying to get them to focus on their physical reactions to stress)

- Have students turn to Lesson 1, Activity B in their workbook and circle the physical signs of stress they have experiences. The list in their workbook is as follows:

Say:

*Circle which ones of these you have noticed in yourself, and, in the space provided under the list add any other physical symptoms you may experience when stressed, that are not on the list*

- Have students do this individually
- After 2-3 minutes have them share with a partner/person seated next to them.
- If there is time, you can do a whole group share

Sum up by saying: *The next time you are stressed, try to take a mental note of which of these physical cues you demonstrate.*

**"Mindfulness"**

*Even though stress is inevitable and an unavoidable part of life, the amount we suffer as a result stress is something that we can do something about.*

*. We will spend the rest of today talking about different ways to reduce stress.*

*One of the best methods is called "mindfulness."*

*"Mindfulness" is all about paying attention to the present moment.*

*Think back to a moment you were stressed.*

*Does anyone want to volunteer to offer an example of a situation where you were stressed? What were you thinking about?*

- Note to facilitator: the point here is to find out what they were thinking about
- Take a few examples from students who volunteer

**5 minutes**

- Make the point that stress often comes from thinking about the past or the future.

*When we are stressed, often that is because we are thinking about the past or the future.*

*This is natural and normal. It is how our brains work!*

*However, when we think too much about the past or future, we often cause stress – because we are worried or replaying difficult situations in our mind. When we do this we are unaware of the present moment.*

*We have to train our brains to be in the present moment. This can be hard work! But with practice, we can make it happen.*

*One of the best ways to be in the present moment is to focus on your breathing.*

### **Mindful breathing**

*There are actually lots of different ways to breathe.*

*We normally do not consciously think about our breath. But, if we are deliberate about it we can use our breath to de-stress.*

*Breathing deeply physiologically makes it impossible for us to stay stressed. When we breathe deeply more oxygen gets into our cells, and our heartbeat slows down.*

*When we are upset our breathing is usually shallow and fast and our heart might be racing. By consciously breathing, we change this physiological response.*

*So, let's try a breathing activity.*

*Put away whatever is in your hands.*

*Sit squarely in your chair.*

*Put both of your feet flat on the floor.*

*Roll your shoulders forwards and backwards.*

*Try to drop your shoulders, so your shoulders*

**15  
minutes**

*are not up near your ears. When your shoulders are up near your ears it means you are holding tension in your neck and back. Do your best to relax your shoulders, neck and back.*

*Do your best not to hunch your shoulders forward.*

*Sit back so that your back is flat against the back of the chair. Open up your heart area.*

*Rest your hands in your lap.*

*Make sure you are comfortable.*

*Please close your eyes, if you are comfortable doing so.*

- Wait for students to close their eyes
- Lead students through the following breathing activity in a very calm, slow, peaceful voice:

*If you can, please close your mouth and only breathe in and out of your nose.*

*Now, just notice your breath.*

*Notice how your body moves with each in-hale and exhale.*

*Notice the sensation of air going in and out of your nose.*

*Notice if the air is cool or warm.*

- Give students approximately 15 seconds of silence to notice their breathing

*Now, try to make your breath deeper and slower.*

*You can do this by counting your inhale.*

*Try to make your inhale take 3 counts. 1...2....3...*

*And then exhale for 3 counts.. 1...2....3...*

*And, again slowly count to 3 on the inhale....*

*And, slowly count to 3 on the exhale.....*

*If you can, try extending the count to 4. You can do this by making sure that the breath goes all the way down into your stomach. Let your belly be free to get as big as it needs to while you breathe in...*

*With each inhale count to 3 or 4 in your own mind.*

*And with each exhale count to 3 or 4 while your breathe.*

*Remember to try to breathe deeply into your belly, but don't struggle or try too hard.*

*No matter what try to remain comfortable and do not tense your body.*

*I will give you a moment of silence to keep breathing.*

- Give them 30 seconds, then say:

*If you are like most people, you are probably having some thoughts. That's okay, just tell yourself "those are just thoughts" and go back to focusing on either counting or the sensation of your breathe.*

- Again, give them 30 seconds, then say:

*When you hear noises from outside, just think to yourself, "those are just noises" and then return your focus to counting or the sensation of your breath.*

*Keep counting.*

*Whatever comes to your attention, just notice it; then, without judging yourself for wandering, and without judging whatever you're experiencing, bring your attention back to your breath.*

- Give students 15-30 seconds of silence

*When you feel ready, let your breath go back to normal. You can stop counting.*

*Notice the sounds in the room.*

*Feel the light on your eyelids.*

*Notice your feet on the floor.*

*And the feeling of sitting in your chair.*

*When you feel ready, shake your hands.*

*And, slowly and gently open your eyes.*

- In a calm voice, ask students how this exercise was for them
- Be positive and thank them for sharing
- Say:

*At any time, and any place you can do a quick 2 minutes of breathing. It will help you give yourself a break from stress and any negative emotions you might have.*

- Have students turn to their workbooks, Lesson 1, Activity C, and answer questions about their experience
- Once done, have students volunteer to share some of their responses with the whole group - or do a partner share where students pair up and each talk to their partner for 1 minute about their responses

**Doing 1 thing at a time<sup>1</sup>**

*As you saw from the breathing activity, focusing on the present moment is very challenging! That's because society and the modern world is focused on anything but sitting still and focusing on the here and now. And our brains have been trained to multi task.*

*But multi-tasking is actually not good for us, and it adds stress to our lives.*

*So, we want to re-train the brain to slow down and do 1 thing at a time. When you really focus on 1 thing at a time, you will do that thing better - and you will feel more at peace.*

*Think of your mind as a puppy being trained to sit and stay. When you first start to teach that puppy, naturally, it's not going to listen*

**15 minutes**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Dijk, Sheri Van. Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life for Teens: Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills for Helping You Manage Mood Swings, Control Angry Outbursts, and (Instant Help Book for Teens), New Harbinger Publications.

*to you. Slowly it will learn. It will sit and stay for a few seconds before moving around. As time goes on, the puppy will get better and better at staying when you tell it to. Your mind will behave in the same way—it's never been trained to stay before!*

*So you might need to bring your attention back to counting or your breath again, and again -- and that's fine. You wouldn't get impatient and angry at a young puppy when it doesn't stay -- because you know it's just learning. Be patient with yourself as well. We are after all undoing a lifetime of habits of thinking about the past and future, at the expense of the present moment.*

*Like the breathing, you can do absolutely anything "by focusing solely on the 1 thing you are doing in the present moment.*

*For example: listening to music. When you listen to music you might find that the music reminds you of something like a past relationship or someone you like who's rejected you. You might and get caught up in those thoughts and memories, rather than hearing the music.*

*When you're thinking of the past, rather than the present, you actually experience the past negative emotions again, as if you were going through that event again.*

*You probably have enough stress to deal with in the present moment, without bringing up hurtful memories from the past.*

*Instead, when you're listening to music, try to focus on just listening to the music -- not judging it or letting the mind wander. If and when the mind wanders, bring your attention back to the song you're listening to.*

*If you're cleaning your bedroom just focus on doing that; when you notice your attention wanders, don't judge yourself for wandering; just bring your attention back. When you notice that you're judging your mom for making you clean your room, simply notice that*

*thought, and bring your attention back to the present moment.*

*Sometimes it helps to focus on one of our 5 senses to stay in the present moment, rather than thinking about the past or present. This means, focus on tactile sensations, sound, smells, and sights.*

- Direct students to Lesson 1, Activity D
- Have them circle the everyday activities they will attempt to do "mindfully" (one thing at a time" before the next life skills lesson
- Have students do this individually
- After 2-3 minutes have them share with a partner/person seated next to them. If there is time, you can do a whole group share
- Direct students to the home exercises, breathing and mindfulness trackers
- Clarify any questions students may have about home exercise
- If time allows, have 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank youth for their participation

## Ending

**5 minutes**

# LESSON 2: EMOTIONAL REGULATION

## SESSION 2: EMOTIONAL REGULATION

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

After this lesson, learners will be able to:

- Describe the nonverbal expression of a variety of emotions
- Distinguish between their desirable and undesirable feelings/emotions
- Articulate how much stress they have and what the stress looks and feels like
- Students will brainstorm specific ways to cope with difficult feelings/emotions

**Materials to run this session:**

- **Facilitator will need to prepare a head of time the name of various emotions on small piece of paper (1 emotion per paper for a game of 'feelings charades') Please see the list of emotions following this lesson plan.**
- Art supplies for the group -for each person
- White board or flipchart with pens/markers or a blackboard with chalk/eraser
- The script for delivering this session is in italics below

Aim	Format	Timing
<p><b>Welcome Introduction</b></p>	<p>Welcome students to today's lesson.</p> <p>Go over the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> <li>• No use of cell phones during the lesson, unless it is an emergency</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>



	Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Home Exercise Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students share their main findings/revelations from the 2 home exercise activities: breathing and mindfulness trackers.</li> <li>Be positive, supportive and calm as students share.</li> <li>You can lead students through a brief 2 minute breathing activity (such as the one from the last lesson) if you wish</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Feelings charades<sup>2</sup></b>	<p>a) Preparation: facilitator will place pieces of paper with names of emotions in a hat, bag or basket.</p> <p>b) Have students select a piece of paper from a hat, basket or other container – they are not to share with anyone the word they selected.</p> <p>c) Say:</p> <p><i>Please do not show or tell anyone the name of the emotion you selected.</i></p> <p><i>Today we are going to talk about feelings and emotions -- especially how you – and those you come in contact with -- express feelings. Feelings and emotions are expressed in many different ways.</i></p> <p><i>We are going to do an activity where volunteers will come up and act out the emotion they selected from this bag/hat/basket without saying a word.</i></p> <p><i>This is like a game of charades. So you will need to find a way to express the emotion without verbal communication.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students volunteer 1 by 1 to come up and mime (completely nonverbal) the emotion they picked from the bag/hat/</li> </ul>	<b>20 minutes</b>

<sup>2</sup> First part of this lesson was adapted from excerpts of the Children's Resilience Program: Psychosocial support in and out of school, Handbook 2, published by IFRC and Save the Children Denmark and Danish Red Cross Children Affected by Armed Conflict Workshop Manual (2008).

- basket -- like a game of charades
- When a learner guesses the emotion correctly, ask that person:

*How did you guess that emotion? What did you see?*

- The point here is to get students to realize 2 main ways that emotions are expressed without verbal language:
  - Nonverbal body language
  - Facial expressions
- Write their responses on the board.
- Have another student volunteer to come up to the front of the class and act out the emotion they picked
- Repeat the process of asking:
- When a learner guesses the emotion correctly, ask that person:

*How did you guess that emotion? What did you see?*

- The point here is to get students to realize 2 main ways that emotions are expressed without verbal language:
  - Nonverbal body language
  - Facial expressions
- Write their responses on the board.
- Have another student volunteer to come up to the front of the class and act out the emotion they picked
- Repeat the process as many times as you like (however, be mindful of time limits!)
- At the end, say:

*It seems to me that many nonverbal expression of emotions fall into the following categories:*

*Body posture For example: When someone has a straight back, open palms and seems relaxed, it signals openness and happiness. When someone is tired of physical contact or seems distant when touched, it signals a lack of confidence or trust in others.*

*Gestures and body language show what someone might be thinking. For example,*

	<p><i>when you nod your head, it shows that you are interested in a conversation or that you agree with what is being said. When you cross your arms when you talk to someone, it can signal that you are not comfortable and feel uneasy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The facilitator should act these out to engage the class and make the lesson more meaningful/memorable.</li> </ul> <p><i>Facial expressions also give us a lot of information about someone's emotions. It is easy to see when someone is happy, as they smile. When they are sad, they may cry. The eyes especially help you to see how someone is feeling.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The facilitator should act these out to engage the class and make the lesson more meaningful/memorable.</li> </ul> <p><i>The facilitator should act these out to engage the class and make the lesson more meaningful/memorable.</i></p> <p><i>The charades activity helped us distinguish the subtle differences between emotions. Sometimes we may not even realize how many emotions there are - and how subtle the difference between emotions can be.</i></p>	
<p><b>Reading other's emotions</b></p>	<p><i>Turn to the person next to you and, on a piece of scrap paper, or on back of one of the pages in your workbook, together write a list of 3 reasons why it is important to be able to read the feelings of OTHERS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give students 2 minutes to discuss with their partner</li> <li>Have students volunteer to offer reasons in front of the whole group</li> <li>Write some of their ideas on the white board/chalk board</li> </ul> <p><i>Say: We want to be able to read others emotions and feeling so that we can understand what they are going through and anticipate what they might say to us or need from us.</i></p>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>Feeling preferences</b></p>	<p><i>Say: There are so many emotions to experience in life. Everyone has so many feelings in a single day. Too many emotions to count.</i></p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students turn in their workbooks to Lesson 2, Activity A: Feeling preferences and complete the page as you go</li> </ul> <p><i>Individually, I want you to complete the first part of this page. I'll give you 30 seconds to do this. What are some feelings/emotions that make you feel good?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once students are done, have some students volunteer to offer their responses.</li> </ul> <p><i>Individually, I want you to complete the next part of the page. I'll give you 30 seconds to do this. What are some emotions/feelings that might make you feel bad or not good?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once students are done, have some students volunteer to offer their responses.</li> </ul> <p><i>This exercise allowed us to reflect on which emotions feel good - and which don't.</i></p> <p><i>It's pretty rare that we have an opportunity to think about our emotions in this way.</i></p> <p><i>I'd like to ask you a few more questions, for a whole class discussion:</i></p> <p><i>Which feelings are hard for us to accept?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take students responses</li> </ul> <p><i>Which feelings are hard to express safely?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take students responses</li> </ul> <p><i>Which feelings make it difficult to take care of yourself?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take students responses</li> </ul> <p><i>Today's topic is called "emotional regulation." Recognizing and understanding what we are feeling, and which emotions we like, and don't like, are an important steps to better manage our feelings in stressful times.</i></p>	
<p><b>Riding the Wave<sup>3</sup></b></p>	<p><i>One of the best ways to better manage our emotions is to create some distance from them.</i></p> <p><i>You might think: How do we do that?!</i></p>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from: Biegel, Gina M. The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress (An Instant Help Book for Teens). New Harbinger Publications.

*When we are in the middle of a difficult or strong emotion, are you usually thinking clearly?*

- Take student responses, you may want to ask them to raise their hand if they are able to think clearly while experiencing strong emotions

*If you're like me – and most people – it can be very difficult to think clearly and rationally while having strong emotions.*

*However there are ways to do that!*

*What about what we tried last time, with breathing. Did that help you calm your thoughts/mind?*

- Take student responses, you may want to ask them to raise their hand if they are able to think clearly while experiencing strong emotions

*We want to try techniques similar to the breathing – techniques that will allow us just a little space from our emotions so we are not consumed by them.*

*Let's try an activity.*

*Put away whatever is in your hands.*

*Sit squarely in your chair.*

*Put both of your feet flat on the floor.*

*Roll your shoulders forwards and backwards.*

*Try to drop your shoulders, so your shoulders are not up near your ears. When your shoulders are up near your ears it means you are holding tension in your neck and back. Do your best to relax your shoulders, neck and back.*

*Do your best not to hunch your shoulders forward.*

*Sit back so that your back is flat against the back of the chair. Open up your heart area.*

*Rest your hands in your lap.*

*Make sure you are comfortable.*

*Please close your eyes, if you are comfortable doing so.*

- Wait for students to close their eyes
- Lead students through the following breathing activity in a very calm, slow, peaceful voice:

*If you can, please close your mouth and only breathe in and out of your nose.*

*Now, just notice your breath.*

*Notice how your body moves with each in-hale and exhale.*

*You do not have to change your breathing, just do your best to focus on what I say.*

*-Give them 10-15 seconds of quiet to get centered.*

*Imagine being on a rowboat in the sea. The waves in the sea represent everything and anything that might cause you stress.*

*The waves might be small and calm -- or they might be large, fierce, and rough. Everyone is different. Just notice the intensity and volume of your stress waves.*

Now, let's focus on a few stories of youth similar to you, as they ride their own stress waves.

Mohammed wants very much to please his parents by getting into University. He believes he has to get good grades, play sports, and excel in a number of intellectual competition clubs to be accepted. He feels like he no longer has time for doing anything he is interested in. His whole focus is to live up to other's expectations, while putting aside all of his personal wishes and hopes. When Mohammed thinks about his stress waves, he sees a huge tidal wave; he feels like he can barely keep going.

Mina, on the other hand, finds balance bet-

ween doing her homework, spending time with her friends, and going to dance classes. Mina finds that her waves are pretty small, and manageable. At times, when her stress waves get too big, she takes it as a sign that she needs to change something – it might be her schedule or who she spends time with. When she takes actions to stabilize, her waves get smaller again.

Now, again, think for a minute about what might be causing you stress. Imagine that all of your stresses are waves. These might be big, intense waves or they might be very small and calm.

- Give students a minute to envision their waves in their mind.

*Slowly bring your attention back to the room.*

*When you feel ready, open your eyes.*

- Direct students to turn to the next page in their workbooks: Lesson 2, Activity B
- Distribute set of crayons to each student

*In the space provided, draw a picture of what your stress waves look like. Label the waves. You can make the waves big or small as you imagined. Then, add words or draw pictures that represent the things that cause you stress. You will not share this with the group.*

### Grounding Anchor

- Have students again get comfortable and close their eyes if they'd like
- Now we will build on this idea of our emotions as waves.*

*Imagine you are in a rowboat in the middle of the waves that you just drew.*

*Even in the strongest of storms -- with huge crashing waves on the surface of the water -- deep below the waves, down near the bottom of the sea, the water is perfectly calm and still.*

- Give students 15-30 seconds to imagine this

*Imagine that you have a giant anchor on your boat.*

**15  
minutes**

*You can use that anchor to reach the calm near the bottom of the sea. By dropping the anchor you can establish calm even in the biggest storms and waves.*

- Give students 15-30 seconds to imagine this

*This grounding anchor you drop from your boat to get to your calm and still waters can be anything that gives you some space and calmness during difficult emotions.*

*Your anchor might be to take a break and take several deep breaths, visually noticing the things around you, noticing your feet on the ground or anything else that activates 1 of your 5 senses.*

*Your anchor can also be doing something nurturing like talking to a friend having a cup of tea, cooking, taking a walk, praying, unplugging from the internet, going for a run or spending time with a pet.*

*What grounding anchors do you have to help you drop down into the calm and still waters below your stress waves?*

*Take a moment to think about – what anchors you.*

- Give students 15-20 seconds to think about this

*Slowly bring your attention back to the room.*

*When you feel ready, open your eyes.*

- Direct students to turn to the next page in their workbooks: Lesson 2, Activity C
- Have students draw a big anchor that represents the things they do for grounding during times of stress storms/waves.
- Instead of drawing, they can also simply make a list of the things that anchor them.
- Students can use words, drawings, or both.
- Once they are done, have students volunteer to say 1 thing that grounds them, and put these ideas on the flip chart/blackboard
- Afterwards, say:

*Notice that many of these things involve 1 of your 5 senses: so, having a tea, taking a warm bath, listening to music, dancing.*

*The next time you notice that you are starting to have a strong emotion, try to stop to do one of these things to give your brain a break.*

*I want you to know that this is not the same thing as avoiding a problem or emotion all together. Instead, this is about taking a break to cool down. Once you are in a calmer mind-set you will deal with the situation that is causing you stress.*

*Also, remember that all emotions come and go like waves - no emotion lasts forever.*

*This is just 1 tool of many that we will be learning over the course of this life skills series.*

**Ending**

- Direct students to the 3 home exercises to be done before the next lesson (1 is just a reading)
- Clarify any questions students may have about homework
- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**

## Lesson 2: Feelings Charades

Dear Facilitator:

- Please write the following emotions on small pieces of paper. Fold each piece of paper and put it in a hat, bag or basket so students can pick 1 piece of paper at random.
- Tell students not to tell anyone, or show anyone which emotion they picked.
- They will then take turns acting out that emotion in front of the class WITHOUT SAYING A WORD - like a game of charades. Students will then take turns volunteering to act out their emotion.

Anger

Joy

Happiness

Contentment

Stressed

Overwhelmed

Surprise

Disappointment

Grief

Embarrassment

Exhaustion

Loved

Lonely

Scared

Proud

*Dear facilitator: you may add to or modify this list as you like. However make sure that you only include emotions/feelings - not thoughts, actions, beliefs, etc.*

# LESSON 3: POSITIVE THINKING

## SESSION 3: POSITIVE THINKING

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will learn:*

- The difference between optimism and pessimism
- How their thoughts impact their feelings/emotions
- That they should not always believe their thoughts
- The various thinking traps/thought distortions
- How to reframe negative thoughts to positive or neutral

**Materials to run this session:**

- White board, flip chart or chalkboards with pens/markers/chalk
- The facilitator will need to prepare the 2 visuals (following this lesson plan)
- Students will need to bring their workbook to this session
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<p><b>Welcome Introduction</b></p>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic <b>"Positive Thinking"</b></p> <p>Go over the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation</p>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

	or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Home Exercise Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students share their main findings/revelations from the 2 home exercise activities: breathing and mindfulness trackers.</li> <li>• Be positive, supportive and calm as students share.</li> <li>• You can lead students through a brief 2 minute breathing activity (such as the one from the last lesson) if you wish</li> </ul>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>Optimism and Pessimism</b>	<p><i>Until this class, we've talked about emotions, today we will shift to talking about our thoughts.</i></p> <p><i>This is a secret: our thoughts usually cause our emotions/feelings. So, our thoughts cloud our whole perception of the world. Sometimes, our thoughts are not accurate – and then we have feelings based on things that aren't even true. This causes us a lot of undo stress.</i></p> <p><i>Have you heard of the term, Optimism?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimism means hopefulness and confidence about the future</li> <li>• Optimists are people who see most things in a hopeful, positive light</li> </ul> <p><i>What does the term Pessimism mean?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pessimism is when someone has a tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen</li> <li>• Pessimists are people who view things in a negative, cynical light</li> <li>• Use the “glass-half-full-half-empty” analogy to define what an optimist and pessimist are.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In pairs, have students take opposite perspectives, one of an optimist or pessimist, on an issue that can be as easy as “Will it rain tomorrow?” to the more complex, “When will there be income equality?” (Facilitators, if you know local challenges of the students you are working with, please propose those ideas rather than the suggested ones just mentioned)</li> <li>• Have learners talk for 3-5 minutes then switch topics, and have students switch</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topics, and have students switch roles (meaning the person who was optimistic will now act as the pessimist and likewise, the pessimist will now act as the optimist)</li> <li>• Afterwards, ask students how they <b>felt</b> while behaving optimistically vs. pessimistically</li> <li>• Let them know that our goal is to behave as optimists (thug this is a process which takes time, patience and self-compassion)</li> </ul>	
<b>Thoughts are not facts<sup>4</sup></b>	<p><i>Like a cloud is just a cloud – it's not the sky -- what if a negative thought were just a thought and nothing more? A negative thought is not who you are.</i></p> <p><i>You may be giving more power to your thoughts than you need to. What if when you became aware of a thought, you didn't believe it -- but instead just noticed it? Just like we did with the clouds. This is also similar to what we did with the cars of the train and our emotions last week.</i></p> <p><i>For example, here's a situation:</i>  <i>“In the middle of doing her homework, Fatima thinks that no one likes her.”</i></p> <p><i>Since, a thought is just a thought, not truth, fact, or reality, Fatima notices herself having the thought that no one likes her -- and instead of feeding into or believing the thought, she simply notices it “a thought “ and instead continues to do her homework. Had she not done that she'd get into a bad mood, and be too distracted and/or upset to do her homework.</i></p> <p><i>Or, for example, imagine that due to the negative thought Fatima instead stops doing her homework. She begins to think about all the times in the past that she has lost a friend. She also thinks about her current group of friends and assumes that she knows what each person thinks of her. These thoughts</i></p>	<b>5 minutes</b>

<sup>4</sup> Eich, Jean. Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A Practical Workbook for Therapists, Teens & Parents. PESI Publishing & Media.

support her original idea that no one likes her. She starts to feel sad and tired. When Fatima kept thinking about friends she had lost, she began to feel depressed, worthless, sad, and tired.

As this case illustrates, our thoughts, feeling and behaviors are all intimately linked.

- Write on the board or a flip chart, a triangle to illustrate the relationship between thoughts feelings and behaviour (this image is found after this lesson plan)

Our thoughts lead to feelings - whether those thoughts are accurate or not. Often times, all of us have thoughts that are based on untruths, those are called "Thought Distortions" or what we will call, "stinking thinking." The thing is our feelings - whether based on facts or not - lead to actions. So, if Fatima believes that no one likes her, this leads to sadness, and ultimately giving up on her homework, because "why bother" no one likes here a- and she feels worthless anyways.

**5 minutes**

**Self-Talk**

The good news is that extensive research has shown that one of **the most powerful ways to change our feelings and actions is by changing our thoughts.**

So, first we will discuss about something called: SELF-TALK

Has anyone heard of self-talk before?

- Take student's responses

Everyone engages in self-talk. Self-talk is our inner voice that tells us how we're doing and what we're thinking. Sometimes that voice is positive, negative or neutral.

Positive means that our self-talk is encouraging, nurturing and kind. In Fatima's example, she may have thought "that is just a thought; it does not mean it's true. Many people like me and enjoy being my friend."

Negative means when we are critical of ourselves - and mean to ourselves. That would be the case in the second example - Fatima

believes that no one likes her and she "cherry picks" situations where she felt disregarded by friends, in order to reinforce that negative thought.

Neutral means that our self-talk is factual without any opinion or judgment - our talk is neither negatively or positively charged. In Fatima's case - she might have thought: Yes, Mina and I are no longer friends, but that is a part of life - friendships come and go. I have many other people who do in fact like to spend time with me. It is impossible to get through adolescence without some conflict, but that does not mean that I am a bad person. Neutral is just the facts.

- Ensure that participants understand the difference between these 3 terms - and that neutral means not positive or negative

A little negative self-talk is unavoidable, and not terrible, in fact it can be constructive in certain situations. For example, you might tell yourself that it was a bad idea if you play video games all night rather than studying for tomorrow's test, calling in sick to work the next day, or laying video games rather than preparing for a job interview the next day.

The problem with negative self-talk is when it dominates your mind- and when that self-talk is not based on facts, and it is overly negative. Sometimes this negative self-talk is very harsh and mean towards ourselves. Sometimes we learned that from our parents - but it does not mean that our parents' opinions are correct.

Negative and harsh self-talk can lead to bad moods, sad emotions and can cause us a lot of suffering - especially when what we are thinking is not even true.

**Fact. Vs. Opinion/ Judgment**

- Explain to students the difference between a fact and an opinion; many of our thoughts are just opinions - not facts! Clarify by explaining:

**20 minutes**



*The difference between fact and opinion is that a fact can be seen in black and white – it is indisputable, such as the weather, your age, the fact that you are living here in Azerbaijan.*

*Opinions are what people perceive – so, things like attractiveness and beauty are subjective -- and all a matter of opinion. In addition, whether or not someone is a good friend is most likely a matter of opinion.*

*Whether or not a teacher or boss is a good leader depends who you ask. Whether or not Russian food is delicious is an opinion. Whether we are a good son or daughter is also a matter of opinion! It is best that we not base our emotions on opinions – or judgments.*

*Often, we are our own worst critic. We can be very hard on ourselves. For example, “I didn’t apply for that job today because I’m lazy.” Lazy is a judgment word.*

*What are some other words that suggest we are judging ourselves or others?*

- Get responses from students.
- May include words like: Right, Wrong, Good, Bad, Should, Smart, Stupid, Pretty, Ugly, Fair, Unfair

*Using judgment words is often easier than describing the facts. The problem is, it’s easy for us to see our judgments as facts.*

*Judgments are a normal part of thinking and communicating and can be hard to avoid. So, when you find yourself using judgments, don’t judge or berate yourself for doing so – just let it pass, like a cloud in the sky. Think, “It’s just a thought.”*

- Have participants turn to Lesson 3, Activity A: Non-Judgment in their workbooks, and work with a partner (assign them partners if students are clique-y or prone to chit-chat if paired up with a friend)
- Once students are done, ask a few to summarize how the negative statements are judgments, are not facts, yet if they

believe untrue negative self-talk it will lead to a negative emotion, and most likely, poor self-esteem and low motivation to do better.

### Thought distortions

*The main point of this lesson is that when we let our thoughts go unchecked and have total command of our emotions, we are asking to live on an emotional roller coaster. Sadly, too many people live this way – this includes adults and elderly people. They think this way because they have never been told anything different. I am now telling you something different. Please take advantage of this opportunity to reduce your own self-criticism and suffering.*

#### Activity:

- Have students turn to Lesson 3, Activity B: Thought Distortions
- Have students take turns reading aloud the thought distortion list, 1 by 1.
- The 12 thought distortions, as found in the student workbook, are as follows:
  1. *Mind Reading: You assume you know what people thinking without having evidence or proof of their thoughts. For example: “I can tell by the way he looks at me, he thinks I’m an idiot” “She did not call me back -- No one likes me,”*
  2. *Future-Telling: You predict the future – that things will get worse or that there’s danger ahead. “If I go, people will make fun of me,” “If I talk, I will say something stupid,” “I’m not going to ask her out – I will be single forever and die alone.”*
  3. *Catastrophizing: You believe what might happen will be so awful and unbearable that you won’t be able to stand it. “If I fail this test then I will never get into university,” “If I do not get into university for next semester I will spend the rest of my life jobless and poor.”*
  4. *Labeling: You assign general negative traits to yourself and others. “I’m disgusting.” “He’s horrible,” “She’s a loser.”*

**10  
minutes**

5. *Discounting Positives: You claim that the positives traits/qualities that you have don't matter. "That's what I'm supposed to do, so it's nothing great," "Those successes were easy, so they don't matter," "I don't believe her compliment - she was just pitying me."*
6. *Negative Filter: You focus almost exclusively on the negatives and rarely notice the positives. "Look at all the terrible things on the news," "I just got fired. I am a total failure and I have shamed my entire family."*
7. *Overgeneralizing: You perceive the likelihood of a negative outcome based upon a single incident. "I fail all the time", "If I ask him out he will definitely say no and I will be the laughing stock of the town."*
8. *All-or-None Thinking: You view events or people in all-or-none/black-and-white terms. "I get rejected by every job I apply for," "Nothing ever goes my way," "She always gets every guy she wants to date - I never do."*
9. *Shoulds: You interpret events in terms of how things should be instead of what is. "I should have a job by now; since I don't, I'm a failure," "I should have done more for my parents."*
10. *Personalizing: You attribute a most of the blame to yourself for negative events and fail to see that certain situations are also caused by others. "My relationship ended because I wasn't smart/funny/good looking enough." "It was my fault my university work group got a bad grade."*
11. *Blaming: You focus on the other person as the source of your negative feelings and refuse to take responsibility for changing yourself. "My girlfriend is to blame for the way I feel. She's ruined my life" "My parents were abusive towards me, and caused all my problems; I will never recover from my childhood, thanks to them" "My teacher is the reason I flunked math."*
12. *Unfair Comparisons: You interpret events in terms of standards that are unrealistic. "Others did better than I did on the test." "People my age are more successful than*

**Reframing negative to positive or neutral**

*I am", "I should look like that professional model on the billboards" (who has been photo-shopped).*

*Do any of these thinking traps sound familiar? When you find yourself falling into a thinking trap, ask yourself 3 things:*

- *What is the evidence that what I'm thinking is true?*
- *How is this thinking helpful?*
- *What would I say to a friend who was thinking this way?*

• Have students turn to the next page in their workbook, "Lesson 2 Activity C: Reframing Negative Self Talk to Positive or Neutral

*Now we will practice shifting negative self-talk to positive or neutral. With a partner work on the task in your workbook "Eliminating negative self-talk."*

- Have students complete this alone
- Walk around the room and help those who need it
- Review a sampling of responses with the whole group
- Point out successes no matter how small; be very positive, supportive and encouraging
- Sum up the activity by saying:

*For many of us, this may seem like an unnatural way of thinking - but with practice it will get easier and feel more natural. Remember that changing our thoughts to positive or neutral is one of the most evidence-based practices to combat stress, worry, low self-esteem, anxiety and depression.*

*Likewise, thinking this way will motivate you to see the positive side of situations at work school and home.*

*Because of how important this is there will be 3 pieces of home exercise because this skill is so important to learning the rest of the skills in this series.*

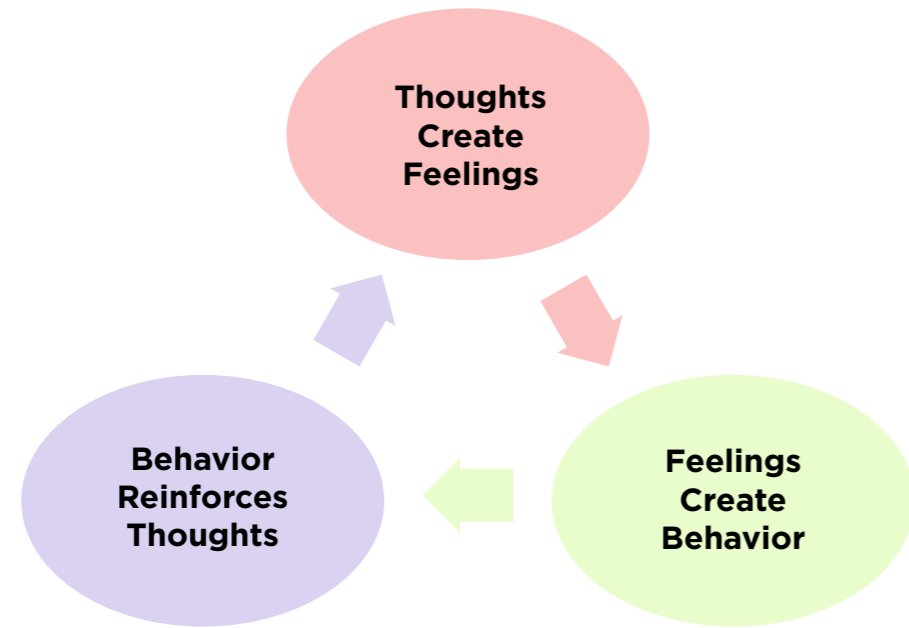
**15 minutes**

**Ending**

- Indicate the 3 home exercises in their workbooks
- Clarify any questions students may have about home exercises
- If time permits, have 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**5  
minutes****VISUAL FOR OPENING MEDITATION EXERCISE:  
YOUR THOUGHTS AS CLOUDS**

### VISUAL TO ILLUSTRATE HOW OUR THOUGHTS LEADS TO FEELINGS AND ACTIONS/BEHAVIORS



## LESSON 4: SELF-ESTEEM

# SESSION 4: SELF-ESTEEM

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

Students will learn what self-esteem is

### Materials to run this session:

- A set of crayons for each student
- White board, flip chart or chalkboards with pens/markers/chalk
- Students will need to bring their workbook to this session
- The script for delivering this session is in italics below

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic <b>"Self- Esteem"</b></p> <p>Go over the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	<b>5 minutes</b>
<b>Home Exercise Review and Cloud Meditation Visualization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review each of the 3 home exercise tasks to ensure that students know how to change their</li> </ul>	<b>15 minutes</b>

- negative self-talk to positive or neutral
- Recap that students can have better command over their stress and emotions if they simply observe their thoughts rather than buying into or reacting to them.
- Use a soft, calm, slow voice as you lead students through a mindful cloud visualization to reinforce what was experienced in the last lesson<sup>5</sup>:

*Sit comfortably.*

*You can close your eyes at any time, or not. This will be a very brief exercise to reinforce the cloud mediation we did during the last lesson.*

*Take 10 deep breaths, extending your breathe all the way into your belly.*

- Wait for students to get through 10 breaths

*As you try to focus just on your breath, if your mind begins drifting to thoughts, you can imagine that you are watching your thoughts pass by like clouds in the blue sky.*

*In this scenario, the sky represents your mind.*

*Sometimes there are no clouds, and your mind is clear and spacious.*

*Other times, there are lots of clouds – representing your thoughts -- floating past very quickly.*

*When you see the thought, you may think, "that's a thought" but don't believe that thought.*

*Let it pass you by and let go of it.*

*Just as in life, you can't keep clouds from coming, nor can you make them stay. You can only watch as they come and go.*

*By just watching your thoughts instead of*

<sup>5</sup> From: Vo, Dzung X. The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time (The Instant Help Solutions Series) New Harbinger Publications.

	<p><i>trying to control them, you will become more at peace with your own mind.</i></p> <p><i>So watch now as clouds come and go. Know that behind those clouds is the clear blue sky—which is who you truly are, a good person, at peace. The clouds will not always be there. You do not have to attach to them.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gently have them bring their attention back to the room, and open their eyes (if closed)</li> <li>• Share if there is time – ask them if they are able to more easily imagine their thoughts as clouds, since completing all the home exercises</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What is Self-Esteem<sup>6</sup></b></p>	<p><i>What we learned about last week was how our thoughts color our feelings/emotions, which then lead to behaviors. The root is our thoughts. Why do you think some people are more optimistic, while others are more pessimistic?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses and write pertinent key words on the board/flip chart</li> <li>• If it is not mentioned, ask,</li> </ul> <p><i>One reason is due to someone's self-esteem. Has anyone here heard of self-esteem? If you have, how would you describe it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses and write pertinent key words on the board/flip chart</li> </ul> <p><i>Having healthy self-esteem means you have a strong sense of self-worth and value.</i></p> <p><i>You understand and accept your weaknesses, and you appreciate and celebrate your strengths.</i></p> <p><i>When you have healthy self-esteem, you recognize the inborn value of all people, including yourself. All the while you may have flaws, but that does not mean that you do not love and value yourself any less.</i></p> <p><i>People's self-esteem reflects the manner and</i></p>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from: Schab, Lisa M. The Self-Esteem Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Build Confidence and Achieve Your Goals, New Harbinger Publications. And Schab, Lisa M.. Beyond the Blues: A Workbook to Help Teens Overcome Depression (An Instant Help Book for Teens) New Harbinger Publications.

	<p><i>degree to which they value themselves. People who have healthy self-esteem see themselves in a positive yet realistic way.</i></p> <p><i>People whose self-esteem is not healthy often have an overly negative view of themselves. People with low self-esteem have a hard time honestly evaluating their strengths and weaknesses and often have an unrealistic negative impression of themselves. They take other people's opinions of their strengths and weaknesses more seriously than they should.</i></p> <p><i>Everyone has a story, and everyone's story is important. It doesn't matter who your friends are, where you go to school, where you work, whether or not you get married, or how much money you make. Your story is yours alone. You deserve to be treated with respect regardless of external factors. As do others.</i></p> <p><i>Some people think that focusing on their strengths makes them arrogant. Being arrogant means that you often brag about your strengths to others and you rarely admit to having faults. Healthy self-esteem involves being realistic, which means that you recognize, accept, and admit to both your strengths and your weaknesses.</i></p>	
<p><b>Self confidence</b></p>	<p><i>Confidence and self-esteem are often lumped together but they're different.</i></p> <p><i>Does anyone want to guess how the 2 are different?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student's responses</li> </ul> <p><i>Self-esteem is an internal experience and confidence is an external experience.</i></p> <p><i>Self-esteem relates to the way that we feel about ourselves, it's a reflection of our inner sense of value and self-respect.</i></p> <p><i>Confidence is a reflection of the way that we experience ourselves in our external world, in our relationships with other people and with situations and circumstances – for example, we are confident in running, or making friends, or earning stellar marks at University – all of these depend on us receiving recogni-</i></p>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

	<p><i>tion and validation from outside of us.</i></p> <p><i>Self-esteem is a reflection of our own inner sense of self-value, regardless of the external circumstances around us. So, even if we get a bad grade on a test, our significant other breaks up with us, it does not change how we value and respect ourselves. It is unshakable and more valuable than confidence.</i></p> <p><i>We don't need to feel confident about everything and that's ok, but a lack of self-esteem will cause great difficulty in our lives.</i></p> <p><i>For that reason we will examine self-esteem today, not self-confidence.</i></p>	
<p><b>Personal inventory</b></p>	<p><i>A first step of self-esteem is taking a personal inventory of our strengths and areas we'd like to improve.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to Lesson 4, Activity A and have them take a personal inventory</li> <li>• Prompt them to think carefully about this. They do not need to share what they have written</li> <li>• Remind learners that whatever is said or seen about each other remains confidential</li> <li>• At the end, ask students: <i>What did you learn about yourself through doing this activity?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Did you find this activity difficult? Why or why not?</i></p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>Your networks and those who treat you with respect</b></p>	<p><i>A second factor that impacts your self-esteem is the people in your life. Obviously we cannot choose our family, but we can choose our friends - and our mentors.</i></p> <p><i>Please raise your hand if you can think of immediately someone who values and respects you and treats you kindly.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait for students to respond</li> </ul> <p><i>At the same time, it is wise if we limit or stop spending time with people that treat you badly or make you feel bad about yourself.</i></p> <p><i>Please raise your hand if you can think of immediately someone who makes you feel bad</i></p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>

	<p><i>about yourself.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait for students to respond</li> </ul> <p><i>If someone is often critical to you - or treats you disrespectfully, you will want to end the relationship. We will talk in a future lesson about how to say no to someone and establish what we call "boundaries" to limit the power that person has over you.</i></p> <p><i>Obviously we can't automatically cut our family out of our lives, but we can find ways to limit how their words and behavior impact us.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to Lesson 4, Activity B: My Connections in their student workbook</li> <li>• Pass out a set of crayons/markers/colored pencils to each student</li> <li>• They will work on this task individually</li> <li>• Explain the directions</li> </ul> <p><i>On this handout, with crayons/colored pencils/markers write the name, or initials, or make a symbol of those closest to you.</i></p> <p><i>Those towards the center of the circle have the most influence/presence in your life - though they may not be the people who make you feel the best or who you prefer to be closest to. This includes those who may not be the best for your self-esteem. This will remain confidential, but please use initials, symbols or nicknames if you prefer.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once students have finished writing names/initials/symbols, read the directions (also on the worksheet) to them: <i>When you are done, use any colors you like to do the following:</i> <i>First, circle the names of those who treat you with respect and make you feel good about yourself.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Second, put check-marks over those who make you feel bad about yourself.</i></p> <p><i>Third, put a star next to those who you think could be mentors in helping you foster healthy self-esteem - and/or people who you'd like to spend more time with because</i></p>	
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*they boost your self-esteem.*

*Put a line through those who you think you will have to limit your time with and/or end relationships with.*

- When students are done, ask how this activity was for them (it was likely emotionally challenging in some ways, so be supportive and kind. Say, *This activity helped us identify who is good for us, and who is not healthy for us. By spending more time with those who believe in us and make us feel good about ourselves (remember this is about intrinsic qualities, such as they think you are a good person, smart, etc. not only spending time with you because you are attractive, dress well, etc.) we can work on developing healthier self-esteem.*

### **Taking care of our basic needs**

*The third step in fostering self-esteem is about making sure you are attending to four basic human needs: sleep, nutrition, exercise and activity, and social connectedness (which we just touched on briefly).*

*Any time you are sleepy, hungry, restless, or lonely, it is much harder for your brain and body to feel good and, as a result, handle the demands of life, including stress.*

*Regarding food, some research studies show that what people eat can affect their moods. Deficiencies in certain vitamins and nutrients have been linked to higher levels of depression. Paying attention to your eating habits (frequency, quantity and quality) and practicing healthy nutrition is part of a healthy lifestyle, which will set the tone for healthy self-esteem. Some foods which are particularly bad for our moods include sugar, caffeine (only in moderation), alcohol, and foods that are processed and packaged. It is better to stick to a diet consisting of whole foods such as vegetables, legumes, dairy, fruit, whole grains and on occasion, lean meat such as fish.*

**20 minutes**

*Physical exercise/activity: physical exercise has the ability to improve mood and positively impact self-esteem. When people exercise, there is an increase in the production of the brain chemicals that lift their moods. Incorporating mild-to-moderate exercise into your daily life can help you feel more resilient. It is tricky though because when people have low self-esteem, they may not have much energy. They may not have the desire to make plans because they don't have much interest in doing anything. Stopping activity, however, only worsens self-esteem issues. It is important to stay active, even when you don't feel up to it and/or are not "in the mood."*

*Social Connectivity: People who isolate themselves from others usually have a harder time dealing with stress and emotions than people who stay connected to supportive friends and family. This of course, impacts our self-esteem. Supportive people can act as a safety net to help hold us up emotionally during the harder times of life. Staying connected to people who encourage and support you will help you obtain and maintain healthy self-esteem. At the same token, do not think that connection via social media or text is a replacement for face to face real life interaction. Everybody knows that people present glamorized versions of their real life on websites like Instagram and Facebook. If you are exposed to this for too long, you will begin to compare yourself to others and (falsely) believe that everyone is having a better life than you are. If you struggle with low self-esteem curb or limit your use of social media to 10 minutes per day, and instead make appointments to meet friends for in-person activities. Also, delete the social media apps from your phone so you will not be tempted.*

*Sleep: Everyone's sleep needs differ. However sleep deprivation will not help your self-esteem. A good rule is that you should try to get 7-9 hours of sleep per night. If you have difficulty sleeping increase your activity level, cut out caffeine, and make yourself to go bed and wake up at a specific time each*



day. Try to keep a stable sleep routine and remain awake during as many daylight hours as possible<sup>7</sup>. Likewise, do not bring electronic devices to bed, nor should you check social media or watch disturbing movies or television at bed time. If you have difficulty with a racing mind at bedtime, keep a notebook next to your bed, and make to do lists, or write letters (but do not send) to those who are on your mind and have hurt you.

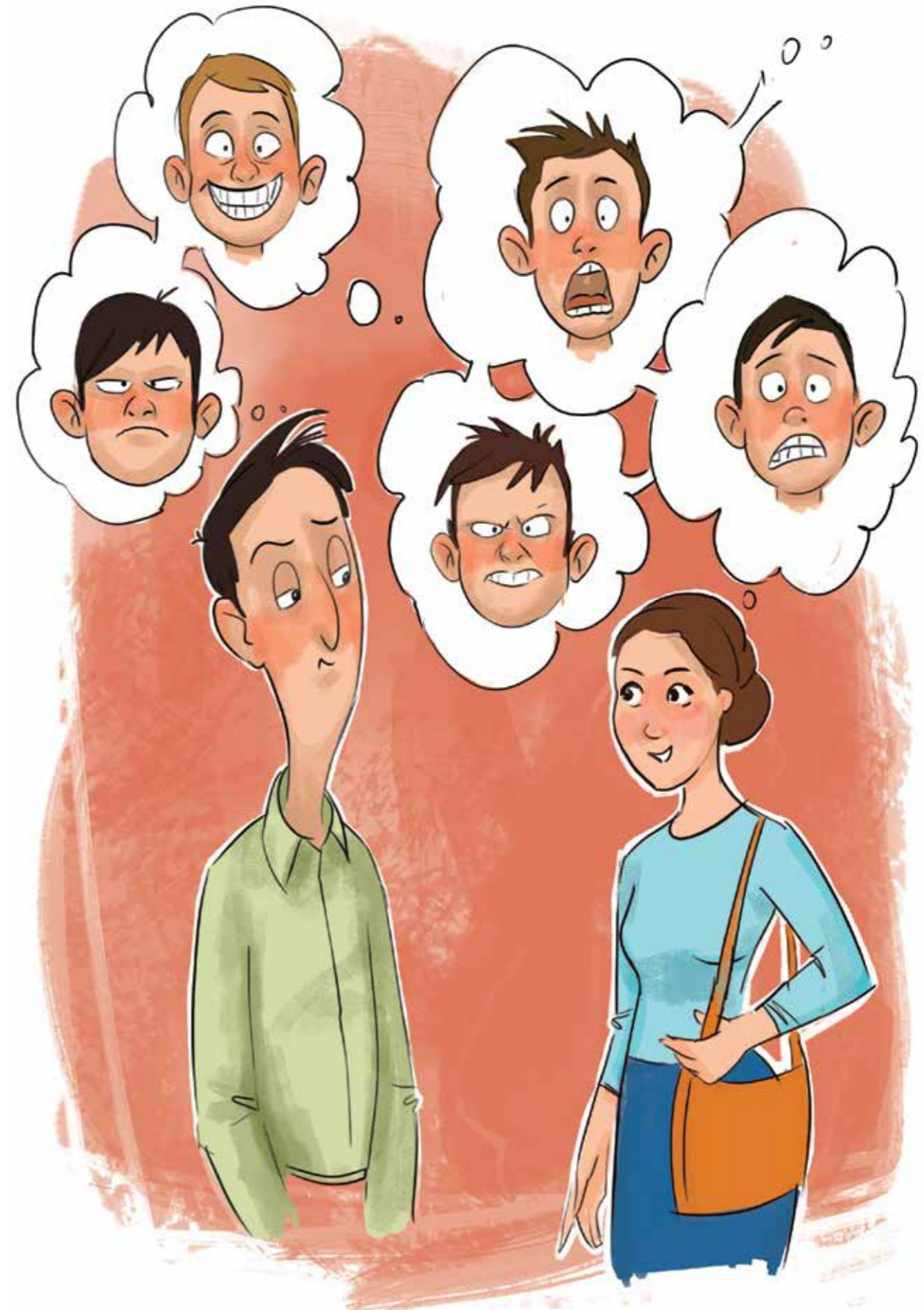
- Direct students to Lesson 4, Activity C: My Connections in their student workbook
- Review some responses from volunteers
- If learners are having difficulty coming up with ideas make some general, simple suggestions such as: If you remember you missed breakfast or lunch, you can have a healthy snack. If you realize you're sick of sitting still, you can get up and do something active. If you've been isolating yourself, you can talk to someone or spend time with people you feel close to. If you realize you're exhausted and sleep-deprived, you can boost your alertness and energy with a ten-to-twenty-minute "power nap." To take a power nap, set an alarm on your phone for ten or twenty minutes. Lie down, or sit in a chair with your head leaning against a wall. Close your eyes and allow your body to rest without doing anything else. It doesn't matter if you actually fall asleep or not.

**Ending**

- Direct students to the 2 home exercises, review these if needed
- Clarify any questions students may have about home exercises
- If time permits, have 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**

## PART 2: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



<sup>7</sup> Adapted from: Schab, Lisa M.. Beyond the Blues: A Workbook to Help Teens Overcome Depression (An Instant Help Book for Teens). New Harbinger Publications.

## LESSON 5: EMPATHY

## SESSION 5: EMPATHY

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

*Students will*

- Practice taking the perspective of another
- Learn what empathy is
- Learn the 5 steps of advanced empathy
- Through homework, will practice showing empathy for those who think differently/ appear different

### Materials to run this session:

- Learners will need to bring their workbooks to this class
- Poster with group rules listed
- White board, flip chart or chalkboard with pens/markers/chalk
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic <b>"Empathy"</b></p> <p>Briefly refer to the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome</p>	<b>5 minutes</b>

	during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Home Exercise Review and Guided Visualization<sup>8</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the home exercise activities for the last lesson, Self-Esteem</li> <li>Remind participants that personal information shared during review is confidential</li> <li>Lead students through a guided visualization regarding self-esteem: <i>Envision a place where you feel safe and at peace. This place might be in nature – the mountains, or the sea. Or it might be in your home, or at a mosque, or any place that makes you feel happy.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Remain in your peaceful place while we go through this guided visualization together.</i></p> <p><i>Imagine that all of the following affirmations are true for you, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation you experience.</i></p> <p><i>Repeat each affirmation in your mind, with conviction. Use your imagination to fully believe each self-esteem relaxation affirmation.</i></p> <p><i>The self-esteem relaxation affirmations begin now.</i>  <i>I am at peace with myself.</i>  <i>I appreciate who I am.</i>  <i>I value myself as a person.</i>  <i>All people have value, and I am a valuable human being.</i>  <i>I deserve to relax.</i>  <i>I deserve to be happy.</i></p> <p><i>I embrace my happy feelings, and enjoy being content.</i>  <i>I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.</i></p>	<b>15 minutes</b>

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from <http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/self-esteem-relaxation.html>

	<p><i>When my mood is low, I accept my emotions and recognize that the low mood will pass, and I will be happy again.</i></p> <p><i>I look forward to the good times. My future is bright and positive. I look forward to the future, and I enjoy the present.</i></p> <p><i>I feel good about who I am today. I accept the person that I am. I accept my flaws, and accept my strengths. I view my shortcomings as strengths not yet developed, rather than as weaknesses.</i></p> <p><i>I eagerly develop new strengths. I imagine and believe that all of these affirmations are true for me, right now in this moment, and enjoy the self-esteem relaxation I am experiencing.</i></p> <p><i>I approach challenges with strength. I do the best that I can at the time. I give 100% effort when I am able and when I choose to put full effort toward the things that are important. I accept my imperfections and the imperfections in what I do. My efforts are good enough, and they're okay. I do not have to be perfect to be okay as a person. I am a human being with flaws. I love myself as I am. I do not need to compare myself to others.</i></p> <p><i>I accept myself. I care for myself. I am perfectly alright just the way I am. I am a valuable human being.</i></p> <p><i>Think again about your peaceful place.</i></p> <p><i>Picture yourself enjoying this environment.</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledge the feelings you are experiencing after repeating the self-esteem relaxation affirmations.</i></p> <p><i>Accept any positive or negative feelings you</i></p>	
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	<p><i>are having. Allow yourself to feel calm and at peace.</i></p> <p><i>Now it is time to leave your special place. Know that you can return here in your imagination any time to relax, feel calm and relaxed, and feel comfortable and safe. Take with you the feelings of acceptance of yourself, and belief in the self-esteem relaxation affirmations. Continue to feel positive and accepting of yourself.</i></p> <p><i>Hold onto this secure feeling of self-esteem as you return to your day.</i></p>	
<p><b>Perspective Taking</b></p>	<p><i>Say: Have you and a friend/family member ever experienced the same exact situation but you reacted differently? Why is that?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take students responses</li> </ul> <p><i>In essence, it's because you had different perspectives.</i></p> <p><i>"Perspective taking" is seeing a situation from another person's point of view.</i></p> <p><i>It is the basis for getting along with others, since you will need to understand what someone else is going through and how they might feel in order to understand their behaviors and feelings.</i></p> <p><i>Your perspective is unique. Let's talk about a few simple things that we may have different perspectives on. Let's start with something easy and non-emotional:</i></p> <p><b>#1 Cats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students first share with a partner seated next to them, then discuss as a whole group. WHAT CATS MAKE THEM FEEL</li> <li>• They can do this for 15-30 seconds</li> <li>• Make the point that some may love cats while others may be fearful of cats</li> </ul> <p><b>#2 Summer vacation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students first share with a partner seated next to them, then discuss as a whole group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the point that some may enjoy having time off from schools, while others may be feel bored, not like the hot weather, and prefer to be in school (please adapt examples/reasons to various ages; for example, those who have children may not like summer vacation because they have to entertain their kids all day)</li> </ul> <p><b>#3 Watching scary movies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners first share with a partner seated next to them, then discuss as a whole group.</li> <li>• Make the point that scary movies may cause too much anxiety for some, while others are unfazed and entertained</li> </ul> <p><b>#4 Swimming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students first share with a partner seated next to them, then discuss as a whole group.</li> <li>• Make the point that while some who know how to swim may like it, others may not either because they have not yet learned how to swim, or they had a bad experience swimming, or are fearful of marine life such as sharks etc.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Others think differently (and that's Ok!)</b></p>	<p><i>Say: Part of perspective taking is becoming aware that others will think differently than you - MOST OF THE TIME! This is what makes us all interesting and unique. There is nothing wrong with thinking differently from each other - and it does not mean that we need to have conflict. We do not need everyone to think exactly like we do.</i></p> <p><i>Let's take a simple example: Ibrahim loves math, while Omar does not. Why? Maybe math is just more difficult for Omar, or maybe Omar really loves to read instead.</i></p> <p><i>Understanding that Omar does not love math will help Ibrahim understand Omar's feelings if they are working together on a math project.</i></p> <p><i>So, if Omar becomes frustrated or appears anxious, Ibrahim will understand why and can do something to try to ease Omar's</i></p>	<p><b>20 minutes</b></p>

*anxiety (for example, he might get Omar a glass of water, suggest they take a walk outside etc.).*

(Note to facilitators, please adapt this depending on your audience. For example, for older learners, you may cite a more relevant example.)

- Refer learners to the page that begins, "Lesson 5 Activity A: Others think differently and that's okay"
- Have learners partner up with someone they do not know, and complete the table together.
- Go over the instructions with learners
- Recap by saying:

*Differences are healthy. We need to respect others who think differently than us - and not try to change people to think or act like us. Even if someone's beliefs are very different than ours and/or we think that they are unusual.*

**20 minutes**

**Empathy**

Say: *has anyone heard of the word empathy before?*

- Take student's responses; be encouraging and positive about their responses - they may not know the exact definition

*Technically speaking, the "em" means "in" and "path" means "suffering" - empathy is simply feeling the suffering of someone else.*

*More easily put, Empathy is the ability to consider and understand what someone else is going through. It is putting ourselves in someone else's shoes.*

*Let's do an exercise and imagine that we are a street cat or dog. Although of course you have never experienced exactly what a street cat or dog has -- you can imagine what they experience by intentionally imagining putting yourself in their position.*

*To do this, close your eyes. Imagine having to live on the street. Imagine having to search through the garbage to find something to eat. Imagine being cold at night and having*

*nowhere to go for warmth. Imagine being picked on*

*How does it feel? Can you imagine what it might be like? Although you have never been exactly in their shoes, you can imagine what it is like.*

- Take student responses. If they are not immediately empathic, model empathic responses
- Do not get too technical here - do not start lecturing on the difference between empathy and sympathy - the point here is to have students use their imagination to put themselves in someone else's shoes.

*Say: People are born with the ability to feel empathy towards others - even if we have not experienced the same exact experience as someone else.*

*Empathy is the reason people try to help each other. For example, if you heard that a friend's family member had died, you would understand that they feel very sad and you might do something to try to make them feel better.*

*Empathy may also be one reason we give to charity. We know that many people live in hunger, and we want to help them because we understand how hard that must be.*

*Empathy may also lead us to interrupting children or bullies who abuse animals and children. We know that it is cruel and that the children or bullies are inflicting harm onto another - and it is not right. The right thing to do is to intervene so no one - not even animals -- experience suffering.*

*Being empathic - is to have empathy - and it is the opposite of being selfish or self-centered. Being empathic requires that we soften our heart so we can feel what others are going through. "It is doing unto others as you would like them to do unto you." It is a vital part of connecting with others!*

*When you are empathic you try to put yourself in someone else's shoes, it gives you a better understanding of what they might be feeling, thinking and acting.*

*So, for example, rather than getting angry at someone, you can imagine what they are going through – and you want to help them rather than demand that they change.*

*Try putting yourself in the other person's shoes to understand someone else's perspective the next time you are in conflict or do not understand someone, or wish that their perspective was the same as yours.*

- Direct students to their workbooks, "Lesson 5 Activity B: Putting yourself in someone else's shoes"; have students complete this activity in pairs
- Review as a whole group to ensure students are able to put themselves in another's shoes – and are not being judgmental or cruel towards others
- Reiterate that perspective taking, empathy and putting ourselves in someone else's shoes are important – and the keys to having fulfilling relationships

**The 5 Steps of Advanced Empathy**

*Many of you were able to have empathy for the characters in the scenarios presented in Lesson 6, Activity B.*

*These were straight forward situations, however it's more challenging to have empathy with someone that you disagree with, feel fundamentally different from, or someone who "presses your buttons" and makes you angry and/or frustrated.*

- Direct students to turn to the next page: Lesson 5, Activity C: Read Aloud
- Have students volunteer to take turns reading the steps aloud, they are as follows:

**Five Steps to Practice Advanced Empathy**

*1) Make an active decision to see something from another person's point of view. Most often we are so blinded by our own strong*

**10 minutes**

*opinions and our need to be right that we never even attempt to see another's perspective. "Let go" of your ego's need to be right – and instead be curious as to someone else's point of view (It does not mean that you need to agree with their point of view – but be curious!).*

*2) Become aware of your filters– Most of our biases are completely unconscious. When we listen to others we don't realize that we're listening with judgment. Our unconscious biases are like the water fish swim in. We don't see the water because we have never seen anything other than the water. We take our stances on various issues very personally. We make these labels part of our identity.*

*These identity labels are normal. They make us feel safe because now we belong to a certain group of believers. Belonging to a group has traditionally been also a fundamental human need because it gives us a feeling of connection and community. It is useful until it stops us from being effective because we cannot see the other's point of view. Many times, it gets in the way of empathy, by dividing the world into "black and white" "us versus them."*

*We all have biases. A bias is nothing other than our view of the world (which most of us usually assume is the only "correct" way to see the world). However, we should become more aware of our biases and how it colors all of our perceptions.*

*3) See the whole human – See the person beyond their crisis, habits or current situation. Like you, they are a human-being. They may be a mother, daughter, sister, brother, father, son to someone – and their story is much wider than what you can see in brief snapshot.*

*Our human emotions can connect us to others because we have all felt these emotions in some form or another: fear, anger, love, sadness, joy, disappointment. They are per-*

sonal to each of us-- and yet they are also universal.

4) Practice active listening - We will learn more about this in the next lesson, but active listening is key in promoting empathy. Active listening is listening while being present -- without giving advice or talking about yourself. This is the best way to understand the details of what someone is going through.

5) Check in to be sure you are understanding and perceiving their experience correctly. Following active listening, check in to be sure that you understood what they said/ are experiencing. Paraphrase and ask questions. Be open to being corrected. The point is to understand the other person - the purpose of true empathy is not expressing your own views, talking about yourself, judging someone or change that person's views or behaviors.

Wrap up by saying:

*These are the steps of Advanced Empathy - try using these steps sometime this week with someone that you normally could not easily empathize with.*

### Ending

- Direct students to the 2 home exercises
- Clarify any questions students may have about home exercises/concepts taught
- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank learners for their participation in today's lesson

**5  
minutes**

## LESSON 6: LISTENING SKILLS

# SESSION 6: LISTENING SKILLS

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

*Students will:*

- Learn about the difference between real and half listening
- Determine their own personal blocks to listening
- Practice and role play the steps and qualities of active listening

### Materials to run this session:

- Preparation for facilitator: secretly select 2 students in advance to do a role-play where one acts as a horrible listener to the other. Make sure the students you choose are aware of their roles; you can rehearse in advance, if necessary.
- Learners will need to bring their workbooks to this class
- Poster with group rules listed
- White board, flip chart or chalkboard with pens/markers/chalk
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic "<b>Listening Skills</b>"</p> <p>Briefly refer to the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in and review the 2 home exercise tasks</li> <li>• Applaud students' attempts at practicing empathy for those who are different. It is a practice that will take time, and consistent effort</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Real vs. Half Active Listening<sup>9</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretly select 2 students in advance to do a role-play where one acts as a horrible listener to the other. Make sure the students you choose are aware of their roles; rehearse in advance if needed – it does not need to be "perfect." Start the session with the role play to illustrate today's topic</li> </ul> <p><i>Say: Have you ever had the experience of telling your story to someone but you get the strong sense that they are not interested – or even listening – to what you're saying?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student input</li> </ul> <p><i>Have you ever been in a group where everyone wants to tell their own story and you feel like nobody is truly listening to what others are saying?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student input</li> </ul> <p><i>Even when people appear to be listening closely, you can see that they're actually just rehearsing what they want to say and waiting for their chance to talk. Other times people are distracted, perhaps with their eyes wandering to their phone.</i></p> <p><i>To build healthy relationships, it's important to truly listen to others. If you're a good listener, others will be drawn to you. Your friends will confide in you, and you'll make new friends more easily.</i></p>	<b>10 minutes</b>

<sup>9</sup> Skeen, Michelle. Communication Skills for Teens: How to Listen, Express, and Connect for Success (The Instant Help Solutions Series) New Harbinger Publications.



*In school or job situations, you may experience success more quickly or easily if you really hear people and understand them. You can grasp what others expect from you, what's important to them, and what pleases or displeases them.*

*Not listening well suggests that you don't care, that you aren't interested in what others have to say, or that you're self-absorbed.*

*Sometimes we are also stressed out and we simply can't listen because we are so worried. This is one more reason why it's important to use the mindfulness stress reduction exercises we spoke about earlier in this series.*

*We've all been guilty of only half listening. With so many distractions in our environment, it's easy to fall into half listening.*

*Even though it is impossible to be fully attentive everyone we interact with others, we can strive to do better.*

*The first step in combating this common habit is to understand the distinction between real listening and half listening. Real listening is more than just being quiet while the other person is talking. It involves 4 things:*

- Direct students to their workbook for a read aloud.
  - Have 4 students take turns reading the following aloud from their workbooks:
1. *We listen to: understand what the other person is saying, without imposing your own judgments*
  2. *We listen to: enjoy your interaction and appreciate that the person is sharing a part of himself or herself with you*
  3. *We listen to: learn more about the other person, including the person's thoughts, feelings, and opinions*
  4. *We listen to: help -- which involves paying particular attention to ways in which you can assist the person or provide support*

**Listening<sup>10</sup>**

Recap by asking:  
*Did any of you happen to show any of these qualities while practicing empathy for your home exercise?*

*MAKE SURE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS ABOUT - INSERT NOTE ABOUT*

*THIS IS ABOUT HOW WE CAN BE BETTER LISTENERS - THIS IS TOO ADVANCED:*

*THIS IS ABOUT BEING A GOOD LISTENER - WHEN YOU WANT TO NOTE TO EVERYONE*

*Blocks to listening prevent you from hearing people. Everybody is prone to listening blocks, so don't feel bad about having them; it's human nature. But once you become aware of your listening patterns, you can more easily avoid the blocks to become a better listener. In this section you'll learn about the 12 most common blocks to listening. You probably fall into some of them frequently, and those are likely to sound very familiar.*

- Have students turn to Lesson 6, Activity B Listening Block Read Aloud in their workbooks
- SHE WROTE DOWN THE BLOCKS ON PAPER AND LAID THEM ON THE FLOOR AS SHE WENT THROUGH THEM ONE BY ONE AND GOT EXAMPLES
- Have student volunteers take turns reading aloud the following (this information is also in their workbooks):

*Comparing.*  
*Comparing yourself to people who are talking to usually means that you are preoccupied with yourself - and as a result, you're not fully listening to them. Instead, you're trying to figure out if you're as smart, as good-looking, as funny, as ambitious, etc. Regardless of whether you're making positive or negative comparisons, you're not focused on hearing the other person. It's easy to get caught up*

**25 minutes**

<sup>10</sup> Skeen, Michelle. Communication Skills for Teens: How to Listen, Express, and Connect for Success (The Instant Help Solutions Series) (p. 5). New Harbinger Publications.

*in how you measure up to others in particular settings or situations.*

*Mind reading.*

*This is very common. When you're mind reading, you're paying less attention to the actual words people are saying and too much attention to their tone of voice and body language in an effort to figure out their thoughts and feelings. For example, you may find yourself imagining what the other person is thinking about you instead of listening to what the person is saying.*

*Rehearsing.*

*It's tempting – and very common -- to start thinking about your response to others while they're still talking. But when you do that, you will miss out on important information that the other person is trying to communicate to you.*

*Filtering.*

*You know you're filtering if you consistently pay attention to some things more than others. For example, you may be less interested in the content of what others are communicating than figuring out whether they're in a good mood or a bad mood. Some people filter for material that's critical of them, some for compliments, some for a particular topic that interests them, and so on. Filtering can also involve excluding some types of information, leading people to listen selectively, ignoring remarks that are of little or no interest to them.*

*Judging.*

*If you're too quick to pass judgment on people, you won't hear what they're actually saying. Be careful not to judge people on their appearance, where they're from, their history -- or what you've heard about them. Stay open to what the person is communicating, rather than dismissing them because you have preconceived notions about them.*

*Daydreaming.*

*This is a particularly problematic listening block because when you're daydreaming,*

*you're completely focused on other things, not the person in front of you. You don't hear a word they say.*

*Identifying.*

*This listening block can grow out of a desire to connect about a shared experience. But when you're too busy focusing on how your experience relates to what others are saying, it starts to become more about you and less about them.*

*Advising.*

*Like identifying, advising is often based on a desire to connect with others – or obtain their admiration -- by trying to solve their problems. Unfortunately, it can make others feel like you're too focused on trying to offer a solution and as though you aren't allowing them to finish communicating their entire experience or situation.*

*Arguing.*

*When you're focused on promoting or defending your opinions and beliefs, it's difficult to make genuine connections with others. Arguing alienates people because it sends a message that you're not open to understanding their point of view.*

*Being right.*

*This listening block is a huge obstacle to connecting with other people. It's hard to learn from others or grow in terms of your beliefs and feelings if you aren't open to other people's opinions.*

*Derailing.*

*This listening block involves quickly changing the topic to avoid criticism or talking about something that makes you anxious or upset. Sometimes people derail conversations by making jokes or distracting comments.*

*Placating.*

*You may do this in an effort to be liked, agreeing with everything the other person says or does. However, it's difficult to connect with others if you're focused on making sure they feel good. If you're placating, you aren't*

*tuned in to or examining what the other person is saying.*

- Direct learners to turn to the next page in their workbooks: Lesson 6, Activity C: Identifying your listening blocks
- Go over the directions with them
- Have students complete the chart independently
- After they have completed the chart with their 6 most common listening blocks, partner learners up with someone they do not know well, and take turns discussing their listening blocks
- DON'T CONTINUE ADVISING
- NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY
- EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE/SOLUTION
- SHE DID A ROLE PLAY WHERE SHE HAD THEM EACH TAKE A BLOCK AND ROLE PLAY IT (FIRST SHE EXPLAINED THE BLOCKS)
- THEN THEY HAVE TO GUESS WHICH BLOCK IT IS
- LIKE LISTENING BLOCK CHARADES

### The Steps of Active Listening<sup>11</sup>

*So now that we have identified blocks and barriers, let's shift to speaking about what makes a GOOD listener.*

- Get student input here regarding qualities of a good listener
- You may wish to add the following if they've not been mentioned:

*-Look at the other person when they are speaking*

*-Do not interrupt the other person while they are talking/allow the person to continue speaking without interruption*

*-Let the other person know that you care about what they are talking about*

*-Ask questions about what they are saying*

*-Have an open body posture (for example, do not sit facing away from them, or have your arms crossed)*

**10 minutes**

*For the rest of today we'll talk about something called "Active listening."*

*Active listening is a necessary skill for building relationships. It requires that you be fully engaged in the process of communicating and aware of the listening blocks you just identified. It also means responding with your words, body language, and eye contact - all ways of indicating that you're engaged in the conversation.*

*Active Listening is a 3-step process:*

- Have students turn to the next page in their workbooks, Lesson 6, Activity D: Active Listening
- Have student volunteers take turns reading paragraphs of the following (this information is also in their workbook):

*Step 1. Paraphrasing*

*Paraphrasing is using your own words to restate what someone else has said. This prevents miscommunication, false assumptions, and misunderstandings. It also makes conversations easier to remember. Here are a few ways to lead into a paraphrase: "So in other words..." "I get that you..." "What I hear you saying is..." "What happened was that..." "So you're saying..."*

*Paraphrasing focuses your attention on the actual content of what others are saying. There are many advantages to paraphrasing. One is that it conveys that you're really listening. You may be surprised at how much others appreciate being heard. Also, if others are upset or angry, paraphrasing is a good way to calm them down. And if what someone is saying is unclear, paraphrasing will prevent miscommunication and misinterpretation.*

*Step 2. Clarifying*

*Clarifying is an extension of paraphrasing. It involves asking questions until you have a clear understanding of what's being said. This allows you to get more information to fill in any gaps in the communication. Clarifying sends the message that you're engaged in communicating and that you care about*

<sup>11</sup> Skeen, Michelle. Communication Skills for Teens: How to Listen, Express, and Connect for Success (The Instant Help Solutions Series) New Harbinger Publications.

*what the person is saying.*

**Step 3. Feedback**

*The final piece of active listening is feedback. After you've paraphrased what you heard and asked clarifying questions, it's your turn to add something new: your personal reaction. With feedback, you express what you think and feel about what you heard and your experience while listening. This is when you get a chance to present your point of view, but without arguing, advising, derailing, and so on.*

*Your communication with others will also be enhanced if you bring certain qualities to listening: empathy, openness, and awareness.*

**Listening with Empathy**

*The key to listening with empathy is to imagine being in the other person's shoes and feeling what he or she is feeling. This doesn't mean you have to agree with the way another person handled a situation. In fact, you need to steer clear of focusing on how you would have felt or acted if you'd been in the same situation. Instead, take the perspective of the other person and try to understand what that person may be feeling and thinking.*

**Listen with Openness**

*Listening with openness means listening without judging or finding fault with what you hear. If you have a closed mind, you won't be able to hear the other person's message because you'll be focused on how it's inconsistent with your own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.*

*Everybody has trouble listening openly. One way to foster this approach is to think of yourself as a scientist. Say to yourself, "I value the truth. I want to know what's what, even if it means changing my opinion. My opinions are simply my current theories about life, and they're subject to revision as new information becomes available." Be curious. It will help you remain open.*

**Listening with Awareness**

*Listening with awareness mean looking for consistency and congruence between what people say and how they act. Notice their body language, in the form of posture, gestures, and facial expressions. Pay attention to their tone of voice and how loudly or softly they're speaking. Sometimes there's an obvious mismatch. For example, maybe someone is telling you that but they're lounging back on their couch, smiling, yawning and talking in a soft, relaxed tone. When something like this happens, you can ask for clarification or give feedback: "It seems to me that you're not completely devastated - is that accurate?"*

**Active Listening Role Play**

- Pair students up with by counting 1-2-3-4-5-6 until everyone has a partner. If there is an odd number of students, the facilitator can take part in the activity
- Have students take 10 minutes to prepare a 2-3 minute role play of a 2-person conversation involving active listening
- They can discuss any topic they like - so long as they use the steps and qualities of active listening
- Have students refer to Lesson 6, Activity C Read Aloud to make sure that they use all of the steps and qualities of active listening.
- Have each group then role-play a 2-3 minute "active listening conversation" in front of the group.

**25 minutes**

**Ending**

- Indicate the 2 Home Exercises to complete before the next lesson: Active listening tracker, and "addressing your listening blocks"
- Clarify any questions students may have about home exercises/concepts taught
- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank learners for their participation in today's lesson

**5 minutes**

# LESSON 7: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## SESSION 7: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will:*

- Become familiar with the essential elements of interpersonal effectiveness
- Learn about “boundaries” and explore their own specific personal boundaries
- Brainstorm different ways of saying no, and practice saying “no” in order to establish healthy boundaries

**Materials to run this session:**

- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<p><b>Welcome Introduction</b></p>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today’s topic <b>“Interpersonal Effectiveness”</b></p> <p>Briefly refer to the group’s ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is domi-</p>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

	nating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check in and review last week's 2 home exercises: Active listening tracker, and "addressing your listening blocks"</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Interpersonal Effectiveness<sup>12</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students turn to Lesson 7, Activity A Interpersonal Effectiveness</li> <li>Put learners into groups of 2-3 and assign each group one of the following 5.</li> <li>Have learner groups each read and discuss their assigned Interpersonal Effectiveness Group</li> <li>Have each group take turns reading aloud their main point and presenting to the whole class their group's main impressions of their assigned Interpersonal Effectiveness point.</li> <li>The 5 points are as follows (the same script is in the student workbook):                     <p><b>1. Interpersonal Effectiveness skills are not about the outcome or "perfect results."</b> <i>Using Interpersonal Effectiveness skills is challenging because these skills involve other people and we cannot control what others do. We only have control over our part of the relationship. This means that when we use Interpersonal Effectiveness skills, we may not get the outcome we want. It is important not to be upset with yourself or others, if the end result is not what you hoped for.</i></p> <p><b>2. Interpersonal Effectiveness skills can be used for my relationship with myself.</b> <i>Interpersonal skills can also be used as Intrapersonal skills. Intrapersonal means the way you communicate with yourself. The longest and closest relationship you will have in your life is the relationship that you have with yourself, so it is important to tend to this relationship.</i></p> <p><b>3. Interpersonal Effectiveness skills require respecting and valuing people who, on the surface, appear very different.</b> <i>Using Inter-</i></p> </li> </ul>	<b>20 minutes</b>

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from: Eich, Jean. Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A Practical Workbook for Therapists, Teens & Parents, PESI Publishing & Media.

	<p><i>personal Effectiveness skills requires that you respect others who have very different life stories, histories and values than you. This includes people with different political views, religion, ethnicities, and gender identification. Interpersonal effectiveness requires that you accept that everyone is different – and there is not 1 rigid way to live life. This does not mean that you have to agree with every lifestyle you encounter, but you it does require that you let go of trying to control others, vilify them for being "different," or lecturing others on how to live. Respecting others' perspective (so long as they are not harming anyone or promoting violence), and non-violent communication are crucial skills in succeeding in the work, home and in your community.</i></p> <p><b>4. Everyone has their own unique needs and wants.</b> <i>Everyone has needs and wants – this is a normal part of being human. You have the right to ask for what you need or want from others (even if they say no). Likewise, it is okay to say no to others so that you can meet your own needs and stay safe. You can assert yourself and still be a good person. Saying no can be difficult and scary, but it is your right. You may want to please people that you care about, but you do not have to please them all the time.</i></p> <p><b>5. It's Ok to be different from others.</b> <i>It's Ok to have your own interests and likes, even if they are different from those of your family or friends. It is normal to want to fit in, but remember to be yourself, too.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Afterwards ask the group: Which one of these points are you personally most surprised by? Why? Which one do you think is most important to you personally?</li> </ul>	
<b>Boundaries<sup>13</sup></b>	<i>A big part of having effective interactions with others, it knowing your own boundaries.</i>	<b>25 minutes</b>

<sup>13</sup> Eich, Jean. Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A Practical Workbook for Therapists, Teens & Parents PESI Publishing & Media.

*Who has heard of boundaries before?*

- Find out who has
- Ask for a definition of boundaries
- Summarize what students have suggested, and offer the following definition:  
*Boundaries are limits. Setting boundaries is the way we communicate what is Ok and not Ok in relationships. Boundaries are healthy. We can have boundaries in many different areas:*

- Have 6 students take turns reading the following paragraphs aloud:

**Time:** *You only have so much time in a day, and it's important to be mindful about how you spend your time. You can assert a boundary with your time by saying no to things you do not want or need to do, or you can say yes to things you want to spend more time on.*

**Communication:** *You have the right to be spoken to with respect. People in our lives may say or do hurtful things (at times unintentionally). You can assert a boundary with communication by asking others not to use disrespectful language and to speak to you respectfully.*

**Personal Items:** *This includes money, your cell phone, clothes and any property. You can assert a boundary with your personal items by saying no when you are uncomfortable with giving or lending, or you can say yes when you are comfortable with giving or lending.*

**Physical Space:** *Personal space means the space around you and includes physical touch. You can assert a boundary with your physical space by asking people not to get too close or by saying yes or no to hugs or other forms of physical contact.*

**Personal Information:** *You have the right not to share things about yourself. You can assert a boundary with personal information by answering or not answering questions that make you uncomfortable and by being mindful about what personal information you share.*

**Social Media:** *You have the right to use or not use social media. If you choose to use social media, you can assert a boundary with how others communicate to you on the Internet and with what you post or what others post about you on social media.*

- Direct students to turn the page in their workbook to Lesson 7, Activity C: Know your boundaries
- Have students work through this individually
- Afterwards, have them do a 2-minute 'partner share' where each partner has 1 minute to sum up their boundaries.

**How to Say No<sup>14</sup>**

*One of the most challenging aspects of being an adolescent/young adult, is balancing what is right for you and what other people – like your family and friends -- think is right for you.*

*We just took time to define our own boundaries*

*Still, we also want to be accepted by our friends and family – so maintaining their boundaries will not be easy at first.*

*When others insist that we do what they want – especially when it doesn't fit with our own values – we call this peer or family pressure. A peer is someone who is your own age, or close to it, and is a friend, a class or work-mate, or someone from your social group.*

*It's very difficult to resist peer pressure because we want to be liked and accepted. It is also quite difficult to resist family pressure, since our parents may have expectations that we live our life exactly how they want. They may think they know what is best for us, and they don't allow any room to try out our own interests.*

*I'd like to help you think creatively about how to say 'no' when you don't want to do something your friends are pressuring you to do.*

**25 minutes**

<sup>14</sup> This part of the lesson was adapted from a lesson in the Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

- Remind participants that some individuals and cultures tend to be either more direct or more indirect in their communication style. Ask for their help in modifying a series of 'no' statements that would be comfortable for the participants and other people of the local culture.
- Direct students to their workbook, Lesson 7, Activity D: Ways to Say No.

*There are many ways to say No. Some are more direct; some are more indirect.*

*Your workbook lists several methods you can use to say No.*

*The examples for each are more direct but there also are ways to get the same messages across in a more indirect way. For example, the simple 'No' can also be said as, 'I'd rather not.' Or, 'I'm more of a quiet-type of person.'*

*Each of these is a more indirect way of saying the simple 'No.'*

*What I'd like is for you to become more comfortable saying 'No.' It doesn't matter whether you say no directly or indirectly, as long as you are able to get the message across that you are not going to do something that is against your values.*

- Divide participants into small groups; assign 1 method of saying "No" to each group.

*Say: With your group, you have 5 minutes to write as many different ways of saying 'No' as you can think of for your method. Be creative. If it helps, you can invent a situation so your method of saying 'No' is more specific.*

*After 5 minutes, say: Now I would like you to get ideas for different ways of saying no that fit with the other methods on your handout. When I give the signal, I want you to talk to people individually from different groups to get suggestions for how to say no.*

**Social Media:** *You have the right to use or not use social media. If you choose to use social media, you can assert a boundary with how others communicate to you on the Internet and with what you post or what others post about you on social media.*

- Direct students to turn the page in their workbook to Lesson 7, Activity C: Know your boundaries
- Have students work through this individually
- Afterwards, have them do a 2-minute 'partner share' where each partner has 1 minute to sum up their boundaries.

*Try to talk to 4 other people. Share an idea from your method and write down another idea that the person has for you from their method of saying no. You have 5 minutes. Go!*

- After 5 minutes, ask people to return to their original group.

*Please take a few moments to share your notes with the other members of your group. If you hear of a way to say 'No' that you like, be sure to add it to your handout.*

- Invite people to share ways of saying no that they think would be especially effective.
- Make sure everyone has more than one alternative for each method of saying no.

*If you've ever learned a foreign language, you know that it can feel very uncomfortable to use that new language in public. But, as you speak it more, it becomes easier and easier. It's the same with saying 'No.' The more practice you have, the easier it becomes and the more confident you will feel about yourself.*

*Let's make this a bit more challenging. I'll share a situation that a young adult might run into where they might want to say no. You can use your handout if you wish.*

- Share a situation that youth in your community may encounter such as Something is missing here let the person answer, and have that person select the next person



	<p>to go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note: You can either describe a situation (“What if your friend wanted you to skip school. How would you say No?”) or you can play the role of a friend (“I’m your friend: ‘Hey, Aida, let’s skip school.’”). In either case, it is important that you as the adult facilitator be the “bad person” rather than having a youth play the negative role. It is usually suggested that role- plays be used to practice positive behaviors rather than to become a reinforcement of negative behaviors</li> </ul> <p>Conclude the activity by saying:  <i>Learning to say no allows you to be consistent with your values and also to maintain friendships with people who are important to you.</i></p>	
<p><b>Ending</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicate the 2 home exercises to be completed before the next lesson</li> <li>Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session</li> <li>Thank students for their participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

## LESSON 8: HANDLING DISPUTES

# SESSION 8: HANDLING DISPUTES

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will:*

- Learn healthy and unhealthy way to handle disputes and conflicts
- Learn and experience the steps of win-win negotiation
- Apply the steps of negotiation to real and hypothetical situations

**Materials to run this session:**

- Facilitator will need to prepare in advance a poster or flip chart that says “Options for dealing with conflict/disputes” (see graphic following lesson plan for details)
- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today’s topic <b>“Handling Disputes”</b></p> <p>Briefly refer to the group’s ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome</p>	<b>5 minutes</b>

	during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in and review the 2 Home Exercise tasks from last session</li> <li>• Review all homework assignments and allow students to each take a turn offering up examples of how they established boundaries and practiced saying “No”</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Options for dealing with disputes/ conflicts<sup>15</sup></b>	<p><i>While practicing saying no and establishing boundaries you may have realized that disputes or conflicts with others is just one more inevitable part of life.</i></p> <p><i>Can anyone offer up a definition of a dispute or conflict?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses; write key words from their responses on the board/flip-chart</li> <li>• Clarify if needed</li> </ul> <p><i>A simple definition would be any sort of disagreement or argument - including small everyday conflicts.</i></p> <p><i>Can you think of any examples of conflict or disputes in your life?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses; write key words from their responses on the flip chart/board</li> <li>• Display the poster that you prepared in advance, “Options for dealing with conflict/disputes” (see graphic following this lesson plan)</li> <li>• <b>Avoid conflict</b>—Simply withdraw from any conflict.</li> <li>• <b>Smooth it over</b>—Pretend there’s no conflict and everything is okay.</li> <li>• <b>Win at all costs</b>—Get what you want; the other person loses.</li> <li>• <b>Compromise</b>—Give up something you want to get something else you want.</li> <li>• <b>Win/win negotiation</b>—Use creative problem solving to give both people what they want or need.</li> </ul>	<b>25 minutes</b>

<sup>15</sup> Steps are from SafeYouth.org

- Divide the class into pairs (if there is an odd number of students, there can be a group of 3, or the facilitator can pair up with the solo student)
- Refer learners to their workbook: Lesson 8, Activity A, “Options for dealing with conflict/disputes”
- Read each option to the class
- Explain that they will need to complete the table regarding why the option might be good, why it might be bad and an example of a situation where they might use or have used such option
- In the last column they will have to decide if they think the option is a healthy way to deal with disputes and conflicts
- Give students 10 minutes to complete the table (each student should write in their workbook, so that they have it for future reference)
- When finished take a show of hands regarding which options are healthy ways of dealing with conflict.
- Explain that the first three typically cause problems, but the last two are very useful strategies.
- Have students place asterisks (\*) or stars beside “negotiation/compromise” and “win/win.”
- Ask learners for examples of situations where **compromise** brings a positive result (Examples include settling on the price of a car, union/management negotiations, divorce and child custody, negotiating border/land disputes between countries and so on.)
- Explain **Win/Win** to students:  
*Usually in a sporting event one person (or team) wins and the other loses. Most of the time there is just one winner. In other parts of our lives, when people disagree or have a conflict with one another, there is also usually just one winner. The other person goes away with very little (or none) of what they wanted or needed.*

*In a dispute, people usually push to get what*

*they want and they tend to forget about what they have in common.*

*However, when we find our common interests with others we can create win-win solutions, solutions where the outcomes are good for everyone.*

*Here's an example:*

*A girl complains that her father is making her life difficult because he wants her to come home directly after school. She would rather to go to the youth center with her friends. She says that she must have the chance to make her own decisions without her father.*

*Her father says that she should be home right after school to do chores around the house and help cook dinner. He says that she is being selfish and that a daughter should obey her father.*

*The girl and her father are now in a situation where they are pushing against each other. They are in conflict and unless something changes, one will win and the other will lose.*

*In this example, the girl has taken the position that she should be able to make her own decisions. The father has taken the position that his daughter should do what he says. The position for each of them is different. It's what they think must happen.*

*If the girl and her father can talk about what they really care about most – instead of what they think must happen they might find a solution that is good for both of them. For example, maybe the girl can go to the youth club two days a week instead of four. Or perhaps she can do some household chores before school and have some time for herself after school.*

- Ask learners for real life examples of situations where **Win/Win negotiation** brings a positive result
- Have the class offer up advantages and disadvantages of the win/win compromise option

**Steps of Negotiation<sup>16</sup>**

*So, how do we actually come to a win-win agreement? There are 6 specific steps that we will spend the rest of today exploring.*

- Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 8, Activity B Steps of Negotiation Read Aloud and take turns reading the paragraphs below:

*Steps to Win-Win Negotiation*

- 1. Set the stage. Agree to try to work together to find a solution peacefully, and establish ground rules (e.g., no name-calling, blaming, yelling, or interrupting).*
- 2. Gather perspectives. Each person describes the dispute from his or her perspective, without interruption. Use active listening skills and try to put yourself in the other person's shoes, to understand their perspective. Consider not only what the other persons say they want something, but why they want what they want.*

*For example, if someone insists that you pay for something they believe you broke, they may be doing so not because they really care about the object or the money, but because they feel that you don't respect them. Addressing the other person's need to feel respected may be key to resolving the conflict.*

- 3. Find common interests. Establish which facts and issues all participants agree on and determine why different issues are important to each person. Identify common interests, which can be as simple as a mutual desire to resolve the problem without resorting to violence or a shared need to save face.*
- 4. Create options. Take time for both parties to collectively brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. Come up with a list of options without immediately judging them or feeling committed to them. Try to think of solutions where both people*

**10 minutes**

*gain something-think win- win! Too often we assume that for one person to win, the other person has to lose. In reality, it is often possible to think creatively and come up with a solution that both people feel good about.*

- 5. Evaluate and select an option. After a number of options are suggested, both parties discuss with each*
- 6. Create an agreement. Explicitly state thee decided on agreement -- you may even want to write it down. If necessary, set up a time to check back to see how the agreement is working.*

**Applying the steps of Negotiation<sup>17</sup>**

*Now that we've read the steps let's practice using them so they make sense.*

*I'd like you to think of some everyday conflicts or disputes.*

*Please help me think of some issues that people in our group today might have different opinions about. I'll make a list on the flip chart/board.*

- Note: Be prepared to offer some suggestions. If participants are having trouble generating ideas, here are some suggestions that might produce conflicting opinions in your group. Be culturally sensitive about which you decide to suggest or use:

*Students should always do their homework before meeting their friends.*

*Youth should do what their parents tell them to do.*

*Once you are married you should not divorce.*

*The wife, not the husband, should be the one to stay at home with a baby all day.*

*Let's begin with the first topic.*

**15 minutes**

<sup>16</sup> Steps are from SafeYouth.org

<sup>17</sup> Adapted from Peace Corps Life Skills Leadership Manual

*Some of you probably agree with the first position and others of you probably don't. I would like you to move to the left side of the room if you agree with the position in the first topic. Move to the right if you disagree with that topic.*

- Allow a moment for people to choose and move. Hopefully the two sides are about equal in number so people can make a pair or group of three with people from both sides in it.
- A group of four with a 3:1 ratio is about the greatest difference between sides of an issue that you should attempt. If there are only a few participants on one side of the issue, choose a different issue.
- Divide participants into groups of 2-3 with people from both sides of the issue in each. Say:

*In your small group, have a conversation about the issue. Do not try to convince anyone to change her or his mind or to agree with your point of view.*

*Instead, ask the people who have a view opposite yours to explain what their interests are.*

*Use your active listening skills that we learned earlier, and try to hear what they really cares about. Once they are done sharing, it is your turn to express your own interests/wants.*

*I'll give you about three minutes.*

- When the time is up, ask participants from one point of view to restate the interests of the opposing point of view. Invite people from the opposite point of view to do likewise. Ask:

*What ideas were new to you?*

*What surprised you about the interests of the other group?*

*What new solutions are suggested by what you heard from someone with a different opinion from you*

**10 minutes**

- Repeat the above steps with 1 or 2 more issues, depending upon time.
- Conclude the activity by saying:  
*As you can see, the more you care about an issue, the more difficult it becomes to ask about and listen to the interests of other people. But, when you can hear the interests that are important to other people, you might be able to get past positions and discover solutions you didn't expect.*

**Role Play**

- Go over the instructions for the role play activity:
- Put students into small groups to create a role play that highlights using all 6 steps of negotiation
  - Ask the group to be sure to use all 6 steps to come up with a win/win solution
  - Have them refer to Lesson 8, Activity B Read Aloud (from above) to remind them what the steps are
  - While groups are working, walk around the room to offer guidance and ideas for how they can role-play their negotiation.
  - Ask for volunteers to present their role-play to the whole group. When they are finished, ask the group to identify the 6 steps in the negotiation process.
  - If any steps appear to be missing, work with the group to add or strengthen those steps.
  - If time allows, continue with each role play until every group has had a chance to perform.

**20 minutes**

**Ending**

- Indicate the 2 Home Exercises for next week: 1. Detail how your role-play group did the following at the end of the last class. If your group did not have time to finish the activity, work through the steps on your own before the next class; 2. applying elements of the 6 steps to a current or recent real life dispute/conflict
- Request that 3-4 students to volunteer 1 important thing they learned during this lesson
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**

Create a Poster or write the following on a flipchart/chalkboard in preparation for Lesson 8 on Handling Disputes:

Options for dealing with conflict/disputes:

- **Avoid conflict**—Simply withdraw from any conflict.
- **Smooth it over**—Pretend there's no conflict and everything is okay.
- **Win at all costs**—Get what you want; the other person loses.
- **Compromise**—Give up something you want to get something else you want.
- **Win/win negotiation**—Use creative problem solving to give both people what they want or need.

## LESSON 9: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

# SESSION 9: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

*Learners will:*

- Compare what they want versus others expectations
- Explore their level of independence versus support from their parents
- Practice finding a balance between priorities and demands

### Materials to run this session:

- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic "<b>Managing Relationships</b>"</p> <p>Briefly refer to the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	<b>5 minutes</b>

### Homework review

- Check in and review the 2 home exercise tasks
- Review all homework assignments and allow students to each take a turn offering up a sample response to a few of the homework questions

**10 minutes**

### Your wants and needs vs. others expectations of you

*Relationships are incredibly important in our lives. Without them, we feel alone and isolated; we have no one to share our pain or our successes with. As we have learned, along with the benefits of relationships there is maintenance, and, as well spoke about last week, disputes from time to time.*

**25 minutes**

*As someone transitions from adolescence to young adulthood it is sometimes a time of increased disputes, as you begin to become aware of and separate your own personal wants and needs versus what your family, friends and society wants from you. This can range from everything from career choice, to if and when you get married, to how you dress or style your hair.*

*What are some things that you might not see eye to eye with your family or society on?*

- Take student responses and put key words on board/flip chart
- Reinforce that it is not easy to make choices that our parents or friends may not agree with -- but that everyone must go through this separation sooner or later if they want to live a life that they find personally fulfilling and satisfying
- Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 9, Activity A: What I want vs. What others expect from me
- Guide students through completing this table, step by step:
- First, have them take 10 deep breaths to get connected to their wants and needs. Then say:

*Complete the first column of the chart below "What I **truly** want in this area. **Before completing this, suspend all belief in what others want for you, and only think about yourself.** Imagine if you could do anything – and no one expected you do to anything other than exactly what you want.*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students at least 5 minutes to do this. They do not need to share it with anyone.</li> </ul> <p><i>Now, complete the second column. This may be very different from how you completed the first column – and that's okay. Write what your parent(s) or family has implicitly or explicitly told you that they expect from you in each area.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students at least 5 minutes to do this. They do not need to share it with anyone.</li> </ul> <p><i>Now, complete the third column. Write what society has traditionally expects from people your age, gender and socioeconomic status. Many times messages are delivered subtly through the media, television and advertising.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give students at least 5 minutes to do this. They do not need to share it with anyone.</li> </ul> <p><i>The point of this exercise is to distinguish what you want vs. what others want from you. Sometimes it is hard to separate these factors, since sometimes there are such demands and pressure to be or act a certain way.</i></p> <p><i>Keep these differences in mind, as we go through the next few lessons.</i></p>	
<p><b>Balancing Independence and Support<sup>18</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Does anyone know what independence is?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses</li> <li>• Write key phrases on the flipchart/board</li> <li>• Recap/define independence by saying:</li> </ul> <p><i>Independence for youth means establishing your own identity and becoming a separate individual from your family – no matter how good your relationship may be. This is actually a normal and important part of the “work” of transitioning from teenager to young adult.</i></p> <p><i>What are some choices we should learn to make on our own, as part of becoming independent from our parent(s)</i></p>	<p><b>25 minutes</b></p>

<sup>18</sup> Adapted from: Eich, Jean. Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A Practical Workbook for Therapists, Teens & Parents. PESI Publishing & Media.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses. Some ideas may include:</li> <li>• What to wear each day</li> <li>• When to get a haircut/visit a hair stylist</li> <li>• When to do homework</li> <li>• Whom to invite to a party</li> <li>• How to arrange one's possessions</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Role Play</b></p>	<p><i>Regardless of society's or parent's opinions, it's completely normal for adolescents/youth/young adults to want independence.</i></p> <p><i>With independence, you can do things and go places on your own.</i></p> <p><i>You may also want privacy and not want to talk to your parent(s) about your thoughts or feelings.</i></p> <p><i>Independence is helpful because you learn to do new things and start figuring out who you are away from your parents.</i></p> <p><i>Early on, having too much independence can create problems, because without rules and limits, you could get into trouble.</i></p> <p><i>Too much independence can also cause you to feel alone and unsupported. Your independence can be difficult and scary for your parents.</i></p> <p><i>Some parents are used to being supportive and making decisions for you – at times completely disregarding your personal opinions and interests. These parents may want to be involved in your decisions, even when you are an adult.</i></p> <p><i>Other parents notice your abilities to do things on your own and give you too much independence. These parents may have adult-like expectations of you – which can be difficult in adolescence.</i></p> <p><i>How do you define support?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses</li> <li>• Write key phrases on the flipchart/board</li> <li>• Recap/define support by saying:</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 minutes</b></p>



*Independence Although for adolescents/youth/young adults want more independence, your parents' support is also needed.*

*Support is helpful because you know someone is looking out for you, and having parental guidance about some things can make life less overwhelming.*

*Support can also mean having limits and boundaries so that you don't take on more than you are ready for.*

*Having too much support can be a problem. Too much support can be crippling - and stop you from having to struggle and learn things on your own.*

*If you don't have some freedom, you won't be able to learn from your mistakes and gain new skills.*

*Too much support might also prevent you from figuring out who you are as a person.*

*Parents might give you too much support because they are afraid of you making mistakes - this is completely normal and natural, however it's not ideal for your personal development.*

*Parents may not give you enough support because they are busy with other things or because they think you can handle more than you are ready for.*

*Although it is difficult to find the perfect balance between Independence and Support, when you have Balance between the 2, you are able to try new things, have some freedom to make your own choices and have support with and limits on what you take on yourself.*

*When you have both independence and support, you are working together with your parents. This will help you and them feel more comfortable and allow you to get what you need.*

**Balancing Priorities and Demands<sup>19</sup>**

- Direct students to open their workbooks to Lesson 9, Activity B: Independence and Support  
*Complete this activity on your own to figure out how you and your parents can achieve a balance between independence and support.*

*While relationships are rewarding, as you may have noticed in the first activity we did today, there can be a big gap between what we want, what our parents want for us and society's expectations.*

*Another way that relationships can cause us stress is striking a balance between our own personal priorities and other people's demands.*

*Does anyone know what a priority is?*

- Take student responses
- Write key phrases on the flipchart/board
- Recap/define priorities by saying:

*Priorities are things that are important to you and on which you want to spend your time.*

*Priorities help you develop hobbies, interests and your own sense of self. For example, it's important to Ilgar to play video games to unwind after university.*

*If your time is only spent on your priorities, others may feel angry, neglected or unimportant, and this could strain your relationships.*

*For example, if Ilgar ignores his mom's requests for him to do his chores and instead spends all his time on video games, his mom will probably get angry, and this could lead to fights.*

*Does anyone know what a demand is?*

- Take student responses
- Write key phrases on the flipchart/board
- Recap/define demands by saying:

**20 minutes**

<sup>19</sup> Eich, Jean. Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training with Adolescents: A Practical Workbook for Therapists, Teens Parents. PESI Publishing & Media.

# LESSON 10: CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION

*Demands are things that are important to others and are what they want you to spend your time on. Demands are a natural part of relationships. Other people have expectations of you and your time.*

*For example, it's important to Ilgar's mom that Ilgar gets his chores done. If your time is only spent on demands, you may feel overwhelmed and stressed and will likely become resentful of others.*

*For example, if Ilgar spends all his time on chores and does not take a break to play video games to unwind, he will probably feel burned out and overwhelmed, and this could also lead to fights with his mom.*

*What we aim for is balance between our priorities and other's demands on our time*

- Please emphasize to participants that these demands are not in regards to the last activities such as what one should choose for a career, whether to get married etc - these demands are more the daily tasks of what needs to get done - and are an unavoidable normal part of life.

*Finding a balance between priorities and demands is really important. With this balance, you and others will get what you need in the relationship.*

*For example, if Ilgar spends some of his time on video games and some of his time on chores, both he and his mom will get what they need and will be less likely to get into fights.*

- Direct students to Lesson 9, Activity B: Priorities and Demands
- Have them complete this independently and indicate that their homework will build on the last 2 activities in their workbooks

**Ending**

- Indicate the 2 home exercises in their notebooks that will build on the activities completed today
- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**

# SESSION 10: CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

*Students will learn:*

- The 3 communication styles
- How to be a confident communicator using a 3 step "I-statement"
- Why one must take responsibility and apologize -- whether we hurt someone intentionally or not
- The 5 steps of forgiveness

### Materials to run this session:

- Facilitator will prepare in advance a poster (or a flip chart) with the 3-steps of confident communication clearly written (see graphic following this lesson plan)
- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic "<b>Confident Communication</b>"</p> <p>Briefly refer to the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> <li>• Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</li> </ul>	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in and review of the former lesson's 2 home exercise tasks</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Three communication styles<sup>20</sup></b>	<p><i>There are 3 general communication styles that most people have. Sometimes we have different styles in different settings, and with different people. Other times we have a combination of communication styles.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to workbook, Lesson 10, Activity A</li> <li>• Divide the entire group into 3 groups total</li> <li>• Assign each group one of the following: assertive, passive and aggressive communication styles</li> <li>• Tell each group to read and discuss their assigned communication style, and prepare to present that specific communication style to the whole group</li> <li>• Learners can present as an entire group, or they can elect one person to speak for the group - or they can present a role play to illustrate their specific communication style (role play is also a fun choice for groups)</li> <li>• After 5-10 minutes of preparation have each group spend 3-5 minutes presenting</li> <li>• Ask the class:</li> </ul> <p><i>Raise your hand if you think you are usually an assertive communicator?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pause and wait - write the number on the flip chart/board</li> </ul> <p><i>A passive communicator?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pause and wait - write the number on the flip chart/board</li> </ul>	<b>30 minutes</b>

<sup>20</sup> Adapted from:  
<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=243&np=291&id=2174#1>

- Pause and wait – write the number on the flip chart/board

*Guess which communication style is the healthiest and the style we will talk most about today?*

- (The answer is assertive communication style)

*Assertiveness is hard to do! It takes time, patience and bravery. It doesn't "just happen" – you are usually not taught to assertively communicate. You have to work at it. There are 2 important things you need before you do anything:*

- You need to choose to be assertive
- You need a willingness to learn about, try and do new things

*For most people, confident assertive communication is difficult. Maybe when you were a child, people told you not to talk too much. Or perhaps you're afraid that you'll be judged or be rejected by others if you communicate directly about what you need.*

*Unfortunately, many people communicate indirectly. But when you communicate indirectly about your thoughts, feelings, and desires, you have to rely on others to pick up on your hints. Most people are not perceptive enough to read your mind. Therefore, it is a better idea to communicate assertively -- even when it is difficult.*

**Confident Communication**

*Now we will, clearly outline how to communicate with confidence.*

*When we express our feelings or wants we many unintentionally cause the other person to feel attacked if we focus on their behavior or what they did wrong.*

*Fortunately, there is something called "I - statements."*

*Beginning a statement with the words, "I think, I feel, I want. Using an I-statement when expressing your opinion, wants and needs is not selfish. It is a non-confrontational way to*

**25 minutes**

*take responsibility for your needs and feelings. When you use "I statements, other people are less likely to feel judged, attacked or criticized.*

*There are three "I" statements in a confident statement:*

- Bring out the poster or flipchart where you prepared the following, and read to the class
- Point to each part as you go:  
*Your perspective on the situation ("I think...")*  
*Your feelings about the situation ("I feel...")*  
*Your wishes regarding the situation ("I want...")*

*Here are some examples of how to incorporate all 3 parts into an assertive statement:*

*Say you have a friend who dominates conversations, frequently rambling on about details about arguments with her boyfriend. She rarely asks you any questions or discusses what's on your mind. Occasionally, she will ask you about men you are romantically interested in – but nothing else.*

*You could say, "We spend a lot of time talking about your relationship. I'm tired of only hearing about your problems and not having the opportunity to talk about me. I feel like I'm not interesting enough. And I wish we could talk about more than just guys we're interested in. I'd like us to talk about other things we have in common."*

*Another example is, say your parents argue a lot and home s tense. Now you have a fight with your sibling – who you normally get along with. You don't want to stay angry, you want everyone to move on and treat each other better. You could say to your sibling:*

*"Our family's been fighting a lot lately. I haven't been happy coming home because the environment is so hostile. I wish we could all be more sensitive to each other's feelings and act kindly. Our family life is difficult as it is. I hope we can sit down and talk about this."*

	<p><b>Don't use blaming or attacking language. When you describe the situation, state the facts—what happened or what was done—without adding judgments.</b></p> <p><b>Don't make accusations that will put the other person on the defensive. Remember, the goal is to create an open and constructive dialogue. Be specific when you state what you want. This will help ensure you aren't misunderstood.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to their workbook, Lesson 10, Activity B</li> <li>• Have students work through each with a partner (you may assign a partner or let them pick the person next to them)</li> <li>• Walk around to make sure that students are working on the activity</li> <li>• If there is time, 4 student pairs can volunteer to share their 3 step statement to the whole class</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Apologizing and Forgiveness</b></p>	<p><i>Another part of confident communication is taking responsibility for your actions, when necessary.</i></p> <p><i>Which brings us to Apologizing: we all make mistakes or forget to do things we promised to do. No one is perfect and sometimes our emotions get the best of us. Apologizing is an essential step in taking responsibility for your actions. Learning how and when to apologize can go a long way in getting along with others in the work place, university, and social relationships.</i></p> <p><i>You've probably had to apologize in 1 way or another many times. Apologies come in all sizes, big and small. You might apologize to someone at the store if you bump into them by saying a quick, "sorry" or "excuse me." You might need to make a bigger apology if you hurt someone's feelings.</i></p> <p><i>"I am sorry" is one of the most complicated things we must say to one another. Depending on how the apology is said, your words can sound sympathetic, since, sarcastic, fake or mean. When making an apology, your tone</i></p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>

	<p><i>of voice matters a lot, as does your body language.</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, there is Forgiveness: It is also important that we understand that others also make mistakes, and so we need to forgive others when they apologize. Throughout life, you will ask others to forgive you, and likewise, you will be asked to forgive others.</i></p> <p><i>"Holding grudges" and staying angry even after someone has apologized will not help you in life. It will instead, keep your focus on hurt and anger. It is in your best interest to forgive and move on.</i></p> <p><i>This does not mean that you will let people repeatedly hurt you - or that you approve of their bad behavior. Instead, it means that you have made a conscious decision to let go of anger - but it does not mean that you are oblivious to someone's ability to hurt you.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to their workbooks: Lesson 10, Activity C: Apologizing and Forgiveness</li> <li>• Have students get into small groups of 2-3 students to brainstorm effective ways to apologize using verbal and nonverbal communication</li> <li>• Have the group complete the Activity C form regarding how they would verbally and nonverbally express both - and how both would make them feel</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Homework review</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate the 3 home exercises due for the next class. One of the home exercises is just a reading</li> <li>• Ask 3-4 volunteers to name 1 thing they learned in the session</li> <li>• Thank learners for their participation</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>

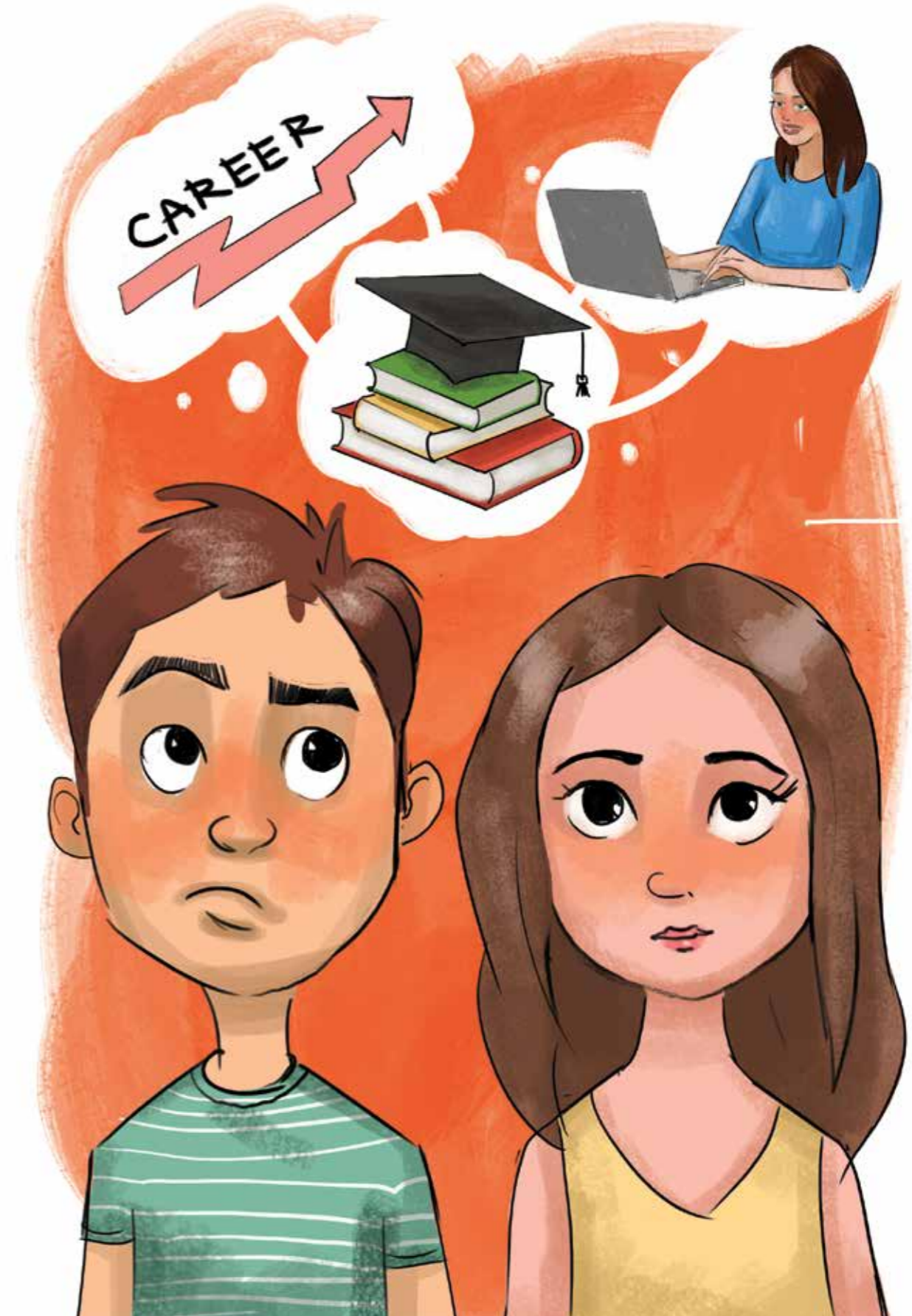
## PREPARATION FOR FACILITATOR:

Before class, make a poster of the following, or write the following on a flip chart/ chalkboard - it will be used in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the new materials

### The Three Steps of Confident Communication:

1. **Your perspective on the situation:**  
“I think...”
2. **Your feelings about the situation:**  
“I feel...”
3. **Your wishes regarding the situation:**  
“I want...”

## PART 3: THINKING SKILLS



# LESSON 11: GOAL SETTING

## SESSION 11: GOAL SETTING

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will:*

- Become aware of what they may need to “give up” to achieve a dream
- Learn how to define a goal using a method called “SMART”
- Practice using SMART in hypothetical situations
- Will apply SMART to setting their own personal goals

**Materials to run this session:**

- Print out or make a poster of the handout in students workbooks: Lesson 11, Activity B: SMART Goals (refer to the handout after this lesson plan)
- White board/flip chart/chalkboard with pens/markers/chalk
- Name of various emotions on paper
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	Welcome students to the group and today’s topic <b>“Goal Setting”</b>  Go over the group’s ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> Questions are welcome during the session	<b>5 minutes</b>

	but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Home Exercise Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check in and review of the 2 home exercise tasks</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>What are your dreams and goals?</b>	<p><i>Sometimes when we describe what we want for ourselves, we do not consider what we might need to “give up” to get it. This exercise is intended for you each to begin thinking about just that.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 11, Activity A</li> <li>Indicate that they will complete the chart by thinking about: Something they want to accomplish in the next month, the next year, and in five years</li> <li>Along with that they will write something they need to give up for each</li> <li>They do not have to share what they write</li> </ul> <p><i>When I say “give up” we mean something like time, a way of viewing the world, staying comfortable, sometimes it means money, a relationship, sleeping in late, going out at night with your friends, playing video games for hours on end, a belief about yourself, etc. It could be anything tangible or intangible.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give students 5-10 minutes to do this</li> <li>They do not have to share – this activity is simply to get them to think about how to attain what one wants (the objective of this lesson)</li> </ul>	<b>15 minutes</b>
<b>Effective Goal Setting<sup>21</sup></b>	<p><i>Sometimes when we describe what we want – we also do not offer up enough detail. We may have just a vague or a general view, such as “a lot of money,” “a great husband,” or “happiness.”</i></p> <p><i>To ever reach that goal, we will need to be more specific and detailed.</i></p> <p><i>By focusing our attention on specific parts, we can begin to see important connections, as well as the relationships between different</i></p>	<b>15 minutes</b>

<sup>21</sup> Adapted from: Baruch-Feldman, Caren. The Grit Guide for Teens: A Workbook to Help You Build Perseverance, Self-Control, and a Growth Mindset. New Harbinger Publications.

	<p><i>parts. We will begin to know what we need to do to achieve a goal. Without a sort of “road map” we will simply be relying on luck to get what we want – which does not make reaching our goal a probable prospect.</i></p> <p><i>Setting detailed goal is a very important life skill.</i></p> <p><i>Today will practice being more specific about your dreams by looking closely at all the details and defining a goal very in a methodical way.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write “I want to study at a university” on a flip chart or chalkboard and say: <i>Look at the goal written here, and tell me what you think.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Is ‘I want to study at a university’ a good goal? (Pause for a few reactions.)</i></p> <p><i>This is fine for a dream but it doesn’t give any ideas about how to make it happen. A goal that is written well can tell you how and when the thing you want is likely to be achieved.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write “I will study agriculture at Mingachevir State University for at least 2 years by the time I am 22.”</li> </ul> <p><i>Here’s another version of the same goal written below the first.</i></p> <p><i>What makes ‘I will study agriculture at Mingachevir State University for at least two years by the time I am 22,’ a better goal?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible answers include: It tells what the person will study. It tells where the person will study. It tells how long the person will study. It tells when the person will go to the University.</li> <li>Divide participants into groups of three to five.</li> <li>Write on the board or flip chart: “Example 2a) I want a good paying job”</li> <li>Next, write: “Example 2b) I will be hired for a job that pays at least \$\$\$/hour at one of the factories in the region by this time next year.”</li> <li>Have student groups each spend 5 minutes</li> </ul>
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<p><b>What are your dreams and goals?</b></p>	<p>talking about what makes the second version of the goal (I will be hired for a job that pays at least \$\$/hour at one of the factories in the city by this time next year) better than the first (I want a good paying job). Invite different groups to share one reason they think the second goal is better.</p> <p><i>In both examples, the second version of the goal is better. Both of these versions are better because they have several things in common. They are ...</i></p> <p><i>Specific – They say exactly what will happen (study agriculture; be hired for a job).</i></p> <p><i>Measurable – They say how much of the thing will happen (for at least two years; at least \$\$/hour).</i></p> <p><i>Achievable – They help the person think big, make a stretch, and become inspired while still being possible.</i></p> <p><i>Realistic – They are meaningful to the person who wrote them.</i></p> <p><i>Time-bound – They say when they will be finished (by the time I am 22; by this time next year).</i></p> <p><i>Take the first letter of each of these features and you have the word ‘SMART.’ If you can make all your goals SMART, you will become much clearer about how to reach those goals.</i></p>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>Setting Effective Goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to turn to the page in their workbook to Lesson 11, Activity B: SMART Goals</li> <li>• Review it with participants (refer to the facilitator handout after this lesson and/or refer to the poster you made to illustrate SMART). Alter the examples as needed to meet the interests/age group/regional issues where you work.</li> </ul>	<p><b>10 minutes</b></p>
<p><b>Practice Setting SMART Goals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct participants’ attention to Refer students to Lesson 11, Activity B</li> </ul>	<p><b>30 minutes</b></p>

	<p><i>On the bottom half of this page you can see several goals that are not SMART. Working with the others in your group (same group as earlier), I’d like you to rewrite them so they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer students to Lesson 11, Activity C</li> <li>• Pair them up with a partner for this activity</li> </ul> <p><i>Say: “You can use this handout to write SMART goals for each of the poorly written goals. Use the starting sentences so that you make the goals specific, measurable, and time-bound. Put a mark in the boxes next to achievable and realistic when you think you have achieved those elements, too.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give groups about 10-15 minutes to work</li> <li>• Ask each to share one of the goals it rewrote.</li> <li>• Use the following questions to continue the discussion: <i>Of the goals you rewrote, which were the most difficult and why?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Which aspect of writing SMART goals do you still have questions about?</i></p> <p><i>What are the advantages of writing SMART goals?</i></p> <p><i>Of the five parts of SMART goals, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, which do you think is most important? Why?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State: <i>By making our goals SMART, we can add enough detail to a dream so we can begin to know how and when we can reach it.</i></li> <li>• Indicate that students will work individually on the next activity</li> <li>• Refer students to Lesson 11, Activity D in their workbooks and practice setting 2 of their own personal SMART Goals</li> <li>• They will not need to share the specifics of their goals, unless they want to</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Ending</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate the 3 home exercises; emphasize that</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**Facilitator: Please read this aloud during activity B (students will follow along in their workbooks) or create a poster with the following examples – and bring to class to refer to as you review.**

**Go through each column, Example 1: SMART, Example 2: SMART, Example 3: SMART**

**NOTE: You may tailor the examples to match the interests and ages of the students you are working with**

#### LESSON 11, ACTIVITY B: SMART GOALS MAKE YOUR GOALS SMART<sup>22</sup>

		Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
S	Specific – what will happen?	Improve my English writing skills	Weave a new blanket	Become an internet expert
M	Measureable – How much will happen?	Earn 10 more points on the English exam	Weave it by myself	Take computer lessons 2 times per week
A	Achievable – ambitious but possible.	So I can travel abroad	So I can have my own business	So I can get a job as a technology specialist
R	Realistic – important to you.	I like speaking other languages	I want to work for myself	I enjoy using the computer
T	Time-bound – When will the goal be finished?	By the end of this term/ semester	Within 2 months	By next year

<sup>22</sup> This handout adapted from a sample in the Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

# LESSON 12: DECISION MAKING

## SESSION 12: DECISION MAKING

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will learn:*

- The difference between making a decision based on your heart, head, social influences, and goals
- A decision making process called PAUSE
- How to apply the PAUSE decision making steps to hypothetical and real-life situations

**Materials to run this session:**

- Facilitator will need to arrange seating in various ways (see instructions of lesson), which requires stones, and signs that indicate, “do not sit here,” “reserved” etc.
- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NOTE: Today’s lesson will begin differently than most sessions. You will begin with an experiment when participants walk in the door. You will discuss home exercise review after.</li> <li>• Before participants arrive, set up the learning space with some special chairs and the objects below. (If you do not have chairs, place the objects on the cushions or in those places people would typically sit.)</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

<sup>23</sup> Parts of this section adapted from: Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

**What are your dreams and goals?**

- A chair with stones on the seat
- A chair positioned at the front or focus point of the learning space
- A chair with a sign that says "Reserved," "Do Not Sit Here," or "Save this Chair"
- A chair facing a corner or at the edge and facing outside the learning space

**15 minutes**

- Allow participants to enter and sit down as they usually do.
- Point out how regularly we make decisions, sometimes without giving it much thought. Say:

*We make countless decisions every day, from what to eat to what to wear, and which friends to spend time with. Making decisions is so much a part of our daily lives that, most of the time we don't even realize we have decided on something.*

*In fact, I can imagine that most of you made some decisions as soon as you walked into the room and you weren't even aware that you did. For example, here's a chair with some rocks on it. Why didn't anyone sit here?*

- Possible response: It looks uncomfortable or dirty.

*There are logical reasons that no one would want to sit in a chair with rocks on it.*

*Why didn't anyone want to sit in the chair that's right up front?*

- Possible response: I don't want to have everyone looking at me.

*Being right up at the focus of attention might make someone feel uncomfortable so there are emotional reasons for choosing not to sit here.*

*This other chair has a reserved sign on it. Why wouldn't people typically sit there?*

- Possible response: It's being saved for someone else.

*Yes, people tend to respect the social rules so this chair represents the social factors involved in making choices.*

*Lastly, there is a chair facing into a corner that no one chose (or if they did, they probably turned it to face the right direction). Why didn't any of you sit there?*

- Possible response: I wanted to see what was going on. I wanted to be a part of the class - I could not do that if the chair was turned away.

*If you are coming to a class, you probably want to see and participate so this would be a bad choice. It's an illustration of the way we make choices that are in line with our goals, our purpose, and our hopes for the future.*

*So these are the starting points for many of our decisions - DECISION MAKING is our topic today! Some decisions we make using logic -- others with our emotion - sometimes we base a decision on social rules -- and other times our decision is made because we want to achieve a goal or we have an expectation.*

**Ground Rules and Home Exercise Check In**

Quickly reference the group rules on the poster board:

- Use respectful communication and behavior
- The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance
- Listen to each other
- Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to
- Be supportive of one another
- Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential
- No verbal abuse or violence

**10 minutes**

Check in and review last week's homework

- Note: It is fine and expected that students may not have answered all questions correctly. This time is for "safe" learning where children can make mistakes without any judgment. Remind them that these skills are skills for life - and they take time and practice

**Decision Making**

*Sometimes it's difficult to know what the best decision is in a situation. We can easily become confused when there are many*

**20 minutes**

## What are your dreams and goals?

*factors to consider. Today we are going to learn a system for making decisions. We will also practice making decisions so you can be more confident about your own choices in the future.*

- Have prepared on a flip chart or chalk board a drawing of a drawing of a stick figure person with parts labeled (see image following this lesson plan)
- Direct students to turn the page in their workbooks to: Lesson 12, Activity A: PAUSE for Better Decisions

- On the figure you prepared, point to the head and say:

*To remember the logical, thinking aspect of making decisions, picture your head. That's where your thinking begins.*

*Ask yourself questions like these:*

*Is it right?*

*Does it make sense?*

*What does my experience tell me about this?*

*How much does it cost?*

*Is it safe?*

- On the figure you drew point to the heart and say:

*To remember the emotional aspect of making decisions, picture your heart. That's the center of your feelings.*

*Ask yourself:*

*How do I feel about it?*

*Do I have pains in my stomach when I think about this decision?*

*What are my instincts telling me?*

- On the figure you drew point to the hands and say:

*To remember the social aspect of making decisions, visualize your hands. We use our hands to greet other people or to help them out.*

*So before you make a decision, think about ...*

*Who might help you with advice?*

*Who might be affected by your decision?*

*What do other people expect?*

*Who will approve or disapprove?*

- On the figure you drew point to the wings

**15  
minutes**

(or thoughts cloud) and say:

*To remember the role our goals fit in making decisions, think about your hopes for the future. In this flip chart, I've drawn some wings (or a cloud bubble) to represent the dreams and hopes for a better life. GOALS*

*When making a decision, ask yourself ...*

*How will it affect me in the long term?*

*Will it help me reach my goal?*

*Will it help me be a better person?*

*It's important to know which factors you are using to make a decision. For example, if you use only your head and ignore what your heart tells you, you may not be as happy in the end.*

- Listen to some examples that participants share. Say:

*It's obvious that every day each of you has used a variety of your head, heart, hands, and hope to make decisions. In some cases you used several, if not all, of these aspects of decision making. You might prefer one aspect more than another but, as we'll see, it's usually better to use more than 1 aspect to make our best decisions.*

- Introduce the 5-step process for making decisions. Say:

*Making good decisions during adolescence/youth/young adulthood can be tough. What seems like a good thing at first may not turn out as you expected. And sometimes, teenagers/youth/young adults don't even realize that they could have made a decision and avoided problems in the first place.*

*Part of the difficulty is that, during adolescence and young adulthood, our brains work differently than when we are fully matured adults.*

*With so many changes in our development, our environment going on at once, making decisions can become very complicated.*

*Fortunately, young people can learn to make better decisions even while their brains are undergoing this incredible growth. Today you will learn some simple steps that will improve your decisions and lead to better outcomes.*

*To start, it's usually better to take some time to think about decisions rather than rushing and deciding something quickly. You can avoid making a bad decision by slowing down. Here's a way to do that, which we will call 'PAUSE.'*

- Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 12, Activity B Read Aloud, and have students volunteer to read aloud each step, as follows:

*Each letter of the word 'PAUSE' stands for a step in the decision-making process:*

*P is for Pause - ask yourself: what is the decision that needs to be made/about? Sometimes we don't realize that there is a decision to be made. Slow down. It might be difficult to realize that we can take charge and be in control.*

*A is for Ask yourself - what are the options? List as many choices as possible. Try to notice those choices you can make and those where you have no control. That said, be creative and let your mind come up with inventive ideas.*

*U is for Understand the consequences. Try to guess what will happen as a result of each choice. This is a mental activity that may be difficult since we are not usually used to considering the consequences - however but you will get better at this with practice.*

*"S is for Select an option - use your Head, Heart, Hands, Hope. Check in with yourself on all levels; consider them all. How do the options fit logically, emotionally, socially, and in terms of your goals?"*

*E is for Evaluate the outcome. Make a plan to review your decision and make sure it's still what you want. Often we think a decision will be final; that there is no going back. Fortunately, most decisions can be changed and often, over time, new options present themselves as solutions that we had not seen before.*

- Divide participants into groups of 2-5.
- Direct students to refer to their workbooks, and Lesson 12, Activity C: Practice with PAUSE.

*Here's a chance for you to practice using PAUSE. Your group has several situations where someone needs to make a decision.*

*As a group, work through the steps of PAUSE. You can use a different sheet for each situation to keep notes. Later, I'll ask your group to describe your thinking about the situations you used for this activity.*

- Give the groups about 10 minutes to work, then ask each group to share highlights of their discussion about at least one situation.
- Invite other groups to make a short comment about the situations if they came to a different conclusion.

**Use PAUSE for a real-life decision<sup>24</sup>**

- Make sure that each student has a piece of paper to write on for this activity *I'd like to give you a chance to use the steps of PAUSE in a situation that's more specific to you. Please note that you will be sharing this with a partner, so only consider something you are not embarrassed to discuss.*

*Please take a moment to think of a situation from your own life when using PAUSE would be helpful.*

*This could be a decision that you made in the past that you'd like to review. It could be a decision that you will need to make in the near future. Or it could be a decision about a situation that happens to you a lot.*

*It doesn't have to be as dramatic as some of the examples we've already looked at. It could be as simple as choosing whether to go out with friends or to study for a test at school.*

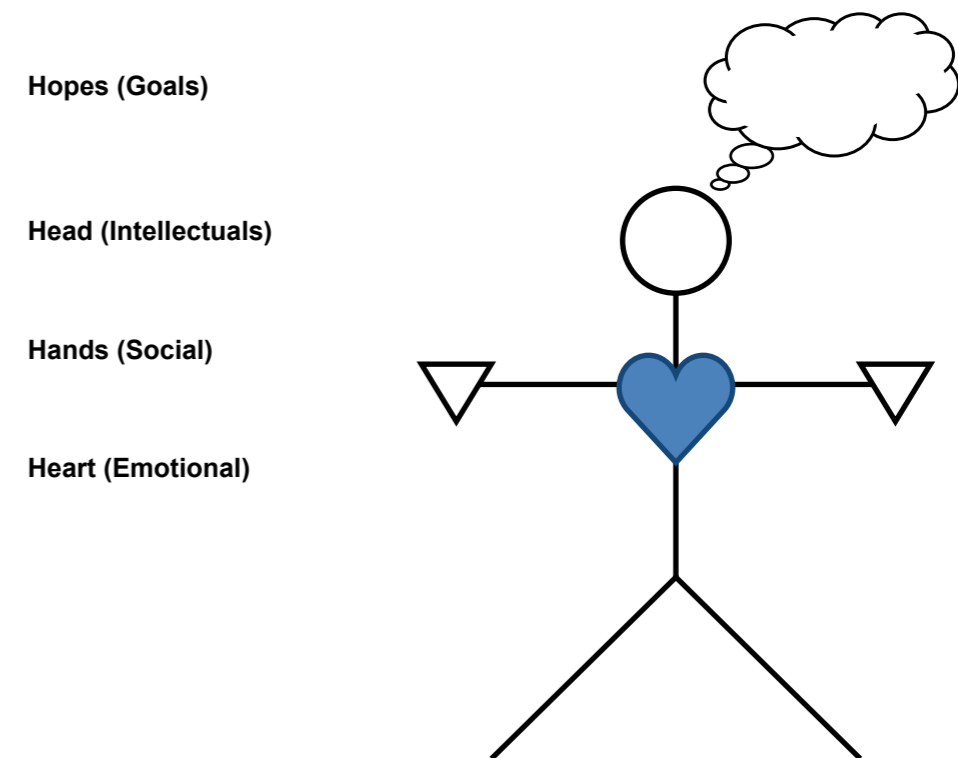
**20 minutes**

<sup>24</sup> Adapted from the Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

- Divide participants into groups of 2-5 and Have them turn to their workbooks: Lesson 12, Activity D: Real Life PAUSE for Better Decisions. Say:  
*On a separate piece of paper I would like you to write the decision (choice) you have to make at the top of the page.*
- When participants have all written something, ask them to exchange their papers within their own group so each participant has the paper of a different person. Say:  
*Look at the new paper you have. The next step of PAUSE is to Ask what all the options might be. Please look at your new paper and list at least three options that someone could do for the decision written at the top of the page*
- Allow a few moments so participants can respond. Then ask them to exchange their papers once again and say:  
*With this new paper, please read the decision and the options. Then complete the third step of PAUSE, Understand. Look at the possible choices and try to guess what will happen as a result. Take a few moments to write some ideas*
- This will take more time so allow three to five minutes for people to write ideas, then say:  
*Return the papers to their owners. When you get your own paper, read through everything and use the next step of PAUSE to Select an option.*  
  
*Then talk about your paper with the other members of your small group. You can use some of these questions:*  
  
*Which option did you choose and why?*  
*How helpful was it to get ideas about the steps in PAUSE from friends?*  
*Did you use your Head, Heart, Hands, or Hope in choosing from among the options?*  
*How and when will you review your decision?*
- After participants have had a chance for these conversations, you can follow up

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with a short discussion with the whole group using these questions: <i>What similarities are there among the situations for decision making chosen by the members of your group?</i> <i>How confident do you feel about using PAUSE in other situations?</i></li> <li> <i>PAUSE is not always easy to remember to do. Taking the time to do this kind of practice helps you become more familiar with each of the steps and more confident using them.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Ending</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicate the 2 home exercises for this lesson: Practice using PAUSE at home (to make a small, and medium to large decision)</li> <li>• Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session</li> <li>• Thank students for their participation</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

**Dear Facilitator, Draw this figure on a flip chart or chalkboard to assist in teaching the lesson on DECISION MAKING**



# LESSON 13: PROBLEM SOLVING

## SESSION 13: PROBLEM SOLVING

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will learn:*

- The 6 steps of problem solving
- To work in groups to solve a community issue, using the 6 problem solving steps
- Link problem solving to decision-making

**Materials to run this session:**

- Facilitator preparation: Facilitator will need to cut the 6 steps of problem solving (can be found following this lesson plan) and make as many copies of each step as needed (see lesson)
- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	Welcome students to the group and today's topic <b>"GROUP Problem Solving"</b>  Briefly refer to the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns - give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential make this more explicit</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check in and review last week's 2 home exercises</li> <li>Allow students to each take a turn to share how they did with using PAUSE at home</li> <li>It is fine and expected that students may not have questions and challenges with PAUSE. This time is for "safe" learning when youth can make mistakes without any judgment.</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>The Elephant Story</b>	<p>Tell this story: <b>VISUALLY IMPAIRED</b>  <i>An elephant wandered into a village. Six blind men walking together came upon the elephant. For each, it was his first experience with such an animal.</i></p> <p><i>The first blind man walked into the elephant's side and said, 'The elephant is like a big wall.'</i></p> <p><i>Another man's hands fell upon the tail and declared, 'The elephant is like a rope.'</i></p> <p><i>A third blind man encountered the elephant's foot and said, 'You are both wrong. The elephant is like a big tree trunk.'</i></p> <p><i>The fourth felt the elephant's ear and said, 'The elephant is like a fan.'</i></p> <p><i>The fifth blind man got poked by the end of the elephant's tusk and said, 'You all don't know what you are talking about! The elephant is like a spear.'</i></p> <p><i>No,' said the sixth blind man, who had taken hold of the moving trunk and said, 'The elephant is like a snake!'</i></p> <p><i>The men stood by the elephant, arguing over who was right until another villager with sight came by and said that each was right, but all were wrong.</i></p>	<b>15 minutes</b>

	<p><i>They were wrong because they believed only what they experienced about the elephant and refused to consider what others felt or experienced.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAKE THE LINK MORE TO PRPBLEM SOLVING MORE OBVIOUS</li> <li>Facilitate a discussion, connecting how the story relates to skills participants have learned so far in the Basic Life Skills course, including perspective taking, conflict resolution, empathy and, today's topic: problem solving.</li> <li>Ask all or several of the following questions:                      What lesson do you get from this story?   <i>How is this story like a situation in your life - a situation where you might see something different than someone else?</i>   <i>How can different points of view actually make decision making or solving a problem easier --or result in a better solution?</i></li> </ul> <p>They did an example on the board - one saying problem, the other saying solution - using the elephant story</p> <p>Sum up with: <i>We each have our own stories, our own perspectives. If we are to work, live, and play together, we need to find ways to respect each other's points of views. Also, we can learn from each other and get a fuller picture of possibilities when we include others' perspectives - like the blind men.</i>  <b>THIS STORY IS A METAPHOR</b></p> <p><b>ALSO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT THERE IS NOT 1 WAY - THERE ARE MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS TO EVERY PROBLEM</b></p> <p><b>THEY DID AN EXAMPLE WHERE THEY LINKED THIS TO DISAGREEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE</b></p>	
<b>Problem Solving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation for instructor: instructor will need to cut out each of the 6 steps regarding problem solving (can be found after this lesson plan)</li> </ul>	<b>15 minutes</b>

- Place participants in groups of 6 if possible – it is OK if there is a group with less than 6 or if there is only 6 students total.
- Give each person one of the cut out statements.
- With a group of less than 6, ask for volunteers to take another statement or 3. MAKE THIS MORE CLEAR

*Say: These are the steps in problem solving. Right now they are in no particular order. MAKE DIRECTIONS MORE EXPLICIT*

*Put yourselves in the order that you think the problem-solving steps should go. The person in front should be the first step.*

- Once groups have completed the task, reveal the statements in the order they are presented above
- Suggested order:
  1. Define the problem
  2. Include others
  3. Describe the best possible outcome
  4. List options
  5. Weigh the pros and cons
  6. Decide which option to take
- If groups put the statements into a different order, ask them for their reasoning, such as: What can you tell us about the order you have selected? While the steps are all important, you might have a good reason for putting the steps in a different order.
- Note: The order of the steps is less important than the fact that the participants are thinking about the steps and elements of problem solving. Also, some of their responses might make good sense for the participants – such as including and involving others from the very beginning.
- LET THEM KNOW CHAOS IS FINE. THEY NEED TO STAND UP
- To ensure that everyone understands the steps, have a brief discussion about each step, such as:
  1. Define the problem – The way a person defines the problem helps determine the kind of result you are going to get. What's considered a problem by one person might not be a problem to

*another.*

2. Include others – Think about whom else the problem affects, who can help you or who has information about the problem.
3. Describe the best possible outcome – What would you like to happen?
4. List options – What are possible strategies, things you can do, to achieve the best possible outcome? Often there are several paths one could take.
5. Weigh the pros and cons – Take the top two or three options and break them down into the pluses and minuses of each option; what's good and easy – what's not good (or less good) and more difficult.
6. Decide which option to take –What are the consequences?" You may want to intentionally choose an option based on your Head, Heart, Hands, or Hopes.

**Practice Problem Solving<sup>25</sup>**

- CHANGE TO SOCIETY RATHER THAN COMMUNITY
- Refer students to their workbooks, Lesson 13, Activity A, Practicing the Steps of Problem Solving
- TELL THEM NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE CHAOS
- Practice with the steps by sharing the following situation:
- NOTE HOW THEY WORKED TOGETHER

*Let's talk about a situation and how these steps of problem solving might be used. There is a conflict in a town. Most people keep their houses and property very neat and tidy. Their properties are well-cared for and maintained.*

- Note: You might ask the group what a well-cared for property in their community looks like.

*There is, however, one person in the center of the town who tries to keep up his house and property, but for reasons such as money or illness, he cannot maintain his house at the same standards as his neighbors.*

**20 minutes**

<sup>25</sup> Adapted from the Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

- Ask the groups to use the problem-solving steps to address the scenario, as you go:
- How would you define the problem?
- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible responses: The man needs help maintaining his house. The man is too busy working and earning money for his family to maintain his house.

*Who should be included?*

- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible responses: The man. His closest neighbors. A social worker. Someone from the town office.

*Describe the best possible outcome.*

- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible response: The man's house would be maintained at the same standard as the rest of the town.

*List options.*

- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible responses: The man's neighbors could take turns helping him. The man could barter for maintenance help. The town could relax its rules for him for a while.

*Weigh the pros and cons.*

- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible responses: This will depend on the options listed. Think about the possible consequences.

*Decide which option to take.*

- Let the group work through their response to this step, and write their response on their worksheet(s)
- Then discuss possible responses: What would your Head, Heart, Hands, and Hopes tell you if you were in this situation?

- Say:  
*It's really important to talk to others about your plans to address a problem. They can be resources to you. Their different perspectives might strengthen your plan. It's also critical to make sure you are all in agreement. Communication is key. Otherwise, conflict could arise.*

### Real Life Problem<sup>26</sup>

*I'd like to use these problem-solving steps in a situation that is more common for you. What is an example of an issue or conflict that has not been resolved in your school or community?*

- Be prepared to suggest some potential issues in the community that you already know about, such as unemployment, a lack of particular materials in the Youth House, lack of affordable housing, etc.
- Divide participants in groups and have them turn to their workbooks, Lesson 13 Activity B: Real Life Problem-Solving

- Say:

*Work with your group (or partners) to analyze and decide upon a solution to the problem we have identified. Use the worksheet as a guide and be ready to share your ideas. Remember that various answers are 'correct,' as there are many possible outcomes to this situation. I will ask each group to present your findings.*

- Give participants about 10 minutes to work, then ask each group to report. Say:  
*Let's hear what you have come up with so far. First I would like each group to report about what they decided was the problem.*

- Take the problem-solving process step by step, inviting each group to share its answers. Most likely this will produce some interesting insights because the groups will probably define the problem differently or think of and choose different options.

- Be prepared to talk about these differences

**20  
minutes**

<sup>26</sup> Adapted from: Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

without thinking you have to determine which is correct. This will be a good demonstration that each of us (each group) has valuable insight into a problem but that no one has the full picture – just like the blind men and the elephant.

*There are many advantages to following the steps of problem solving. You can see that the way we define a problem determines how we will try to solve it. The variety of the answers to the problem we just worked on shows how important it is to include different people when solving a problem.*

**Ending**

- Indicate the 2 Home Exercises for next week: Using the Problem Solving Steps for 1) a community problem (this will be shared with peers at the start of the next lesson) and 2) for a personal problem (this can remain confidential and does not need to be shared)
- Allow 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the session
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**

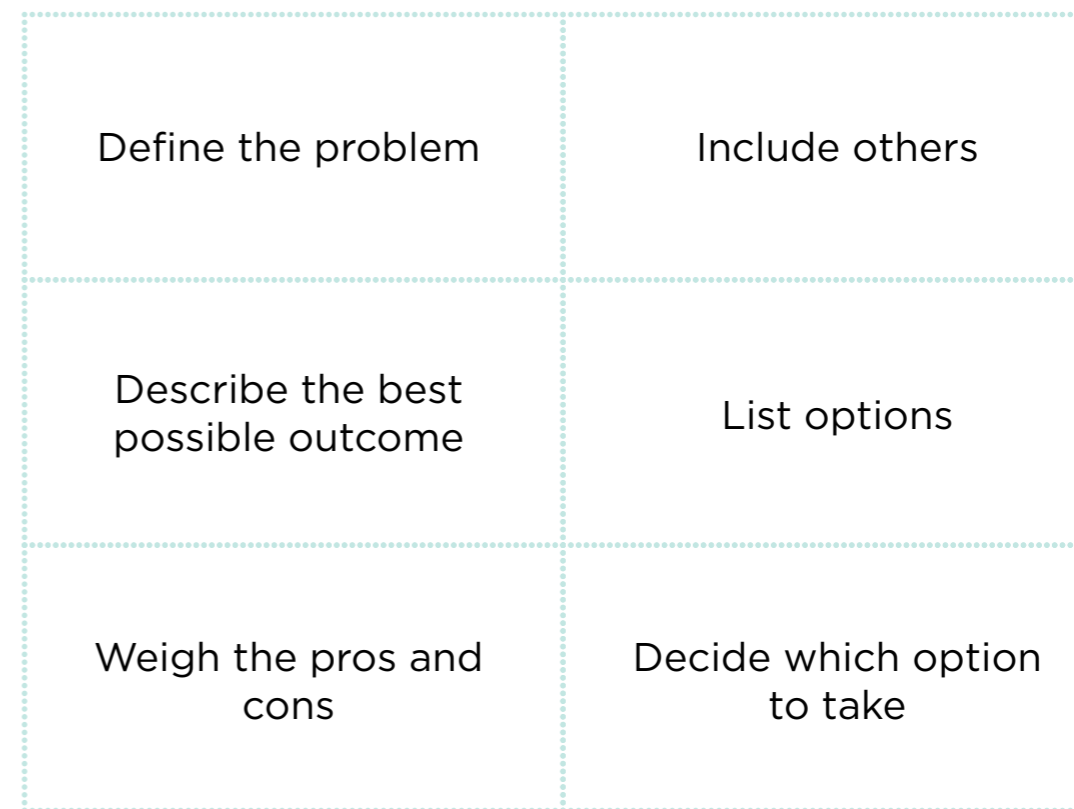
**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:**

**Please print and cut out the 6 steps – divide the class into 6 for one of the lesson 13 activities**

*There are six steps for solving problems that you will teach. Use the following list to remember the sequence of the steps:*

1. Define the problem
2. Include others
3. Describe the best possible outcome
4. List options
5. Weigh the pros and cons
6. Decide which option to take

Make a set of the problem-solving steps for each group of participants by printing a copy of this sheet for each group of participants and cutting the steps apart on the dotted lines.



# LESSON 14: CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

## SESSION 14: CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will be able to:*

- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Respect different perspectives/opinions without viewing them as “fact”
- Brainstorm creative solutions to common dilemmas
- Practice flexible thinking

**Materials to run this session:**

- Students will need to bring their work book to class, with homework completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Introduction</b>	Welcome students to the group and today’s topic <b>“Critical and Creative Thinking”</b>  Briefly refer to the group’s ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time	<b>5 minutes</b>

	consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check in and review last week's 3 home exercise tasks</li> <li>This time is for "safe" learning where children can make mistakes without any judgment. Remind them that these skills are skills for life - and they need practice</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<p><i>Can anyone offer up something that they have heard from friends, read in the news, or seen on TV that did not appear to be true?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students discuss with the person seated next to them</li> <li>Take students responses</li> <li>After examples are given, say: <i>It sounds to me like you knew it was not true because you used something called "critical thinking."</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Have you ever heard this term before?</i></p> <p><i>What does the term, "critical thinking" mean?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take student responses and put accurate key words on board/flip chart</li> </ul> <p><i>Recap: Critical thinking is the ability to analyze our own surroundings and experiences objectively, and question why things are the way they are.</i></p> <p><i>In other words, it means that we should not accept the current situation, or information that is handed down to us, as the only answer. When we think critically, we evaluate motives, biases, views and values - and we in the end make a determination if information is correct or incorrect, reliable or rumor, useful or not useful, intelligent or unwise.</i></p> <p><i>In essence, critical thinking helps us separate fact from fiction. It is also the ability to see a problem from several different angles and perspectives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce that critical thinking will make us informed consumers of media, news, other people's opinions -- and literally everything we take in and perceive</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>

**The difference between fact and opinion**

*We are going to start this lesson by discussing the difference between fact and opinion. Who can give me a definition of either of these"*

- Write key words from students' accurate responses on the chalkboard. Validate accurate responses, and praise students for volunteering to offer definitions.

*Facts are true, real things that we can prove - we can see them with our own eyes, such as - my hair is brown, the sky is blue. Facts are also often based on numbers, such as the temperature is 20 degrees Celsius, she is 12 years old, the dog weighs 20 kilograms."* (Add more as you like, using examples from the class.)

*Opinions are what someone likes, thinks and believes -- every person has their own opinion. They might seem factually true to that person, but they are hard to prove as facts - because often they are not facts. Examples of opinions are 'school is boring' and 'kebab is delicious' "he is handsome.' We would have a difficult time proving with data that school is boring, kebab is delicious, and that a particular man is handsome -- even if these might be popular opinions - they are still just opinions. You will always find someone who does not hold that opinion."*

- Have students distinguish whether these statements are fact or opinion. Have them give a thumbs up if the statement is a fact, and a thumbs down if they are an opinion.
  - All people must breathe to live.* (fact)
  - All people love basketball.* (opinion)
  - Math is terrible.* (opinion)
  - He is lazy* (opinion)
  - Azerbaijan is on the Caspian Sea.* (fact)
  - There are 4 seasons.* (fact)
  - I don't like tomatoes.* (opinion)
  - Dogs are cute.* (opinion)
  - Dogs have 4 legs and a tail* (fact)
  - Pizza tastes great.* (opinion)
  - Most, but not all, people have two arms and legs.* (fact - except people who have had amputations)

**25 minutes**

**Critical Thinking**

- Ask that students volunteer to offer up a statement and the class can debate whether it is fact or opinion
- Ask students, to talk to the person next to them and make a list of sources/books or other media where facts can be found.
- Accurate responses are: Encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, atlas, Guinness Book of World Records, etc. Note that sometimes, textbooks in school are not completely accurate. This is true of history, while usually math books are facts.
- Ask students, to talk to the person next to them and make a list of sources/books or other media where opinions can be found.
- Accurate responses are: Autobiographies, self-help books, novels, journals, opinion pieces in the newspaper, blogs on the internet, history books at school, etc.

Ask, *What about the news? Is everything in the newspaper or on television news fact?*

- Use this to spark a discussion that in fact, everything in the newspaper is not true – and that we need to be cautious consumers of media.

Ask, *“What about the internet? Should we believe what we read on the internet?”*

Note to facilitator: Ensure that you convey to students that we should NOT believe what read on the internet – we have to use ‘critical thought’ and investigate further to find out what is true and what is false.

Emphasize, *In order to know whether things that we read or see on television and the news are true, we need to look for further evidence and facts. We can also be critical thinkers as we are reading or listening to media and people.*

- Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 14, Activity A: Fact or Opinion?
- Facilitator will now read a paragraph or 2 from a local newspaper and/or magazine. Make sure that this is non-political in

**10 minutes**

nature and that there are examples of both facts and opinions represented.  
*State the following before beginning: Remember, facts can be proven/seen in black and white. Opinions are the beliefs of people. It does not mean that we should disrespect their opinion – we should respect that their opinion is their perspective, though it may be different than our perspective/opinion.*

- As you read, students will write down whether statements are facts or opinion.
- Review the responses with students, remember that facts are things that can be scientifically proven.
- Opinions represent the perspective of someone (which should be respected, but it does not mean that it is actually true!). We can agree to disagree – we can also disagree quietly (we do not need to try to change their opinion).

*We all have our own unique perspectives and opinions, and that is perfectly normal and fine. But we must remember that not many things we read in the media these days can be factually proven in black and white.*

**Creative Thinking: Brainstorming**

*Now, let's shift gears.*

*On the other side of the spectrum from this fact vs. opinion activity, is something called “creative thinking.”*

*Have you heard of “creative thinking” before?*

*What does it mean?*

- Write accurate, key words from their responses on the board/flipchart
- Define creative thinking as:  
*In sum, creative thinking is a way of looking at problems or situations from a fresh perspective that suggests unorthodox solutions that may be new and sometimes, unusual. Creative thinking can be stimulated by an unstructured called brainstorming.*

*We used this in many of the lessons we've*

**10 minutes**

**Critical Thinking**

had so far – including our most recent lesson on problem solving where we had to come up with as many options as possible – no matter how unusual or unconventional some of those possibilities seemed.

- Direct learners to their workbooks: Lesson 14, Activity B: Brainstorming, and ask that students volunteer to read aloud the following paragraphs:

American advertising executive, Alex Osborn, created a system for creative-problem solving in 1939. At the time, Mr. Osborn was frustrated by his employees' inability to develop creative ideas individually for ad campaigns. He began hosting group-thinking sessions and discovered a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of ideas produced by employees. We now know this as "brainstorming."

His 4 qualities of effective brainstorming were:

- 1. Go for quantity:** This rule is a means that the more ideas the better. It is also believed that the more ideas you come up with the higher the chance that a few of those ideas will be of high quality – and that one of those high quality options will be the most effective solution to a problem.
- 2. Withhold criticism:** In brainstorming, criticism of ideas should be put 'on hold'. Instead, participants should focus on extending or adding to ideas, and wait to criticize later, when selecting an option to take. By suspending judgment, participants will feel free to generate unusual ideas.
- 3. Welcome "wild" ideas:** To get a good long list of suggestions, wild ideas are encouraged. They can be generated by looking from new perspectives and suspending rigid ways of looking at the world.
- 4. Combine and improve ideas:** Part of increasing quantity of ideas, and coming up with "unconventional" (wild) solutions is to be open to combining and improving some of the ideas already mentioned in

**10 minutes**

**Flexible Responses to Common Dilemmas**

the brainstorming process.

Creative thinking and brainstorming are crucial life skills. If we go through life thinking that there is just 1 solution or option to solve problems, we will be miserable.

Our goal is to move through life with FLEXIBILITY.

What does flexibility mean?

- Take students responses
- Ask students to stand up. Guide them through a 15-30 second activity where they pretend that they are a tree. A storm rolls through creating a lot of wind. Have them bend with the wind.
- Illustrate how a tree bends in the wind. When it is storm out the tree bends – so that after the storm it is still standing.

The reason we need to be flexible is that many times in life, things do not go as planned. When this occurs, it helps if you're ready to be flexible.

Now we will practice what we have discussed about brainstorming and flexible thinking to come up with creative solutions to the common dilemmas.

- Direct students to their workbooks, and turn to Lesson 14, Activity C: Flexible Thinking
- Have students work in pairs or small groups to come up with solutions to the dilemmas presented on the worksheet
- If time permits, review this as a whole class, making sure that each student pair offers at least 1 idea

**20 minutes**

**Ending**

- Indicate the 2 home exercise tasks to do before the next lesson
- If time permits, as that 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned from this lesson
- Thank students for their participation

**5 minutes**



# LESSON 15: EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

## SESSION 15: EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING SKILLS

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

**Learning Objectives:**

*Students will learn:*

- The difference between what they want to do and what they must do
- That 2 of the biggest obstacles to productivity are task initiation and perfectionism
- How to use the “Pomodoro Technique” to focus and accomplish tasks

**Materials to run this session:**

- Facilitator will need to prepare by bringing 2 pint jars, a half cup of uncooked rice, 6-8 walnuts in the shell or small rubber balls about the size of walnuts
- Prepare the “Time Management” Poster (or flipchart) beforehand. See image after this lesson for details on what that poster should say
- Prepare the “Pomodoro Technique” Poster (or flipchart) beforehand. See image after this lesson for details on what that poster should say
- A simple, inexpensive kitchen timer
- Students will bring their work book to class, with home exercise activities completed and ready to discuss
- Poster with the group rules clearly written
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today’s topic <b>“Executive Functioning Skills”</b></p> <p>Briefly refer to the group’s ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> </ul>	<p><b>5 minutes</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> <li>• Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>• No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Note to facilitator: Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	
<b>Homework review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check in and review last week's homework</li> <li>• This time is for "safe" learning where children can make mistakes without any judgment. Remind them that these skills are skills for life - and they need practice</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Prioritizing tasks<sup>27</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrate the issue of 'not enough time' with the following demonstration (Note: requires facilitator preparation).</li> </ul> <p><i>Place rice in the pint jar (3/4 of the way full) and tell students that the rice represents things we want to do—watch TV, talk on the phone, visit with friends, go to soccer games, etc.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempt to place all the walnuts or balls in the jar on top of the rice (make sure that the walnuts will not fit).</li> <li>• Say: <i>These walnuts represent our priorities - things we know we should do. When we do what we want to do first rather than what we should do, we are not able to fit in everything that we need and want to do in a day.</i></li> <li>• Starting over, remove the walnuts from the full jar and place them in the empty jar so that they all fit.</li> <li>• Slowly pour rice over the walnuts. (You should be able to get both the rice and walnuts to fit.)</li> <li>• Tell learners, <i>Identifying goals and setting priorities is an important step</i></li> </ul>	<b>25 minutes</b>

<sup>27</sup> Activity adapted from: University of West Virginia's Guidance website: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/counselors/links/advisors/ms-lesson-plans.html>

	<p><i>in time management. If we put our priorities (like the walnuts) first, then it allows us the extra time we need to do special things we want to do.</i></p> <p><i>Time management helps us organize each day and be more successful in our lives."</i></p> <p><i>In order to manage time, we must:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Consider everything we HAVE to do -- and distinguish what we have to do from what we WANT to do each day.</i></li> <li><i>Understand how much time each activity in a day will take</i></li> <li><i>Make a plan that helps us schedule our day</i></li> </ol> <p><i>When we learn to manage our time, you might be surprised at how much you can get done. The real reward to time management, though, is feeling less stressed and more in control.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer students to Lesson 15, Activity A: Have to vs. Want to.</li> <li>• Review with the whole class, and then say: <i>It is also crucial to create a "to do" list. The next time you create one, be sure to separate your to-do list into the above 2 categories.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>When it comes to executing tasks, do a Have to first, and then reward yourself with a "want to" for just 5 minutes, and then get back to ta have to. Repeat this process until you are done with every "have to."</i></p>	
<b>Barrier to Productivity: Perfectionism</b>	<p><i>Now that you have organized what you have to do, and separated it from what you want to do - it's time to get started.</i></p> <p><i>However for many of us getting started is really difficult!</i></p> <p><i>Many people do something called procrastination.</i></p> <p><i>Does anyone here know what that word means?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take student responses, writing accurate key words on the board/flipchart</li> <li>• Recap by offering a rephrasing of the</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>

definition:  
*Procrastination is “the act of delaying or postponing something that must be done.”*

*There are many reasons for procrastination, and we will talk about a few reasons today.*

*One common reason is something called “perfectionism.”*

*Does anyone know what that word means?*

- Take student responses, writing accurate key words on the board/flipchart
- Recap by offering a rephrasing of the definition:

*Procrastination is defined as “refusal to accept any standard short of perfection.” It is a huge problem that gets in the way of being productive and reaching ones goals.*

*Part of the reason for perfectionism may be that family, teachers, friends and-or society have said to you directly or indirectly that you have to be perfect all the time—that you’re not allowed to make mistakes.*

*You have to get straight A’s, be the top athlete, be the best at your extracurricular activities, and be the perfect son, daughter, sister, or brother.*

*But it is impossible to never make mistakes, and it is impossible to be good at everything.*

*The pursuit of perfection can cause a lot of stress. Believing that you must never make mistakes will make you afraid to try anything new or different, which will limit how much you can learn and grow.*

*The critical voice in your head will keep you stuck in self-doubt and can sabotage your efforts to reach your goals.*

*Talk to the person next to you for one minute about whether or not you have ever experienced or acted like a perfectionist.*

- Bring students attention back to the lesson after a minute
- Sum up by saying:

	<p><i>Ironically, trying to be perfect actually gets in the way of being successful and reaching your full potential! Of course, you should always do your best, but you can’t wait for perfection.</i></p>	
<p><b>Barrier to Productivity: Task Initiation<sup>28</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Another huge reason for procrastination is that we don’t even know where to begin with a task!</i></p> <p><i>Understandably, if a task seems overwhelming, you may be reluctant to start. Breaking down what seems like a big undertaking into “bite-size” pieces can help make almost any task more manageable.</i></p> <p><i>Breaking down a project involves figuring out what the steps are. The first step is usually the most important and sometimes the hardest to get started on.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct students to their workbooks, Lesson 15, Activity A</li> <li>• Have them first do each question on their own, and then compare with a partner/ the person seated next to them</li> <li>• Say:  <i>Try to figure out the very first thing you’d need to do to get started on each of the following projects.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Then ask the person seated next to you what they think would be the first step and compare your answer. Do you seem to be on the right track?</i></p> <p><i>The first one has been done for you, as an example.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once students are done, ask them to go through every situation individually, and write and number the rest of the steps needed for each task in order.</li> <li>• Ideally they should aim for 3-5 steps total</li> <li>• Review this as a whole group activity</li> </ul>	<p><b>20 minutes</b></p>

<sup>28</sup> Hansen, Sharon A.. The Executive Functioning Workbook for Teens: Help for Unprepared, Late, and Scattered Teens New Harbinger Publications.

**The “Pomodoro Technique”<sup>29</sup>**

*Now that you have determined first steps, it's time to get started. You cannot wait until you feel “motivated” as motivation comes from action.*

*So, today we will discuss a “life hack” called the “Pomodoro Technique.”*

*Setting a kitchen or phone timer and working in short spurts of 5-30 minutes -- while not allowing allow our attention to drift to anything but the task at hand -- can get help procrastinators jump past those imposing first steps.*

*The Pomodoro Technique takes that idea further, offering a system aimed to beat procrastination and anxiety.*

*In 1992, then student (now business person) Francesco Cirillo crafted the Pomodoro Technique, as a personal system to get more work done. It is called the “Pomodoro” Technique because he used a simple inexpensive kitchen timer that was in the shape of a tomato (in Italian, pomodoro means tomato).*

- Bring out the poster/flipchart you prepared with the steps of the “Pomodoro Technique”
- Point to each step as you describe it to students:

*The systems works like this:*

1. *Decide on a task.*
2. *Set the timer (traditionally for 25 minutes).*
3. *Work on the task during that time.*
4. *End work when the timer rings and put a checkmark on a piece of paper.*
5. *If you have fewer than 4 checkmarks, take a short break (3-5 minutes), then go back to step 2.*
6. *After 4 pomodoros, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). Reset your checkmark count to 0, and then go to step 1 to begin the process again.*

**15 minutes**

*A “pomodoro” is the interval of time spent working. After task completion, any time remaining on the timer is devoted to over-working – you cannot stop working early!*

*A goal of the technique is to reduce the impact of internal and external interruptions on focus. When interrupted during a Pomodoro, you must ignore the distraction – or risk start over!*

- Have students turn to Lesson 15, Activity C
- Bring out the simple kitchen timer you brought to class and explain that you will time them for 5 minutes (a “mini-pomodoro”) just so they can see how much they can accomplish in such a short period of time
- If they finish early, they are to go back and double check their work and/or read the reading again. They must keep working until 5 minutes is up.
- Be sure to say “Go!” and “Stop!”

**Ending**

- Indicate the 3 home exercises for the next session
- Ask for 3-4 students to volunteer to name 1 thing they learned in the lesson
- Thank students for participating in the lesson

**5 minutes**

<sup>29</sup> Information in this section adapted from: <https://lifehacker.com/5377906/the-pomodoro-technique-fights-deadline-anxiety-with-a-timer>

**Note to Facilitator: Create a poster or flipchart with the following written down. You will refer to it during the first part of the lesson regarding time management.**

### **In order to manage time, we must:**

- a. Consider everything we HAVE to do - and distinguish what we have to do from what we WANT to do each day.
- b. Understand how much time each activity in a day will take
- c. Make a plan that helps us schedule our day

**Note to Facilitator: Create a poster or flipchart with the following written down. You will refer to it during the first part of the lesson regarding time management.**

### **Steps of the “Pomodoro Technique”**

1. Decide on a task.
2. Set the timer (traditionally for 25 minutes).
3. Work on the task during that time.
4. End work when the timer rings and put a checkmark on a piece of paper.
5. If you have fewer than 4 checkmarks, take a short break (3-5 minutes), then go back to step 2.
6. After 4 pomodoros, take a longer break (15-30 minutes). Reset your checkmark count to 0, and then go to step 1 to begin the process again.

# LESSON 16: RESILIENCE

## SESSION 16: RESILIENCE

**90 Minutes**  
**Ages 10-24**

### Learning Objectives:

*Students will:*

- Learn how to use long term thinking to delay impulses, and focus on tasks that need to be completed
- Be able to distinguish between short term (impulsive) thinking and long term thinking (resilient mind-set)
- Read about resiliency and determine the resiliency skills they've learned through the course,
- Reflect on examples of how their behavior, attitude and knowledge has changed over the past 8 weeks; will present their examples to the class

### Materials to conduct this session:

- Students will need to bring their workbooks to class, with home exercises completed
- A copy of the post-evaluation self-report (see beginning of facilitator manual or end of student workbook)
- White board/flipchart/chalk board with pens/markers/chalk
- *The script for delivering this session is in italics below*

Aim	Format	Timing
<b>Welcome Introduction</b>	<p>Welcome students to the group and today's topic "<b>Resilience</b>"</p> <p>Go over the group's ground rules (point to poster with rules clearly written):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use respectful communication and behavior</li> <li>• The group belongs to everyone and everyone is equal in importance</li> <li>• Listen to each other</li> <li>• Take turns – give others an equal chance to speak if they want to</li> <li>• Be supportive of one another</li> </ul>	<b>5 minutes</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any personal information revealed during the lessons remains strictly confidential</li> <li>No verbal abuse or violence</li> </ul> <p>Questions are welcome during the session but if someone is dominating conversation or asking unrelated, time consuming questions, re-direct the group back to the lesson.</p>	
<b>Home Exercise Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the 3 home exercises from the last lesson</li> <li>Be supportive as learners indicate small steps “stepping stones” that need to be taken to achieve their bigger “end goals”</li> <li>Find out how the modified “Pomodoro Technique” worked for them at home</li> </ul>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Delaying Gratification<sup>30</sup></b>	<p><i>While what we spoke about last time was breaking down large goals into smaller daily tasks that are achievable, however sometimes it can help to keep the big, long-term goal in mind when we are trying to resist our impulses to procrastinate and just do whatever it is we want rather than what we have to do.</i></p> <p><i>You may have experienced a mini-version of this while doing the Pomodoro Technique.</i></p> <p><i>Talk to the person seated next to you for 1 minute about what it was like to delay doing something you want to do in order to take care of something you needed to do – as they did in the Pomodoro Technique.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask a few students to volunteer to share their thoughts with the larger group</li> </ul> <p><i>When making choices and decisions, see if you can focus on the long term as opposed to the short term. Ask yourself: In the future, what will this impulse to do something that is a want to do – rather than a must do -really worth delaying my goals?</i></p>	<b>5 minutes</b>

<sup>30</sup> Activity adapted from: Peace Corps Life Skills for Leadership Manual

### Long Term Thinking<sup>31</sup>

*Often when we are trying to work on something, a task or goal be it big or small, there may be two competing voices in our heads:*

*One is a loud, impulsive voice directing us toward more immediate rewards*

*The other is a quiet, thoughtful voice encouraging us to consider long-term outcomes.*

*Turn to the person next to you to discuss for 1 minute how and when you hear both of this internal dialogue.*

- Give learners 1-2 minutes to do a partner share
- Afterwards, allow a few to volunteer to share their thoughts with the whole group

*When you are trying to stick to a goal or overcome a challenge, you will be more successful if you can tune into what you know will feel good in the long term and quiet down what feels good right now (in the short term).*

*By focusing on the long term, your ability to focus and persevere will grow.*

*We often gravitate to what feels good in the moment because, as humans, we value immediate rewards at the expense of future goals.*

*We do this because the future can appear abstract and too far away, while the present moment is right in front of us.*

*Often, we feel disconnected from our future self, making it harder to connect with how we might feel when our long-term goal is accomplished.*

*Short-term gratification is hard to resist.*

*Here is an example I think you may be able to identify with: maybe you plan to wake up*

**25 minutes**

<sup>31</sup> Adapted from: Baruch-Feldman, Caren. The Grit Guide for Teens: A Workbook to Help You Build Perseverance, Self-Control, and a Growth Mindset (Kindle Locations 438-439). New Harbinger Publications.

*early on Saturday morning to study. But when Saturday comes, you can't get up. So you say to yourself, I'll get up early next Saturday, thinking that you'll be more motivated next Saturday.*

*When next week comes—surprise, surprise—you are the same person you were last week: the person who wants to stay in bed. Nothing has changed*

*This process causes us to favor a reward that arrives sooner rather than later, even if the later reward is better.*

*We choose a few minutes of sleep (small reward) over the good grades that extra studying might bring (big reward).*

*This is not to say that there is no place for what feels good in the moment. There absolutely is! It's okay to eat the occasional piece of cake, to sleep in, or just let loose. But our goal is for you to be in charge of your brain as opposed to having an impulsive part of your brain be in charge of you.*

- Have students turn to the next page in their workbooks, for Lesson 16, Activity A

*On this list, are examples of short-term and long-term thinking.*

- Go over the first example
- Mention:

*The thinking that undermines perseverance is focused on what feels good in the moment (short term thinking)*

*The thinking that promotes resilience is focused on what feels good in the long-term.*

- Divide students into groups of 3-4
- Each group should review the rest of the examples on Lesson 16, Activity A
- Based on what they learned from the examples, as a group they are to create 1 example illustrating short term thinking that undermines perseverance and motivation AND 1 example of long term thinking that promotes perseverance and motivation

- As a group, plan a 2-minute role-play of the above to perform in front of the class.
- Praise the groups for a job well done, offer guidance/redirection if they did not quite grasp the concepts taught

**The Qualities of Resilience**

*You have all shown that you have something called Resilience.*

**30 minutes**

*Are you familiar with the word, "resilience?" What does it mean?*

- Once students have given their definitions of resilience you can define it as:
- Resilience is the ability to bounce back, adapt, and/or move forward in spite of life's obstacles and setbacks.
- Refer students to appropriate page in their workbook: Lesson 16, Activity B: Qualities of Resilience.
- Break the class into 5 different groups (total of 5 groups - if you have a small class a group may be just 1 person)

*We can develop resilience as we develop the skills and abilities that will give us a greater sense of purpose, control, and optimism to see us through problems, setbacks, and difficult situations.*

*In your workbook you will see 5 points regarding Resilience.*

- Assign each group (or individual) 1 of the 5 points
- Go over the directions for this activity with them:
  1. *With your group (or individually) read your assigned point*
  2. *Reflect on which specific skills you learned in this 8 week course that speak to the point you read*
  3. *Write down as many specific skills you learned regarding that point, in the space provided*
  4. *Reflect on examples of how you have already integrated those specific skills into your life*
  5. *Write down as many examples as you can think of, in the space provided*
  6. *You will share your findings in a whole class activity. You may name skills, offer*



	<p><i>examples and say anything else about the overall course that you like</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the class 15-20 minutes to read and plan their presentation</li> <li>• Allow 10-15 minutes for student to talk and tie together what they learned in the course with their assigned resilience point</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Ending</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students take the post-test (self-report following this lesson plan - also included in their workbook)</li> <li>• Create space for each student to speak about their most valuable lesson from the course - and from each other</li> <li>• Thank students for being a part of this course - it was an honor to work with them</li> </ul>	<p><b>15 minutes</b></p>