

# Youth in Route

Routes for fostering sense of initiative  
and active citizenship among disaffiliated youth

## Route 1 – Ignite your potential (personal growth) practical guide



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## Route 1 – Ignite your potential (personal growth) practical guide

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## Practical guide identification

**Practical guide title:** Getting to know yourself and your strengths

**Duration:** recommended 1h20

**Use:**

- Youth (individual use)
- Youth workers (facilitation support)
- Both

**Practical guide outcomes:**

- Identify personal strengths, interests, values and personality traits
- Describe the principles of goal-setting and personal development planning
- Recognise common sources of stress and emotional challenges in daily life
- Explain basic concepts related to digital well-being, online safety and responsible digital behaviour
- Understand the role of mindfulness and self-care in maintaining mental and emotional behaviour

**Route tool(s) explored in this practical guide:**

- Self-discovery assessment and personality test
- Goal-setting and personal development planning tools
- Confidence-building exercise and challenge
- Digital health and online safety guide
- Mindfulness and stress management resource

## Practical guide purpose

This practical guide is designed to support the worksheet activities of this route by providing clear explanations, step-by-step guidance for using the tools and practical tips linked to real-life situations. It also includes short, realistic case stories that show how youth can rebuild personal, educational, professional or social pathways over time, often through small and gradual steps.

This guide is not a set of rules or instructions that must be followed. It is meant to be used flexibly and at your own pace. You can read only the sections that feel useful, move back and forth between the guide and the worksheet, and use it on your own or together with a youth worker. There are no right or wrong ways to use this guide and engaging with it in any way that feels meaningful to you is already a valuable step.



## Section 1 – Getting to know yourself better

*Linked to worksheet activity 1*

### 1.1. Why this matters?

Getting to know yourself better can be an important step when life feels uncertain, confusing or disconnected. Many young people experience moments where they doubt their abilities, struggle to recognise their strengths or feel unsure about who they are and what they can do. These experiences are common, especially when someone has faced interruptions, setbacks or difficult situations in education, work or personal life.

Taking time to reflect on how you think, feel and react in everyday situations can help you reconnect with yourself. It can make it easier to notice personal qualities, preferences and ways of coping that are already there, even if they are not always visible. This kind of self-awareness is not about judging yourself or finding what is wrong, but about understanding how you function and what supports you.

In daily life, we constantly make small choices: how we respond to challenges, how we talk to ourselves after a mistake, how we deal with stress or uncertainty, and how we behave in online and offline spaces. Often, these reactions happen automatically. When you notice your usual patterns, it becomes easier to understand why certain situations feel difficult and why others feel more manageable. This awareness can create space for choice, even when circumstances themselves cannot be changed.

For young people who have experienced periods of disconnection or uncertainty, self-confidence and trust in one's own abilities may have been weakened over time. Reflecting on personal strengths, values and reactions can help rebuild that trust gradually. Recognising that you already have ways of coping, learning and adapting can support a renewed sense of agency. Confidence does not mean feeling sure all the time; it can simply mean being willing to reflect, try and learn from experience.

Getting to know yourself better also supports initiative and engagement. When you have a clearer sense of what matters to you, what affects your well-being and how you respond to challenges, it becomes easier to imagine next steps - whether related to learning, work relationships or participation in the community. This reflection helps create the conditions to move forward at your own pace, based on what feels realistic and meaningful for you right now.

### 1.2. Key concepts and definitions



#### Self-awareness

Self-awareness means noticing how you think, feel and react in different situations. It is not about analysing yourself or judging your behaviour, but about becoming more aware of what is happening inside you and around you.



#### Personal strengths

Personal strengths are qualities, abilities or ways of responding that help you cope, learn or relate to others. Strengths are not only talents or achievements; they can include patience, creativity, persistence, humour or the ability to keep trying even when things feel difficult.



### Self-confidence

Self-confidence refers to the trust you have in your ability to handle situations. It does not mean feeling confident all the time. Confidence can change depending on the context and can grow gradually through experience, reflection and small steps.



### Emotional awareness

Emotional awareness is the ability to notice and name what you are feeling and how emotions affect your thoughts and actions. Becoming more aware of emotions can help you understand your reactions and respond with more choice, rather than automatically.



### Self-perception

Self-perception is how you see yourself, including your abilities, limits and potential. This image is not fixed and can change over time, influenced by experiences, feedback and context. Reflecting on self-perception can help you recognise patterns and open space for new perspectives.




## 1.3. Understanding the tool: Self-discovery assessment and personality test

What this tool does	What this tool does <u>not</u> do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you notice how you usually react, think or feel in different situations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages reflection on personal strengths, challenges and habits</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gives word to experiences you may already recognise in daily life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Creates a moment to pause and think about yourself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not label you or define who you are</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not judge yours answers as right or wrong</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not diagnose, assess or measure you</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not tell you what you should change or decide</li> </ul>

### Why is the self-discovery assessment and personality test tool useful?

- It can help you notice patters in how you react, think or feel in everyday situations, especially in moments that feel challenging or uncertain.
- If offers a structured but gentle way to reflect on yourself, which can feel easier than starting from a blank page or trying to explain things all at once.
- It can support a better understanding of your strengths and needs, helping you make sense of your experiences without pressure to change or decide anything immediately.

### 1.4. Step-by-step guidance for the tool use (supporting the worksheet)

	<p><b>Before using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can answer based on how things feel today, not how they should feel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There is no need to prepare or think deeply before starting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a pace that feels comfortable for you; you do not need to rush</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Find a moment and place where you can focus reasonably well, even if it is not perfect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that you can pause, skip questions or stop at any time</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>While using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you are unsure about a question, go with your first reaction rather than overthinking it</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Answer honestly for yourself, not in a way you think is expected</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice how different questions make you feel (easy, uncomfortable, neutral)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If a question feels too difficult or unclear, you can skip it and move on</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take short breaks if you feel tired, distracted or overwhelmed</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>After using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on what stood out to you, rather than trying to analyse everything</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Look for patterns instead of judging individual answers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid judging yourself or trying to do it right</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It is normal if some results feel unclear or do not fully fit</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can come back to this reflection later as your situation or feelings change</li> </ul>	

### 1.5. Tips for common situations

- If you feel stuck or unsure what to answer, this is common when reflecting on yourself. You can write a few keywords instead of full sentences, skip the question or come back to it later.
- If some questions make you feel uncomfortable or tense, it does not mean something is wrong. You can adapt the question in your own words or choose not to answer it.
- If you notice critical thoughts about yourself while answering, this is something many people experience. You can gently remind yourself that the tool is for reflection, not judgment.
- If you feel overwhelmed or tired, slowing down, taking a short break or stopping for the moment is completely ok.
- If the results feel confusing or do not fully fit, this is normal. You can focus only on what feels relevant and leave the rest aside.

### **1.6. Real-life example/short case study**

Maria is 22 years old and has been going through a period of uncertainty since leaving formal education. After several interruptions in training and short work experiences that did not last, she began to doubt herself and avoided situations where she felt she might fail or be judged. Although she had interests and ideas, she struggled to recognise her own strengths and often compared herself negatively to others, especially online.

In everyday life, this showed up in small but persistent ways. Maria hesitated to apply for opportunities, avoided speaking up in group settings and often dismissed positive feedback by telling herself it was just luck. When something unexpected happened, she tended to feel overwhelmed and unsure how to react. Over time, this made her feel disconnected and unsure about what she was capable of.

Instead of trying to change everything at once, Maria started by simply paying more attention to how she reacted in different situations. She noticed that while some situations made her anxious, others felt more manageable, especially when she had time to think or prepare. She also realised that she was more persistent than she gave herself credit for, as she often kept trying even when she felt unsure.

Progress was not linear. Some days, reflecting on herself felt uncomfortable and at times she avoided it altogether. There were moments when she felt stuck or questioned whether reflection was helping at all. However, over time, she began to recognise certain patterns and strengths that felt familiar and true. This did not suddenly make her confident, but it helped her feel more grounded and less critical of herself.

Gradually, Maria started trusting her ability to cope with situations, even when she did not feel confident. She became more open to small challenges and more aware of when she needed to slow down or take care of herself. While uncertainty did not disappear, her relationship with herself shifted. She began to see self-awareness as a resource rather than a source of pressure, creating a more stable starting point for thinking about future steps.

#### **For your reflection...**

- While reading this case study, which moment or situation felt most familiar to you and what do you think it says about your own experience right now?
- The young person noticed patterns in how she reacted over time. What patterns do you notice in yourself when you feel unsure, stressed or challenged?
- The case study shows progress through small steps and pauses. What does small and realistic look like for you now, if anything?
- There were moments of doubt and hesitation in this case study. How do doubt or uncertainty usually show up for you and what helps you cope, even a little?

### **1.7. For youth workers**

It offers guidance on how the worksheet activity and practical guide can be used to support reflection and dialogue, while respecting the autonomy, pace and emotional safety of the young person. This box can be skipped by young people.

### Using this section in practice

This section can be used in different ways, depending on the context and the needs of the young people involved. Youth workers may choose from:

- Use the worksheet activity 1 as a conversation starter, allowing the young person(s) to decide which parts feel relevant or worth exploring.
- Focus on recognition rather than interpretation, supporting young people to name what feels familiar without analysing or explaining their experiences for them.
- Encourage reflection without requiring written answers, using verbal discussion, keywords or silence as valid forms of engagement.
- Adapt the language, pace and depth of reflection to match the young person(s)' readiness and pause or stop if the activity brings discomfort.
- Revisit this section over time, recognising that self-awareness and confidence develop gradually and may look different across situations.

### Facilitation tips

When using this section with young people, youth workers are encouraged to:

- Create a safe and non-judgemental space where young people feel free to share as much or as little as they choose.
- Listen actively and reflect back what is shared without interpreting, correcting or drawing conclusions on behalf of the young person.
- Avoid framing self-discovery as something that must lead to immediate change, action or improvement.
- Mainstream uncertainty, mixed feelings and hesitation as part of the process of getting to know oneself.
- Support autonomy by offering choices (how to engage, what to discuss, when to pause) and respecting boundaries at all times.

### Additional resources

Youth workers may draw on the help of the following practical tools and resources:

World Health Organisation – Doing what matters in times of stress	Guide	Provides simple techniques to support emotional regulation, self-awareness and coping with stress, suitable for youth work contexts	<a href="https://shorturl.at/0mQHL">https://shorturl.at/0mQHL</a>
Mind – resources for well-being and self-care	Articles / tools	Offers non-clinical information on self-care that can support conversations with young people	<a href="http://www.mind.org.uk/">www.mind.org.uk/</a>
LOTUS MOOC – Learning to be healthy, active and mindful	Online course platform	Provides clear information on self-care that can support conversations with young people	<a href="https://lotusmooc.eu/en/">https://lotusmooc.eu/en/</a>

## Section 2 – Thinking about goals that matter to you

*Linked to worksheet activity 2*

### 1.1. Why this matters?

Thinking about goals can feel motivating for some people and overwhelming or confusing for others. For many young people, especially those who have experienced interruptions, changes or uncertainty, the idea of setting goals may come with pressure, doubt or the feeling that expectations are unclear or unrealistic. These reactions are common and understandable.



Goals do not have to be big, fixed or long-term plans. In everyday life, goals can be small and flexible, such as wanting to feel calmer, more confident, more organised or more connected. Taking time to reflect on what matters to you right now can help you reconnect with your own priorities, rather than trying to meet expectations set by others.

In daily situations, goals influence many small decisions: how you use your time, how you respond to challenges, whether you try something new or avoid it, and how you talk to yourself when things do not go as planned. When goals feel imposed or unclear, it can be difficult to stay engaged. When goals are personally meaningful and realistic, they can provide direction without pressure.

For young people who have experienced periods of disconnection or transition, confidence in planning for the future may vary depending on context. Reflecting on goals in a gentle way can help rebuild trust in one’s ability to imagine possibilities and make choices. This does not mean committing to action or having everything figured out. Simply noticing what feels important or relevant at this moment is already a form of initiative.

Thinking about goals that matter to you also supports engagement and agency. It helps shift attention from what feels missing or uncertain to what feels possible, even in small ways. By allowing goals to remain flexible and open to change, young people can develop a sense of ownership over their direction and pace. This creates supportive conditions for learning, participation and future steps in education, work or community life, based on what feels meaningful and realistic for them.

### 1.2. Key concepts and definitions

	<p><b>Goals</b></p>
<p>Goals are things you would like to work towards, explore or pay more attention to. A goal does not have to be big, clear or long-term. It can be a direction, an intention or a small change you want to try.</p>	
	<p><b>What matters to you</b></p>

What matters to you refers to what feels important, meaningful or relevant in your life right now. This can change over time and can be influenced by your situation, experiences and energy level. There is no right priority.



**Motivation**

Motivation is the feeling that gives you energy or interest to engage with something. It can come and go, and it often depends on context. Lack of motivation does not mean failure; it can be a sign that something feels unclear, too big or not meaningful yet.



**Realistic goals**

A realistic goal is one that fits your current situation, resources and well-being. Being realistic does not mean lowering expectations; it means choosing goals that feel possible and manageable for you right now.



**Small steps**

Small steps are simple actions or reflections that move you gently in a direction, without pressure. They can include thinking, observing, talking or trying something once. Small steps often help build confidence and clarity over time.




**1.3. Understanding the tool: Goal-setting and personal development planning tool**

What this tool does	What this tool does <u>not</u> do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you notice what feels important or relevant in your life right now</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supports you in putting vague ideas or feelings into words</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages thinking about direction rather than fixed outcomes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you reflect on what feels possible now</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not tell you what goals you should have</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not require you to be clear or confident</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not force you to commit to a plan or decision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not judge your goals as good or bad</li> </ul>

**Why is the goal-setting and personal development planning tool useful?**

- It can help you clarify what matters to you right now, especially when your thoughts or priorities feel mixed, vague or hard to organise.
- It offers a gentle structure for thinking about goals without pressure to be certain, confident or ready to act.
- It supports choosing goals that feel realistic for your current situation, helping you avoid setting expectations that feel too heavy or discouraging.

#### 1.4. Step-by-step guidance for the tool use (supporting the worksheet)

	<p><b>Before using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can answer based on what feels important right now, not what you think should matter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You do not need to have a clear goal in mind before starting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It is ok if your thoughts feel mixed, vague or uncertain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a calm moment and take your time; there is no need to rush</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that you can pause or stop whenever you want</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>While using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you are unsure about an answer, go with what feels closest, not perfect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on one area or idea at a time instead of trying to cover everything</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write in your own words; short phrases or keywords are enough</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice if something feels motivating, heavy or unclear as you reflect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skip questions that feel too difficult and move on</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>After using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Look at what you wrote and notice what feels meaningful or realistic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid judging your goals as too small, unclear or not good enough</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that goals can change as your situation changes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You do not need to act on anything immediately</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can come back to this reflection later and adjust it is needed</li> </ul>	

#### 1.5. Tips for common situations

- If thinking about goals feels overwhelming or stressful, this is very common. You can focus on what matters today instead of the future or choose just one small area to reflect on.
- If you do not know what goal to write, that is ok. You can describe a feeling you want more of (e.g., calm, confidence, clarity) instead of a concrete goal.
- If your goal feels too big or unrealistic, this happens to many people. You can make it smaller, lighter or turn it into something to explore rather than achieve.
- If you feel pressure to choose the right goal, remind yourself that goals are flexible and can change as your situation changes.
- If you lose motivation while reflecting, taking a break, stopping for the moment or coming back later is completely fine.

#### 1.6. Real-life example/short case study

Marco is 24 years old and has been moving between short training courses, temporary jobs and periods of inactivity since leaving school. After several experiences that did not work out as expected, he began to feel unsure about what he wanted and avoided

thinking about the future. When people asked him about his plans or goals, he often felt uncomfortable and said he was still figuring things out, even to himself.

In everyday life, this uncertainty showed up in small ways. Marco postponed decisions, avoided applying for opportunities and felt pressure when comparing himself to others who seemed more settled. Thinking about goals felt heavy and unrealistic as if choosing one direction meant committing to something he might not be able to sustain. As a result, he often stopped thinking about goals altogether.

Instead of trying to define a clear long-term plan, Marco began by reflecting on what felt most present in his life at that moment. He noticed that feeling constantly tired and unmotivated was affecting his confidence. Rather than setting a big goal, he focused on understanding what he wanted more of in his daily life, such as feeling more structured and less overwhelmed.

Progress was slow and uneven. Some days, reflecting on goals felt pointless and at times Marco questioned whether he was moving forward at all. He changed his focus more than once and sometimes dropped the reflection entirely. Over time, however, he started to see that choosing small and flexible goals made the process feel safer. He began to view goals as directions he could explore rather than decisions he had to get right.

Gradually, Marco felt more comfortable thinking about what mattered to him. He became more open to small steps, such as trying a short activity, talking to someone about his interests or simply observing how different situations made him feel. While uncertainty did not disappear, his relationship with goals changed. Thinking about goals no longer felt like pressure, but like a way to reconnect with his own priorities and sense of agency.

### **For your reflection...**

- When reading this case study, what part of Marco's experience felt closest to yours and what does it tell you about how you relate to goals right now?
- Marco noticed that thinking about goals felt heavy and avoided it for a while. When does thinking about the future feel difficult for you, and what usually helps - or does not help - in those moments?
- The case study shows a shift from big plans to small, flexible directions. What would feel like a safe direction for you at this stage, even if it is not a clear goal yet?
- Over time, Marco's relationship with goals changed. How would you like your relationship with goals to feel, rather than what you think you should achieve?

### **1.7. For youth workers**

It offers guidance on how the worksheet activity and practical guide can be used to support reflection and dialogue, while respecting the autonomy, pace and emotional safety of the young person. This box can be skipped by young people.

#### **Using this section in practice**

This section can be used in different ways, depending on the context and the needs of the young people involved. Youth workers may choose from:

- Use the worksheet activity 2 as a low-pressure entry point to talk about priorities and direction, without requiring young people to define clear or long-term goals.
- Focus on what feels meaningful or realistic now, rather than on planning or achievement.
- Encourage flexible engagement such as verbal reflection, keywords or selective completion, instead of full written responses.
- Mainstream hesitation, changes of mind and pauses as part of the goal-reflection process.
- Revisit this section over time, recognising that goals evolve with experience, context and confidence.

**Facilitation tips**

When using this section with young people, youth workers are encouraged to:

- Emphasise that goals can be temporary, flexible and unfinished, and that uncertainty is a normal part of the process.
- Help young people stay connected to what feels meaningful now, rather than pushing towards future planning or outcomes.
- Avoid comparing goals across individuals or measuring progress against external expectations.
- Use open questions and reflective listening to support exploration, rather than guiding young people towards specific goals.
- Respect moments of hesitation or resistance and treat them as information, not obstacles to overcome.

**Additional resources**

Youth workers may draw on the help of the following practical tools and resources:

<p>Big Life Journal – How to help teens set effective goals</p>	<p>Article</p>	<p>Provides practical, teen-friendly guidance and a downloadable goal-setting template that can support reflection on personal goals in a developmentally appropriate way</p>	<p><a href="https://shorturl.at/Jt8N9">https://shorturl.at/Jt8N9</a></p>
<p>Youth work 101 – Helping students set and revisit personal goals</p>	<p>Article</p>	<p>Offers practical tips for youth workers on supporting young people in setting and revisiting personal goals - useful for facilitating reflection and follow-up conversations</p>	<p><a href="https://shorturl.at/1wwCd">https://shorturl.at/1wwCd</a></p>

## Section 3 – Building confidence in everyday situations

*Linked to worksheet activity 3*

### 1.1. Why this matters?

Confidence plays a role in many everyday situations, often in subtle ways. It can influence whether someone speaks up, tries something new, asks for help, copes with mistakes or takes part in social, learning or work-related activities. Confidence is not a fixed trait that people either have or do not have. It often changes depending on the situation, the people involved and past experiences.



For many young people, especially those who have experienced periods of uncertainty, interruption or transition, confidence can feel uneven. Some situations may feel manageable, while others trigger hesitation, self-doubt or avoidance. These reactions are common and understandable. They do not mean that someone lacks ability or potential, but rather that confidence is shaped by context and experience.

In everyday life, confidence is closely linked to how young people respond when things feel uncertain or challenging. Moments such as introducing oneself, dealing with mistakes, expressing an opinion, applying for an opportunity or navigating online interactions can all require confidence in different ways. Becoming more aware of how confidence shows up in these situations can help young people understand their reactions and recognise where they already cope better than they think.

Building confidence does not mean feeling sure or comfortable all the time. Often, it involves learning to act even when feeling unsure and discovering that discomfort does not always lead to failure. Small experiences of trying, reflecting and adjusting can gradually strengthen trust in one's ability to handle situations. These small steps are often more sustainable than pushing oneself into situations that feel overwhelming.

Reflecting on confidence in everyday situations supports initiative and engagement by helping young people see that confidence can be developed through experience, not perfection. When young people begin to recognise how they already manage challenges, and where they have room to try differently at their own pace, they are more likely to stay engaged and open to participation in learning, work, community life and relationships. This awareness creates a supportive foundation for acting in ways that feel realistic and self-directed.

### 1.2. Key concepts and definitions

	<p><b>Confidence</b></p>
<p>Confidence is the trust you have in your ability to handle a situation. It does not mean feeling comfortable or sure all the time. Confidence often depends on the context and can change from one situation to another.</p>	
	<p><b>Self-doubt</b></p>

Self-doubt is the feeling of questioning yourself or your abilities. Many people experience self-doubt, especially when trying something new or unfamiliar. Noticing self-doubt can help you understand where confidence feels more difficult.



**Comfort zone**

The comfort zone is where situations feel familiar and predictable. Stepping outside of it can feel uncomfortable, but it does not always mean something is wrong. Small steps outside the comfort zone can help confidence grow gradually.



**Coping strategies**

Coping strategies are ways of responding when a situation feels challenging. They can include pausing, asking for help, preparing in advance or encouraging yourself. Coping strategies can change depending on the situation.



**Trying despite uncertainty**

Trying despite uncertainty means acting even when you feel unsure or nervous. It does not require feeling confident first. Many people build confidence by acting first and reflecting afterwards.




**1.3. Understanding the tool: Confidence building exercise and challenge**

What this tool does	What this tool does <u>not</u> do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you notice situations where confidence feels easier or harder</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supports awareness of thoughts, feelings and reactions in challenging moments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages trying small, manageable actions if you choose to</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you reflect on experience rather than performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not measure how confident you are</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not judge your reactions as good or bad</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not force you to face situations you are not ready for</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not expect quick or visible results</li> </ul>

**Why is the confidence building exercise and challenge tool useful?**

- It helps young people notice how confidence changes depending on the situation, rather than seeing confidence as something they either have or do not have.
- It offers a safe way to try small actions in everyday situations, without pressure to succeed or perform.
- It supports learning from experience by reflecting on what felt difficult, manageable or surprising, instead of focusing on outcomes.

### 1.4. Step-by-step guidance for the tool use (supporting the worksheet)

	<p><b>Before using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can reflect based on how situations feel right now, not how you think they should feel.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose one everyday situation that feels relevant; it does not need to be a big challenge.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remind yourself that feeling unsure or nervous is common and expected.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decide a pace that feels comfortable; you do not need to do everything at once.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that you are free to stop or change focus at any time.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>While using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If you are unsure how to answer, go with your first reaction or what feels closest.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on noticing thoughts, feelings and reactions, rather than trying to fix them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Try small actions only if they feel manageable; observing is also a valid step.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pay attention to what feels easier or harder than expected.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skip parts that feel too uncomfortable and move on.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>After using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice what stood out to you, even if it feels small or unclear.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid judging yourself or measuring whether you were confident enough.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognise that confidence can grow through experience, not perfection.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on what helped you cope, even slightly, in the situation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can return to this reflection later as situations and feelings change.</li> </ul>	

### 1.5. Tips for common situations

- If you feel nervous or tense before trying something, this is very common. You can start with a smaller version of the situation or simply observe it instead of acting.
- If you avoid a situation because it feels too uncomfortable, that does not mean you failed. You can pause, choose a different moment or break it into smaller steps.
- If you feel disappointed after trying, this happens to many people. You can focus on what you learned or managed, rather than on what did not go as planned.
- If your confidence changes from one day to another, this is normal. You can adjust your expectations and respond to how you feel in the moment.
- If you start comparing yourself to others, remind yourself that confidence develops differently for everyone. You can refocus on your own experience and pace.

## 1.6. Real-life example/short case study

Carla is 21 years old and has been experiencing a period of transition after leaving education earlier than planned. She spends much of her time at home and occasionally helps a family member with small tasks. While she wants to feel more independent and involved, many everyday situations - such as speaking to new people, asking questions or dealing with unfamiliar environments - make her feel tense and unsure.

In daily life, this lack of confidence shows up in subtle ways. Carla often prepares what she wants to say but then stays quiet, worried about saying something wrong. When she makes a small mistake, she tends to replay it in her mind and becomes more hesitant the next time. Even simple situations, like making a phone call or entering a new place, can feel exhausting and lead her to avoid them when possible.

Rather than trying to change everything at once, Carla began paying attention to which situations felt slightly more manageable. She noticed that she felt more confident when she had time to prepare or when expectations were clear. She started with very small steps, such as asking one short question or staying a little longer in a situation that made her uncomfortable. Sometimes she chose only to observe rather than act.

Progress was uneven. There were days when she avoided situations altogether or felt disappointed with herself for not trying. At times, she wondered whether these small steps were making any difference. However, over time, Carla noticed that certain situations felt less overwhelming than before. She also became more accepting of feeling nervous without immediately seeing it as a failure.

Gradually, Carla's confidence did not become constant or complete, but it became more reliable. She learned that she could cope with discomfort and that confidence could grow through experience rather than certainty. This shift helped her feel more open to everyday interactions and more willing to engage, even when feeling unsure.

### For your reflection...

- While reading this case study, which situation or moment felt most familiar to you, and what does it say about how confidence shows up in your daily life?
- Carla noticed that some situations felt slightly more manageable than others. Which everyday situations feel a little easier or harder for you, and why might that be?
- The case study includes hesitation and setbacks. How do you usually respond when you feel nervous or unsure, and what helps you cope, even a little?
- Carla focused on small steps rather than big changes. What would a small and realistic step look like for you right now, if you chose to try one?

## 1.7. For youth workers

It offers guidance on how the worksheet activity and practical guide can be used to support reflection and dialogue, while respecting the autonomy, pace and emotional safety of the young person. This box can be skipped by young people.

**Using this section in practice**

This section can be used in different ways, depending on the context and the needs of the young people involved. Youth workers may choose from:

- Use the worksheet activity 3 as a gentle entry point to talk about confidence in everyday situations, without expecting young people to be confident or take immediate action.
- Focus on recognition and awareness, helping young people name situations that feel easier or harder rather than analysing behaviour or outcomes.
- Encourage flexible participation such as talking, writing a few words, observing or reflecting silently, depending on what feels safest.
- Support young people in choosing small, self-defined steps while making it clear that observing or pausing is also a valid option.
- Revisit this section over time, recognising that confidence develops gradually and differently across situations.

**Facilitation tips**

When using this section with young people, youth workers are encouraged to:

- Mainstream nervousness, hesitation and avoidance as common responses, rather than signs of failure or lack of motivation.
- Avoid encouraging young people to push themselves and instead support choice, pacing and readiness.
- Pay attention to emotional cues and be ready to slow down, pause or change focus if discomfort increases.
- Use reflective listening to help young people make sense of their experiences without interpreting or evaluating them.
- Emphasise that confidence can grow through experience and reflection, not through pressure or comparison.

**Additional resources**

Youth workers may draw on the help of the following practical tools and resources:

<p>TEDx – How to build self-confidence</p>	<p>Video</p>	<p>A short, relatable talk with practical ideas about confidence and self-belief that can be used as a discussion or reflection prompt for young people</p>	<p><a href="https://youtu.be/8lhFPJ6Pysc">https://youtu.be/8lhFPJ6Pysc</a></p>
<p>Youthversity – Building self-confidence and self-esteem in today's youth</p>	<p>Article</p>	<p>Shares an accessible discussion of self-esteem and self-confidence development in youth, useful for reflection and conversation in youth work settings</p>	<p><a href="https://shorturl.at/JXVcO">https://shorturl.at/JXVcO</a></p>

## Section 4 – Taking care of yourself online

*Linked to worksheet activity 4*

### 1.1. Why this matters?

Being online is part of everyday life for most young people. Digital spaces are used to stay connected, find information, express ideas, relax, learn new things and explore opportunities. At the same time, being online can affect how people feel, think and relate to themselves and others, often in ways that are not immediately visible.

For many young people, especially those who have experienced periods of uncertainty or disconnection, online spaces can feel both supportive and challenging. Social media, messaging apps, videos and online platforms can offer connection and distraction, but they can also bring pressure, comparison, overload or confusion. These mixed experiences are common and do not mean that someone is using digital tools wrong.


Taking care of yourself online is not about avoiding technology or following strict rules. It is about becoming more aware of how online activities affect your mood, energy, confidence and focus. In everyday life, this might show up in small moments: scrolling longer than planned, comparing yourself to others, feeling drained after being online or relying on digital spaces to cope with boredom or stress.

Reflecting on digital habits can support confidence and initiative by helping young people feel more in control of how they use online spaces. When you notice what feels helpful and what feels tiring or stressful, it becomes easier to make small choices that protect your well-being. These choices do not have to be permanent or perfect. Even small adjustments can make online life feel more balanced and supportive.

Taking care of yourself online also supports engagement and participation. Feeling less overwhelmed or distracted can make it easier to focus, communicate, learn and take part in offline activities. Understanding your own digital needs can help you set boundaries that feel realistic, rather than imposed by others.

By approaching digital well-being through awareness rather than restriction, young people can develop a healthier relationship with online spaces - one that supports self-respect, confidence and the ability to engage more fully in everyday life, learning and future opportunities.

### 1.2. Key concepts and definitions

	<p><b>Digital well-being</b></p>
<p>Digital well-being refers to how your online activities affect your mood, energy, confidence and overall balance. It is about noticing how being online feels for you, not about how much time you spend online.</p>	



**Online-offline balance**

Online-offline balance is the way digital activities fit into your daily life alongside offline moments such as rest, movement, social contact or quiet time. Balance looks different for everyone and can change over time.



**Comparison**

Comparison is the habit of measuring yourself against others, often through what you see online. Many people experience this, especially on social media. Noticing comparison can help you understand why certain content affects your mood or confidence.



**Digital boundaries**

Digital boundaries are personal limits you set around how and when you use online spaces. These can include taking breaks, choosing what content to engage with or deciding when to disconnect. Boundaries are flexible and self-defined.



**Online safety**

Online safety means being aware of risks and protecting yourself while using digital spaces. This includes privacy, respectful communication and knowing when to seek help. Safety is part of taking care of yourself, not about fear or restriction.

**1.3. Understanding the tool: Digital health and online safety guide**




What this tool does	What this tool does <u>not</u> do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you notice how different online activities affect your mood, energy and focus</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supports awareness of online risks and protective behaviours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages reflection on habits and boundaries that feel helpful or unhelpful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides guidance to help you feel safer and more in control online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not judge how much time you spend online</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not try to scare you or focus only on dangers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not tell you what rules you must follow</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not monitor or control your online behaviour</li> </ul>

**Why is the digital health and online safety guide tool useful?**

- It helps young people notice how being online affects them personally, making it easier to recognise what feels supportive and what feels draining or stressful.
- It offers practical information in a clear and accessible way, helping young people feel more confident and informed when navigating online spaces.

- It supports making small, realistic choices about online behaviour and boundaries, without pressure to disconnect completely or change everything at once.

#### 1.4. Step-by-step guidance for the tool use (supporting the worksheet)

	<p><b>Before using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can reflect on your online habits based on how they feel right now, not how they used to be or how you think they should be.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There is no need to prepare or change anything before starting.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remind yourself that mixed feelings about being online are common.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose a calm moment and take your time; there is no rush.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that you can pause or stop whenever you want.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>While using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read the information slowly and focus on the parts that feel most relevant to you.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice how different topics make you feel (interested, uncomfortable, neutral).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect honestly on your habits without judging yourself.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skip sections that feel too heavy or not useful now.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take breaks if you feel overloaded or distracted.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>After using the tool</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think about what stood out to you rather than trying to remember everything.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Notice if any small insight or idea feels helpful or reassuring.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid pressuring yourself to change your online behaviour immediately.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Remember that boundaries and habits can be adjusted over time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> You can return to this guide later as your needs or online use change.</li> </ul>	

#### 1.5. Tips for common situations

- If you feel tired, low or distracted after being online, this is a common experience. You can take a short break, change the type of content you engage with or switch to an offline activity for a while.
- If you find yourself comparing your life to others online, this happens to many people. You can remind yourself that online content shows only part of the picture or limit exposure to content that affects your mood.
- If you spend more time online than you planned, that does not mean you failed. You can gently notice what kept you scrolling and adjust next time, without pressure.
- If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in an online interaction, trust that feeling. You can mute, block, report or step away, and talk to someone you trust if needed.

- If thinking about digital habits feels overwhelming, it is okay to focus on just one small change or simply observe your habits for now.

### **1.6. Real-life example/short case study**

Carlos is 18 years old and spends a lot of time online, especially in the evenings. After leaving education and struggling to find stable work, online spaces became a way to pass time, stay connected and avoid feeling bored or isolated. While being online helped Carlos feel less alone, it also began to affect their sleep, mood and confidence in ways that were hard to notice at first.

In everyday life, this showed up through constant scrolling, late-night phone use and frequent comparisons with others on social media. Carlos often felt tired during the day and distracted but found it difficult to stop checking messages or content. At times, online interactions left them feeling tense or inadequate, even though they could not clearly explain why.

Rather than trying to disconnect completely, Carlos started by paying attention to how different online activities made them feel. He noticed that some content felt calming or inspiring, while other content increased restlessness or self-doubt. Small changes followed, such as turning off notifications late at night or choosing to take short breaks after long periods online.

Progress was uneven. Some days, old habits returned, and Carlos felt frustrated for not sticking to the changes. There were moments of doubt about whether small adjustments made any difference at all. Over time, however, Carlos noticed that sleeping slightly better and spending less time comparing themselves to others made it easier to focus and feel more present offline.

Gradually, Carlos' relationship with being online became more balanced. Online spaces remained part of daily life, but they felt more in control and less affected by constant pressure. While challenges did not disappear, becoming more aware of digital habits helped Carlos take better care of themselves and feel more confident in managing online and offline life together.

#### **For your reflection...**

- While reading this case study, what part of Carlo's experience felt most familiar to you, and how does it relate to your own online habits?
- Carlos noticed that different online activities affected him in different ways. Which online activities tend to leave you feeling better, and which ones feel draining or stressful?
- The case study includes small changes and setbacks. What kinds of small adjustments feel realistic for you right now, if any?
- Carlos did not try to change everything at once. How do you usually approach change, and what helps you be kinder to yourself when habits are hard to shift?

## 1.7. For youth workers

It offers guidance on how the worksheet activity and practical guide can be used to support reflection and dialogue, while respecting the autonomy, pace and emotional safety of the young person. This box can be skipped by young people.

### Using this section in practice

This section can be used in different ways, depending on the context and the needs of the young people involved. Youth workers may choose from:

- Use the worksheet activity 4 as a starting point for conversation about online experiences, without assuming that online behaviour is a problem.
- Focus on awareness rather than control, helping young people notice how online spaces affect them personally.
- Encourage young people to reflect on their own digital needs and boundaries, rather than promoting fixed rules or restrictions.
- Allow young people to engage through discussion, short written notes or simple observation, depending on what feels safest.
- Revisit this section over time, recognising that digital habits and needs change with context and life situations.

### Facilitation tips

When using this section with young people, youth workers are encouraged to:

- Avoid moralising or labelling online behaviour as good or bad and instead support curiosity and self-reflection.
- Acknowledge that online spaces can be both supportive and challenging, allowing room for mixed feelings and experiences.
- Encourage young people to set self-defined and flexible boundaries, rather than promoting strict rules or digital detox approaches.
- Be attentive to signs of discomfort or overload and slow down, pause or change focus when needed.
- Respect privacy and avoid asking young people to share personal online experiences unless they choose to do so.

### Additional resources

Youth workers may draw on the help of the following practical tools and resources:

<p>Better internet for kids – youth &amp; digital well-being resources</p>	<p>Portal</p>	<p>An EU-level platform offering youth-friendly materials on online safety, digital well-being and positive participation online, useful for discussion and reflection</p>	<p><a href="https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/resources">https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/en/resources</a></p>
<p>European Schoolnet – digital well-being &amp;</p>	<p>Online courses platform</p>	<p>Provides practical free online courses for teachers on digital</p>	<p><a href="http://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu">www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu</a></p>

media literacy		well-being, media literacy and responsible online behaviour that can be adapted for non-formal youth work contexts	
Netiquette learning hub	Online course platform	Provides practical tools and activities on respectful online communication, digital responsibility and participation, supporting confidence and agency online	<a href="http://www.elearning.netiquetteproject.eu">www.elearning.netiquetteproject.eu</a>

## Section 5 – Finding calm in stressful moments

*Linked to worksheet activity 5*

### 1.1. Why this matters?

Stress is part of everyday life. It can show up in many small moments: feeling rushed, overwhelmed, tense, distracted, irritated or unable to focus. For many young people, especially those navigating uncertainty, change or instability, stress can become frequent and hard to manage, even when there is no single clear cause.

Finding calm does not mean avoiding stress or trying to stay relaxed all the time. It means learning to notice when stress is present and having simple ways to respond to it. In everyday life, this might involve recognising physical signals such as tightness, restlessness or tiredness, or emotional signs like frustration, worry or withdrawal. Becoming aware of these signals can help prevent stress from building up unnoticed.


For young people who have experienced periods of disconnection or pressure, stress can sometimes reduce confidence and make it harder to take initiative. When stress feels overwhelming, even small tasks or decisions can feel too demanding. Learning how to pause and calm the body and mind, even briefly, can help restore a sense of control and make situations feel more manageable.

Calm moments support engagement by creating space to think more clearly, respond rather than react, and reconnect with one's own needs. Simple calming practices can be used anywhere - in a classroom, at home, online or in public spaces - and do not require special conditions or long periods of time. Even short pauses can make a difference.

Finding calm is also linked to self-care and self-respect. It encourages young people to listen to themselves and respond with care rather than criticism. Over time, recognising stress and knowing how to calm oneself can support emotional resilience, confidence and the ability to stay engaged in learning, work, relationships and everyday challenges.

By exploring ways to find calm that feel accessible and personal, young people can develop tools that support well-being without pressure to change everything at once. These tools help create safer internal conditions for growth, participation and future steps, at a pace that feels realistic and self-directed.

### 1.2. Key concepts and definitions

	<p><b>Stress</b></p>
<p>Stress is the body and mind's response to situations that feel demanding, uncertain or overwhelming. It can show up physically, emotionally or mentally, and it can change from moment to moment.</p>	

	<b>Concept name</b>
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Calm is a state where the body and mind feel more settled or balanced. It does not mean that problems disappear. Calm can be brief and still helpful.

	<b>Grounding</b>
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Grounding is a way of bringing attention back to the present moment, often through the senses or the body. It can help when thoughts or emotions feel overwhelming.

	<b>Self-care</b>
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Self-care means taking actions that support your well-being and energy. It can include rest, boundaries, asking for support or using calming techniques. Self-care looks different for everyone.

	<b>Mindfulness</b>
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Mindfulness is paying attention to what is happening right now, without judging it. This can include noticing your breath, body sensations or thoughts, even for a short moment.

### 1.3. Understanding the tool: Mindfulness and stress management resource

What this tool does	What this tool does <u>not</u> do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Helps you notice signs of stress in your body, thoughts or emotions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offers simple techniques to pause and calm yourself in the moment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Supports awareness of what helps you feel more settled</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages short moments of care and attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not diagnose stress or mental health conditions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not require you to relax completely</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not work the same for everyone</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It does not replace professional support if needed</li> </ul>

#### Why is the mindfulness and stress management resource useful?

- It helps young people notice early signs of stress, making it easier to respond before stress builds up or becomes overwhelming.
- It offers simple, short practices that can be used in everyday situations, even when there is little time or privacy.
- It supports learning what personally helps to feel calmer, rather than expecting one technique to work for everyone.

### 1.4. Step-by-step guidance for the tool use (supporting the worksheet)

	<b>Before using the tool</b>
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- You do not need to feel calm before starting; the tool can be used when stress is present.
- Choose a moment that feels manageable, even if it is brief.
- Find a position that feels comfortable for you (sitting, standing or moving).
- Remind yourself that there is no right way to do this.
- You can stop or change the activity at any time.



### While using the tool

- Focus on the exercise or practice as much as you can, without forcing attention.
- If your mind wanders or you feel restless, that is normal; gently return to the practice.
- Pay attention to how your body and breath respond, even in small ways.
- Adapt the exercise if needed (shorter time, slower pace).
- Stop if the exercise feels uncomfortable or overwhelming.



### After using the tool

- Notice how you feel afterwards, without expecting a specific outcome.
- Calm can be subtle; even a small shift is meaningful.
- Avoid judging whether the practice worked or not.
- Remember that different techniques may feel helpful at different times.
- You can return to this tool whenever you need a pause.

## 1.5. Tips for common situations

- If you feel too restless or distracted to calm down, this is very common when stress is high. You can try a shorter practice, focus on your senses or pause and return later.
- If calming exercises feel awkward or ineffective at first, that does not mean they are not for you. You can experiment with different techniques or use them for shorter moments.
- If focusing on your body or breath brings up discomfort, it is ok to stop. You can ground yourself by looking around, moving gently or focusing on something external.
- If you forget to use calming tools when stressed, this happens to many people. You can gently remind yourself later or build the habit slowly, without pressure.
- If stress returns quickly after a calming moment, that is normal. Finding calm is often about short pauses, not permanent relief.

## 1.6. Real-life example/short case study

Marta is 20 years old and currently not in education or employment. Her days often feel unpredictable and small things - unexpected messages, deadlines, crowded places or conflicts at home - can quickly lead to stress. Marta notices that when stress

builds up, she feels tense, restless and easily irritated, and it becomes harder to concentrate or make decisions.

In everyday life, stress shows up in subtle ways. Marta finds it difficult to fall asleep, checks her phone repeatedly and feels overwhelmed by tasks that once felt manageable. When she feels stressed, her first reaction is often to distract herself or withdraw, which sometimes helps in the moment but leaves her feeling more disconnected later.

Over time, Marta noticed early signs that stress was building such as tight shoulders, shallow breathing or racing thoughts. Instead of trying to get rid of stress completely, she experimented with small pauses. Sometimes this meant stepping outside for a few minutes, focusing on her breathing for a short moment or grounding herself by noticing sounds or objects around her.

Progress was not steady. There were days when Marta forgot to pause or felt too overwhelmed to try anything. At times, she questioned whether these small actions were enough to make a difference. However, she gradually noticed that even brief moments of calm helped her feel slightly more in control and less reactive.

With time, Marta's relationship with stress changed. Stress did not disappear, but she became better at recognising it and responding with care rather than frustration. Finding calm in small, realistic ways helped her feel more balanced and more able to engage in everyday situations, even when things felt uncertain.

### **For your reflection...**

- While reading Marta's story, which moments or reactions felt most familiar to you, and why?
- Marta noticed early signs that stress was building up. What signals does your body or mind give you when stress increases?
- The case study shows small pauses rather than big solutions. What kind of short pauses or calming moments feel realistic for you right now?
- Marta's progress included setbacks. How do you usually respond when calming strategies do not work as expected, and how could you be gentler with yourself in those moments?

### **1.7. For youth workers**

It offers guidance on how the worksheet activity and practical guide can be used to support reflection and dialogue, while respecting the autonomy, pace and emotional safety of the young person. This box can be skipped by young people.

#### **Using this section in practice**

This section can be used in different ways, depending on the context and the needs of the young people involved. Youth workers may choose from:

- Introduce the worksheet activity 5 as an optional exploration of stress and calm, not as a set of techniques that must work for everyone.
- Support young people in noticing their own stress signals, rather than interpreting or analysing their reactions.

- Encourage brief and flexible engagement, such as trying one exercise, discussing sensations or simply observing, depending on readiness.
- Make it clear that stopping, changing or skipping exercises is always acceptable.
- Revisit this section over time, recognising that stress responses and calming needs change across situations and life phases.

### Facilitation tips

When using this section with young people, youth workers are encouraged to:

- Emphasise choice and consent, making it clear that all exercises are optional and can be adapted or stopped at any time.
- Avoid framing stress as something that must be eliminated and instead support curiosity about how stress shows up and changes.
- Introduce calming practices gradually and keep them short, especially with young people who may find stillness difficult.
- Pay attention to emotional and physical cues, adjusting pace or approach if discomfort or overwhelm appears.
- Reinforce that small moments of calm are valuable, even if stress returns quickly.

### Additional resources

Youth workers may draw on the help of the following practical tools and resources:

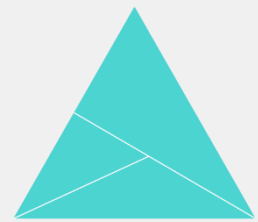
<p>BENEFIT e-learning platform</p>	<p>Toolkit / thematic resources</p>	<p>Offers youth worker tools, approaches and activities focused on psychological well-being, inclusion, resilience and community engagement - relevant to stress, self-care and confidence</p>	<p><a href="https://benefitproject.org/elearning">https://benefitproject.org/elearning</a></p>
<p>Possibilities for change - specific techniques to help youth manage stress</p>	<p>Article / practical techniques</p>	<p>Provides concrete stress-management techniques that are easy to try and discuss with young people</p>	<p><a href="https://shorturl.at/pQqqU">https://shorturl.at/pQqqU</a></p>



# YOUTH ROUTE



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