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YouthProAktiv  
SPAIN

# TOOLKIT FOR YOUTH WORKERS

## Training course: Transferring the LifeComp Framework into Youth Work to Foster Positive Mental Health Among Disadvantaged Youth

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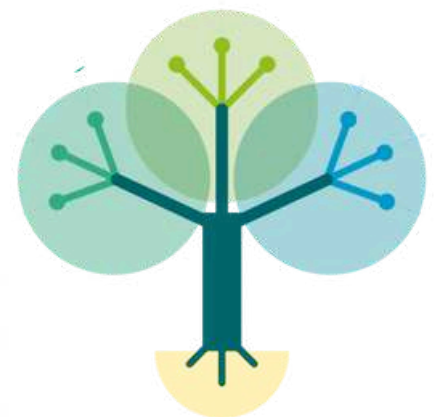
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is the result of a training focused on transferring the LifeComp Framework into youth work practice in order to foster positive mental health, wellbeing, and personal development among young people.

During the training, participants explored the LifeComp framework and collaboratively designed practical activities connected to its different competence areas (Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn). These activities were designed, discussed, and refined with a youth work perspective in mind, ensuring they are experiential, inclusive, and adaptable to diverse youth contexts.

The toolkit aims to support youth workers, trainers, educators, and facilitators in:

- Understanding the relevance of LifeComp for youth work.
- Translating abstract competences into concrete learning experiences.
- Creating safe spaces that support young people's mental health, agency, and resilience.

Rather than offering prescriptive solutions, this toolkit provides inspiration and guidance that can be flexibly adapted to local realities, group needs, and learning objectives.

## How to use this toolkit?

You can use the toolkit:

- As a whole, to design a longer learning process or programme.
- Selectively, by choosing individual activities related to a specific LifeComp area or group need.
- Adaptively, modifying activities according to age, group size, cultural context, or time available.

Each activity is connected to one or more LifeComp competence areas and encourages:

- Reflection and self-awareness.
- Peer learning and dialogue.
- Active participation and experiential learning.

Youth workers are encouraged to:

- Read the activity objectives carefully.
- Reflect on the needs and realities of their group.
- Create a safe and inclusive environment before addressing sensitive topics related to mental health.

There is no “right” or “wrong” way to use the toolkit. Its strength lies in its adaptability and creativity.

## What values does this toolkit promote?



## 2. CONTRIBUTORS

### YOUTHPROAKTIV SPAIN

YouthProAktiv is an international youth organisation and European coalition that works to promote proactivity, entrepreneurship, and personal development among young people. Founded in 2014 by a group of young Europeans in response to youth unemployment and social disengagement, the organisation aims to shift mindsets from passive participation to active citizenship and social responsibility.

YouthProAktiv designs and implements non-formal education activities, international trainings, and Erasmus+ projects that foster leadership, employability, inclusion, and civic engagement. Its work combines education, advocacy, and cross-border cooperation, with a strong focus on empowering young people to become change-makers in their communities. The organisation primarily works with young people, youth leaders, and youth workers, while also engaging policymakers and institutions to promote youth-friendly policies and sustainable social impact across Europe.



### KEEP THE CHANGE



Keep The Change is a Latvian non-profit youth organisation based in Liepāja, Latvia, dedicated to empowering young people through non-formal education, international mobility and community projects. It has been active for 8 years, during which it has engaged thousands of participants in local activities and Erasmus+ exchanges, organised workshops in schools and youth centres, and coordinated projects both locally and abroad.

The organisation believes in the power of community, collaboration and access to opportunities as drivers of transformative change and supports young people to grow personally and professionally, explore different cultures, and develop leadership, civic engagement, and entrepreneurial skills. Keep The Change works mainly with young people, youth workers and local communities, facilitating their participation in Erasmus+ opportunities, capacity-building initiatives and regional development projects that promote inclusion, well-being and career exploration. It also collaborates with partners across Europe to co-create youth exchanges, trainings and workshops that strengthen networks and youth visibility.

## TAVO EUROPA

Tavo Europa is a Lithuanian non-governmental youth organisation based in Vilnius that works to promote European values, active citizenship, and youth participation through non-formal education and international cooperation. The organisation designs and implements Erasmus+ training courses, youth exchanges, and mobility projects that foster intercultural learning, inclusion, leadership, and civic engagement.



By working with trainers, youth workers, educators, and volunteers, Tavo Europa supports young people in developing key competences such as communication, collaboration, and project management, while encouraging social responsibility and democratic participation. Its main target groups are young people, youth workers, and educators, with particular attention to inclusion and equal access to international opportunities.

## FUNDACJA REGENERACJA



Fundacja reGeneracja is a Polish non-governmental educational and sports foundation based in Ciechanów, Mazovia, Poland, dedicated to supporting the development and social inclusion of children, young people, seniors and other groups at risk of social exclusion. The organisation was established to promote social, cultural and physical activity through innovative educational programmes, workshops, trainings and community projects, many of which are supported by EU funding.

Fundacja reGeneracja focuses on building intergenerational connections, strengthening social and professional competences, and fostering active civic participation through initiatives such as digital inclusion projects, social entrepreneurship activities, and skills-building workshops for various age groups. Its main target groups include young people, families, seniors and local community members, with activities aimed at enhancing life skills, integration and empowerment across generations.

## ASOCIAȚIA ARCHE

Asociația ARCHE is a Romanian non-governmental organisation active in the youth and community field. The organisation works to support personal development, social inclusion, and active citizenship through non-formal education activities, community initiatives, and youth-focused projects. Asociația ARCHE is involved in local and international initiatives, including Erasmus+ projects, with the aim of empowering young people, fostering social responsibility, and encouraging civic engagement.

Its main target groups are young people and youth workers, with a particular focus on inclusion, participation, and the development of key life competences through experiential and community-based learning approaches.



LDA Europe is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation run by young professionals that focuses on youth development, leadership, democracy, good governance, entrepreneurship, technology and innovation, and professional growth. Born as Leadership Development Association Albania in 2017, it operates across European countries including Albania, Kosovo, Estonia, North Macedonia, Preševo

Valley and Montenegro, supporting young people to realise their potential and become active leaders and changemakers in their communities. LDA Europe delivers international educational and cultural exchanges, trainings, volunteer programmes and workshops that strengthen citizenship skills, intercultural cooperation and personal and professional competences. Through collaborative partnerships and mobility projects, it inspires constructive engagement, ethical leadership and inclusion among youth. Its main target groups are young people, youth workers and young professionals seeking to enhance their capacities and contribute to positive social change across Europe and beyond.

## LDA EUROPE

## NEW HORIZONS APS

New Horizons APS is a non-profit organisation founded in 2016 in Tusa, in the province of Messina, Italy, by a group of young professionals committed to promoting social development, cultural exchange, and international cooperation. The organisation designs and implements Erasmus+ and other EU-funded projects, non-formal education activities, youth exchanges, and training courses focused on employability, inclusion, civic engagement, and community development.

New Horizons APS works in close cooperation with European partners and local stakeholders, offering young people and youth workers opportunities for learning mobility, skills development, and active participation. Its main target groups are young people, youth workers, and local communities, with the aim of strengthening personal growth, social cohesion, and intercultural dialogue.



## EURO MIRADA



Euro Mirada is a non-profit youth organisation based in Fuente de Andalucía, Seville, Spain, dedicated to empowering young people and promoting social inclusion, human rights, intercultural learning and active citizenship. The organisation works primarily within the Erasmus+ framework to make international cooperation and cultural exchange accessible, offering youth exchanges, mobility projects and educational activities that help participants develop practical skills, personal growth and social engagement.

Euro Mirada believes in breaking down barriers and creating opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds, including those from rural and underrepresented communities, to connect, learn and grow. Its main target groups are young people, youth workers and communities, with programmes often focused on inclusion, leadership, empowerment and community development.

### 3. THE RELEVANCE OF TRANSFERRING THE LIFECOMP FRAMEWORK INTO YOUTH WORK

The LifeComp Framework offers a holistic approach to personal, social, and learning-related competences that are essential for navigating today's complex and fast-changing world.

It describes the following areas and competences:

- **Personal area:** self-regulation, flexibility, and well-being
- **Social area:** communication, cooperation, and empathy
- **Learning to Learn area:** growth mindset, critical thinking and managing learning

Youth work, with its non-formal and learner-centred nature, is a particularly powerful space for bringing LifeComp to life.

Transferring the LifeComp into youth work:

- Makes abstract competences tangible and experiential.
- Supports preventive mental health approaches, not only crisis response.
- Strengthens young people's ability to cope with uncertainty, stress, and change.
- Aligns youth work practice with European competence-based frameworks while respecting local realities.

Youth work allows LifeComp to be explored through real-life situations, relationships, and reflection, making learning more meaningful and sustainable.



### 3.1 KEY CONSIDERATIONS

When applying the LifeComp framework in youth work contexts, it is important to consider the following:

- **Context Matters:** Activities should always be adapted to the social, cultural, and emotional context of the young people involved.
- **Process Over Outcomes:** LifeComp competences develop over time. The focus should be on reflection, dialogue, and experience rather than measuring performance.
- **Emotional Safety:** Some activities may touch upon sensitive topics. Youth workers should be prepared to provide support and know when to refer young people to professional help if needed.
- **Youth-Centred Approach:** Young people's voices, needs, and lived experiences should guide the learning process.
- **Role of the Youth Worker:** Youth workers act as facilitators, not experts. Their role is to create space, ask meaningful questions, and support learning journeys.
- **Flexibility and Reflection:** Continuous reflection and adaptation are essential to ensure that the framework remains relevant and impactful.



## 3.2 SHAPING IDEAS INTO ACTION: A COMPILATION OF ACTIVITIES

This section comprises a collection of ten non-formal education activities co-designed by and for youth workers to engage in and develop alongside young individuals.

### PERSONAL AREA

#### Activity 1: Personal Space Bubbles

**Objective:** To help young people develop self-regulation by increasing awareness of their emotions, personal boundaries, and comfort levels, and by practicing calm and respectful ways to respond when those boundaries are crossed.

**Duration:** 20-30 minutes

**Number of participants:** 6-20 participants

**Age:** 14-16 years old

**Target Group:** Immigrant teenagers living in disadvantaged or low-income neighbourhoods, who may experience: marginalisation, language barriers or low sense of safety/ belonging.

**Materials:** Paper, pens or markers-

**Competence developed:** Self-regulation

#### Instructions:

##### 1. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Participants stand in a circle and pass an imaginary ball, saying their name when they throw it to the next person. This helps break the ice and build group connection.

##### 2. Main Activity (20 minutes)

- Participants walk slowly around the space with their arms open, symbolising their personal space or “bubble.”
- They are invited to notice how it feels when someone comes closer or moves away.
- Afterwards, each participant draws a circle on a piece of paper:
  - Inside the circle: feelings that make them feel safe (e.g. trust, comfort, confidence)
  - Outside the circle: feelings that make them feel unsafe (e.g. fear, discomfort, mistrust)

### **3. Reflection / Debrief (20 minutes)**

Facilitated group discussion using questions such as:

- How do you know when your personal space is being crossed?
- How can we respect each other's personal bubbles?
- What helps you feel safe in stressful situations?

Facilitators can conclude by sharing simple self-regulation strategies (e.g. breathing, grounding, verbal boundary-setting).

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations:**

Participants may feel vulnerable if their personal space is crossed. To ensure emotional safety:

- Sharing is always voluntary.
- Group rules are co-created at the beginning.
- A calm atmosphere is created (e.g. soft tone, optional background music).
- Boundary-crossing moments are used as learning opportunities to practice assertive communication.

### **Expected Outcome:**

- Increase awareness of participants' personal boundaries and emotional comfort zones.
- Recognise physical and emotional signals linked to safety and discomfort.
- Practise respecting others' personal space.
- Learn simple strategies to self-regulate when boundaries are crossed.

As a result, participants feel more confident in expressing needs, responding calmly in social situations, and creating safer interactions with peers.

## Activity 2: How I messed up

**Objective:** To support young people in developing emotional awareness, self-regulation, and well-being by normalising mistakes, reducing shame, and fostering connection through guided story-sharing and reflection.

**Duration:** 45-75 minutes

**Number of participants:** 8-25 participants. Sharing is done in pairs/groups up to 4 people.

**Age:** 15+

**Target Group:** Young people who may experience fear of failure or low self confidence, social pressure or limited spaces for emotional expression.

**Materials:** Flipchart or large paper.

**Competence developed:** Self-regulation and well-being

### Instructions:

#### 1. Opening & Warm-up (3–5 minutes)

- Participants sit in a circle.
- A short, light energiser is used to reduce tension and build presence.
- The facilitator introduces the purpose of the activity and sets a safe and positive tone.

Key messages to share:

- Mistakes do not define who we are.
- Everyone has “mess-up” stories.
- Sharing is voluntary and focused on learning, not confession.

Clear group agreements are established (confidentiality, respect, voluntary sharing).

#### 2. First Sharing Round - Childhood Mess ups (10-15 minutes)

- The facilitator shares a light, humorous childhood story to model safe vulnerability.
- Participants are given one minute to reflect silently on the question: “What is something small I messed up as a child?”
- Participants share in pairs, with approximately 3 minutes per person.
- Short plenary reflection focusing on learning, not story details.

#### 3. Second Sharing Round – Recent “Mess-ups” (15–25 minutes)

- The facilitator shares a recent, but non-traumatic, example.
- Participants form groups of up to 4 and share a recent “mess-up” (3 minutes per person).

- The group returns to plenary for reflection on insights and learning (without sharing personal details).

#### **4. Reflection & Integration (10–15 minutes)**

- Participants are invited to share one word describing what they learned or felt.
- Words are written on a flipchart.
- Participants choose one word that resonates with them and briefly explain why (optional).

Optional reflection questions focus on:

- Learning from mistakes.
- Emotional awareness.
- Growth mindset.
- Group connection and safety.

#### **5. Closure & Grounding (3–5 minutes)**

To ensure emotional closure, the facilitator leads a short grounding activity such as:

- Deep breathing.
- Gentle movement (“shake it off”).
- Silent reflection on one insight to take forward.

The facilitator offers availability for individual support after the session if needed.

#### **Safety and Emotional Considerations:**

This activity may evoke vulnerability. Emotional safety is ensured through:

- Clear group agreements
- Voluntary participation
- Structured sharing with time limits
- Focus on learning rather than details
- Supportive facilitation and grounding exercises

#### **Expected Outcome**

- Normalise mistakes as part of learning and personal growth
- Reduce feelings of shame and fear related to failure
- Strengthen emotional awareness and self-acceptance
- Experience connection and trust through shared storytelling

As a result, participants develop a growth mindset, increased resilience, and greater confidence in handling challenges and setbacks in everyday life.

## Activity 3: River of Life

**Objective:** To support young people in developing emotional awareness, wellbeing, and self-reflection by exploring their life experiences, changes, and emotions through a creative and reflective process.

**Duration:** 40-60 minutes

**Number of participants:** 6-20 participants. Sharing is done in pairs

**Age:** +15

**Target Group:** Young people who may experience low self-confidence, emotional vulnerability or going through life changed

**Materials:** A4 paper per participant, colored markers or pencils and some calm music

**Competence developed:** Self-regulation and wellbeing

### Instructions:

#### 1. Warm-up: Guided Meditation (5–7 minutes)

The facilitator leads a short meditation to help participants calm down and enter a reflective state, using water imagery (river, lake, sea) to introduce the metaphor of life as a flow.

#### 2. Introduction of the Activity

Participants are invited to create a “River of My Life” representing their life journey, including calm periods, challenges, and changes. The facilitator emphasizes that:

- There is no right or wrong drawing.
- Participants choose what they want to show or keep private.

#### 3. Main Activity: Drawing the River (10–15 minutes)

Participants draw a river symbolising their life using:

- Shapes (straight, curvy, wide, narrow).
- Colours (lighter for positive experiences, darker for difficult ones).
- Symbols (bridges, stones, storms, islands) to represent people, events, or turning points.

Time reminders are given halfway through and before finishing.

#### 4. Sharing in Pairs (10–15 minutes)

Participants share their drawing with a chosen partner:

- 5 minutes per person.
- The listener practices active, non-judgmental listening.
- Gentle questions may be asked, but no fixing or advising.

Sharing is voluntary and limited to what feels safe.

### **5. Group Reflection & Closure (10–15 minutes)**

Reflection questions may include:

- How did you feel during the activity?
- What was easy or difficult?
- Did this change how you see your life ups and downs?
- Did you notice similarities with your partner's river?

The facilitator closes by reinforcing the idea of life as a flowing process with continuous movement and change.

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations:**

This activity may bring up vulnerability due to its personal nature. Emotional safety is ensured by:

- Voluntary sharing.
- Active listening and no judgment.
- Calm atmosphere and music.
- Facilitator presence and emotional check-ins.
- Possibility to change environment (inside/outside) if helpful.

### **Expected Outcome:**

- Gain deeper self-awareness by reflecting on their life experiences.
- Recognise emotions linked to change, challenges, and achievements.
- Develop empathy by listening to others' life stories.
- View life as a dynamic process with ups and downs.

As a result, participants strengthen their sense of wellbeing, emotional understanding, and ability to reflect on personal experiences in a non-judgmental way.

## SOCIAL AREA

### Activity 4: Draw what you hear

**Objective:** To strengthen communication, collaboration, and empathy by engaging participants in a structured challenge that highlights how messages are sent, received, interpreted, and emotionally experienced in group work.

**Duration:** 60-90 minutes

**Number of participants:** 8-25 participants working in small groups of 4-5 people

**Age:** 14-30 years old, originally designed for youth workers

**Target Group:** Youth workers and educators, disadvantaged young people who may experience: low communication confidence, feelings of exclusion or misunderstanding, challenges with teamwork or emotional safety.

**Materials:** Pre-drawn simple images (one per group) blank paper, pens or markers, chairs arranged so drawers cannot see the communicator or each other, timer.

**Competence developed:** Empathy, communication and collaboration

#### Instructions:

##### 1. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Short input on communication:

- The gap between what we say and what others understand.
- Why empathy and clarity matter in collaboration.
- Link to LifeComp: social competences can be trained.

Quick energiser: “Describe an object without naming it.”

##### 2. Group Formation & Instructions (5 minutes)

- Participants form groups of 4-5 people: 1 communicator and 3-4 drawers.
- Drawers sit with their backs turned so no visual cues are possible.
- The communicator receives a simple drawing.

Rule: The communicator may not name the object, only describe shapes, positions, and proportions.

##### 3. Main Activity: “Draw What You Hear” (10 minutes)

- Communicator describes the drawing step by step.
- Drawers listen and draw.

- Variations:
  - No questions allowed.
  - Limited questions allowed at fixed moments.

The facilitator observes:

- Communication clarity.
- Listening behaviours.
- Group dynamics and emotional reactions.

#### **4. Reveal & Small-Group Evaluation (10 minutes)**

- The original drawing is revealed.
- Drawings are compared.
- Small groups discuss:
  - What worked well?
  - What caused confusion?
  - How did it feel to give or receive instructions?

#### **5. Group Reflection & Transfer (25 minutes)**

Reflection in plenary using guiding questions:

- Communication awareness
  - How do you prefer to receive information?
  - When did you need more clarity?
- Collaboration
  - How did the group handle mistakes or confusion?
  - What supported or blocked teamwork?
- Empathy & emotions
  - How did misunderstanding feel emotionally?
  - What created psychological safety?
- Transfer to youth work & mental health
  - How does unclear communication affect disadvantaged youth?
  - How can better communication support wellbeing?

#### **6. Closing Discussion (10 minutes)**

Participants reflect on:

- Invisible aspects of communication.
- Inclusivity in instruction-giving.
- Links between communication, trust, and emotional safety.
- Practical changes for future youth work sessions.

## **Safety and Emotional Considerations**

- Emphasise that mistakes are expected and valuable.
- Reinforce that this is not an art competition.
- Encourage patience, humour, and kindness.
- Acknowledge frustration as part of learning.
- For trauma-sensitive groups: use simpler drawings and allow questions.

## **Expected Outcome**

Participants understand how communication styles influence understanding, collaboration, and emotional safety, and gain practical insights into improving inclusive, mental-health-sensitive communication in youth work contexts.

## Activity 5: World Café

**Objective:** To strengthen communication, collaboration, and empathy by creating a safe and structured space where young people exchange ideas, practise active listening, and engage in respectful dialogue around relevant wellbeing and societal topics.

The activity also aims to:

- Increase confidence in expressing personal opinions.
- Encourage constructive, non-judgmental discussion.
- Support equal participation, especially for quieter participants.

**Number of participants:** 10-30 participants working in rotating small groups.

**Age:** 13-30 years old, discussion topics adapted to age group.

**Target Group:** Young people who may experience: low confidence in public speaking, difficulty forming or expressing opinions, fear of judgment or exclusion in group discussions.

**Materials:** Tables, large sheet of paper, markers, timer or bell for rotations.

**Competence developed:** Empathy, communication and collaboration.

### Instructions:

Participants rotate between discussion tables, taking turns being contributors and listeners, building shared understanding through dialogue.

#### 1. Warm-up (5-10 minutes)

Purpose: activate thinking, emotional awareness, and readiness to speak.

Possible prompts: “Choose one word that describes what positive thinking means to you,” “What global or well-being topic feels most important to you right now?,” “If you could change one thing about this topic, what would it be?.”

Responses are kept brief to lower pressure and build confidence.

#### 2. Introduction & Safety Framework (5 minutes)

The facilitator explains the World Café process and clearly introduces psychological safety rules, displayed on a flipchart:

- Every voice counts.
- One speaker at a time, no interruptions.
- Listen to understand, not to respond.
- No judging or mocking.
- Writing ideas is equal to speaking.

These rules directly address feedback about inclusion and safety.

### **3. Main Activity: Table Rotations (25–35 minutes)**

Participants are divided into 5 groups, each starting at one table.

- Each table has one discussion topic.
- Groups discuss for 5 minutes per table.
- Key ideas are written down.
- Groups rotate when the signal is given.

Example wellbeing-focused discussion topics:

- Stress management: “Your Personal Emergency Toolkit.”
- Time management: “If Your Day Had 26 Hours...”
- Coping skills: “Superpowers for Hard Days.”
- Self-care: “Design Your Perfect Recharge Day.”
- Emotional awareness: “Your Personal Weather Map.”

(Topics can be replaced with age-appropriate creative questions; see adaptations below.)

### **4. Group Presentations (10–15 minutes)**

Each group presents: (1) main insights, (2) most interesting ideas, (3) one surprising discovery. Presentations are kept short (around 1 minute per group) to reduce pressure.

### **5. Reflection & Debrief (10–15 minutes)**

Facilitated reflection using questions such as:

- What was easiest for you during this activity?
- What felt challenging?
- How did communication and teamwork feel in your group?

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations**

Some participants may feel excluded if dominant voices take over. Emotional safety is ensured by:

- Clear discussion rules introduced at the start.
- Writing as an equal participation method.
- Active facilitation and time management.
- Encouraging respectful listening and turn-taking.

The facilitator should monitor group dynamics and gently intervene if needed.

## Expected Outcome

Participants feel safe to share their opinions, improve communication and listening skills, collaborate respectfully, and experience a stronger sense of belonging within the group.

## Creative Discussion Topics by Age Group

### Ages 13–16

- What makes a day feel “really good” for us?
- How can school be a more exciting place to learn?
- What helps us feel confident when trying something new?

### Ages 17–20

- What skills do we need most for the future we want?
- What role does failure play in learning and growing?
- How can technology support our well-being instead of harming it?

### Ages 21–24

- How do we stay motivated in uncertain times?
- What competencies matter most when entering the workforce?
- What makes a meaningful life for us right now?

### Ages 25–30

- How do we balance ambition and well-being?
- What does strong leadership mean in our generation?
- How can workplaces support mental health and creativity?

## Activity 6: Talking Picture

**Objective:** To help young people develop effective verbal communication by practising active listening, clear instruction-giving, and understanding the shared responsibility of sender and receiver in the communication process.

**Number of participants:** 5-15 participants

**Age:** 15-30 years old

**Target Group:** Young people who may experience: low confidence, language difficulties, fear of judgment.

**Materials:** One paper per participant, pens or pencils, simple drawings.

**Competence developed:** Empathy, communication (active listening, clarity, precision) and collaboration (shared responsibility).

### Instructions:

Participants alternate between roles of speaker and listener, experiencing both sides of the communication process.

#### 1. Ice-breaker: “The Broken Message” (5 minutes)

Participants stand in a line. The facilitator whispers a short sentence to the first person, who passes it along by whispering to the next person, and so on.

The last person says the message out loud and compares it with the original.

Brief discussion: “What changed in the message?” “Why do misunderstandings happen in verbal communication?”

#### 2. Main Activity: Talking Picture (15–25 minutes)

##### Round 1 – One-way communication

- One participant receives a picture from the facilitator.
- The rest of the group cannot see it.
- The chosen participant describes the picture verbally.
- Others listen and draw without asking questions.

##### Round 2 – Two-way communication

- A new picture is used.
- Participants are now allowed to ask questions.
- The speaker gives instructions while listeners seek clarification.

This contrast helps participants experience how communication quality changes when interaction is allowed.

### **3. Reflection & Debrief (5–10 minutes)**

Facilitated discussion using questions such as:

- What was easier or harder in each round?
- How did it feel to only listen without asking questions?
- What changed when questions were allowed?
- What makes verbal communication clear and effective?

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations**

- Use simple, neutral drawings to avoid emotional discomfort.
- Emphasise that this is not an art activity, but a communication exercise.
- Encourage respect, patience, and humour.
- Ensure everyone has a chance to participate.

The facilitator should monitor group dynamics and support participants who feel unsure or hesitant.

### **Expected Outcome**

Participants understand the importance of listening carefully and giving precise instructions, recognising that clear communication depends on both the sender and the receiver.

## LEARNING TO LEARN AREA

### Activity 7: The algorithm trap

**Objective:** To help youngsters understand how social media algorithms influence what they see online, how this affects their emotions, mental health and screen time, and how they can regain control by using conscious digital habits and micro-learning strategies.

**Number of participants:** 5-15 participants

**Age:** 13-30 years old

**Target Group:** Young people who may experience: low confidence in their own critical thinking, high screen time, and poor sleep routines

**Materials:** One paper per participant, pens or pencils, simple drawings.

**Competence developed:** Critical thinking (Noticing what appears in their feeds and asking why). Recognising bias, emotional triggers and manipulation. Analysing and discussing risks in a structured way. Managing learning (Planning small changes in their digital routines).

#### Instructions:

Participants sit in two circles: an inner circle (the fishbowl) and an outer circle. Only the people in the inner circle speak; the outer circle listens and takes notes. After a set time, roles are switched or participants rotate so everyone has a chance to be in the inner circle.

This method encourages active listening, deep thinking and equal participation.

#### 1. Icebreaker (20 minutes)

TICKING BOMB – A fast, energetic ice-breaker that gets students thinking about digital information.

1. Students stand or sit in a circle.
2. The leader holds the “bomb” (a ball or any object) and sets a 10–15 second timer.
3. The leader reads a question and throws the bomb to someone.
4. The student must answer before the timer ends and pass the bomb on.
5. Whoever holds the bomb when it “explodes” answers an extra question or creates a new one.

Quick questions (pick 5–10)

Example: What do you think your social media feed looks the way it does? What do you feel when you see a sensational headline? How do you react to a controversial post? What do you feel when information surprises you?

Leave space after the game for deeper discussion

## **Main activity (10–20 min theory + 20–30 min practice)**

### **Part A**

Short input and small discussion: “What is an algorithm?” (10–15 min)

Facilitator questions:

- How much time do you spend per day on social media?
- Which platform do you use the most? Stand up if you use Facebook. Stand up if you use Instagram. And so on.
- What kind of content do you usually see? Wait for their answers! Examples from facilitator: cat videos, beauty/makeup, fitness, gaming clips, meme pages, movie edits, finance tips, motivational quotes, etc.

Then explain, in simple words, what an algorithm is. You can use this text directly in your instructions: “An algorithm is a set of rules that a platform uses to decide what to show you. Social media algorithms watch what you do: what you like, comment, share, how long you watch a video, which profiles you follow, even the time of day you are online. Based on this data, the system predicts what will keep you on the app for as long as possible. Then it pushes more similar content into your feed. Over time, your feed becomes a kind of mirror of your behaviour and interests – but not a complete mirror. The algorithm usually shows you content that is emotional, fast, and engaging. This can be fun and helpful (for example, language learning, educational videos, tutorials), but it can also create pressure, comparison, fear, or keep you scrolling much longer than you planned.”

Short discussion (3–5 min):

- What surprised you in this explanation? Write down the answers on a flipchart, if possible.
- Do you feel that your feed reflects who you are or what the app wants from you?
- When has the algorithm helped you learn something useful (micro-learning)?

Examples for facilitators: learning new words in a foreign language, beauty tips, mental health advice from professionals, school-related summaries, CV tips, etc.

### **Part B**

Fishbowl: “Living inside the algorithm” (15–20 min)

Arrange chairs in two circles: Inner circle: 5–6 chairs. Outer circle: the rest of the group.

Give outer circle participants a sheet to take notes: write down the emotions they hear, patterns, repeated ideas.

### Round 1 (7-8 min)

Inner circle discusses questions guided by the facilitator:

- What does the algorithm probably know about you by now?
- How do you feel after 30 minutes of scrolling on your favourite platform?
- When do you notice that you lose control of your screen time?
- Have you ever felt worse about yourself because of something you saw in your feed?

Outer circle listens silently and writes down:

- Words related to emotions;
- Examples of pressure, comparison, FOMO (fear of missing out);
- Why positive experiences (learning, inspiration, motivation etc.).

Switch

- After 7-8 minutes, invite new participants into the inner circle so others from the outer circle can speak.
- Repeat with slightly different questions if needed:
  - What are the benefits of your feed?
  - What content would you like the algorithm to show you more often?
  - What would you like your social media to stop showing you?

## **Part C**

Mini investigation in small groups (15-20 min)

Participants form small groups of 3-4 people. Each group receives one “algorithm scenario” written on a paper (or you can send in a common whatsapp group).

Use very relatable examples such as:

### Scenario 1 – Fitness pressure

“Tom, 16, likes a few workout videos. Soon his TikTok is full of extremely muscular influencers, strict diet tips, ‘no excuses’ motivation and before/after photos. He starts to feel that his normal body is not good enough and spends more time at the gym instead of resting or doing homework.”

### Scenario 2 – Beauty filters and body image

“Anna, 14, follows some beauty and skin care accounts. Her Instagram and Snapchat start suggesting only perfect selfies with heavy filters, plastic surgery ads and ‘glow-up’ transformations. She begins to hate her own face without filters and avoids taking photos with friends.”

### Scenario 3 – Gaming and polarised content

“Markus, 17, watches gaming streams and a few videos about ‘game censorship’. Soon YouTube starts recommending videos about ‘freedom vs. control’, extreme political channels, and conspiracy theories about governments and companies. He begins to trust these channels more than real news and argues with his family.”

### Scenario 4 – Luxury lifestyle and money stress

“Sofia, 18, follows travel and lifestyle influencers. Her feed is full of expensive trips, branded clothes and ‘day in my life’ vlogs in luxury apartments. She feels that her normal life in a small town is worthless and starts buying things she cannot afford, taking bank loans, feeling guilty afterwards.”

### **Task for each group:**

Identify what psychological mechanisms are used:

- Social comparison.
- Fear of missing out (FOMO).
- Ideal body image or ideal lifestyle.
- Us vs. them thinking and polarisation.
- Addiction to likes and validation.

Discuss what risks could arise in this scenario:

- Self-esteem problems, anxiety, depression.
- Overtraining, eating problems, poor sleep.
- Radicalisation, conflicts at home or school.
- Financial stress, lying, hiding behaviour.

Brainstorm how to respond or educate young people:

- How to talk about this in a youth centre or school.
- What questions to ask.
- What digital tools or settings can help (mute, not interested, time limits, following diverse accounts, fact-checking, etc.).
- How to encourage micro-learning instead of endless entertainment.

Each group prepares 2–3 key messages to share in the debrief.

### **Debrief / reflection (8–10 min):**

Facilitator leads a discussion with all participants, using these questions:

- What surprised you the most about algorithmic influence and the scenarios?
- In the activity, what emotions appeared again and again (pressure, guilt, motivation, inspiration, boredom, anxiety)?
- Which strategies can help you maintain control over your feed and screen time?

**Example:** setting app limits, turning off autoplay, unfollowing certain accounts, adding educational or diverse sources, having “offline hours” before sleep.

- How can digital literacy and critical thinking protect mental wellbeing?
- What small change will you try in your own online behaviour this week?
- How can you use the algorithm for micro-learning instead of only entertainment?

**Example:** following accounts that teach languages, maths tricks, mental health first aid, career skills.

## Safety and emotional considerations

At the beginning, establish simple ground rules:

- We speak from our own experience (I-statements).
- We do not laugh at or shame anyone’s feed.
- Everyone has the right to pass or stay silent.
- What is shared personally stays in the group.

In Fishbowl, ensure rotation so that different voices are heard (gender balance, quieter participants invited in).

Monitor emotional reactions; if needed, normalise feelings and remind participants that algorithms are designed by companies, not by them.

Offer a short one-to-one chat after the session for anyone who feels affected by the content.

## Expected Outcome

- Understand in simple terms what a social media algorithm is and how it personalises content.
- Experience how their feeds are different and what this reveals about their behaviour and interests.
- Recognise links between algorithmically selected content, screen time length, emotional states and mental health.
- Identify concrete digital habits that increase or decrease their wellbeing.
- Generate practical strategies to use social media more consciously, including micro-learning (following educational accounts, using learning playlists, etc.).
- Strengthen their confidence that they can change how they interact with digital tools rather than being passively controlled by them.

## Activity 8: Discovering How I Learn

**Objective:** To help young people become aware of their personal learning styles, strengths, and challenges, and to develop strategies for managing their own learning process. The activity aims to foster a growth mindset, critical thinking, and self-confidence in learning as a lifelong skill.

**Number of participants:** 12-20 in groups of 3-4 participants

**Age:** 13-20 years old

**Target Group:** Young people experiencing academic difficulties, low motivation or negative school experiences.

**Materials:** Small papers, markers, printed short texts.

**Competence developed:** Growth mindset, critical thinking and managing learning

### Instructions:

Jigsaw Method – participants become “experts” in one learning-related topic and then teach others. This allows them to experience different learning strategies (seeing, listening, doing, talking, thinking alone) and reflect on which works best for them.

#### 1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

1. Give each participant two small papers or post-its.
2. Ask them to complete the sentences:
  - Paper 1: “I learn when...”
  - Paper 2: “I struggle to learn when...”
3. Participants do not write their names.
4. They fold the papers and place them in:
  - Flipchart or envelope 1: “I learn when...”
  - Flipchart or envelope 2: “I struggle to learn when...”

This activity helps normalise learning difficulties and creates a safe starting point.

#### 2. Main Activity (20 minutes)

- Divide participants into four small groups (3-4 people).
- Each group receives:
  - One learning topic: Planning, Focus & concentration, Asking for help, Adapting learning strategies.
  - A short explanatory text about the topic.

1. Each group chooses or is assigned a learning method, such as:
  - Drawing a mind map.
  - Highlighting key ideas.
  - Creating a diagram.
  - Discussing aloud.
  - Acting out a short role-play.
2. Group task: Summarise the topic in 3–5 simple points, create 1–2 real-life examples and prepare a 1-minute explanation to teach others.
3. After preparation, participants exchange groups, so each “expert” teaches their topic to new group members.

This ensures everyone both learns and teaches, increasing awareness of how they learn best.

### **3. Debrief & Reflection (10 minutes)**

Facilitator leads a group discussion using guiding questions:

- Which strategy helped you learn your topic today?
- When did learning feel easy? When was it harder?
- What did you discover about how you learn best (reading, drawing, listening, talking, doing)?

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations**

- Use simple and accessible language.
- Participation is voluntary; no one is forced to speak.
- No judgment of answers or learning styles.
- Establish basic group rules (respect, one person speaks at a time).
- Use a talking object to support equal participation.

### **Expected Outcome**

Participants gain confidence in their ability to learn by understanding how they learn best, enabling them to apply these strategies across different areas of life and learning.

## Activity 9: Learning about me

**Objective:** To support young people in developing self-awareness around how they learn by recognising their strengths, understanding their challenges, and identifying strategies to manage their own learning. The activity promotes a growth mindset, critical thinking, and confidence in learning as a lifelong process through reflection, collaboration, and goal setting.

**Number of participants:** 8-16 in groups of 3-4 participants

**Age:** 13-20 years old

**Target Group:** Young people experiencing low self confidence, isolation, limited awareness of their strengths.

**Materials:** LEGO bricks or similar building materials (each participant receives an incomplete set), paper and pens or markers, a spacious room where participants can move and collaborate. If LEGO is not available use paper shapes. The key element is that no participant can complete the task alone.

**Competence developed:** Managing learning

### Instructions:

Participants learn by doing and by reflecting on how they approached challenges, sought help, and adapted strategies.

#### 1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

1. Ask participants to sit or stand in a circle.
2. Each participant shares:
  - Two true statements about their hobbies.
  - One false statement.
3. The group guesses which statement is the lie.

This would help to: Build trust and group connection, Lower anxiety, Encourage participation in a low-pressure way.

#### 2. Main Activity: Collaborative LEGO Challenge (30 minutes)

Explain to participants: “Today we will explore how we learn—not just what we do, but how we do it. The task may feel challenging at first, and that’s intentional.”

Reassure them: There is no right or wrong result, the focus is on the process, not the final product.

- Give each participant a small LEGO set: Ensure that no one has all the pieces needed to complete the task alone.
- Instruction: “Build a small structure that represents you, your life, or a goal you have for the future.”

#### Rules:

- Participants may look around.
  - They may talk.
  - They may ask for help.
  - They may exchange pieces only through communication and agreement.
- The facilitator does not intervene immediately.
  - Observe how participants:
    - Plan their work.
    - React to difficulty.
    - Ask for help (or avoid it).
    - Adjust their strategy.

### **3.Reflection & Debrief (10 minutes)**

Bring participants into a circle or seated group.

Use open-ended guiding questions (participants may answer verbally or reflect silently):

- What strategy helped you the most during the activity?
- What felt challenging at first?
- How did you respond when you realized you couldn't complete the task alone?
- When did you ask for help—or what stopped you from asking?
- Did you change your plan at any point? Why?
- What did this activity show you about how you learn?

Facilitator tips: normalise all responses, validate effort, not performance, allow silence: reflection takes time. Invite, but never pressure, quieter participants.

### **Safety and Emotional Considerations**

- Use inclusive, non-judgmental language at all times.
- Avoid ranking, comparison, or competition.
- Encourage turn-taking and respectful listening.
- Gently invite quieter voices without putting them on the spot.
- Be attentive to signs of discomfort and offer support if needed.
- Reinforce that learning differences are normal and valuable.

### **Expected Outcome**

Participants leave with a clearer understanding of their own strengths, challenges, and learning strategies, feeling more confident and empowered to grow and manage their learning in everyday life.



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