



# **YOUNG PERSONS' SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

A programme for young people living  
with substance misuse in the home





# FOREWORD

## BY THE NATIONAL FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Dear Reader,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking the time to read this resource designed to support young people living with substance misuse in the home.

For many years now the National Family Support Network (NFSN) has been supporting adult family members living with substance misuse and we are pleased to be able to present this programme specifically designed to meet the needs of young people under the age of 18 that are living with a relative's addiction.

Initially the need for an under 18's sibling support programme was identified through research and policy but perhaps most importantly through the informal networks within the NFSN. Many parents were coming to us saying that their non-drug using children had suffered as a result of their brother or sisters drug use. When parents thought back to the years they spent worrying about their drug using child they regretted the lack of time and attention they paid to their non-drug using children during that time. This lack of time and attention led to feelings of guilt, anger, resentment, hurt and regret on the part of both parents and their drug using and non-drug using children.

Some areas, with the support of the NFSN, were running locally developed programmes specifically designed for young people affected by a relative's addiction. However the need was identified for an evidence based programme that could be implemented throughout the country.

With the support of Quality Matters we secured funding for this programme through Tusla, Electric Ireland and the Community Foundation of Ireland. We then set up an advisory group to support the programme development. Members of this advisory group included representatives from the Child and Family Agency, Foróige and representatives from local community youth groups and the HSE.

After some research had been conducted the NFSN decided to work within the structure of the American Sibshop model developed by Don Meyers. This is a programme that has been shown to be effective when working with siblings who have a brother or sister with

an intellectual and/or physical disability; we were then able to adapt aspects of this programme to an Irish addiction context.

At the early stages of this development we came to realise by targeting siblings we were omitting a large target group, namely children living with parental substance misuse, it was then agreed by the advisory group that the sibling support programme would also cater to children living with parental substance misuse. This was the start of the Young Persons Support Programme.

The Young Persons' Support Programme is a ten module activity based programme that supports the development of coping skills in young people living with problem drug or alcohol use in their homes. The resource is the result of two years of research, piloting and evaluation of this innovative programme. I am delighted to say this programme is now available to all Youth Projects, Drug Projects and Family Resource Centres.

We are very grateful to and would like to thank Aoife Dermody and Caroline Gardner of Quality Matters who in conjunction with the National Family Support Network developed this programme, the young people and facilitators who piloted the programme and played a vital role in the evaluation process.

I would like to extend our thanks to the project advisory group who were involved in the development, delivery and evaluation of the pilot programme including: Linda Creamer (Child and Family Agency), Debbie Gary (Foróige), Ann Campbell (Yoda), Sineád Leydon (Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative, Fergus McCabe (North Inner City Youth Services), Jimmy Norman (Ciall Project, Addiction Response Crumlin), Siobhan Maher and Robert Browne (National Family Support Network).

We hope that this programme is a helpful resource that Youth Projects, Drug Projects and Family Resource Centres can use to reach out and support this vulnerable yet resilient group of young people.



Best Wishes,  
**Sadie Grace, Co-ordinator,  
National Family Support  
Network**



# INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME

## BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME

This programme was developed as a result of contacts made by a number of groups across Ireland working with families of people with problem drug or alcohol use, to the National Family Support Network. They identified a need for targeted support for young people living with problem substance use. While a number of groups were working with these young people, it was felt that a more formal and structured approach to supporting them would be helpful.

This Young Persons' Support Programme is delivered in 1.5 hour sessions over ten weeks through a variety of methods including group discussion, individual reflection, role-play, creative play, arts and crafts, and games. It was developed as a pilot by the National Family Support Network in conjunction with research charity Quality Matters, using an evidence base and drawing on established models used with other groups. The different approaches and models that fed into the programme are detailed in the literature review<sup>1</sup>.

This introductory chapter gives a background and outline to the whole programme, and includes some facilitators' tips for running the programme, as well as detailed overview of each module.

## PROGRAMME RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Children living with problem substance users are likely to experience a number of unique challenges and risks as a result of living with problem substance use in the family. These challenges include stress, mental health problems, behavioral problems such as aggression and disobedience, problems in school and physical health problems. As well as this, young people living with familial substance misuse are also more likely to become problem substance users themselves.

There are a number of factors that can help a young person build resilience and prevent the development of serious problems, or help them to cope with stressors in their family lives. A comprehensive report on children and families in Ireland recommended that to help children cope with stress in their families, organisations should provide child focused programmes which develop children's skills for building relationships, regulating their emotions, and coping with stress (15). Research has shown that a number of approaches can help a young person develop better coping skills: providing targeted, specific programmes that address the particular risks the young person is facing; fostering positive peer environments and social supports; developing resilience and coping skills in young people; using evidence-based approaches such as emotional intelligence and mindfulness, and promoting a positive and supportive relationship with adults, including mentors or support workers.

The aim of the Young Persons' Support Programme is to support young people to develop improved awareness and understanding of the challenges they face and positive ways to cope with them, and to teach skills for resilience and coping, in a supportive and non-judgemental environment.

1 A comprehensive literature review, which details existing knowledge on young people living with familial substance misuse and all models and approaches used in this programme, is available on request from the National Family Support Network



## EVIDENCE AND GOVERNANCE

The programme has drawn on a number of approaches and resources:

APPROACH	DETAIL	RESOURCE
SibShop	Programme for supporting siblings of people with disabilities	<a href="http://www.siblingsupport.org/sibshops">http://www.siblingsupport.org/sibshops</a>
Cognitive behavioural therapy: Pesky Gnats	A range of effective psychological interventions for over-coming emotional and behavioural difficulties	<a href="http://www.peskygnats.com">www.peskygnats.com</a>
Emotional intelligence	An approach which supports recognition, understanding and regulation of emotions	Hughes, M., Patterson, L Bonita, & Bradford Terrell, j. Emotional Intelligence in Action. Wiley: San Francisco; 2005
Mindfulness	Mindfulness refers to the practice of being fully-present and attentive in body and mind, as opposed to being absent-minded. There is increasing evidence linking mindfulness practice to a number of mental and physical health benefits.	<a href="http://mindfulnessinschools.org/">http://mindfulnessinschools.org/</a>

A comprehensive literature review was developed to inform programme approach, structure and content. Modules were developed, and were reviewed by the steering group over a number of months. The steering comprised of people with expertise in the areas of youth work, family support and drug and alcohol services<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Sadie Grace, Siobhán Maher and Rob Browne, National Family Support Network; Sinéad Leydon, Blakestown Mountview Youth Initiative, Fergus McCable, HSE Neighbourhood Youth Project; Ann Campbell, HSE Youth Drug and Alcohol Service; Debbie Garry, Foróige; Jimmy Norman, Addiction Response Crumlin



## FACILITATOR REQUIREMENTS

Facilitators for this programme should be employed in a client facing social or community support service and be supported by their organisation to run this group. Facilitators should have experience in group facilitation, working with children and young people, working with individuals or families affected by problem substance use. Facilitators should be Garda Vetted and have recent training in Child Protection.

## PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

Participants for this programme should be young people aged 11 - 17 who are living with familial problematic drug or alcohol use. The programme exercises may be adapted to suit younger or older groups as appropriate. Participants can be recruited through existing family support programmes, schools, advertising in libraries or other public areas.

## STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

The sessions are titled as follows:

- **Session 1:** Getting to Know Each Other
- **Session 2:** My Future
- **Session 3:** Managing Stress
- **Session 4:** Communication and Conflict
- **Session 5:** Assertiveness and Saying No
- **Session 6:** Drugs and Alcohol
- **Session 7:** Group Outing
- **Session 8:** Coping Skills
- **Session 9:** Straight Thinking
- **Session 10:** What We Have Learned

## THE ORDER OF THE SESSIONS

In the first three sessions, there is a focus on establishing trust between facilitators and young people, and among participants in the group (session one). There is also a focus in the early part of the programme on the young people's strengths, and establishing a positive and proactive environment (session two). Providing a general overview of stress and some basic stress management skills establishes the primary focus of the programme by the third session.

The middle part of the programme becomes more focussed on communication, assertiveness and the issue of drugs and alcohol.

The final section of the programme provides the young people to further develop coping skills, and skills in managing negative thinking. There is also an opportunity to engage in pro-social activities with their fellow participants, and to reflect on learning on the programme.

## DURATION OF SESSIONS AND PROGRAMME

The general guide is that sessions should last for about two hours, including warm ups and wind downs. There is material for between 1 hour and 1 hour and twenty minutes for most sessions. Prior to evaluation, there had been two hours of material with specific warm up and wind down exercises, however facilitators and participants said that they need some time that was less structured for the group so this is reflected in the modules. The ten-week duration for the programme was chosen because the key areas of coping skills, stress management, shared learning, social opportunities could all be achieved in this time period.



# PROGRAMME CONTENT

The sessions cover the following topics:

#	TITLE	OBJECTIVES
1	Getting to Know Each Other and Sharing our Stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get to know each other</li> <li>To discuss what brings everyone together in this group</li> <li>To look at some of the things that are hard about having a sibling in addiction</li> <li>To set out what the group is about and how we will work together</li> </ul>
2	My Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For participants to discuss their dreams and goals</li> <li>To learn more about their own talents and skills</li> <li>To review the hurdles that can stop us reaching our goals we how to manage these</li> </ul>
3	Managing Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn what stress is and how it feels for us</li> <li>To develop some new ways of helping ourselves when we feel stressed</li> </ul>
4	Communication and Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To learn about how to be a better communicator when we're not happy</li> <li>To learn how to manage conflict in a positive way that gets the best results</li> </ul>
5	Assertiveness and Saying No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be able to recognise when we have trouble saying no</li> <li>To practice saying no to situation in a way which does not upset others – 'this is being assertive'</li> </ul>
6	Drugs & Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand drug and alcohol use and explode some myths about it</li> <li>To explore when and how drug or alcohol use becomes a problem for some people and their families</li> </ul>
7	Group Outing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an opportunity for the participants to have a good time and build relationships from a different perspective</li> <li>To support the group to reflect on each other's talents and qualities</li> </ul>
6	Coping Better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be able to name emotions and discuss how everyone responds differently to different situations</li> <li>To be able to identify when we need some help and how asking can be hard</li> <li>Everyone can identify what kind of help they works for them and how to get it</li> <li>How to talk to with friends who are depressed, anxious or upset</li> </ul>
9	Straight Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand and respond to negative thinking patterns</li> </ul>
10	What We Have Learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To recap on what has been learned over the last 10 weeks</li> <li>To reflect on the qualities of individuals within the group and show appreciation for these</li> <li>To celebrate the achievements of the group</li> </ul>



## EVALUATION

An evaluation of three pilot programmes was undertaken in 2015. It focussed on both outcomes for the young people and the process of programme delivery. It included

- 1 Outcome Evaluation:** Pre and post assessment of youth participants to measure each participant's perception of stress, self-esteem, coping skills and other identified qualities, using validated tools.
- 2 Process Evaluation:** Surveys and interviews with participants and facilitators to evaluate programme content and delivery.

A number of changes were made to the process and content, as a result of suggestions by facilitators in the pilot sites. To measure outcomes for the young people, pre and post data were collected from 16 young people across three sites. The aim was to see the difference in a number of key areas. Items from four tools were used:

**CERQ:** The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) is a multidimensional questionnaire constructed in order to identify the cognitive emotion regulation strategies (or cognitive coping strategies) someone uses after having experienced negative events or situations<sup>3</sup>. The results indicated statistically significant differences in this domain with an increased mean of 12.5 to 15.5%. An increased mean indicates a positive change over time. The reason that this is very important in this instance is that there was enough change, for enough young people, that it was unlikely that this was a coincidence. At the first point, a higher proportion of children reporting really low scores in this area, but when it got to the second point, there was an increase in children reporting high scores.

**The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** this is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to assess how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives to be. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. Moreover, the questions are of a general nature and hence are relatively free of content specific to any sub-population group. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way<sup>4</sup>. In this domain, there was a change, which was almost statistically significant. It is likely that if there data was collected on just a few more young people that we would have seen a similar statistical significance as in Domain A. Again, in this domain, at the 'pre' stage, a higher number of children had low scores, however at time point 2, we noticed that some children were moving into much higher scores (higher scores means they appraise situations as less stressful than they would have previously). Interestingly, the scores at the first point were already quite high, which is why there may be less statistical significance and less change observed.

While it is hopeful that these important changes occurred simply because the young people participated in the programme, there may be other potential explanations for the changes in the programme including:

- Just being around other people in the same situation
- Being around 'one good adult'<sup>5</sup> and the changes that can occur from this
- The changes may have happened regardless at that time in the children's lives

We also measured changes using the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, but did not notice statistically significant changes here. There are a number of reasons why change may not have been observed in some areas which include:

- The programme did not adequately support these outcomes
- The programme was run over a short time, which may not have been enough time to support these changes
- There were not enough pre and post data collected to record change

3 <http://www.socialsciences.leiden.edu/psychology/organisation/clinical/research/instruments/cognitive-emotion-regulation-questionnaire-cerq.html>

4 <http://www.mindgarden.com/132-perceived-stress-scale>

5 According to the My World Survey, the presence of One Good Adult in a young person's life has a positive influence on their mental health  
<https://www.headstrong.ie/headstrong-support-advocacy/one-good-adult/>



# INTRODUCTION FOR FACILITATORS

## USING THIS RESOURCE AND RUNNING THE COURSE

This course is designed to be delivered in 1-1.5 hour sessions over ten weeks. There is a module each per session, with aims, materials needed, suggested exercises and times. The resources, exercise sheets or templates for each module are contained in the relevant module section, and in some cases alternative exercises are available in the appendix section of this resource.

The course is designed to be delivered by two facilitators: roles and responsibilities for various tasks should be agreed in advance by facilitators to avoid confusion and ensure capacity to respond to difficult issues arising (e.g. agreeing in advance who should leave the room with a young person if they need intervention or support).

## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

In this introductory section of the manual, there are a selection of exercises that can be used at the beginning and end of each session. In each session module descriptor, there is a list of suggested exercises to be used in that session, however, facilitators are welcome to use whatever they feel is useful for their particular group of young people, in order to get them ready for the session, and get the ready to leave again at the end.

## TIMING AND CHANGES TO THE COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is designed for delivery over ten 1 – 1.5 hour sessions. This may be changed at the discretion of the provider, although the core exercises should be followed in order to achieve the stated objectives of the session.

## ENCOURAGING POSITIVE GROUP DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF TRICKLE-IN EXERCISES

Experienced facilitators will know that starting a group at an agreed time can be difficult, and when participants have very varied arrival times this can cause stress and tension in the group. It is a reality that for a variety of personal or other reasons some participants will not attend the group at the agreed starting time.

Trickle-in exercises are exercises run at the beginning of a group. They are designed to ensure that those who arrive first are engaged and active from the start (instead of having to sit around, wait and make polite conversation) and can be joined by others as they arrive too. In order for this programme to be successful for those who attend it, participants must from the first minute of the first session feel welcomed and must not feel judged.

In order to minimize the risk of stress and to promote positive group dynamics each session begins with a trickle-in exercise. The facilitators may use this, or they may adopt a more informal approach with the same objectives of minimizing anxiety, stress and tension at the beginning of the group.



# RISK MANAGEMENT

## MANAGING DISCLOSURES

It is possible that a young person may make a disclosure of abuse regarding themselves or another member of their family. Before beginning any group, the service should have the following in place:

- A child protection policy which outlines how the organisation manages disclosure of child protection issues.
- A nominated child protection officer who is available to be contacted at the times of the course.
- Staff who are Garda Vetted and trained in managing child protection issues and issues relating to disclosure of self-harm or suicide.

If the young people participating are not already familiar with the organisation's policy on this issue, it may be useful in the first session to explain it in clear in simple terms.

## MENTAL HEALTH, COPING, SELF-HARM & SUICIDE

This programme contains frequent discussions and exercise that relate to coping mechanisms, stress and similar topics. These exercises may create a space where young people discuss serious mental health concerns, self-harm, suicide etc. Ensure that facilitators are familiar with their organisation's policy regarding disclosure of self-harm, and are ready to respond to any challenging situations around this issue should they arise.

## LIMITS OF THE FACILITATOR AND REFERRING ON

The main focus of this group is around issues that are deeply personal in nature and may be a source of considerable distress or upset for participants. It is important that facilitators recognise the limits of their role and that of the group in relation to these issues. This group focuses on personal development and development of resilience and coping skills in the face of a shared challenge. It is not a therapeutic space and where it is clear that more intensive supports around this issue are needed for the young person, the facilitators should clarify the following prior to starting any course:

- If a young person is distressed on a specific issues, how will we provide quick appropriately trained 1-2-1 support.
- If a young person wants counselling how can we access this?



## TIPS FOR DOING MINDFULNESS EXERCISES<sup>6</sup>

Mindfulness means paying attention, on purpose and without judgment, to whatever you are experiencing in the present moment (BC Mental Health and Addiction Services, 2011).

Mindfulness exercises are included in a number of sessions in this programme. The purpose of these exercises is to provide a dedicated time for relaxation, help the young people to increase their awareness of their feelings and experiences, and to help reduce stress. Some recorded benefits include reduced stress levels, enhanced concentration and problem-solving, increased self-awareness, greater acceptance of thoughts and feelings without self-judgment and greater enjoyment of life (Halliwell, 2009).

Some facilitators will be comfortable with the idea of mindfulness, others less so. Please consider the following points:

- Be open to the benefits of mindfulness and ensure you are familiar with some techniques before beginning.
- Read through activities in advance to understand their purpose and flow.
- Consider making it a 'special time', and if there are candles, mats or cushions that can help to create a peaceful atmosphere, consider using these.
- If participants are uncomfortable with the exercises, that is ok and not unusual. Do not reject their negative feelings... they live in an over-stimulated society and may not be used to silence or quiet.
- Explain to participants that with practice, they may look forward to and come to appreciate this time of quiet, calm and reflection.

## TIPS FOR CBT

Session 9 is a session that looks at challenging negative thinking patterns. It draws on the work of Dr. Gary O'Reilly of UCD who has developed specialised cognitive behavioural therapy resources for young people.

It is recommended that facilitators take time to refresh their knowledge of this area. A useful starting point may be the resource from which session 9 was drawn available at [www.peskygnats.com](http://www.peskygnats.com).

<sup>6</sup> These tips are adapted from the facilitators notes from Foróige's Be Healthy, Be Happy Programme





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**THANKS**

To the funding agencies who have supported the development of this resource.







## SESSION 1

# GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER & SHARING STORIES





## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To get to know each other

To discuss what brings everyone together in this group

To look at some of the things that happen when we have problems in our family such as alcohol or drugs

To set out what the group is about and how we will work together

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- PRINT OUTS OF THE THREE SHEETS AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER
- FLIP CHART AND PENS
- COLOURED MARKERS
- POST-ITS





## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In:** Selfie Sheet

**Warm Up:** Remembering What You Heard / Knots

**Closing:** Mindfulness

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
COURSE OVERVIEW	5
FAMILY TREE	20
AUNTIE AGGY	25
SOUND OFF	15
GROUP CONTRACT	10
TOTAL	1 HR 15

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Apart from that outlined below, remind participants that if they are telling stories about friends, remind them not to use real names as other people may know them. Beginning stories with 'someone I know' may be useful.

### SUPPORT

As with other sessions, ensure you have contact numbers for specialist youth supports in case you need to make a referral

### ESTABLISHING GROUP RULES

There is an exercise towards the end of the session for establishing a group contract. Some facilitators may wish to establish a group contract at the beginning rather than the end of the session.



# OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

5  
MINS

## AIM

To provide the young people with an overview of the programme. The facilitator should provide age-appropriate explanations of the various issues. The aim is also to formally welcome everyone to the course and provide a short introduction.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1 Facilitate a conversation with the young people about the programme and what they can expect from it. Encourage open discussion and questions. Some of the points the facilitator to raise are highlighted below:

**THIS  
COURSE  
IS ALL ABOUT  
YOU**

Over the next ten weeks the course is a chance for you to focus on yourself, get to know each other, learn some new skills, have a good time and discuss things that may be bothering you. This time is all about you, so while many of you have family members with drug or alcohol problems, we will not be talking about them all the time, we will be talking about what you want, what you are interested in and what concerns you.

## PARTICIPATION:

We think that you will learn a lot about yourself and about young people who have similar experiences to you. A good way to help yourself grow and learn and help others to do the same is to participate by doing the exercises and joining the conversations in this group. Still, we know some people are shy, some people don't like to talk in a group and some things are just difficult to talk about. You don't have to do or say anything you don't want, and we want you to take this at your own pace. If you're feeling a bit shy, we encourage you to push yourself to join in, or have a chat to us about it if you need to.



## **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Throughout the course people may want to share stories with the group that they would tell others people in their school. To make sure people feel safe we ask everyone to agree that they will not discuss people's stories outside of the group.

## **CHILD PROTECTION:**

It's important for you all to know about the responsibilities of the facilitators or any adult who works with you in regard to child protection. To protect people under 18 the law is clear that any adult must inform social workers or the Gardaí, if we become aware of any of the following:

- That you are being physically or sexually abused.
- That you are planning to harm or have already seriously harmed yourself or someone else.

The law is there to protect you, and we have to work with the law, but if something like this arises, we will talk through it with you and where we can, we will support you to speak for yourself in relation to these issues.

## **IF YOU FEEL UPSET:**

Sometimes when we talk about personal issues, like our families, we can get upset. If you find that you are feeling down and you want a break from the group that's alright, let one of the facilitators know, and they will come outside with you, or you can take a few minutes by yourself if you need to.

If you have to leave the room (e.g. to go to the toilet) while we're in the middle of an emotional discussion, please give a thumbs-up sign to the facilitator to let them know you are alright and not leaving because you're upset, otherwise we will follow you out to check that you are okay.

If something really upsets you in the session, we have trained counsellors who can talk to you about whatever is going on for you. Let us know if you would ever like some one-on-one time to talk about what is going on for you.

If you can't make it to one the sessions: we are keen to see you all for the next ten weeks so give a call if you can't make it.



# FAMILY TREE

20  
MINS



To initiate a conversation about families and family members in a non-threatening, general way.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Hand out a **My Family Tree worksheet** (page 12) to all participants, and make sure that everyone has access to post its, scissors and felt pens.
- 2** Cut post its into the shape of leaves, big enough to write a name and draw a small picture on.
- 3** On each leaf, the participants write a family name, the relationship and draw a small picture or symbol that represents that person (e.g. a bike beside the sister's name who likes bikes).
- 4** The participant can use different sides (right or left) of the tree for different sides of the family if relevant.
- 5** Once everyone has finished get them to introduce their family members and if they would like to, explain why they choose the picture or symbol for this person.



# DEAR AUNTY AGGIE<sup>1</sup>

25  
MINS

## AIM

To begin a conversation about some challenges of living in a family where there is a problem with drugs or alcohol. The goal is to share some of their own coping mechanisms with each other, but as an exercise in advising someone else in a similar situation.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The idea is that in small groups the participants take on the role of 'agony aunt' for a person who has written in, discussing the problem in their family.

- 1 Ask whether anyone has read an agony aunt column in a magazine. Explain that this is when people write in to ask advice and the newspaper publishes the letter and advice.
- 2 The agony aunt for your favourite magazine 'Aunty Aggie' is on holiday, and you are being asked to fill in for her.
- 3 Break into small groups of four or five.
- 4 Give copies of the **Dear Aunty Aggie** sheets (page 11) to each group.
- 5 Read through the letters and in small groups, discuss what advice you would give to the people writing the letters.
- 6 A facilitator should sit with each group and try to encourage participation. It may be useful to ask the group if they think that the problem raised by the writer is a common one for families living with a drug or alcohol problem.
- 7 At the end each group may wish to share some of the advice that they agreed to provide.

## FACILITATORS NOTE

*During this process, young people may give advice that is not in line with good practice or could be considered unhelpful, however, it is important that participants do not feel like they 'got it wrong'.*

*If a participant gives unhelpful advice, the facilitator should encourage others to provide options too, so that everyone can see that there are many ways to deal with stressful situations.*

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Sibshop



## SOUND OFF 20 MINS



Participants have an opportunity to express themselves about what it's like to have someone in the family who's drug or alcohol use is causing problems.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Remember, sharing is welcomed but not compulsory.
- 2 Look at the **Sound Off** sheet (page 12), and think about who you would like to say something to if you could, it might be your teacher, or you mum or brother, or your friend, maybe even a politician.
- 3 Think whether you want to tell them something good, bad or average about living in a family where there are problems because of drugs or alcohol.
- 4 Take a few moments to complete your sheet. You can sign with your name or with an X or a picture. We will collect these after the session and no one else will see them or if you prefer you can take your home. Take 5 minutes to complete your sheet.
- 5 Get everyone back together, ideally sitting in a way that encourages discussion. Ask if anyone would like to share and remind everyone that they don't have to. Once someone has shared, thank him or her and ask if anyone else feels the same way or wants to comment.



# SETTING OUT OUR GROUP CONTRACT

10  
MINS



This is a chance for the group to agree some ground rules for how they want to work together over the coming weeks and months.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Ask for suggestions and write the rules on a flip chart. Some rules which you may want to prompt include:

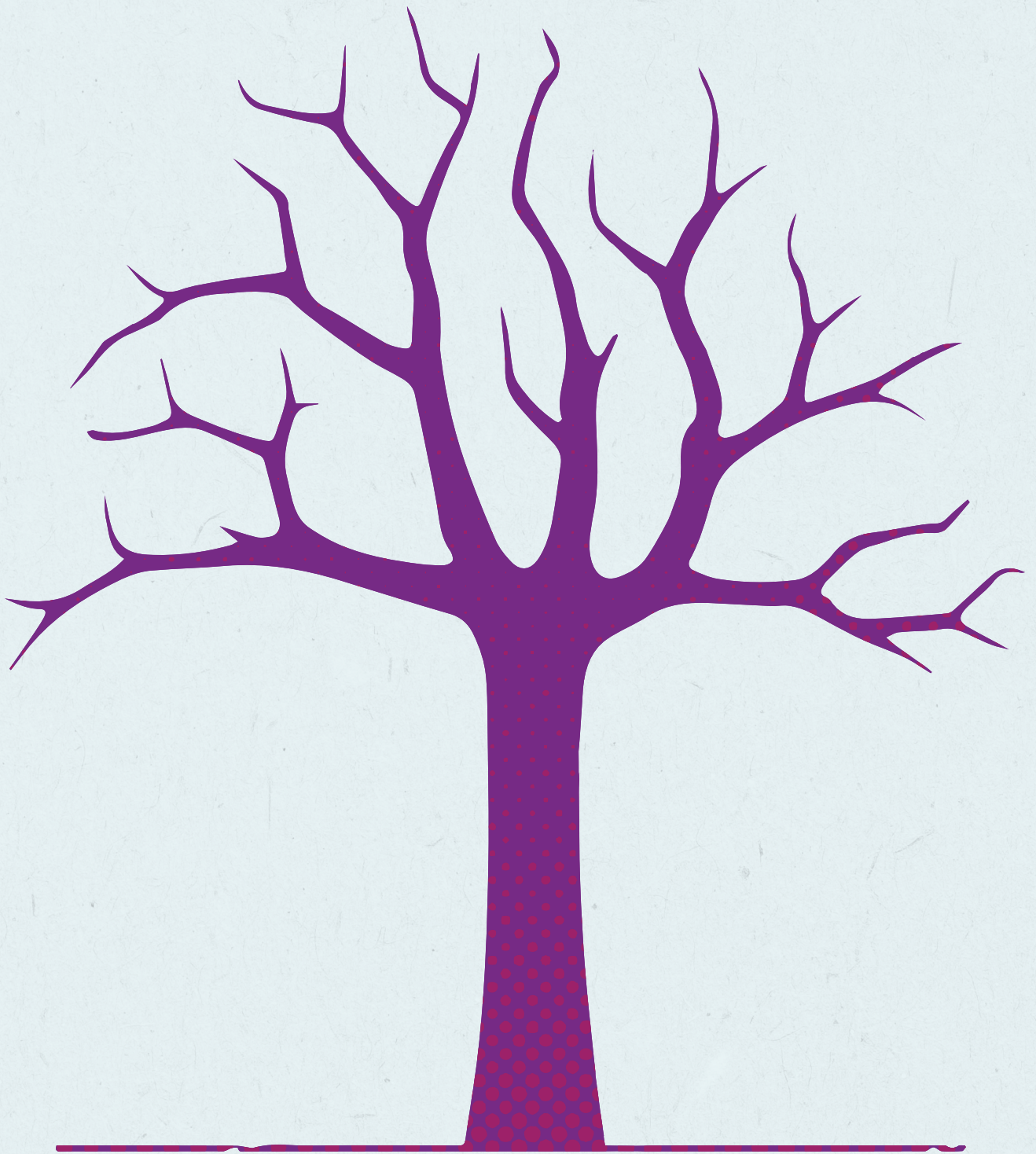
- We will not tell others outside of this course the stories which we hear here.
- We will turn our phones off.
- We will try not to interrupt another person who is speaking.
- We will listen to each other.
- We will try to include one another and make sure we never leave anyone out.
- We will be on time.
- If we need to leave the room we will let the facilitators know we are okay or not.
- We will try to support each other.

Getting participants to sign the flip chart at the end can help to generate ownership of the contract.



- Ask everyone how they are doing, and remind them when the next session is.





# MY FAMILY TREE



### **HEY FACEBOOK FRIENDS,**

Sometimes in my family it feels like I am invisible. My brother is has problems with drugs and alcohol and is in trouble a lot. Mum and dad spend all their time worrying about him. It seems the only time that I get noticed is when I get into trouble. How do I let them know that they have two kids and not just one?

**FROM, INVISIBLE EMMA**

### **HEY FACEBOOK FRIENDS,**

I worry all the time about my sister because she is taking and selling weed. Mum and Dad have told her that if she doesn't change she will have to live somewhere else. She has been in trouble with the Garda and I worry that she will end up homeless or in prison. I have asked to her to stop but she doesn't listen to me.

**FROM, WORRIED WENDY**

### **HEY FACEBOOK FRIENDS,**

My brother takes heroin. The kids at school don't understand that this can happen in any family and keep making jokes about my brother and calling him names. I know he is addicted but he is still a person and his addiction hurts him the most. Their joking really upsets me, what should I do?

**FROM, FED-UP FREDDIE**



**SOUND OFF**

## IF I COULD TELL

---

---

---

*(my parents, friends, my teacher, the whole world, a politician)*

## JUST ONE THING THAT IS:

(good, bad or pretty average)

**ABOUT HAVING SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY WHO HAS PROBLEMS WITH DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, IT WOULD BE:**

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**SIGNED:**

*your name, X, or a picture*

**adapted from Sibshop**





**SESSION 2**

# **MY FUTURE MY GOALS**





## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**For participants to discuss their dreams and goals**

**To learn more about their own talents and skills**

**To look at things that can stop us reaching our goals and ways we can to manage these things**

## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- **BALLOONS**
- **PENS TO WRITE ON THE BALLOONS (AT LEAST ONE BETWEEN THREE)**
- **BALL OF WOOL TO TIE BALLOONS TO ANKLES**
- **BAG OF CLOTHES-PEGS**
- **FLIP CHART AND PENS**



## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In:** Clothes Pegs

**Warm Up:** Two Truths and a Lie

**Closing:** N/A

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### FOCUS

There is less of a focus in this session on drugs / alcohol at home. The main aim of this session is to support the development of goal-setting skills and to develop a sense of self-efficacy, both of which are mitigating factors against stress.

### MINDFULNESS

Read through the mindfulness exercise thoroughly prior to the session so you can do it as smoothly as possible, but of course it should be relaxed and fun.

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT	25
SETTING SHORT TERM GOALS	25
THINGS THAT HOLD ME BACK	10
BALLOON STOMP	10
SELF-CARE AND SLEEPING	10
TOTAL	1 HR 20



# THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT<sup>1</sup>

25  
MINS



This section helps the young people learn about setting goals, which may include things to do with family relationships or drugs, but also looking at other areas of their lives. This aim is to explore what a goal is and the difference between long and short-term goals.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Get everyone in a circle and ask them if there is anything in common in the following stories:
  - Peter is saving up for a new bike.
  - John is working up the courage to invite Zara out to the cinema.
  - Courtney is determined never to be a 'stoner' like her brother and so she makes sure she studies hard and never touches weed
  - Aoife is practicing dancing so she can join a dance club in her estate.
  - John Paul wants to say something to his mum about how much she is drinking and how it's making him and his sister feel.
  - Rebecca has started running so she can get much faster in basketball.
- 2 Ask what do all of these people have in common? See how close the group can get to identifying what everyone has in common: that they have set goals for themselves.
- 3 Draw a picture of some goal posts on a flip chart. Ask everyone to say what the similarities between goals in sports and goals in life are.

<sup>1</sup> (based on Life Planning Education, Chapter 7)



- 4 Make some notes on the flip chart. If they don't come up with any of the following points, you may want to prompt by asking questions.
- Goals make people happy when they achieve them and others are happy for us when we achieve them (like goals in a football match).
  - Goals help us have focus and get what we want (play well to win the game).
  - Goals make life more interesting for us and others.
  - Goals in football are achieved by a team, in life we often need help to reach our goals.
  - There can be barriers to goals that we have to manage (the other team in sport).
- 5 Explain that today's session is about them working out some of their goals and what holds them back and how they can overcome the things that hold them back.
- 6 Now get everyone into the middle of the room. Ask them to think about one of their own goals and say it out for everyone to hear. When they do, direct them into one of two corners in the room (one corner is for long term goals and one is for short term goals).
- 7 Once everyone is in one of the corners, see if they can work out why they are in two groups.
- 8 Explain the difference between long term goals and short term goals:
- **Short-term goals:** Something that can be achieved in weeks or months, such as joining a new group, learning something, getting fit.
  - **Long-term goals:** Something that make take half a year or many years to achieve, such as becoming a journalist or saving to go to Australia.



# SETTING SHORT TERM GOALS

25  
MINS



This next exercise is about setting short-term goals. Goal-setting can help focus us especially when there is a lot going on around us, if we are feeling like we don't have a direction or if something seems too big to tackle.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Note for younger groups or where there may be problems with reading and writing it may be useful not to complete step 4 in pairs, but to talk through it verbally in the larger group or make sure there's a facilitator available for both groups.

- 1 To do this task participants will be working in pairs. Use the worksheet **My Goals** (page 10) to guide the exercise.
- 2 If you start by thinking about things you enjoy or think you might enjoy, this can be helpful in figuring out your goals.
- 3 Think of two short-term goals that you have for the next few months.
- 4 In pairs, work through the worksheet with each other, helping each other to complete all the questions.



# THINGS THAT HOLD ME BACK 10 MINS



This exercise is to help young people to identify if there are things that hold them back from achieving goals. It also aims to empower them to realise when they can overcome these things. It is also an opportunity for them to learn ideas from each other about overcoming barriers.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Popping balloons is used to symbolise overcoming challenges.
- 2 The facilitator should firstly run through the example **Things That Can Hold Me Back Example** (page 11) with the group and may wish to work through a number of others as part of a larger group discussion.
- 3 Participants in small groups should identify what holds them back and how they will overcome it. They can draw pictures or fill in the **Things that Hold Me Back** (page 12) worksheet below.
- 4 Encourage participants to think of their own feelings, other people, resources etc. that can help or hinder their goals.

# BALLOON STOMP 10 MINS

- 1 Each participant should pick one thing that they would like to work on over the coming months so they can reach a goal.
- 2 To symbolise facing this challenge and overcoming it, all participants are going to write the challenge on the balloon and pop it.
- 3 Write your challenge in one or two words on your balloon with a marker.
- 4 Tie your balloon on your ankle with the wool string. Once everybody has their balloons on their ankles, all together, get in and burst each other's balloons by stomping on them.
- 5 At the end, ask how people feel now their personal challenges have been popped. In real life will they be able to 'pop' these challenges?



# LEARNING ABOUT SELF CARE

10  
MINS



To help the young people understand the concept of self-care and the important role it will play in the programme and to have a group discussion about the importance of sleep.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** Provide a brief overview to the young people on self-care, considering the following points:
  - Self-care is all of the things we do to take care of our physical health, our mental health and our emotional health.
  - Self-care can be hard work and we have to find unique ways of caring for ourselves that work for us.
  - In this course, we are going to look at good ways that we can care for ourselves in our day to day lives and lots of the activities will help us develop some skills to feel calmer, more in control and happier.
  - Every week, we will do an activity at the end of the class that helps us think about self-care, or learn something new about it. Last week, we learned about mindfulness and breathing. We will do that some weeks and then focus on other things other weeks.
- 2** Give all of the young people a piece of paper and ask them to draw or write two things that people often do to help keep themselves healthy and well.
- 3** After a minute or so, ask them to call out their answers. See which are the most common answers given and try to fill in a few blanks. Prompts:
  - Eating healthily
  - Getting exercise
  - Keeping clean
  - Getting enough sleep
  - Going to the doctor
  - Talking to someone if we are upset
- 4** Say that for just 5 more minutes, we'll focus on sleep. Ask the participants how important they think sleep is: is it more or less important than food? Is it more or less important than water? Is it more or less important than air? These are trick questions, as we cannot stay alive without all of them. Our bodies need food, water, air and sleep to survive.



**5** Ask some quick fire questions. Tell participants to raise their hand if...

- You love sleeping
- You sometimes fall asleep in school
- You sometimes find it hard to get up in the morning
- You find it hard to concentrate on schoolwork
- You feel tired a lot

**6** **HINTS AND TIPS:** It is likely that participants will have heard some good advice in the past about helping to make sure you get enough sleep. Ask them to share tips and the facilitator can write them up on the flipchart. Remind them that not everyone can do all of these things, the important thing is to make small changes to improve sleep in a way that suits them. Here is some information from SpunOut.ie to help fill in the blanks:

- A** Avoid stimulants such as tea and coffee after 7 in the evening.
- B** Avoid eating too much food before bed, as this will also disrupt your sleeping patterns.
- C** Try to go to bed at night and rise in the morning at a regular time, as this will help your body clock establish a rhythm.
- D** Avoid napping in the evening when you come home, as this can also play havoc with your main overnight slumber session.
- E** Try to do something relaxing before going to bed. Have a hot bath, do some light reading or listen to one of your chill out albums.
- F** Do not use the bed for mental activity like worrying about exams or wondering does he or she fancy you? He/she is probably fast asleep dreaming about chocolate or football, so give it a rest.
- G** Don't lie in bed if you're finding it hard to sleep. Get up and make a hot cup of cocoa or milk and try some light reading until you feel drowsy.
- H** Keep a pen and paper by your bed. If something comes into your head that you feel you need to sort out tomorrow, then write it down and forget about it as it could disrupt your sleep and dreams.
- I** Keep your bedroom as darkly lit as possible, as artificial light can interfere with our natural sleeping patterns.
- J** If people are being noisy, ask them to keep it down.
- K** Make sure your bed is comfortable, but has a firm mattress that will support your back and spine while you sleep.
- L** Keep your room well aired, as you will enjoy deeper sleep.



# MY GOALS

## GOAL ONE

Do I want this for me (not my parents or someone else): Yes / No

What are the steps I need to take to reach my goal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Who can help me reach my goal:

How will I know I have achieved the Goal:

## GOAL TWO

Do I want this for me (not my parents or someone else): Yes / No

What are the steps I need to take to reach my goal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Who can help me reach my goal:

How will I know I have achieved the Goal:



# THINGS THAT HOLD ME BACK

**MY GOAL:** I want to perform a song at a talent show with my two friends.

**THIS CAN HOLD ME BACK /BE A BARRIER BETWEEN ME AND MY GOAL.**

**THIS IS HOW I WILL OVERCOME IT.**

I can feel a little unconfident when we get asked to sing our song and we get giggly, which makes people think we can't sing (even though we are good singers).

We will practice the intro piece and have a code that we use when someone starts to get giggly.

We will make a pact not to laugh.

We don't know where to perform.

We will make a list of all the possibilities and then start calling them up. If there is none then we maybe have to make our own.

People don't take us seriously.

We will work on how we sell ourselves and look at old YouTube videos of people who made it like Beyonce and Lady Gaga to see how they come across.

We have no money for good costumes.

Once we have a venue and date we will fund raise by singing for our families and neighbours (which is for practice and some fundraising).



## MY GOAL:

## THIS IS HOW I WILL OVERCOME IT





# **SESSION 3** **MANAGING STRESS**





## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**To learn what stress is and how it feels for us**

**To develop some new ways of helping ourselves when we feel stressed**

## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

- **SHEETS OF A4 PAPER WITH THE NUMBERS 1 TO 10 DRAWN ON EACH (ONE NUMBER ON EACH SHEET, ENSURE THERE ARE 10 IN TOTAL)**
- **FLIP CHART**
- **COLOURED MARKERS**
- **PRINT OUT OF THE WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE**
- **PROPS / DRESS UP FOR A PLAY (OPTIONAL)**



## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In:** The Web

**Warm Up:** Stress Reduction

**Closing:** Don't Forget to Breathe

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### STRESS

Stress is often a significant and on-going problem experienced by young people living in higher stress family environments, including homes where drugs or alcohol are causing a problem. The aim in this session is both to acknowledge this, and to build resilience.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING ISSUES

Coping mechanisms, stress and similar topics may create a space where young people discuss serious mental health concerns, self-harm, suicide etc. Ensure that facilitators are familiar with their organisation's policy regarding disclosure of self-harm, and are ready to respond to any challenging situations around this issue should they arise.

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
UNDERSTANDING STRESS	20
WHEN I GET STRESSED I...	10
THE ABC OF MANAGING STRESS	20
GOOD STRESS BAD STRESS	20
HEALTHY / UNHEALTHY REACTIONS	5
STRESS LESS PART 2	5
TOTAL	1 HR 20



# UNDERSTANDING STRESS

20  
MINS



To help participants understand that if they have negative feelings, if they feel like there are demands on them, if they feel worried, tense, upset or angry that this is what being 'stressed' is, and that it is a common thing for young people.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

### 15 MINS UNDERSTANDING STRESS STEP 1: FEELINGS ON THE FLOOR

- 1 Lay some sheets on the floor, numbered from 1 to 10.
- 2 Ask the group; 'have you ever been asked to rate something, for example have you ever been asked 'on a scale of 1-10 how much do you like Rhianna / Man Utd etc.'? A '1' usually means that you don't like it at all, and '10' means you absolutely love it. A '3' means you don't really like it but you don't hate it, and a '7' means that it's pretty good, but you don't love it. A five is that you are not pushed either way or you think it's a bit average.
- 3 Explain 'we're going to do some ratings now. I'm going to read a statement to you and tell you what a '1' means and what a '10' means, and you go and stand beside the number to rate how you feel about the statement. Let's start with the very important issue of pepperoni on pizza. If you LOVE pepperoni on pizza, go to '10'. If you HATE pepperoni on pizza, go to '1'.
- 4 Ask a couple of participants to discuss why they rated pepperoni the way they did. Ask on or two more example questions to get everyone moving and used to rating things using this game.
- 5 Now that everyone has got the general idea, explain that now you want to get their feelings on some other things.
- 6 Explain that living in a family where there are problems with drugs or alcohol can be extra stressful, especially for young people. Ask them if they agree?
- 7 Ask everyone to name one or two things in life that causes them to get sad, angry, annoyed, worried, tense or upset, i.e. something that causes them stress. Write these things on a flip chart.



- 8** Now, read out a statement from this list and get the group to rate them by standing in the position from 1 to 10. 1 = this doesn't cause me stress, and 10 is this causes me lots of stress.
- 9** Statements could include things like the following:
- My family member making a show of us by fighting on the street /being stoned etc.
  - My family shouting at each other and fighting.
  - Having friends come over to the house.
  - My friends in school slagging of my family member.
- 10** The statements don't have to relate to the substance use issue only, but can deal with other issues.
- 11** After each participant has chosen their place on the scale, allow a space for people to discuss their reasons for choosing a place before moving on to the next issue.
- 12** Make sure everyone is clear that they do not have to talk about why they have chosen to stand where they have, but that it's great if they want to as it helps the group understand that different things affect people differently. Being aware of this helps us support each other a little better.

## **5 MINS** UNDERSTANDING STRESS STEP 2: DISCUSSION ON STRESS

As a group, reflect on the following:

- Did you score high on many of the ratings?
- What do you think 'stress' is? (Hint: people feel stressed when they feel like the demands or pressures on them are more than what they can cope with). Stress is a normal part of every day life. Being young and being a teenager can be a stressful time for anyone, but this can be much harder when you live in a home where there are problems caused by drugs or alcohol.
- What are some of the ways that stress can affect us? (Hint: emotional can include feeling irritable, sad or not being able to concentrate and physical can include sleeplessness, appetite problems, headaches, stomach aches, tiredness).
- Were there some things that everyone found stressful, and were they the things you expected?



# WHEN I GET STRESSED I...

10  
MINS

## EXPLORING COMMON RESPONSES TO STRESS



This activity is designed to give people an opportunity to think about what it is that they normally do to cope with stress.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 The facilitator may want to remind everyone that sharing is welcomed but not compulsory.
- 2 The facilitator should look at the **Stress Less** worksheet (page 12). For this exercise, the group will answer question one. Question two is addressed later.
- 3 Discuss: Think about the things you normally do when you get stressed. Try to be honest about what you do, we all have different ways of coping.
- 4 Give all participants a copy of the **Stress Less** sheet.
- 5 Take a few minutes to complete question one in your sheet or in pairs to think of 5 things you do when you get stressed.
- 6 Get everyone back together. Ask if anyone would like to share and remind everyone that they don't have to. Once someone has shared, thank him or her and ask if anyone else does this or wants to comment.



# THE ABC OF MANAGING STRESS

20  
MINS

## AIM

This exercise is to help participants understand that there are ways to respond to stress that can make them feel better, and ways that can make them feel worse and try to explore case studies.

## INSTRUCTIONS

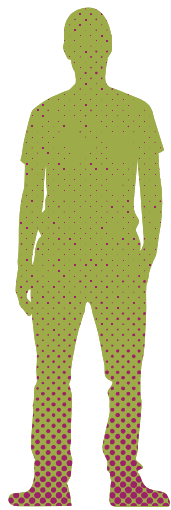
- 1 Write a large A, B and C on three rows on a flip chart.
- 2 Explain: When we look at stress and how we deal with it, we can look at it in three stages:
  - A the action or the thing that made us stressed.
  - B our behaviour, the way we react to the stressful thing.
  - C the consequences of our behaviour – what happened after? Has it made things better or worse for us?
- 3 As you discuss what each thing means, fill in the words 'Action' 'Behaviour' 'Consequence' beside the appropriate letter.
- 4 As a group discuss the following scenarios and after each one try to identify the A, B & C.



## JOANNE'S STORY

Joanne's sister is sent back into prison (Hint: A). Joanne's family are fighting all the time and she doesn't know how to cope. She spends a lot of time in her room (Hint: B) and doesn't talk to any of her family or friends, sometimes for a long time. This makes Joanne far lonelier and she doesn't feel close to anyone. (Hint: C).





## NEIL'S STORY

Neil's brother just came home, sat on the couch, took the remote control off him and changed the channel from what he was watching (Hint: A). Neil was furious, he was enjoying watching the show and he's sick of his brother thinking he can do whatever he likes. Neil started shouting at his brother and jumped across the couch and tried to pull the remote out of his hand (Hint: B). His brother shouted back and hit him. Neil stormed out of the room and didn't get to watch anything that he wanted to (Hint: C).

- 5** Ask the group if these behaviours were useful. For this exercise, we'll see if the group can identify more useful behaviours that would have resulted in better consequences.
- 6** Now, divide the group in to three or four, and ask them to write / draw out a new 'ABC' for Neil and/or Joanne using the ABC Spells Stress (page 14) sheet below **OR** if numbers are small, there are issues with reading and writing or for any other reason you would prefer a discussion rather than written exercise, this can take the form of a full group discussion.
- 7** As a large group discuss the new 'ABC' that they wrote / drew / discussed, and why it is healthier and ends up in a better result for them. Some hints:
  - A** Neil could have negotiated with his brother to share the time, he could have waited for his brother to get bored and leave, he could have ignored him and pretended he didn't care, he could have convinced him that something good was on another channel
  - B** Joanne could have spoken to her friends or family online if she didn't want to talk in person. She could have told a friend 'I'm in a bad mood, I don't want to talk about it but I feel like watching a movie / going for a walk etc.



# GOOD STRESS BAD STRESS

20  
MINS

## AIM

This is to look at healthy and unhealthy stress behaviours and practice them in role plays. Note, that this can be good fun, particularly if the participants are responding an unhealthy way. There should be fun and learning in whatever they choose.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Break participants into smaller groups. Explain that this next exercise is about looking more at healthy and unhealthy responses to stress.
- 2 Each group will be given a scenario that they have to invent the end of.
- 3 They will act out a reaction to a stressful situation and the other groups have to decide whether it was a healthy or unhealthy reaction and why.
- 4 Give each group a scenario and tell them whether they have to make it a healthy or unhealthy behaviour. Here are some example scenarios:
  - A Your friends at school come over and start telling you that your brother is a waster.
  - B Your sister steals five euro from your room and your mam tells you that she won't replace it for you.
  - C Your teacher gives out to you for not doing your homework but your family were shouting at each other in the house last night, so you had to get out of there.
- 5 Each group take three minutes to come up with a little play, showing how their lead character will react, include some consequences.
- 6 One by one, the groups perform a 3 minute play. The other groups have to guess whether it was a healthy or unhealthy reaction. After each play, hold a short discussion:
  - How do you think the young person will feel after they reacted in that way?
  - What would have been another healthy way to handle the situation?



# LIST OF HEALTHY / UNHEALTHY REACTIONS

5  
MINS

This is a simple exercise where young people will have an opportunity to list what stress reaction behaviours are healthy and what are less so. It will not always be perfectly clear if a reaction is healthy or unhealthy.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP

As a group, try to identify 10 healthy reactions to stress and 10 unhealthy reactions to stress. Write these on a flipchart. Some healthy reactions could include:

- 1 Saying 'No' when you don't want to do something, but a friend is pressuring you
- 2 Talking to a relation, teacher or friend about what's on your mind.
- 3 Taking responsibility for your feelings and communicating this to the other person: rather than saying 'you are making me annoyed' saying 'I feel annoyed when you...'
- 4 Doing something creative, like singing, painting, making music or writing.
- 5 Doing something physical like sport, running, yoga, dancing.
- 6 Standing in a field and yelling.
- 7 Going for a walk somewhere beautiful or peaceful.
- 8 Listen to some music you love and sing along really loud.
- 9 Get regular exercise.
- 10 Get good sleep.
- 11 Eat less sugar and more healthy food.
- 12 Find something funny to laugh at.
- 13 Treat yourself – go see a friend, watch a movie.



## STRESS LESS PART 2

5  
MINS

To identify what healthier reactions the participants will try to use in future. Beating stress means changing your usual habits for something better and more positive.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Now that we have talked a lot about healthy and unhealthy reactions to stress, go to the second part of Stress Less worksheet and write down or draw some new ways that you think you might deal with stress in the future.





# STRESS LESS

## QUESTION 1: WHEN I GET STRESSED I...

1

2

3

4

5



## NEXT TIME I GET STRESSED, I WILL TRY TO ...

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**



# ABC SPELLS STRESS

- 1 Fill in the 'consequences' of the old ABC.
- 2 Help Neil and Joanne to develop a healthier reaction by filling in the NEW behaviour and consequence.

NEIL	OLD	NEW
Action	Brother took the remote	Brother took the remote
Behaviour		
Consequence		

JOANNE	OLD	NEW
Action	Sister goes to prison & family fights	Sister goes to prison & family fights
Behaviour		
Consequence		





# **SESSION 4** **COMMUNICATION & CONFLICT**





## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To learn how to communicate better when we're not happy

To learn how to manage conflict in a positive way that gets the best results

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- TENNIS BALL OR HAND-SIZED BEANBAG
- FLIPCHARTS AND MARKERS
- PRINT OUT OF WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE
- DIFFERENT COLOURED SHEETS OF PAPER OR MARKERS (INCLUDING BLACK, GREY, RED, BROWN ETC.)

### SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT	15
I MESSAGE YOU	20
BE STRONG, BE MEAN, GIVE IN	35
IN MY LIFE	5
TOTAL	1 HR 15

## FACILITATORS NOTES

This session deals with conflict and touches on conflict with family, peers etc. If there are a group of young people who know each other from a neighbourhood or school, there may be a need to remind of confidentiality agreements among the group. As well as this, the group could discuss ways to protect the confidentiality of others outside the group who may be known to the rest of the group, for example, by telling stories with 'a person I know' rather than disclosing the person's name.



## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In:** Catch a Story

**Warm Up:** Telephone Whispers

**Closing:** N/A

## UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT 20 MINS



To begin to explore what conflict is through creative activities and discussions and also through sharing their own experiences

### INSTRUCTIONS

#### 1 Discussion: What is conflict?

- As a group, sit and discuss 'what is conflict'. Below are some points to help with the discussion. You may also want to call out one of these statements and get people to say whether they think it is true, or if they can think of a better way to say it:
  - Conflict is a regular part of our lives, an everyday occurrence.
  - Conflict is disagreement, arguing and having different viewpoints.
  - Conflict happens between two or more people, when they don't agree with each other.
  - Conflict does not always end in fights or violence and we normally resolve it.
  - Conflict can be good if it allows us to express different views and to hear each other and work through the issue.

#### 2 Discussion: Everyday examples of conflict.

- The aim here is simply to highlight that conflict is an everyday part of life that we must learn to manage well.
- Ask everyone to describe a disagreement or conflict they've had, or seen in any of the following places.
  - A shop
  - School
  - On the street
  - At home



### 3 Discussion: Helping Maria Manage Conflict



*Maria goes into the chipper to get a bag of chips and a few young people from her estate are there. One of them who she had a row with last week, starts slagging her and calling her names. Maria shouts at her and storms out of the shop, without her chips.*

- Discuss the following scenario
- How do you think Maria was feeling? Why did she shout and leave without her chips?
- How else could Maria have reacted? Did she get what she wanted? What else could Maria have done?  
**Hint:** Perhaps Maria could have ignored the girl who was slagging her, or told her to leave her alone and got her chips and walked out.
- Why bother trying to learn how to resolve conflict? Ask the group to recall a time that conflict was managed well, or not so well, and what happened as a result and discuss the advantages of managing conflict well. (**Hint:** managing conflict well can help us get what we want - see Maria example below, managing conflict well can reduce stress, can make us safer, can improve our relationships etc.)



# I MESSAGE YOU<sup>1</sup> 20 MINS

## AIM

The aim of this exercise is to teach participants a simple method for clearly explaining when they are not happy with something. For young people living in homes where there are problematic drug or alcohol related behaviours, this can be a particularly important skill.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1 Discuss the following idea with the group:

*When there is conflict, everyone thinks it is the other person's fault. In fact, we're often all partially to blame. When we get angry with each other, it's really easy to blame the other person but when we blame other people, we can make them angry and then everyone ends up hurt. That doesn't mean we shouldn't tell people how we are feeling though. We can use 'I' messages to tell other people why we are upset and what we need without blaming.*

### 2 There are four simple steps for 'I' messages: (write these on a flipchart)

**ONE:** Say how you feel: **I feel....**

**TWO:** Say what the other person did to upset you: **when you...**

**THREE:** Describe how that affected you: **because....**

**FOUR:** Finally, say what would make it better: **and I want...**

### 3 Give an example to the group:

*Jenny asked Mary around to her house to watch telly. Mary said she would come around, but then she never did and went out to hang around at the shops with other people instead. She didn't text Jenny to tell her and Jenny felt really annoyed so she tells Mary: **I feel** angry and upset **when you** make a plan with me but then don't come over **because** I'm left waiting and wondering what's happening and I felt upset. **I want** you to text me next time if we make a plan and then you change your mind.*

### 4 Exercise: I Messages Together

- Read out the four stories on the **I Message** worksheet (page 8).
- Break into groups or do it as a large group.
- Fill in the boxes on the **I Message** worksheet together.
- If the group was in smaller groups, come back together and discuss each story and how you would communicate your **I Message**.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Shapiro E. 101 Ways to Teach Children Social Skills. Bureau for At Risk Youth.



# BE STRONG, BE MEAN OR GIVE IN<sup>3</sup> 35 MINS

## AIM

This exercise is about teaching the participants different ways of managing conflict (passive, aggressive and assertive). Again, in a high-stress environment it is important to consider a range of ways to handle conflict and know that we have choices in how we respond to it.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### EXERCISE 1: CHOICES (15)

- 1 Ask for two volunteers to act out this scenario, or have the facilitators act it out:

**A** After the role play,

- have a symbolic gesture to mark the difference between them and the character they were playing – for example a round of applause / pat on the back for being such great actors
- have a discussion about the scenario answering the following questions:
  - How do you think Rory was feeling? How was David feeling?
  - How did Rory react to David?

*David wants to steal money from Brian's bag, as Brian was mean to his sister. David comes up to Rory and asks him to help him do it but Rory likes Brian and doesn't want to. They have a row about it, because they both believe they are right.*

- 2 Explain:

- When we are in a conflict situation, there are a number of different ways that we can react, we can: **Be Mean, Be Strong or Give in**
- Discuss: What do each of these things mean?
  - **Be Mean** = do something to hurt another person (their body or their feelings) or use force or threats to make somebody do something they don't want to do
  - **Be Strong** = be nice and respecting the other person while standing up firmly for yourself (your rights, your interests).
  - **Give in** = go along with what someone wants you to do even though you'd rather do something else.

- 3 Ask the group to discuss these questions

- What could Rory have said to David if he was being mean?
- What could Rory have said to David if he was being strong?
- What could Rory have said to David if he was giving in?

<sup>3</sup> Language adapted from the Morningside Centre for Teaching Social Responsibility



## EXERCISE 2: MEAN, STRONG, GIVE IN ROLE PLAY / STORY TELLING (20)

- 1 Break the group into three if there are enough people (2 people per group is enough).
- 2 Read out each of the following scenarios and ask each group to act it out or tell the story as 'mean', 'strong', or 'give in' (if telling the story, they should describe how the characters act and what they say).

**Amanda:** Amanda's mother wants to borrow her iPod for the afternoon while she goes out, but Amanda doesn't want to give it to her because her Mam lost Amanda's last one that she leant her.

**Chris:** Chris's friend Matt is saying horrible things about Chris's brother, Charlo. Chris is sick of Matt saying bad things about Charlo.

**Louise:** Louise's dad screamed at her even though she didn't do anything wrong.

- 3 After the role play or storytelling, have a symbolic gesture to mark the difference between them and the character they were playing – for example a round of applause / pat on the back for being such great actors.
- 4 Now have a conversation with the group reflecting on the different reactions:
  - Is one of the three types of reactions better than the other?
  - Are there times in life or situations where it's important to be one or the other? While it seems obvious that 'being strong' is the best course of action, it's worth considering:
    - If there is a threat of violence, it may be better to give in, even though you want to be strong.
    - If someone is mean to you, but really needs your help it may be better to give in and help them even though they've been mean.
    - If someone is being a bully to someone who is weaker, maybe you won't be mean, but you may choose to be really clear about how they are being and this may feel like being mean.



## STEP 5: IN MY LIFE 5 MINS

### AIM

This is an opportunity for participants to pause and reflect on what they have learned and how they might apply it in their own lives. This can be done either using the 'In My Life' Worksheet (page 9), or as a visualisation. Hand out a copy of the In My Life worksheet (if using it) if using

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Ask participants to sit quietly and think about a time they had conflict, or think of a conflict they are afraid of having.
- 2 Ask participants to imagine themselves in the situation again, but this time with absolute confidence that they will handle it well.
- 3 Ask them to think of the situation, their feelings about the other person.
- 4 Invite them to wish both themselves and that person are safe and free from harm and suffering and that it will be a fair resolution to the problem.
- 5 Ask them to think about what steps they would take to handle the situation, and really imagine themselves doing that this time including what they would say what their facial expressions and what their body language would be... (fill out the worksheet if it is being used).
- 6 Ask them to feel pride at having resolved the situation well.



# I MESSAGES

	I FEEL	WHEN YOU	BECAUSE	I WANT
<i>Your mam forgets to tell you she's going out and leaves you locked out of the house.</i>				
<i>Your brother comes home and makes a show of you in front of your friends.</i>				
<i>Your friend starts slagging your family off in front of your other friends.</i>				
<i>Your teacher shouts at you in the middle of the class for not having your homework done.</i>				



## IN MY LIFE

**I've had conflict in my life before when....**

**My reaction before was...**

**If this happened again I would...**





# **SESSION 5** **ASSERTIVENESS** **& SAYING NO**





# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To be able to recognise when we have trouble saying no

To practice saying no to situation in a way which does not upset others

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- A BAG OF CHOCOLATE SWEETS
- PEN AND PAPER EACH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS
- PRINT OUTS OF WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE
- FLIPCHART AND MARKERS

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are

suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In:** Deciding as a Group What to Do on the Outing

**Warm Up:** Chocolate Charge

**Closing:** Grounding Close

**TRICKLE IN  
WARM UP  
CLOSING EXERCISES**

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### HUMAN RIGHTS

In this session, there is a discussion on human rights and responsibilities towards others. It may be useful to have a read through and have an age-appropriate definition or understanding of what human rights are in order to facilitate discussion.

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
THE RIGHT JOBS	25
AWFUL ROFL ROLE PLAY	10
PRESSURE POINTS	10
STEPS TO NO	20
IN MY LIFE	10
TOTAL	1 HR 15



# THE RIGHTS JOB

25  
MINS

## AIM

The aim of this exercise is to help the participants understand that they have rights that they can assert, and that they have a responsibility to respect the rights of other people too.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1 Discussion on Rights and Responsibilities (5 mins):** Ask the group if they know what 'rights' are? Have a brief discussion considering the following points:

- Rights are things that people deserve, no matter who they are, how old they are or where they live.
- Everyone in Ireland has a right to food, shelter, water, education etc.
- We all have the right to feel safe, be different, express ourselves etc.
- If everyone has rights, that means we have a responsibility to help other people enjoy their rights too.

**2 Exercise 2: Rights (20 mins)**

- Either break into groups, or as a large group, fill in **The Rights Job** (page 8) sheet.
- Come back together as a large group and discuss their responses to the different questions
- Some appropriate responses might include:

### I HAVE THE RIGHT...

### IT'S MY JOB...

I have the right to say no if someone asks me to do something I don't want to.

It's my job to listen to other people if they say no.

If someone is doing something that I don't like I have the right to ask them to stop.

It's my job to listen to them and to stop doing something if it's making some uncomfortable or hurting them in any way.

If I disagree with what someone is saying I have the right to give my opinion.

It's my job to listen to the opinions of other people.

If I see someone being hurt by another person, I have the right to speak up for them.

It's my job to listen to other people if they tell me I am hurting someone by my words or actions.

If there's something I want, I have the right to ask for it.

It's my job to listen to other people if they ask me for something, and answer them respectfully.



# AWFUL ROFL ROLE PLAY

10  
MINS

## AIM

The aim of this exercise is to look at rights / responsibilities in a practical way, and to look at the importance of standing up to others.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The following can be done either in small groups, or in a large group, where those who are not doing the role play can observe and make comments. Read the scenario, and follow the instructions:

*David, Jenny and Mark are hanging around. David is talking to Jenny, calling her mother (who drinks heavily) names and pushing her.*

- 1 Ask participants to take on the role of David, Jenny and Mark and to respond in the following ways (swap the roles between each role play):
  - Mark joins in with David, making fun of her Mam.
  - Mark stands up for Jenny.
- 2 After the role play, in each instance, discuss:
  - How do you think David felt? How do you think Jennie felt? How do you think Mark felt? How do you feel?
  - What were Jenny's, David's and Mark's rights and responsibilities in this situation?
- 3 After the role play, have a symbolic gesture to mark the difference between them and the character they were playing – for example a round of applause / pat on the back for being such great actors.



# REFUSING: PRESSURE POINTS **10 MINS**

## AIM

This section exercise is to help the participants develop skills to say 'no' assertively and in a way that will result in a better result for them. The aim of this first part of the exercise is to get the group into the headspace of feeling pressured to do things they don't want to do

**1** Give every person a pen and paper and get them to write a few examples of when:

- Someone asked you to do something you didn't want to do.
- A time when you've done something, even though you didn't want to do it.

Examples might include: someone wanting to fight, someone wanting you to pass drugs on to someone else, someone wanting to borrow money, someone wanting you to share something that is your own that you don't want to share, someone wanting you to drink / smoke / take drugs.

- Ask the group to discuss their examples if they feel like sharing. In the next example we're going to look at good ways to say no.



# STEPS TO NO

25  
MINS



The aim of this part is to remind participants that they have the right to say no, and saying no can be done effectively

- 1 There are five important steps to saying 'no' outlined below. You won't always use all 5 steps, but each is important at different times. Write the five steps out on a flipchart, or do illustrations to show each step. Discuss what each means as you write them up:

**ONE: Say no**, be strong, clear and polite.

**TWO: Explain why**, using language based around I (I feel, I would like etc)

**THREE: Leave the 'door open'** if you want e.g. I don't want to do that, but if you want to hang out later let me know... (only use this if its honest, otherwise you are just moving the problem to the future, and creating potential for miscommunication)

**FOUR:** If someone is applying pressure to you, or putting their needs before your own, **then say how you feel** in a polite and kind way. And tell them you will discuss it with them later (if they are family or friends and you need to discuss it again), or if you don't need to discuss it again, you can end the conversation by

**FIVE:** Walking away. changing the conversation of saying that you don't wish to discuss it anymore

- 2 Now, going back to the participant's examples in the 'Pressure Points', give each group a scenario, or use the ones below, and ask participants to act out the scenarios using the five steps to NO outlined above:

*Someone in school  
you don't like says  
they want to fight you.  
You don't want to fight  
them*

*Your brother asks to borrow €20  
from you. This is your pocket money  
that you have saved and you were  
planning on buying new runners with  
it in a couple of months when you  
have enough. He borrowed off you  
before and didn't return it.*



*Your friend wants you to go  
and smoke a joint with them.  
You don't want to do this.*

*A guy from your estate says your  
sister owes him money and you  
have to mind drugs for him until  
your sister pays them.*

If you think the group are ready and have a good grasp on the basics, you can ask the people playing in the role of friend/ brother / person in school to push them a bit further and not accept their refusal, and discuss ways of dealing with this.

## IN MY LIFE 10 MINS

### AIM

The aim of this section is for participants to apply learning to their own lives.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** You can have this as a group discussion, or participants can fill out the worksheet **In My Life** (page 10) and feedback if wished.
- 2** Everyone think of a time in their life where they wanted to say no, but didn't. What would they do differently if this happened again? How they would overcome any challenges in doing this?



# THE RIGHTS JOB

1) When someone asks me to do something I don't want, I have the right to...

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If I ask someone to do something they don't want, it's my job to...

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2) If someone is doing something I don't like, I have the right to....

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If someone asks me to stop doing something because they don't like it, it's my job to....

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3) If someone is being hurt by another person, I have the right to....

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If someone tells me I am hurting someone else by my words or actions, it's my job to....

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4) If there's something I want, I have the right to....

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If someone wants something from me, it's my job to....

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## SAYING 'NO' IN MY LIFE

Things that I have been asked to do that I haven't wanted to do...

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

The next time a situation like this happens I will....

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.





**SESSION 6**

# **DRUGS & ALCOHOL**





# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To understand drug and alcohol use and explode some myths about it

To explore when and how drug or alcohol use becomes a problem for some people and their families

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- A SELECTION OF OLD MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS, GLUE AND PAPER
- A PRIZE FOR A TEAM QUIZ
- PRINT-OUTS OF ACCOMPANYING HANDOUT

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

**Trickle In/ Warm Up:** Drugs and Alcohol Collage

**Warm Up:** Coming Into the Room

**Closing:** Being Present and Positive

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### INFORMATION & ANTICIPATING QUESTIONS

The facilitator should read through this session in advance and ensure that they have brushed up on their knowledge of drink, drugs, dependence etc. so that they can answer the participants' questions as they arise

### CONFIDENTIALITY

If participants are telling stories about friends, remind them not to use real names as other people may know them. Beginning stories with 'someone I know' may be useful.

### SUPPORT

As with other sessions, ensure you have contact numbers for specialist youth supports in case you need to make a referral.

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
QUIZ	15
STICKS & STONES	10
ALL ABOUT DRUGS	20
STAGES OF DRUG USE	10
TO BFF OR NOT TO BFF	15
99 PROBLEMS	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 HR 15</b>



## MYTH-BUSTING QUIZ

15  
MINS

### AIM

To have some light-hearted fun while getting the young people thinking about drink and drugs and to challenge some commonly held myths about it. There is a rationale for each question on the accompanying sheet for facilitators. This quiz should be fast and exciting.

- 1 Get everyone in a team of three or four people and hand out the **Myth Busting questions sheet** (page 9).
- 2 Read the questions and give the teams a chance to discuss each answer before marking it down on the sheet.
- 3 Once completed, teams swap sheets and mark the other teams sheets while the facilitator reads out the answers from the **Myth Busting Facilitators Sheet** (page 10) and encourages discussion if any of the answers were not known.
- 4 The winning team gets a prize.

## STICKS & STONES

10  
MINS

### AIM

To agree on common language for referring to people who might have a problem with drink or drugs and give participants a chance to name all the stigmatising / negative words for people who have problems with drink or drugs. This both highlights stigma and reduces potential giddiness from saying 'bold' words during the session. Again, this should be a quick-fire, fun and energetic exercise.

- 1 Get everyone to call out words that are used to describe people who use alcohol or other drugs. Encourage the group to say whatever terms come to their mind, including any negative or stigmatising words
- 2 Once they are all on the flipchart, have a discussion about which terms are negative, neutral or positive and why.
- 3 Agree words that you will use in the session from this point onwards (try to agree for neutral terms e.g. people who use drugs, people who drink, people who have a problem with drink / drugs)



# ALL ABOUT DRUGS

20  
MINS



The aim of this activity is to start the young people thinking about different types of substance, their level of harm, potential for dependence etc., while generating some energy by walking around the room

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1** The facilitator should explain that the group are now going to think about different substances, what they are used for and how dependent people can become on them. The group will discuss different ways of looking at drugs such as:
  - Legal or illegal
  - Being used for medicine or for recreation
  - Being very harmful or relatively safe
- 2** It is important to note that this exercise is not about right or wrong, or how much you should know. It's about getting a discussion going and helping each other to learn.
- 3** Brainstorm examples of drugs; include local names, onto a large sheet of paper... the facilitator should make some suggestions and fill in gaps.
- 4** Cut up the list of drugs, on the sheet and give one to each participant.
- 5** More than one participant can have the same drug if there are more participants than drug types.



- 6** For each of the following, pick a point in the room and tell participants to go to the point that matches their drug, e.g.:

MOVE TO THE RIGHT OF THE ROOM IF YOUR DRUG IS...	MOVE TO THE LEFT OF THE ROOM IF YOUR DRUG IS...
A medicine	A drug for fun
Causes harm	Does not cause harm
Legal	Illegal
Prescribed by a doctor	Not prescribed by a doctor
Can be bought by kids	Can't be bought by kids
Can lead to dependence	Doesn't lead to dependence
Is used to cope with stress	Isn't used to cope with stress

- 7** It is important to note that there is no right or wrong answer here. Many drugs are used both recreationally and medically, many drugs are legal in one form and illegal in another and drugs are used differently by different individuals. Each participant could go to any corner and could be correct!
- 8** Discuss the different topics as they arise, challenging and correcting any misinformation.



# STAGES OF DRUG USE

10  
MINS



To help participants understand the varying stages of drug and alcohol use, from experimentation to problematic use, and how to identify different degrees of use.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1 Experimentation: Why do people use drugs in the first instance?

- A** Split into two to three discussion groups.
- B** Each group must talk for three minutes, and come up with three reasons why someone might try drugs or alcohol.
- C** Each group then feeds back to the larger group.
- D** Have a brief discussion on any other reasons why people might try drugs or alcohol. Here is a list of common reasons:
  - They're curious and want to try it
  - They saw someone doing it who looked like they were having fun
  - They were told it was good fun
  - They want to fit in with their peers
  - They're stressed and heard it helps you relax
  - They think it's cool
  - They saw someone doing it on telly
  - They saw a family member doing it
  - Their friends are doing it
  - They think it makes them look mature or grown up
  - They want to rebel / make a teacher or parent angry
  - An older brother / sister / friend gave them some to try
  - Because it's cheap and easy to get
  - Everyone on the estate does it

### 2 Discuss with the group:

- A** This is known as 'experimental' drug or alcohol use; the young person is trying it because they don't really know what it's like.
- B** What happens when someone knows what it's like to use something, and plans to use it to have fun?
  - The person graduates to being a 'recreational' user... they use drugs or alcohol as part of socialising, or for fun.
- C** If a person uses a drug or alcohol, do they become dependent on it (dependent meaning the need it to feel ok or not to feel bad)?
  - There is a fear that if a person uses drugs they will become dependent or addicted. No drug leads immediately to a physical or psychological dependence however, drug-related harm could occur at all levels of use, including experimental, recreational and problematic use.



# TO BFF OR NOT TO BFF...

15  
MINS

## AIM

The aim of this exercise is for the group to consider why some people who try or use drugs or alcohol develop problems and others don't.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Draw an image of two people up on the board and give them names.
- 2 This is Alex and Mary, Alex and Mary meet each other at the shop and get along well. Does this mean they will become good friends?
- 3 The group should split into two:
  - A Group A: Draw 5 things that would help them become good friends
    - I Examples might include – that they live near each other, that they go to the same school, that their parents let them be friends etc.
  - B Group B: Draw 5 things that would prevent them from becoming good friends
    - I Examples might include – that they don't go to the same school, that they live far away and there's no bus to get to each other's house, that one of them loses the other one's phone number etc.
  - C Each group should present what they found back to the rest of the group

## DISCUSSION

- Begin the discussion with a context such as..."Now that we've talked about how lots of different factors can influence whether or not you become friends with someone, let's think about the different factors that can influence whether someone develops a problem with drugs or alcohol or not"...
- What are the different things that the group think could make it more likely that someone will develop a problem with drink or drugs? What are the things that can help prevent young people from developing a problem with drink or drugs? Note, a resource such as the 40 Developmental Assets may be useful for such a discussion.
- It is important in such a discussion to ensure the focus is on protective factors and that all risk factors can be mitigated by protective factors.



# 99 PROBLEMS

10  
MINS

## AIM

To help the participants think about what things indicate that drug or alcohol use is becoming a problem for someone.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Read Julie's story aloud to the group (below).
- 2 Break into two groups.
- 3 Each group should consider what they would say if they were Julie's friend, brother or sister. What are the things they would say to her, about some of the changes that are happening, to help her see that things are becoming a bit of a problem?
- 4 Provide each group with the **Advice for Julie sheet** (page 11) and ask them to write down what observations they might make to Julie.
- 5 Feedback and try to consider how Julie might react, why it is important to use specific examples of observations etc.

### JULIE'S STORY

*Julie tried smoking weed for the first time two years ago. She didn't really like it but all of her friends were doing it at lunchtime in school so she did it too.*

*She used to feel stoned and really tired in classes after lunch. She started sneaking out to smoke it after school at home too and staying up late watching videos eating snacks.*

*Her mam was asking her why she was running straight up to her room all the time and avoiding her family.*

*She stopped seeing her friend Sarah in the evenings because Sarah wasn't interested in smoking joints. She started snapping at her mam and brother whenever they tried to talk to her.*

*Julie started finding it a bit harder to get up in the mornings and didn't have time to get ready properly. She felt tired and grumpy a lot and found the easiest way to deal with it was just to get stoned.*



# MYTH BUSTING

		FACT	MYTH
1	Alcohol is a drug		
2	Cigarettes are a drug		
3	A blackout is when someone passes out from drink		
4	Young people who use hash/weed are more at risk of depression and anxiety		
5	Young people who use cannabis (hash/weed) have more fun than their peers		
6	Drinking coffee sobers you up after drinking alcohol		
7	One in ten young people use illegal drugs apart from cannabis		
8	Drinking vodka or whiskey makes you far more drunk than drinking beer		
9	Most problems to do with drink are caused by people who have a 'drink problem'		
10	Accidental / unplanned pregnancies happen more when young people drink		



# MYTH BUSTING

- 1) True:** Alcohol is a legal, sedative drug – sedatives are drugs that are normally used to help people relax, or put them to sleep.
  - a.** This is to help participants understand the similarity between alcohol and other drugs.
- 2) True:** Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. Smoking affects functions in your body like your brain and your hormones.
  - a.** This is to help participants understand the similarity between cigarettes and other drugs.
- 3) False:** A black-out is when a person who was drinking or taking other drugs forgets what happened at a certain point. Their friends remember what they did, but they don't. Black-outs are considered dangerous and a sign that someone is drinking at a very dangerous level. It's important to know that you don't have to black out to know you're drinking too much.
  - a.** This is to help participants understand the nature and danger of 'black-outs'.
- 4) True:** Cannabis use is associated with higher levels of depression and schizophrenia in later life. Cannabis can also make it difficult to learn and concentrate and can increase your risk of anxiety and paranoia.
  - a.** This is to highlight the link between cannabis use and mental health and social problems.
- 5) False:** There is no research to say this is true. People can have fun whether they use cannabis or not.
  - a.** This is to remind young people that some people think that cannabis can be fun, but it's not the only way to have fun.
- 6) False:** There is only one cure for too much alcohol and that's time for your body to process the alcohol. Nothing can make your body process it faster. Drinking coffee will just make you wide awake and drunk.
  - a.** This is to challenge the myth that coffee / cold showers etc. can sober you up.
- 7) False:** Only one in twenty young people use illegal drugs other than cannabis<sup>1</sup>
  - a.** This is to highlight a common myth (particularly among drug using peer groups) that 'everyone' tries or uses e, coke etc.
- 8) False:** Alcohol has the same effect, whether it's beer, wine or spirits. It depends on how fast you drink it. It's not the type of drink, but the amount of it that you drink in an hour. There's a much higher level of alcohol in spirits than in beer, so it's easier to drink more of it quicker.
  - a.** This is to highlight that it's the amount of alcohol, not what type of drink, that determines it's effects.
- 9) False:** Problems like motor accidents, violent assaults and accidental injury are mostly caused by moderate drinkers who occasionally overdo it<sup>2</sup>.
  - a.** This is to highlight that alcohol problems aren't experienced just by typical 'alcoholics' but can happen to anyone who drinks.
- 10) True:** When young people drink alcohol, they generally go further than they would like to, and are far more likely to get someone pregnant or become pregnant when they drink.
  - a.** This is to highlight the links between sex, pregnancy and drinking.

<sup>1</sup> Cannon M, Coughlan H, Clarke M, Harley M & Kelleher I (2013) *The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland: a report of the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research across the Lifespan (PERL) Group* Dublin: Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

<sup>2</sup> Drugs.ie



## TALKING TO JULIE

**“Julie, I’ve noticed about you that.....**

*For example... appearance / energy*

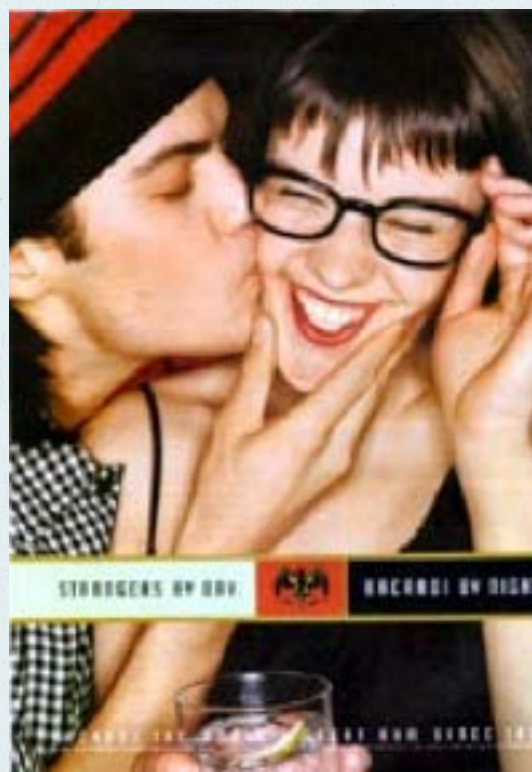
**“Julie, I’ve noticed about the way you are with other people that....**

*For example... losing friends, being cranky*

**“Julie, there’s a few things in your life seem to be not going so well, I’ve noticed that ....**

*For example... getting out of bed, school-work, no money...*









# **SESSION 7** **GROUP OUTING**





## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To learn how to communicate better when we're not happy

To learn how to manage conflict in a positive way that gets the best results

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- TENNIS BALL OR HAND-SIZED BEANBAG
- FLIPCHARTS AND MARKERS
- PRINT OUT OF WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE
- DIFFERENT COLOURED SHEETS OF PAPER OR MARKERS (INCLUDING BLACK, GREY, RED, BROWN ETC.)

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### OFF SITE WORKING AND ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES

This group and exercise should be conducted in line with your own organisation's policies regarding working off site.



# GAMES AND ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE USED ON THE OUTING



All of these exercises are to help 'gel' the group, have fun and get to know each other better.

## SLAP ON THE BACK

Stick an A4 sheet on everyone's back, everyone has a pen and spends a few minutes writing on each person sheet something positive about them that makes them special.

**Materials Needed:** Pens /markers, paper and sellotape.

## SCAVENGER HUNT

In small teams participants must get all the things on the list. The facilitator should develop a checklist that groups can tick off, based on the items chosen. Examples include:

- Middle names of seven people in their group.
- Find the secret talents of six people in the group.
- Find three wrappers of healthy things and three wrappers of unhealthy things.
- Collect the signatures of three people who you made laugh at your silliest joke.
- Get a picture of something that one of your group facilitators loves or that someone in the groups loves.

The facilitators should develop the scavenger checklist based on what will be available in the environment you are going to. The first team to collect all may win a prize.

**Materials Needed:** Scavenger Checklist (template below which can be edited to suit the group), Pens, paper and a prize for the winning team (optional).

## FORTUNATELY / UNFORTUNATELY STORY OF THE DAY

This is a good close if the group has done something that has been funny, creative or challenging. Ask the participants to stand in a circle and tell the story of the day, they should start at the beginning of the day, and move around in a circle explaining the days events, with each person starting their description with fortunately or unfortunately, (humour is the aim of the game) i.e:

Fortunately, most of us arrived on time.

Unfortunately, we all decided to sing on the bus

Fortunately, the song was not chosen by Ben.....



# SCAVENGER HUNT

**NAME:**

**3 WRAPPERS OF HEALTHY THINGS (TICK)**

☐

**SOMETHING THAT SOMEONE HAS LOST (TICK)**

☐

**3 WRAPPERS OF UNHEALTHY THINGS (TICK)**

☐

**SECRET TALENT OF 6 PEOPLE:  
(WRITE THEM DOWN)**

**MIDDLE NAMES OF 7 PEOPLE:  
(WRITE THEM DOWN)**

**PICTURE OF SOMETHING THAT SOMEBODY LOVES (TICK)**

☐

**SIGNATURES OF 3 PEOPLE WHO LAUGHED AT YOUR SILLY JOKE**





**SESSION 8**  
**COPING  
BETTER**





# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To be able to name emotions and discuss how everyone responds differently to different situations

To know when we need some help, and how to ask for it, even if it's difficult

Identify what kind of help works for us and how to get it

Discuss how to talk to with friends who are feeling down or sad

## MATERIALS NEEDED

**FRAMES / ARTS AND CRAFTS**

- **BLANK SHEETS OF A3 PAPER**
- **COLOURED MARKERS**
- **PRINT OUT OF THE WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE**
- **PROPS / DRESS UP FOR A PLAY (OPTIONAL)**

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### SUPPORTS

A broad range of personal issues may arise in this session. The facilitator should have a list of local relevant support services for young people and details of how these can be accessed which may include:

- School counsellors
- Phone counselling
- Local youth mental health services

### LISTENING GOOD PRACTICE

There is a section here that discusses good ways to support other people in your life who are not coping. It may be useful for the facilitator to have an understanding of non-directive, non-judgemental listening.

### SUICIDE OR SELF-HARM

There is also potential for the issue of suicide and self-harm to come up in the discussion mentioned above. The facilitator should respond to this and provide guidance to participants in line with the organisation's policy on suicide and self-harm and good practice guidance for young people on this.



## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In/ Warm Up:** Make a Frame

**Warm Up:** I Am Poem

**Closing:** Being Present and Positive

### SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
NAMING EMOTIONS	25
EXPLORING POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE	15
ASKING FOR HELP AND HELPING OTHERS	10
OUR PERSONAL MAP	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 HR 15</b>

## NAMING EMOTIONS

25  
MINS



The aim of this exercise is to get participants thinking about different emotions and how we can express these emotions in healthy, helpful ways, or in less healthy or unhelpful ways.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Get everyone in a circle, one person names an emotion and then throws the ball to the next person. The person who catches the ball describes something that makes them feel this emotion.
- 2 They then name an emotion and throw this ball to someone else.
- 3 Once no one can think of anymore emotions, then as a group discuss the following:
  - What emotions are the hardest to talk about?
  - Why do we find it hard to talk about our emotions?
- 4 Bring the groups minds' back to the session where 'healthy and unhealthy reactions to stress' were discussed. In this session we'll apply the same logic but to other emotions.
- 5 In pairs or as a group get everyone to discuss the **Emotional Square Sheet** (page 8).
- 6 Identify healthy and unhealthy ways to express the different emotions.
- 7 As a group, try to discuss a few of the reactions and why they are helpful or less helpful.



# EXPLORING POSITIVE WAYS TO COPE

15  
MINS



The aim of this section is to look more closely at those healthier and more helpful reactions to negative emotions or situations and how we can use them in our day to day lives.

## INSTRUCTIONS

When we are faced with tough situations, working out the right way to think about it and handle it can be hard, but it's worth doing it. Sometimes our problems and feelings can feel like a brick wall that is hard to get over. Our coping mechanisms are the things that help us break down the wall and get through it.

- 1 Draw a wall of bricks on the flip chart and ask everyone to name the kind of supports that can help them get through difficult. Have a discussion on some good ways to reflect on a situation to help you cope:
  - A Realising you are not to blame.
  - B Accepting the situation has happened.
  - C Not thinking about it over and over again.
  - D Thinking about something positive and happy.
  - E Putting it into perspective... how important will this be in a month/year from now?
  - F Finding something positive in the situation, or something to learn from it.
  - G Not always looking for other people to blame.
- 2 Write each of these on a brick on the wall.
- 3 Give everyone the **brick wall sheet** (page 7) and ask them to write in their own ways to cope. If they like they can include activities that help them cope such as talking to a friend, doing a breathing exercise, going for a walk etc.



# ASKING FOR HELP AND HELPING OTHERS

10  
MINS



The aim of this exercise is to explore good ways to support other people who may be having a hard time coping.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 When you are feeling sad, lonely, angry or anxious, it can be hard to ask for help. As a group discuss the following:
  - What is the best way to ask someone for help or let them know that you are feeling down?
  - How you can tell that a friend or family member who may need someone to talk to but is afraid to ask?
  - How would respond if you thought a friend or family member was depressed or if they told you they were?
- 2 The tutor may highlight the following if they have not come up in discussion.
  - Try to get your friend to talk about their troubles; you may just say something simple like: "You seem down, do you want to talk about whatever is going on?"
  - Just listen, you don't have to give advice.
  - Encourage your friend to get some help.



# OUR PERSONAL MAP

25  
MINS



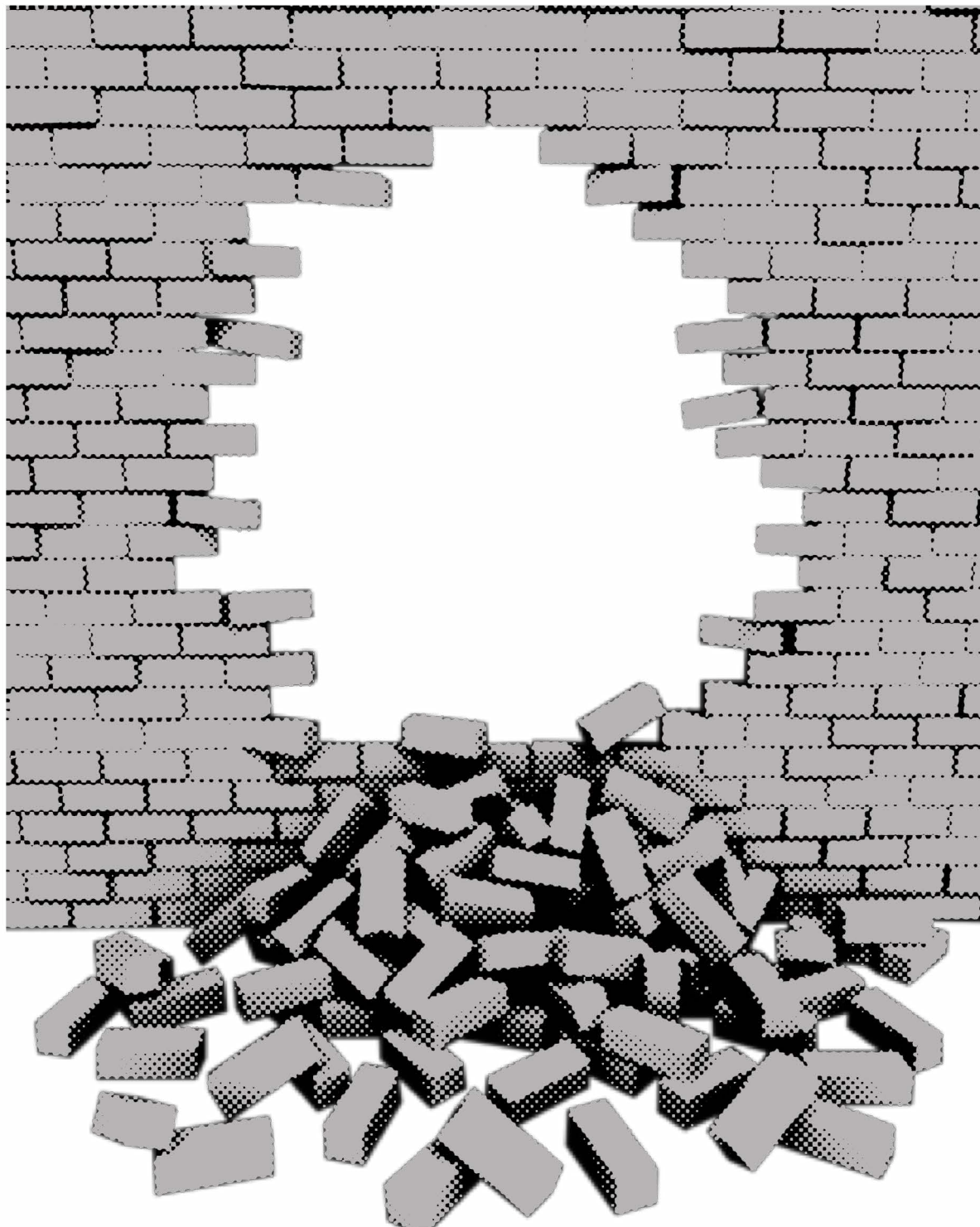
The aim of this exercise is to ensure that students can personalise and internalise some of the learning about identifying challenges and working through them, through a creative exercise.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Every participant will create their own personal map.
- 2 The facilitator should begin by drawing a number of example symbols on the flipchart as an example map. The map should have a path with obstacles, such as:
  - A treasure chest to represent a goal achieved (one of the goals from previous sessions might be useful).
  - A skull and crossbones to represent hazards along the way such as emotions or challenging people.
  - A deep fast river to represent difficult personal situations.
  - A fallen tree to represent someone close having a difficult time.
  - A prickly tree to represent a person who can sometimes be mean.
  - An explosion to represent a situation that makes you angry.
- 3 Once the map with hazards has been drawn, hand out the post-its.
- 4 Ask everyone to draw a symbol / or write their personal coping supports on the post its. The coping skills are what they can use to manage the hazards along the way.
- 5 Use the post-its to cover each hazard symbol on the map.



# BREAKING THROUGH THE WALL





# EMOTIONAL SQUARE SHEET

In each square write what you do when you experience the emotion listed. Include both useful behaviours and not so useful behaviours to express the emotions.

	USEFUL	NOT SO USEFUL
Aggravated / Angry?		
Shy?		
Depressed?		
Content?		
Scared or fearful?		
Worried or anxious?		
Happy?		
Jealous?		
Hopeless?		

Taken from: [http://my.extension.uiuc.edu/documents/257080502080208/Emotional\\_Intelligence\\_13-18.pdf](http://my.extension.uiuc.edu/documents/257080502080208/Emotional_Intelligence_13-18.pdf)





**SESSION 9**

# **THINKING STRAIGHT**



*This session is adapted from  
the work of Dr. Gary O'Reilly, UCD*



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To look at how we can spot unhelpful thinking that has a bad effect on our feelings and behaviour

To look at different things we can do to help mend this faulty way of thinking

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### ADVANCED SESSION / ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULE

Facilitators should read through this session and decide if it is too advanced for their group. If it is, facilitators may choose instead to do the following:

- Pick 1 – 2 of the warm up/ trickle in exercises that support a focus on positive thinking.
- Do the 'thinking and behaviour' exercise from this session to introduce basic CBT.
- Undertake 1 – 2 of the mindfulness type closing exercises to support relaxation and positive thinking.

### LENGTH OF SESSION

Please note that this session is slightly longer (1 hr 45) and so may benefit from being spread over 2 weeks.

### COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

The importance of developing the analytical skills presented in this module have been proven to be helpful to both adults and children in high-stress or difficult situations. The facilitator should have a working understanding of CBT. There are some very useful resources on CBT and young people available on [www.peskygnats.com](http://www.peskygnats.com) / [www.juvenilementalhealthmatters.com](http://www.juvenilementalhealthmatters.com)

See the overview for facilitators for some guiding notes on working through CBT with young people.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

PEN AND PAPER EACH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

- PRINT OUTS OF WORKSHEETS AT THE END OF THIS MODULE
- FLIPCHART AND MARKERS
- POST-IT NOTES
- (EVALUATION FORMS)

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
THINKING & BEHAVIOUR	15
AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS EXERCISE	20
GNATS	15
GNAT CONTROL	15
SWOTTING AWAY	40
TOTAL	2 HR



## TRICKLE IN WARM UP CLOSING EXERCISES

Trickle in, Warm Up and Closing exercises are suggested, although facilitators are encouraged to choose activities to suit their group.

**Trickle In/ Warm Up:** Smiley Faces

**Warm Up:** NA

**Closing:** Being Present and Positive

## THINKING & BEHAVIOUR

15  
MINS

### AIM

This exercise is to introduce an important idea in CBT; the idea that a lot of the time, we don't plan or even realise what we are thinking because it is automatic and can happen very quickly.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Read this story aloud to the group:

*Richie was walking to the shop and heard a group of young lads behind him laughing. Richie became furious and turned around and started shouting at them. He got in a fight with one of the lads and felt furious and upset going home.*

- 2 Looking at the story, as a group, discuss the following questions:

- What did Richie think when he heard the laughing behind him?
- Why did he start shouting and get in a fight?
- Could there be another explanation for the group of young lads laughing?
- If Richie had realised one of these other explanations, would he have thought differently? Would he have behaved differently? How?
- Can anyone here think of a time when the way they thought about something (right or wrong) had an important impact on how they?



# AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

20  
MINS

## AIM

The aim of this exercise is to introduce participants to the idea that we have automatic thoughts that are negative and can have a negative impact on how we understand and respond to situations.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 The facilitator should write each of the following words up in five areas of the room:
  - Automatic
  - Hidden
  - Twisted
  - Unhelpful
  - Involuntary
- 2 The facilitator should highlight that some of these words may be difficult, or have lots of meanings. The aim is to use it as a learning experience, not to test anyone. Most people will be guessing what they mean.
- 3 In pairs, each team goes round to each word. They can either discuss, or use the **Automatic Thoughts** worksheet (page 8) and writes down, what they think each word means. They can only spend 2 minutes at each word. This can be done as part of the whole group either.
- 4 As a group, discuss what the words mean. The facilitator can help the group to clarify. Some suggested definitions are in place:

Automatic	<i>Pop into your head without any effort from you</i>
Hidden	<i>You don't usually notice them</i>
Twisted	<i>They are not true, or bend the truth</i>
Unhelpful	<i>They make you feel bad don't help you to deal with the situation</i>
Involuntary	<i>You don't choose to have them and they can be hard to switch off</i>



# GNATS

15  
MINS

## AIM

The aim of this section is to look at how having negative automatic thoughts can influence your thinking and behaviour and a good way to recognise these thoughts and how they are influencing us.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Explain that gNATS are like little flies that sting you into certain thoughts and you usually don't notice being stung
- 2 When you get 'stung' by a negative automatic thought, or a gNAT, it can make you do or think many different things.
  - Hand out the information sheet **7 Different Types of gNATs** (page 9) with the group.
  - As you go through each of the 'gNATs' on the sheet, ask all who have done something like this before to stand on one side of a line and all who haven't to stand on another.
  - You can ask if anyone has stories to share.



# GNAT CONTROL

15  
MINS

Discuss the following with the group:

- 1 The first thing you have to do to control your negative automatic thoughts is set a trap for them. There are three steps to this:

## STEP ONE: WHERE AND WHEN

Think of all the places or situations that GNATs can strike.

## STEP TWO: HOW

We know that GNATs are sneaky, and brief like:

'I'm crap at everything'

'My ma hates me'

'Nobody wants to be friends with me'

## STEP THREE: WHAT THEN?

Start to see what effect the gNATs have on your feelings and behaviour.

What are some of the negative emotions that they might make you feel?

What behaviours might change as a result?

- 2 As a group, recall the scenario at the beginning of the session, when Ritchie was angry with the lads on the street.
- 3 Have a read through **Ritchies gNAT Trap** (page 10)
- 4 All participants should take a blank **Your gNAT Trap** (page 11) and fill it in from a situation they encountered recently.
- 5 Ask if anyone would like to share, they may.



# SWOTTING AWAY

40  
MINS

## AIM

Participants will finally learn some techniques for 'swotting away' the negative automatic thoughts.

## INSTRUCTIONS

This can be done through asking four questions about each negative thought and filling in the SWIPE IT form either individually or as a group.

- 1** What evidence do I have for my negative automatic thought?  
**A** Ritchie might say: Well I heard them laughing but there is no way I know if they were laughing at me or even if they did it was anything to do with my ma.
- 2** What other explanations could there be?  
**A** Ritchie might say: I suppose they could have just shared a joke, or they could have been laughing about something completely different. I think I was jumping to conclusions too quickly.
- 3** What effect does the negative thinking have on me?  
**A** Ritchie might say: I got really depressed and angry. I ended up making a show of myself and shouting at people that I see around. I didn't go out for a week afterwards and felt really bored and lonely. I need to slow down in these situations and not presume the worst. I don't want my negative thoughts to have a bad effect on my life, my feelings and my friendships.
- 4** What sort of gNAT did I swipe away?  
**A** What Ritchie might say: I know that I was personalising and jumping to conclusions.



# AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

In the boxes below, write what you think the word on the left might mean.

**Automatic**

**Hidden**

**Distorted**

**Unhelpful**

**Involuntary**



## 7 DIFFERENT TYPES OF GNATS

### Name: **OVER-GENERALISING GNAT**

His sting makes you think: If something bad happens once, it'll happen again and again.

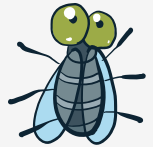
**Example:** *after failing a maths test, Jamie says to himself 'I'll never be good at maths'.*



### Name: **SELECTIVE THINKING GNAT**

Her sting makes you: Only focus on the bad parts of stuff.

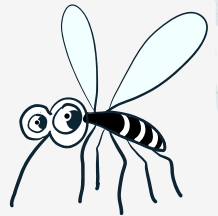
**Example:** *At the end of a party at the youth club, with great music and food and loads of fun, Jenny got into trouble for horseplay. She told everyone what a terrible night it was and didn't point out any of the good stuff.*



### Name: **BLACK AND WHITE THINKING GNAT**

His sting makes you: think everything is either good or bad, with no in between.

**Example:** *Jack's Dad told him that he didn't like one of the lads he was hanging around with and Jack is furious because his dad hates his friends.*



### Name: **PERSONALISING GNAT**

Her sting makes you: put the blame on people for doing things to them, even if it wasn't anything to do with them.

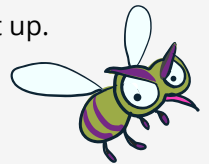
**Example:** *Joanie tells Melanie she can't come over that evening because she has to go to her Nana's. Melanie decides that Joanie doesn't like her and that's why she's not coming over.*



### Name: **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS GNAT**

His sting makes you: presume something, even if you don't have anything to back it up.

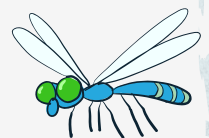
**Example:** *Alex came home and found money gone from his bedside table. He presumed it had been stolen by his sister Lorraine.*



### Name: **PREDICTING THE FUTURE GNAT**

Her sting makes you: presume all the worst possible things are going to happen.

**Example:** *Courtney says that her brother's never going to get off drugs.*



### Name: **CHEWING OVER IT GNAT**

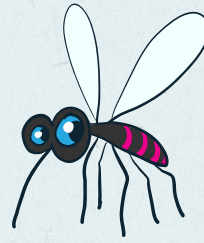
His sting makes you: spend all the time thinking over and over about something bad that happened.

**Example:** *Gary's mam told him that he was lazy before he left for school. Gary spent the rest of the day thinking about it and being angry about it.*





# RITCHIE'S GNAT TRAP



## SITUATION

I heard a bunch of lads laughing on the street who were walking behind me.



## NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

*'They're laughing about my Ma'*

*'Everyone's always gonna laugh at me'*

*'Nobody respects me'*



## BAD OUTCOME: BEHAVIOURS

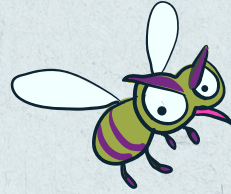
- Not trying to make friends with people.
- Getting into fights.

## BAD OUTCOME: FEELINGS

- Feeling bad about myself.
- Feeling depressed.



## YOUR GNAT TRAP



**SITUATION**

**NEGATIVE  
AUTOMATIC  
THOUGHTS**



**BAD OUTCOME:  
BEHAVIOURS**

**BAD OUTCOME:  
FEELINGS**





## SWIPE IT!

### 1 What proof do I have for my negative automatic thought?

**A** Ritchie might say: *Well I heard them laughing but there is no way I know if they were laughing at me, or even if they did it was anything to do with my ma.*

**B** What do you say?

### 2 What other explanations could there be?

**A** Ritchie might say: *I suppose they could have just shared a joke, or they could have been laughing about something completely different. I think I was jumping to conclusions too quickly.*

**B** What do you say?

### 3 What effect does the negative thinking have on me?

**A** Ritchie might say: *I got really depressed and angry. I ended up making a show of myself and shouting at people that I see around. I didn't go out for a week afterwards and felt really bored and lonely. I need to slow down in these situations, and not presume the worst. I don't want my negative thoughts to have a bad effect on my life, my feelings and my friendships.*

**B** What do you say?

### 4 What sort of gNAT did I swipe away?

**A** What Ritchie might say: *I know that I was Personalising and Jumping to Conclusions.*

**B** What do you say?





**SESSION 10**

# **WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED**





# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

To recap on what has been learned over the last 10 weeks

To reflect on the qualities of individuals within the group and show appreciation for these

To celebrate the achievements of the group

## FACILITATORS NOTES

### SESSION PLANNING

Please note that this is a session for closing and celebrating. This is a suggested outline for a 2 hour closing session but can be adapted and planned according to the wishes of the group and the resources of the project.

### EVALUATION

The evaluation sheets must be completed within two weeks of the final session. This can be done briefly during the last session with individual participants or after the session at another time that suits the facilitator and participants.

### CELEBRATION

The session includes a space for the awarding of certificates. It is intended that this will provide a chance to celebrate each individual's contribution to the group from the perspectives of the facilitator. The facilitator should take a few hours to write certificates that highlight a positive attribute or contribution of each participant. Note that these certificates will be presented alongside positive comments from the group on the individual.

**Certificate templates can be downloaded**

**from:** <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/results.aspx?qu=award%20certificates>

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS
- COLOURED MARKERS, PENS, GLITTER GLUE ETC.
- LARGE SUGAR-PAPER SHEETS
- SCISSORS
- PRITT STICK
- COMPLETED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CERTIFICATES FOR EACH PARTICIPANT
- TWO SHEETS OF HIGH QUALITY PAPER STAPLED TOGETHER FOR EACH PARTICIPANT
- A BALL OF WOOL

## SESSION TIMETABLE

SECTION	TIME
TRICKLE IN EXERCISE: THOROUGHLY THANKFUL	30
APPRECIATION SHEETS	20
AWARD CEREMONY & MEAL	60
CLOSE	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 HR</b>



## TRICKLE IN EXERCISE AND WARM-UP: THOROUGHLY THANKFUL

30  
MINS

### AIM

To get participants in the headspace of reflection and gratitude.

- 1 As the group arrive, give them all of the creative materials to make a collage. The collage is called 'I Am Thankful'.
- 2 The participants should divide their large sugar paper sheet in four sections and find images and words that represent things that they are thankful for:
  - About themselves
  - About their families and friends
  - About this programme
  - In the world

## APPRECIATION SHEETS

20  
MINS

### AIM

To develop on the theme of gratitude by feeding back to each other.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Tell everyone a few words about how you have found the group as a facilitator and what you have learnt from and appreciated about the group. Let everyone know that often we forget to tell each other what we appreciate in others, although now there will be a chance to.
- 2 Everyone sits in a circle. Give everyone two stapled papers, get them to write their name on the top in nice writing and then pass the sheet along to the next person.
- 3 Each person should write something special about the person that is unique to them, this could be a quality they have or something you appreciate about them (they can draw a picture either, or stick something on they have found in a magazine that represents what they appreciate about that person)
- 4 Each sheet should pass around the entire group, with each person having a chance to write on the appreciation sheet of every other participant
- 5 The facilitator collects all the sheets before people get to read their own sheet, they will be handed back at the presentation ceremony and you may choose to read a few of the comments out for everyone in the group.



## STEP 5: AWARD CEREMONY

& MEAL 60 MINS

- 1 Everyone gathers around for a prize giving, this should be fun and lighthearted.
- 2 Begin with an opening speech, which is an opportunity to highlight the more serious achievements of everyone as well as talking about the journey of the group over the past ten weeks and the learning and wisdom that has been developed. This is also a chance to get everyone laughing and prepared to receive their individual award, so a few lighthearted stories will also set the tone.
- 3 Call participants up to the stage in pairs to receive their awards, also presented to them should be the appreciation sheets that the rest of the class has written about them in this session. The facilitator should give them their certificate, tell a small story and ask the other participant on the stage to read a few of the reflections on the appreciation sheet.
- 4 The course ends with a communal meal (e.g. pizza) and celebration.

## CLOSE

End the course with a few formal words about what other supports are available to young people, whether you will run any other group sessions and say that you may be in touch to ask them to participate in a brief interview about the programme in a few weeks.