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# STRONGER YOU(TH)



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## Handbook: Social and Emotional Learning Activities for Youth Wellbeing



STOWARZYSZENIE  
MŁODYCH  
ARTYSTÓW



C:E:T  
Platform

LIETUVA



TOR VERGATA  
UNIVERSITA MAGEŠTŲŲ BI BUKA



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**STRONGER YOU(TH)**

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# PROJECT INFORMATION

**NUMBER:** 2024-1-PL01-KA220-YOU-000253958

**ACRONYM:** STRONGERYOU(th)

**TITLE:** STRONGERYOU(th): PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMME THAT WILL ENHANCE YOUTH WORKERS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF CARE, FOSTER YOUTH RESILIENCE AND PROMOTE WELLBEING

**ACTION TYPE:** KA220-YOU - Cooperation partnerships in youth (KA220-YOU)

**WEBSITE:** <https://strongeryouthproject.eu/>

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## INTRODUCTION

This Handbook serves as a shared structure for all **STRONGER YOUTH** partners. Each partner develops an activity focused on a specific social-emotional competence.

### Social-emotional competences per partner:

- **CET Platform:** Self-acceptance & Self-awareness
  - **ARCHE:** Social awareness through upcycling
  - **Eco Power:** Relationship skills through music
  - **Tor Vergata:** Responsible decision making
  - **WalkTogether:** Mindfulness through yoga & meditation
  - **Connecting DOTS:** Recognizing and controlling of emotions and behaviours
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## **Module Title: Self-acceptance & Self-awareness**

**Partner Organization:** CET Platform

**Social-Emotional Competence:** Building self-awareness and creating a positive relationship with oneself through reflection and emotional understanding.

**Module Overview:** This module invites young people to explore the concepts of self-awareness and self-acceptance as foundations for emotional intelligence and personal growth. Through guided reflection, experiential activities, and group dialogue, participants will examine how self-perception, values, and emotions shape their sense of identity. They will learn practical strategies to embrace their strengths and limitations with compassion and openness. By the end of the module, learners will understand how self-acceptance supports confidence, resilience, and authentic relationships with others.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Define self-awareness and self-acceptance, explain their importance for well-being.
- Identify personal strengths, values, and areas for growth.
- Recognize internal and external influences that shape self-perception.
- Practice self-compassion techniques to develop a positive relationship with oneself.
- Reflect on how self-acceptance enhances empathy, communication, and authentic connection.
- Commit to small, mindful actions that nurture ongoing self-awareness and self-acceptance.

**Target Group:** Youth, 15-30 year old people.

**Methodology:** The module uses participatory and experiential methods: guided reflection, creative expression, journaling, role-play, and group discussion. These activities foster a safe environment for personal exploration, encouraging participants to share ideas, feelings and develop emotional literacy through active experiences.

**Keywords:** Self-awareness, self-acceptance, emotional intelligence, self-compassion, identity, reflection, personal growth.



## **Activity title: See Yourself Clearly: Exploring Self-Awareness Through Creative Reflection**

**Topic/ Skill covered:** Self-awareness, self-acceptance, emotional expression, confidence, self-compassion

**Activity Focus:** Encouraging young people to explore and express their identity, emotions, and personal growth through a creative vision or mood board. The activity uses visual storytelling to help participants understand who they are, what they value, and how they can approach themselves with kindness and acceptance.

**Learning Objectives:** Reflect on personal strengths, values, and emotions through creative expression. Visualize positive self-image and inner resources (confidence, safety, compassion).

**Duration:** 45 - 60 minutes

**Venue/ Space Requirements:** Comfortable and calm indoor space with tables for creative work, or access to digital devices (if we are doing digital mood boards)

### **Materials Needed:**

**For physical boards:** Magazines, newspapers, colored paper, scissors, glue sticks, markers, stickers, personal printed photos, phrases or quotes, A3/A4 sheets or cardboard.

**For digital boards:** Laptops, tablets, or smartphones with access to Canva, Pinterest, or any moodboard creation platform. Encourage participants to upload personal photos, favorite colors, or meaningful images from their own collections.

### **Instructions:**

Briefly discuss what self-awareness and self-acceptance mean. Ask a few warm-up questions like, “When do you feel most yourself?” or “What makes you feel confident?”

Invite participants to make a “See Yourself Clearly” board — physical or digital. Ask them to include:

- Images, words, or colors that represent how they see themselves
- Photos, symbols, or phrases that reflect confidence, compassion, or safety - personal to them



- Elements showing their identity — passions, talents, values, and dreams
- Remind them there's no right or wrong way to create their board. Every experience, feeling, and expression is unique — and that uniqueness is something to celebrate as part of their journey toward self-acceptance.

Provide creative prompts, for example: What does a safe space look like to you? How does confidence feel to you? What makes you unique? What are your hidden talents? What you wish others knew about you?

### Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- How did creating this board make you feel?
- What parts of yourself stood out most?
- What did you learn or re-discover about who you are?



### Facilitator's Role:

Offer guidance, keep the tone calm and inclusive, encourage creativity without judgment, and support both digital and physical approaches.

### Participants' Role:

Be open, creative and respectful; explore self-expression freely and reflect honestly.

### Safety & Emotional Considerations:

Remind participants they can skip any prompt or image that feels too personal. Every experience and expression is valid.





## Nurturing Yourself: Exploring Self-Compassion Through Journaling

**Topic/ Skill covered:** Self-awareness, self-acceptance, emotional expression, self-compassion, positive self-dialogue

**Activity Focus:** Encouraging young people to reflect on their inner dialogue and practice self-compassion through structured journaling. The activity helps participants recognize self-critical thoughts, reframe them kindly, and cultivate a more nurturing relationship with themselves.

**Learning Objectives:** Recognize moments of self-criticism and negative self-talk. Practice reframing thoughts with kindness and understanding.

**Duration:** 45 - 60 minutes

**Venue/ Space Requirements:** Quiet and comfortable space with seating for writing, or access to digital devices if using a journaling app or document.

### Materials Needed:

Notepads or journals, pens, optional colored markers or stickers for creative expression; for digital option: tablets, laptops, or smartphones with a text editor or journaling app.

### Instructions:

Briefly explain the concept of self-compassion and how journaling can help develop a kinder inner dialogue. Ask participants warm-up questions such as:

- "When do you notice yourself being self-critical?"
- "How do you usually talk to yourself in challenging moments?"

**Guided Journaling:** Invite participants to reflect and respond to prompts, either on paper or digitally:

- "When I notice self-criticism, what can I say to myself instead?"
- "How can I nurture myself like I would nurture a friend?"
- "What are three things I appreciate about myself right now?"
- "What small action can I take today to support myself?"

Encourage participants to write freely, without censoring or judging their thoughts.



**Reflection:** Invite participants to share insights or reflections they feel comfortable discussing. Emphasize that sharing is optional and that every personal reflection is valid.

**Closing:** Encourage participants to continue journaling regularly, reminding them that self-compassion is a practice they can return to daily/ weekly. End with a short grounding exercise, for example: taking three deep breaths while silently affirming, "I am worthy of kindness and care."

### Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- How did it feel to write to yourself with kindness?
- What did you learn about your self-talk or inner dialogue?
- Which prompts were most helpful in fostering self-compassion?
- How might you apply this practice in everyday life?

### Facilitator's Role:

Guide participants through prompts, model supportive language, maintain a calm and inclusive environment, and encourage reflection without judgment.

### Participants' Role:

Engage with honesty, write freely, respect others' privacy, and explore self-compassion with openness.

### Safety & Emotional Considerations:

Participants may experience emotions when reflecting on self-criticism. Remind them they can pause, skip prompts, all reflections are valid and part of personal growth.



Don't worry  
Don't worry  
Don't worry

Don't worry  
Don't worry  
Don't worry



## **What I Need Right Now: Practicing Self-Compassion Through Awareness of Needs**

**Topic/ Skill covered:** Self-awareness, self-compassion, emotional regulation, personal care

**Activity Focus:** Helping young people recognize their immediate emotional, mental, and physical needs, and understand that expressing these needs is an important act of self-compassion and self-respect.

**Learning Objectives:** Identify personal needs in the present moment—emotional, mental, or physical. Develop strategies to meet these needs in a caring, realistic way. Reflect on how honouring personal needs supports overall well-being and resilience.

**Duration:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Venue/ Space Requirements:** Quiet and comfortable space

### **Materials Needed:**

Notepads, pens, optional colored markers or sticky notes; for digital option: tablets, laptops, or smartphones with note-taking app.

### **Instructions:**

Explain the importance of noticing and attending to personal needs as a form of self-compassion. Ask participants:

- “When was the last time you noticed what you truly needed?”
- “How do you usually respond when you feel stressed or overwhelmed?”

**Individual Exercise:** Invite participants to quietly reflect and write down three things they need most right now. These could be:

- Emotional (e.g., reassurance, connection, calm)
- Mental (e.g., focus, clarity, a break)
- Physical (e.g., rest, food, movement)

Encourage honesty and emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers. Participants can also add small action steps for how to meet each need.

**Group Reflection & Discussion:** Invite participants to consider:

- How does noticing your needs feel?
- How might attending to these needs be an act of self-compassion?



**Closing:** Encourage participants to revisit this exercise regularly to check in with themselves and respond to their needs.

**Reflection / Debrief Questions:**

- What did you notice about your needs in this moment?
- How did it feel to name and acknowledge them?
- Which needs can you realistically fulfil today?
- How does this practice support self-compassion and self-awareness?



**Facilitator’s Role:**

Guide participants with calm, supportive instructions; model reflective questioning; maintain a safe, non-judgmental environment; encourage self-compassion without comparison.

**Participants’ Role:**

Engage honestly with the exercise, reflect openly, respect the privacy of themselves and others, and explore ways to meet their needs kindly.

**Safety & Emotional Considerations:**

Participants may uncover unexpected or intense needs. Remind them they can pause, skip, or share only what feels safe. Normalize all needs as valid and part of self-care practice.





## Stories of Kindness: Exploring Self-Compassion Through Group Dialogue

**Topic/ Skill covered:** Self-awareness, self-compassion, empathy, emotional regulation, reflective communication

**Activity Focus:** Providing a safe space for participants to share moments when they were self-critical, and exploring ways to respond to themselves with kindness. The activity highlights the shared human experience to normalize self-compassion practices.

**Learning Objectives:** Practice reframing self-critical thoughts with kindness and understanding. Develop empathy and learn from shared experiences. Normalize self-compassion as a valuable, everyday practice.

**Duration:** 45 - 65 minutes

**Venue/ Space Requirements:** Comfortable, quiet space arranged for group discussion

### Materials Needed:

Notepads and pens (optional), calming background music (optional).

### Instructions:

Explain the purpose of the exercise: to explore self-compassion through reflection and sharing. Emphasize that all experiences are valid, and the group is a safe, non-judgmental space.

**Storytelling Exercise:** *Invite participants to reflect on a recent moment when they were hard on themselves. Encourage them to briefly share the situation and how they felt.*

*Facilitator prompts can include:*

- *“Can you describe a time you criticized yourself?”*
- *“How would you respond to a friend in the same situation?”*
- *“What could you say to yourself with kindness instead?”*

**Group Reflection & Discussion:** After sharing, guide a discussion around common patterns, feelings, and strategies. Highlight shared human experiences and normalize self-compassion. Encourage participants to consider how these strategies could be applied in daily life.



## Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- How did it feel to share your experience?
- What did you notice about patterns of self-criticism in yourself or others?
- How can responding with kindness change your perspective or feelings?
- What self-compassion strategies will you take forward from this exercise

## Facilitator's Role:

Create a safe and supportive environment, guide discussion with empathy, model self-compassionate language, and encourage all participants to respect each other's experiences.

## Participants' Role:

Engage honestly, listen actively, respect others' sharing, and reflect on ways to apply self-compassion in their own lives.

## Safety & Emotional Considerations:

Some participants may feel vulnerable sharing self-critical experiences. Remind them they can pass, share only what feels comfortable, or reflect silently. Normalize that all experiences are valid and that self-compassion is a practice, not a perfection.





## THEORETICAL INPUT

**Self-awareness** is the ability to recognise and understand one's thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviours. **Self-compassion** is the practice of treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and patience—especially during times of struggle or self-criticism. Together, these qualities support emotional regulation, resilience, and a healthy relationship with oneself. By exploring self-awareness and self-compassion, individuals can improve wellbeing, reduce negative self-talk, and develop a deeper sense of acceptance, confidence and personal growth.

### Key Theoretical Insights:

- Self-awareness and self-compassion are rooted in psychological theory and contemplative practices (including mindfulness and humanistic psychology).
- Research shows self-compassion improves emotional regulation, reduces self-criticism, and builds resilience in the face of stress or setbacks.
- Practical interventions like creative boards, journaling, guided dialogue, and mindful reflection strengthen both self-awareness and self-compassion—helping to internalise supportive self-dialogue, build confidence, and foster wellbeing.

### Sources / Multimedia & Example Resources:

- [Neff, K. D. - "What is Self-Compassion?"](#)
- [Neff K.D - "Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself" book](#)
- [The Link between Mindfulness and Self-Compassion: A Meta-Analysis](#)
- [Self-Compassion Makes Life More Manageable](#)
- [The Reason You Make Unhealthy Choices](#)



## KEY LEARNINGS

### Key Learnings:

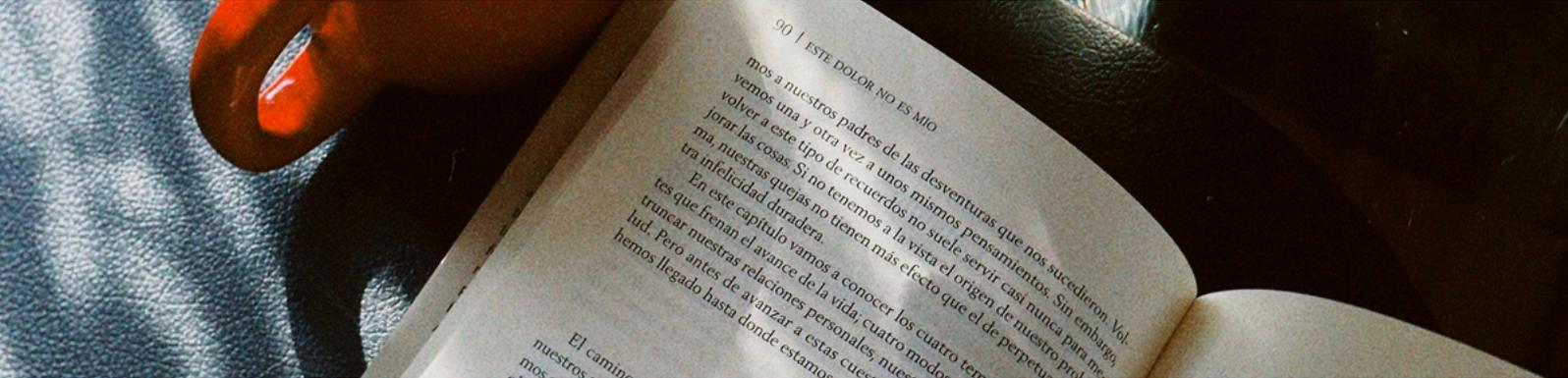
- Participants develop awareness of their thoughts, emotions, and inner dialogue, enhancing self-understanding, emotional regulation, and self-acceptance.
- Through creative exercises like moodboards, journaling, and guided reflection, they explore personal values, strengths, and identity, fostering confidence and clarity.



- Structured self-compassion practices encourage kindness toward oneself, reduce self-criticism, and build resilience in challenging situations.
- The module encourages consistent self-reflection and nurturing practices, helping participants strengthen mental clarity, emotional balance, and overall well-being.



# GLOSSARY



**Self-Awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's own thoughts, emotions, values, and behaviors. It is the foundation for personal growth, emotional regulation, and intentional decision-making.

**Self-Compassion:** Treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and patience, especially during times of struggle or self-criticism. It involves responding to oneself as one would respond to a close friend.

**Resilience:** The capacity to recover from difficulties, adapt to challenges, and maintain well-being in the face of stress or adversity.

**Emotional Regulation:** The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a healthy and constructive way, maintaining balance and perspective.

**Self-Acceptance:** Recognizing and embracing one's own qualities, strengths, and limitations without judgment, fostering a positive and compassionate relationship with oneself.



## APPENDICES

### Activities You Will Practice:

1. See Yourself Clearly: Exploring Self-Awareness Through Creative Reflection
2. What I Need Right Now: Practicing Self-Compassion Through Awareness of Needs
3. Nurturing Yourself: Exploring Self-Compassion Through Journaling
4. Stories of Kindness: Exploring Self-Compassion Through Group Dialogue

### Tips for Daily Practice:

- Take a few minutes each day to check in with yourself — ask, “What do I need right now?”
- Practice speaking to yourself with the same kindness you’d offer a friend.
- Use journaling or a creative outlet to reflect on your emotions, values, and growth.
- Notice moments of self-criticism and consciously reframe them with compassion.
- Celebrate small wins and acknowledge progress, not perfection.

### Reflection Questions:

- What have I learned about myself through these practices?
- When do I feel most connected to who I truly am?
- How can I show more kindness to myself in difficult moments?
- What strengths, values, or dreams define my sense of identity?
- How can I continue building self-acceptance and self-awareness in daily life?



## **Module Title:**

### **Social Awareness Through Upcycling**

**Partner Organization:** ARCHE

**Social-Emotional Competence:** Developing social awareness, empathy, responsibility, and collaborative problem-solving through creative upcycling practices.

**Module Overview:** This module introduces young people to the concept of upcycling as a way to strengthen social awareness, responsibility, and positive community engagement. Participants explore how everyday waste can be transformed into meaningful, functional, or artistic objects, while reflecting on how their choices impact the environment and society. Through creative, hands-on activities, group collaboration, and guided reflection, they learn to recognize community needs, foster empathy, and engage in purposeful action. The module encourages young people to understand their role within a broader social and ecological context. By the end, participants will have developed both practical upcycling skills and a deeper sense of collective responsibility.

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Define social awareness and explain its connection to sustainability and responsible citizenship.
- Recognize environmental and social consequences of consumer habits and waste production.
- Practice upcycling techniques that transform discarded items into useful or decorative objects.
- Collaborate with peers to design creative solutions addressing community or environmental needs.
- Reflect on how personal actions influence the wellbeing of the community and the environment.

**Target Group:** Young people (15–30), small to medium-sized groups, indoor creative or workshop setting.

**Methodology:** Experiential learning, hands-on creative work, group problem-solving, reflection circles, community-focused discussion.

**Keywords:** Upcycling, sustainability, social awareness, empathy, creativity, community engagement.



**Activity title:** Inspiration Walk

**Topic covered:** Introduction to Upcycling and Creativity

**Activity Focus:** Observing surroundings to identify materials, shapes, and textures that can inspire creative upcycling ideas.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Strengthen observation and creative thinking
- Recognize potential in everyday materials
- Build mindful awareness before creating



**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Outdoor/indoor space suitable for walking and observing

**Materials Needed:** Notebook, pen, camera/phone (optional)

**Instructions:**

1. Ask participants to walk around the chosen space and observe objects, textures, discarded materials, or natural elements.
2. Participants sketch or photograph items that inspire them.
3. The group returns and briefly shares what they noticed and why it caught their attention.

**Reflection / Debrief Questions:**

- What did you notice that you normally overlook?
- How can observation spark creativity?
- Did something surprise you during the walk?

**Facilitator's Role:**

Encourage curiosity, guide observation, stimulate creative discussion.

**Participant's Role:**

Observe mindfully, note inspirations, share reflections.

**Emotional Safety Considerations:**

Avoid judging artistic or observational choices; allow participants to share as much as they feel comfortable.



**Activity Title:** Emotional Object

**Topic / Skill Covered:** Materials as Mediums for Emotional Expression

**Activity Focus:** Transforming a chosen material into an object that expresses a personal emotion or internal state.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Develop emotional expression through creative transformation
- Build confidence in handling materials
- Connect personal feelings with physical creation

**Duration:** 30–40 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Tables, crafting space

**Materials Needed:** Discarded materials (cardboard, bottles, fabric), scissors, glue, paint, markers

**Instructions:**

1. Ask participants to choose a material that “feels right” to them.
2. They create an object that represents a feeling (e.g., calm, chaos, joy).
3. Participants share the meaning of their objects in pairs or small groups.

**Reflection / Debrief Questions:**

- How did the material help you express emotion?
- Was it easy or difficult to translate emotion into an object?
- What did you learn about yourself?

**Facilitator’s Role:**

Support emotional safety, encourage expression without judgment.

**Participant’s Role:**

Freely explore emotional creativity and share reflections.

**Emotional Safety Considerations:**

Allow participants to choose how much they want to disclose; avoid pushing for personal details.





**Activity Title:** Group Upcycling Project

**Topic / Skill Covered:** Collaborative Upcycling & Creativity

**Activity Focus:** Working together to transform materials into a functional or symbolic object that represents a shared message or theme.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Strengthen teamwork and communication
- Practice problem-solving in a group
- Explore creativity through collaborative creation
- Develop responsibility and social awareness



**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:**

Tables, workshop space, enough room for group work

**Materials Needed:** All recyclable/upcyclable materials available, glue guns, tools, paint, decorations

**Instructions:**

1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. Each group chooses a theme (community, sustainability, belonging).
3. Groups design an upcycled object expressing the theme.
4. They create the object collaboratively.
5. Groups present their work and explain its meaning.

**Reflection / Debrief Questions:**

- How did you collaborate within your group?
- What part of the process was most challenging?
- How does your creation relate to the chosen theme?

**Facilitator's Role:** Assist groups, mediate cooperation, provide materials guidance.

**Participant's Role:** Cooperate respectfully, contribute ideas, engage in shared creation.

**Emotional Safety Considerations:** Watch for unequal participation; ensure each member has space to contribute.



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# THEORETICAL INPUT

## ARCHE – THEORETICAL INPUT

Upcycling is the creative transformation of discarded materials into new, valuable objects, encouraging both sustainability and emotional expression. In youth work, upcycling serves as a tool for strengthening social awareness by helping young people understand how personal actions connect to environmental and community wellbeing. The hands-on, reflective nature of upcycling promotes mindfulness, empathy, and collaborative learning while making participants more aware of the resources around them and the impact of their choices.

### Key Theoretical Insights

- Creative reuse supports emotional regulation and self-expression by offering a non-verbal medium for communicating feelings and experiences.
- Upcycling strengthens social awareness by linking individual behavior with environmental responsibility and community-oriented thinking.
- Collaborative creation fosters teamwork, empathy, and shared problem-solving as participants negotiate ideas and co-create meaningful outcomes.



# KEY LEARNINGS

## **ARCHE – Key Learnings =**

- Participants develop creativity by experimenting with materials and transforming everyday objects into meaningful creations.
- Upcycling activities increase social awareness by showing how personal choices influence the environment and the community.
- Creative expression through materials supports emotional wellbeing, helping participants externalize and process emotions safely.
- Collaborative upcycling strengthens teamwork, communication, and empathy within the group.
- Hands-on creation reduces stress, increases focus, and promotes a sense of achievement and agency.
- Participants learn practical, sustainable habits that can improve their daily lives and support a more mindful lifestyle.





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# GLOSSARY

**Upcycling** – The creative process of transforming discarded materials into objects of higher value or meaning, promoting sustainability and resourcefulness.

**Social Awareness** – The ability to understand others' feelings, needs, and perspectives, and to recognize how personal actions influence the community and environment.

**Creativity** – The capacity to generate new ideas and solutions by using imagination, experimentation, and flexible thinking.

**Mindfulness** – A state of focused, present-moment awareness that helps individuals observe their thoughts, emotions, and environment without judgment.

**Emotional Expression** – Communicating thoughts and feelings through words, actions, art, or other creative forms.

**Resilience** – The ability to cope with challenges, adapt to change, and recover from difficulties through inner strength and problem-solving.

**Non-Formal Learning** – Structured learning outside traditional school settings, often experiential, participatory, and focused on personal development.

**Collaboration** – Working together toward a shared goal while valuing others' contributions and perspectives.

**Sustainability** – Making choices that protect natural resources, reduce waste, and support long-term environmental wellbeing.





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# APPENDICES

## **Appendix 1. Upcycling Materials Checklist**

### **Basic materials needed for the activities:**

- Cardboard, bottles, fabric scraps, magazines
- Scissors, glue, tape, markers
- Optional: paint, brushes, decorative items

## **Appendix 2. Safety & Tools Guidelines**

- Use scissors and tools safely.
- Keep workspaces tidy.
- Ask for support when using materials that may be sharp or hot.

## **Appendix 3. Reflection Sheet (for participants)**

### **Participants answer briefly after the module:**

1. What did I enjoy the most today?
2. What did I learn about creativity or emotions?
3. One upcycling habit I want to try in my daily life:





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**Module Title:** Relationship Skills Through Music

**Partner Organization:** SMART Eco-Power

**Social-Emotional Competence:** Relationship Skills – communication, cooperation, emotional expression, trust-building.

**Module Overview:**

This module explores how music can strengthen relationship skills among young people by enhancing communication, emotional expression, and group cohesion. Through rhythm, sound, and collaborative music-making, participants learn to listen actively and respond to one another. Musical activities encourage trust, mutual awareness, and cooperation, helping young people better understand group dynamics. Music also provides a safe and playful way to express emotions and reduce stress. By the end of the module, participants will have strengthened their interpersonal skills and developed new creative tools for building healthy relationships.

**Learning Objectives:**

- **Understand how rhythm and music impact emotions and interpersonal connection.**
- **Strengthen active listening through non-verbal, sound-based communication.**
- **Build trust and empathy in group musical exercises.**
- **Develop cooperative behaviors through collective rhythm-making and improvisation.**
- **Explore emotional expression through sound, movement, and musical storytelling.**

**Target Group:** Youth aged 15–30; groups of 8–25 people.

**Methodology:** Experiential learning, rhythm-based cooperation, improvisation, reflective sharing, embodied movement.

**Keywords:** Music, rhythm, emotional expression, communication, cooperation, empathy.

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## **Activity Title:** Musical Mood Walk

**Topic / Skill Covered:** Introduction to Music & Emotional Connection

**Activity Focus:** Using music and movement to explore emotional reactions and interpersonal awareness.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Understand how music influences emotional states
- Increase openness and group comfort
- Strengthen non-verbal emotional communication
- Build awareness of how moods affect interactions



**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Venue / Space:** Open space for movement

**Materials Needed:** Speaker, playlist with varied emotional tones (calm, energetic, tense, joyful)

### **Instructions:**

1. The facilitator plays short clips of music (1 minute each).
2. Participants walk freely around the room, adjusting movement and pace to the mood of each musical clip.
3. Take brief pauses between tracks to notice emotional changes.
4. In the last round, participants make eye contact or lightly synchronize their movement with someone nearby.
5. Discuss the emotional transitions created by the music.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- How did each piece of music change your movement?
- Did you feel more connected to others at certain moments?
- What did you notice in yourself as the mood changed?

### **Facilitator's Role:**

Create a safe space, offer diverse emotional music, guide transitions gently.

### **Participant's Role:**

Stay open to movement, observe internal reactions, engage with others respectfully.

### **Emotional Safety Considerations:**

Allow reduced-movement options for participants who feel uncomfortable.

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## **Activity Title:** Emotion-to-Sound Expression

**Topic / Skill Covered:** Music as a Medium for Emotional Expression

**Activity Focus:** Creating sound patterns that represent emotions.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Build confidence in emotional expression
- Practice decoding emotions through sound
- Strengthen creativity and non-verbal communication



**Duration:** 30–40 minutes

**Venue / Space:** Quiet room, chairs or circle setting

**Materials Needed:** Percussion instruments, everyday objects, fabric, paper, sticks

### **Instructions:**

1. Ask participants to choose an emotion they feel comfortable expressing.
2. They select an object or instrument that “fits” this emotion.
3. Participants create a sound or short rhythm that represents their chosen emotion.
4. In pairs or groups of three, others guess the emotion or discuss the interpretation.
5. Groups combine several emotional sounds into a short collective soundscape.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Which emotions were easiest/hardest to express through sound?
- Did someone interpret your emotion differently? How did that feel?
- What did you learn about expressing yourself non-verbally?

### **Facilitator’s Role:**

Model openness, support emotional safety, encourage creative risks.

### **Participant’s Role:**

Engage actively, respect differences in emotional expression.

### **Emotional Safety Considerations:**

Allow participants to choose emotions safely; avoid pushing for sensitive disclosures.



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**Activity Title:** Group Rhythm Circle

**Topic / Skill Covered:** Rhythm & Synchrony for Relationship Building

**Activity Focus:** Creating and maintaining a shared rhythm to build cooperation and trust.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Strengthen group cohesion and synchrony
- Practice leadership and followership
- Improve active listening and timing
- Build trust through collective creation



**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Circle space for movement or seated rhythm

**Materials Needed:** Drums, percussion, or body percussion (clapping, tapping)

**Instructions:**

1. Participants stand or sit in a circle.
2. One person begins a simple rhythm.
3. Others join in, adding layers or harmonizing.
4. Rotate the leader every 1–2 minutes.
5. The group creates a final rhythm sequence together.
6. Reflect on the process of leading, following, and adapting.

**Reflection Questions:**

- **What helped you stay connected to the group rhythm?**
- **How did leading feel compared to following?**
- **What did this activity teach you about cooperation?**

**Facilitator's Role:**

Keep tempo steady, encourage participation, support hesitant members.

**Participant's Role:**

Listen closely, adapt to others, cooperate non-verbally.

**Emotional Safety Considerations:**

Offer quieter rhythm options for sensitive participants; manage volume carefully.

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# THEORETICAL INPUT

## Concept Definition

Music is a universal form of expression that naturally supports emotional connection, communication, and social bonding. In youth work, musical activities help young people explore feelings, build empathy, and understand relational dynamics. Rhythm and sound engage both emotional and cognitive processes, making music an effective tool for strengthening interpersonal skills. Creating music together encourages cooperation, trust, and shared responsibility within groups.

## Key Theoretical Insights

- **Rhythmic synchrony enhances empathy and strengthens social bonds.**
- **Musical improvisation encourages emotional expression, flexibility, and creative problem-solving.**
- **Group music-making increases cooperation by requiring participants to listen, adapt, and coordinate.**



## KEY LEARNINGS

- Music helps participants understand how emotions influence interactions.
- By noticing how different rhythms or sounds shift their mood, participants become more aware of how emotions shape the way they communicate and relate to others. This awareness supports healthier, more intentional interactions.
- Group rhythm strengthens cooperation, trust, and communication.
- Creating and maintaining a shared rhythm requires participants to listen to one another, adjust their timing, and rely on group synchrony. This process naturally builds trust and fosters collaborative communication.
- Musical expression provides a safe way to explore and share feelings.
- Sound and movement allow participants to express emotions that may feel difficult to describe verbally. This encourages emotional release, self-awareness, and honest sharing within the group.
- Participants improve active listening through synchronized sound-making.
- To stay aligned with the group rhythm, individuals must pay attention to subtle cues, changes, and tempo. This strengthens their ability to listen deeply and respond thoughtfully in social interactions.
- Collaborative improvisation builds flexibility, empathy, and adaptability.
- Improvisation requires letting go of control, taking creative risks, and responding sensitively to others' contributions. This enhances empathy and teaches participants how to adapt to changing group dynamics.
- Music reduces stress and increases group cohesion and wellbeing.
- Engaging in musical activities lowers tension, fosters positive emotions, and creates a sense of enjoyment. This strengthens the feeling of belonging and contributes to emotional wellbeing.



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# GLOSSARY

**Rhythm** - A repeated pattern of beats or sounds that creates structure in music. In group activities, rhythm helps participants coordinate, connect emotionally, and stay aware of one another.

**Active Listening** - Focused, intentional listening that involves paying attention not only to sound, but also to emotions, non-verbal cues, and group dynamics. Essential for cooperation and relationship-building.

**Emotional Expression** - The ability to communicate emotions through sound, movement, body language, or music. Musical expression allows participants to externalize feelings safely and creatively.

**Synchrony** - Moving or sounding in harmony with others. Synchrony creates a sense of unity and increases trust, empathy, and group cohesion.

**Improvisation** - Spontaneous creation of sounds or melodies without a fixed plan. It strengthens flexibility, creativity, and the ability to adapt to others in real time.

**Non-formal Learning** - Learning that happens outside formal education, based on experience, participation, creativity, and reflection. Music-based activities are a form of non-formal learning that engages emotions and collaboration.

**Relationship Skills** - A set of social-emotional abilities that include cooperation, communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. Music provides a powerful context for practicing these skills.

**Music-Based Learning** - An approach that uses rhythm, sound, movement, and collective music-making to support emotional, cognitive, and social development.





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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Music Materials Checklist

Basic instruments and objects used in activities:

- Small percussion (shakers, tambourines, hand drums)
- Everyday objects for sound (cups, sticks, boxes)
- Speaker and playlist

## Appendix 2. Safety & Noise Guidelines

- Keep sound levels comfortable.
- Provide quieter instrument options.
- Ensure enough space for movement.

## Appendix 3. Participant Reflection Sheet

1. What emotion did you express today?
2. How did making music with others make you feel?
3. What did you learn about communication or listening?





**Module Title: Responsible decision making**

**Partner Organization:** University of Rome Tor Vergata

**Social-Emotional Competence:** Developing critical thinking, evaluating options, and understanding the impact of choices on oneself and others to navigate complex situations effectively.

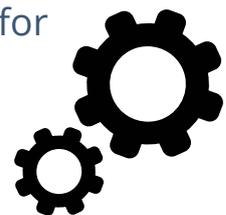
**Module Overview:** This module guides young adults through the essential steps of making thoughtful and responsible decisions in various life contexts. Participants will explore the psychological, social, and ethical factors that influence their choices, moving beyond instinctual reactions to adopting a systematic approach. Through interactive case studies, reflection, and peer discussion, they will learn to identify potential risks, consider consequences, and align their actions with their personal values and long-term goals. By the end of the module, learners will possess a practical framework for approaching difficult situations with clarity, foresight, and accountability.

**Learning Objectives:** Define the process of responsible decision-making and explain its importance for personal and professional success; Identify and analyze the internal (emotions, biases) and external (social pressure, information) factors that influence choice; Apply a structured framework for evaluating alternatives, assessing risks, and predicting potential outcomes; Recognize the ethical dimensions of decision-making and how choices impact communities and relationships.; Commit to mindful steps for integrating a systematic, value-driven approach into everyday decisions.

**Target Group:** Young adults

**Methodology:** realistic case studies, ethical dilemmas, individual action planning, scenario-based role-play, and facilitated group discussions. These activities are designed to stimulate critical analysis, encourage constructive debate, and provide a low-stakes environment for practicing effective decision-making skills.

**Keywords:** Critical thinking, ethical reasoning, values, accountability, risk assessment, problem-solving.





## The Value Compass

**Topic / Skill covered:** Aligning choices with personal values; Clarifying priorities.

**Activity Focus:** Participants identify their core values and use them as a "compass" to guide decision-making, ensuring congruence between beliefs and actions.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Identify at least three core personal values.
- Explain how these values should influence major life choices.
- Recognize internal conflict when a decision violates a core value.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Flexible. Participants need a surface to write on.

**Materials Needed:** Pens/Markers, "Value List" Handout (a list of 30-50 common values: e.g., Freedom, Security, Creativity, Family, Honesty, Success), Blank paper for the "Value Compass" drawing.

### **Instructions:** Value Selection (5 min):

- Distribute the "Value List." Ask participants to individually review the list and circle their top 10 values, then narrow them down to their Top 3 Core Values.
- Scenario Application (5 min): Ask participants to draw a simple "compass" on their paper, placing their Top 3 values at the North, East, and West points. Provide a scenario related to work/career, e.g., "You are offered a high-paying job that requires you to work 70 hours a week, leaving no time for family or personal projects."
- Compass Check (5 min): Ask them to use their Value Compass to discuss in pairs: "How does this scenario 'pull' at your values? Which value would guide your decision, and why?"
- Group Share (5 min): Briefly ask a few participants to share their guiding value and decision rationale.





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## Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- Was it easy or hard to narrow down your top values? Why?
- When a decision contradicts one of your core values, how do you typically feel?
- How can simply naming your values help you make better decisions in the moment?

**Facilitator's role:** Be responsive and attentive to feedback and help overcome difficulties, for example by being the first to share personal anecdotes that are both exemplary and uncomfortable.

**Participants' role:** Individual reflection, pair discussion, and voluntary sharing.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Ensure that participants understand they only need to share what they are comfortable with. Stress that there are no "right" values.





## The Influence Map

**Topic / Skill covered:** Identifying internal and external influences (biases, social pressure, emotions)

**Activity Focus:** Participants analyze a decision scenario by mapping out all the internal and external pressures acting on them, promoting critical awareness of non-rational factors.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Differentiate between internal and external factors in a decision process.
- Identify at least two potential cognitive biases or emotional influences.
- Develop a strategy to mitigate the effect of social pressure.

**Duration:** 25 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Room for small group work (3-4 participants). Flip charts or large whiteboards are ideal.

**Materials Needed:** Case Study Handout (a decision dilemma, e.g., "Choosing between moving to a new city for a relationship vs. staying for a stable job, where friends/family have strong opinions."); Large paper/Flip charts; Markers

### **Instructions:**

- Group Formation (2 min): Divide participants into small groups (3-4 people).
- Case Study Review (3 min): Distribute the case study. Groups read the scenario and identify the core decision that needs to be made.
- Mapping the Influences (10 min): Instruct groups to draw a large circle in the center of their paper (the decision). They must then brainstorm and draw two categories of arrows pointing toward the decision:





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- a. Internal Influences (e.g., fear of missing out, excitement, need for approval, habit).
  - b. External Influences (e.g., parental expectations, social media, partner's opinion, financial pressure).
    - Discussion and Strategy (5 min): The groups discuss: "Which influence is the strongest, and how could the person in the scenario consciously reduce its power?"
    - Gallery Walk/Share (5 min): Groups quickly present the most surprising/strongest influence they identified and their proposed mitigation strategy.

### Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- Which type of influence (internal or external) did you find harder to recognize?
- How can emotion be both helpful and harmful in decision-making?
- What is one practical step you can take next time to check for biases?

**Facilitator's role:** Ensure the groups focus on the analysis, not just solving the problem. Encourage depth in identifying why an influence exists.

**Participants' role:** Collaborative brainstorming, critical analysis, mapping and presenting findings.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Emphasize that the case study is fictional; remind participants to discuss influences without judgment.





## Cost-Benefit-Impact Matrix

**Topic / Skill covered:** Systematic evaluation of alternatives; Risk assessment and consequence prediction.

**Activity Focus:** Participants apply a structured framework to weigh the pros and cons of three alternative options, adding a layer of ethical/social impact.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Utilize a three-column matrix to evaluate decision alternatives.
- Practice assessing short-term benefits versus long-term consequences.
- Integrate consideration of impact on others (ethical dimension) into the final choice.

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Flexible. Participants work individually, then in pairs.

**Materials Needed:** "Decision Scenario" Handout (A dilemma with three clear options, e.g., "Three approaches to handle a work error: A) Report immediately, B) Fix silently and hope nobody notices, C) Blame a new colleague."); "CBI Matrix" Handout (A template with columns for: Option, Benefits, Costs, Impact on Others); Pens/Pencils.

### **Instructions:**

- Scenario Introduction (5 min): Introduce the decision scenario and the three options. Individually, participants choose which option they would initially lean towards.
- Individual Analysis (10 min): Participants fill out the Cost-Benefit-Impact (CBI) Matrix for all three options. Example: Option A (Report) -> Benefit: Builds trust; Cost: Potential reprimand; Impact: High fairness to colleagues.





- Pair Comparison (10 min): Participants pair up and compare their matrices. Did they assign the same costs/benefits? Did their initial choice change after filling out the "Impact on Others" column? They must reach a consensus on the most responsible choice.
- Brief Share (5 min): Ask a few pairs to share which column had the greatest effect on their final decision.

### Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- What was the most challenging part of filling out the "Impact on Others" column?
- How does this structured approach compare to how you usually make decisions?
- Why is predicting the long-term consequences more difficult than assessing the immediate benefits?

**Facilitator's role:** Circulate and ensure participants are distinguishing between Costs/Benefits (personal) and Impact (on others). Encourage thoroughness in the analysis.

**Participants' role:** Individual analytical work, critical comparison in pairs, reaching a consensus.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** This activity deals with ethical choices. Ensure a climate of non-judgment, focusing on the process of evaluation rather than the "correctness" of the final answer.





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## The Accountability Commitment

**Topic / Skill covered:** Taking ownership of decisions; Post-decision evaluation and learning.

**Activity Focus:** Participants practice drafting an "Action Plan" that includes steps for implementation, monitoring, and a contingency plan for when the decision doesn't work out as expected.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Articulate an action plan to implement a difficult decision.
- Develop a contingency (Plan B) strategy.
- Commit to a process for post-decision reflection and learning.

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Flexible. Quiet space for individual writing.

**Materials Needed:** Pens/Markers; "Accountability Commitment" Worksheet (template below).

### **Instructions:**

- Decision Recap (5 min): Ask participants to recall a real, unresolved minor personal decision they are currently facing (e.g., starting a new hobby, leaving a volunteer position, making a difficult purchase). Stress: Keep it relatively low-stakes.
- Commitment Draft (10 min): Participants use the provided worksheet to draft their commitment, covering three sections:
- The Decision & First Three Steps: What is the final choice, and what are the immediate actions?
- The Review Date: When will you check in to see if it's working? (e.g., 2 weeks, 1 month).
- The Contingency Plan: If the decision fails or causes problems, what is Plan B? (e.g., "If the new hobby makes me too tired, I will try X instead.")





- Pair Endorsement (5 min): Participants swap their worksheets with a partner. The partner reads the commitment and, if it seems reasonable, signs it as a "Witness/Accountability Buddy."

### Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- How did creating a Plan B change the way you felt about making the initial decision? (Did it reduce fear?)
- Why is setting a "Review Date" so important for responsible decision-making?
- What does it mean to take full responsibility for a decision?

**Facilitator's role:** Provide quiet writing time. Emphasize that the "Witness" role is purely supportive, not judgmental. Put some background music to help the process.

**Participants' role:** Applying the principles to a real-life choice, drafting a plan, and acting as a supportive peer.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Remind participants to keep their chosen decision personal but low-stakes for privacy and time management. This activity aims to build confidence through planning, not solve major life crises.





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# THEORETICAL INPUT

**Responsible Decision Making (RDM)** is a cognitive and behavioral process that involves making constructive choices about personal and social behavior. It requires the ability to consider the ethical standards, safety concerns, and societal implications of choices, moving beyond impulsive or purely self-serving actions. RDM is a critical component of **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**, empowering individuals to evaluate potential consequences, respect others, and take accountability for the outcomes of their choices. For young adults, mastering RDM means navigating complex situations—such as career choices, relationship dynamics, and financial planning—with foresight, empathy, and integrity.

## Key theoretical insights

- **Metacognitive skills:** Responsible decisions require to consciously shift from the reactive default mode to the reflective mode when stakes are high, ensuring thorough evaluation rather than simply relying on intuition.
- **The Power of Values Alignment:** A fundamental insight is that the quality and consistency of decisions improve significantly when they are consciously aligned with core personal values and long-term goals. Decisions made under pressure often violate these values, leading to regret; RDM encourages deliberate pauses to ensure the choice reflects the person the individual aims to be, minimizing cognitive dissonance.

## Sources / Multimedia

(TED Talk): "[How to make hard choices](#)"

[CASEL](#), the leading source for SEL frameworks.





# KEY LEARNINGS

This module equips participants with a foundational framework for conscious choice, moving them beyond automatic, reactive behaviors towards deliberate, value-driven actions. The experience reinforces that making responsible decisions is a learnable skill integral to personal agency and long-term satisfaction.

Participants successfully gain the capacity to:

- **Clarify Personal Compass:** Articulate and prioritize their core values, using them as non-negotiable standards to evaluate the ethics and long-term viability of their options.
- **Analyze Complex Contexts:** Systematically identify and map out internal biases, social pressures, and external influences that often cloud judgment.
- **Practice Accountability:** Develop comprehensive action plans that include contingency planning and commitment to post-decision reflection, fostering ownership and resilience.
- **Reduce Stress and Regret:** Developing a reliable decision framework lowers decision fatigue and anxiety. When choices are aligned with values, participants experience less internal conflict, leading to reduced stress and minimized long-term regret.
- **Build Self-Efficacy:** Successfully navigating complex dilemmas using a clear process boosts confidence in their ability to handle future challenges, fostering a strong sense of self-efficacy and control over their lives.





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# GLOSSARY

**Core Values:** Fundamental beliefs (e.g., honesty, freedom, security) that guide an individual's attitudes and choices. They act as a moral compass for responsible action.

**Reflective Mode:** A deliberate, analytical state of thinking used to process information logically, weigh evidence, and consciously check for biases, contrasting with quick, automatic responses.

**Inhibitory Control:** A key component of Executive Function; the mental ability to resist an impulse or automatic temptation, allowing for time to engage the more reasoned Reflective Mode.

**Stakeholder Impact:** The consideration of how a decision's consequences will affect all parties involved (individuals, communities, environment), promoting ethical and socially responsible outcomes.

**Contingency Plan:** A predetermined "Plan B" developed alongside the primary decision. It outlines the specific steps to be taken if the initial choice fails or yields unforeseen negative results, enhancing accountability and resilience.





# APPENDICES

## 11. The Value Compass Worksheet

**Objective:** To help participants clarify their guiding principles for decision-making.

**My Top 3 Core Values.** List the three values that define your most important priorities in life.

Value 1:(e.g., Honesty); Value 2:(e.g., Security); Value 3:(e.g., Growth)

**Decision Check:** Consider a current difficult choice. How would each of your values guide you to the most responsible action?

## 3. CBI Matrix Template (To be used with Activity 3: Cost-Benefit-Impact Matrix)

**Objective:** To systematically evaluate options by analyzing outcomes on different levels.

**Set a table with:** In lines: Option (A, B, or C); In columns: Benefits (Personal Gain/Short-term Pros), Costs (Personal Loss/Risk/Sacrifice), Impact on Others (Ethical/Social Consequence)

## Facilitator Preparation Checklist

- Venue Setup: Room secured, chairs arranged.
- Materials: Pens, markers, flip charts, all worksheets printed (Quantity: 1 per participant + spares).
- Timing: Agenda reviewed and time allocations confirmed.
- Safety: Emergency procedures and contact information clearly posted.
- maximum emotional energy reserve in listening and facilitating this among participants





**Module Title:** Mindfulness through yoga & meditation

**Partner Organization:** WalkTogether

**Social-Emotional Competence:** Creation of mindfulness through yoga and meditation

**Module Overview:** This module explores how yoga and meditation work together to cultivate mindfulness and inner awareness. Through guided exercises and reflective practice, participants will develop tools to manage stress and enhance present-moment awareness. By the end of the module, learners will understand how consistent yoga and meditation practices support emotional balance, clarity, and overall well-being.

**Learning Objectives:** Define mindfulness and explain its connection to yoga and meditation practices. Identify key principles and techniques that foster mindfulness through posture and concentration. Practice basic yoga and meditation exercises that promote self-awareness and relaxation.

**Target Group:** Young people (15 - 30 years old)

**Methodology:** The methodology focuses on experiential learning through guided practice, reflection, and group discussion, enabling young people to develop mindfulness, self-awareness, and emotional balance through yoga and meditation.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Yoga, Meditation





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**Activity title:** Mindful Moments: Discovering Awareness Through Breath and Movement

**Topic / Skill covered:** Mindfulness, self-awareness, emotional regulation, body–mind connection

**Activity Focus:** Introducing young people to mindfulness through simple yoga postures, breathing exercises, and guided reflection.

**Learning Objectives:** Understand the concept of mindfulness as present-moment awareness. Recognize personal thoughts and emotions without judgment.

**Duration:** 45 - 60 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Quiet, open space with enough room for mats and free movement (indoors or outdoors).

**Materials Needed:** Yoga mats, comfortable clothing, speaker for soft background music (optional), notepads/pens for reflection

**Instructions:** *Breath Awareness* (10 min): Guide participants through deep, slow breathing—inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth—focusing on how the breath feels. *Mindful Movement* (20 min): Lead a short yoga flow encouraging participants to notice sensations and stay present. *Guided Meditation* (10 min): Invite participants to sit or lie down, close their eyes, and observe their thoughts and emotions without judgment.



**Reflection / Debrief Questions:** How did you feel before and after the session? What helped you stay focused on the present moment? Did you notice any changes in your body or mind during the practice? How could you use mindfulness in your daily life? Have participants journal or discuss what they noticed about their thoughts, feelings, or focus during the activity.

**Facilitator's role:** Provide clear guidance, model calm and mindful behavior, ensure a safe and supportive space, and encourage open reflection without judgment.

**Participants' role:** Engage fully in the activities, respect the group atmosphere, and remain open to self-exploration and sharing.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Encourage participants to move at their own pace, skip any poses that feel uncomfortable, and respect personal boundaries; remind them that all emotions and experiences during mindfulness are valid.





**Activity title:** Flow and Focus: Connecting Body and Mind Through Yoga

**Topic / Skill covered:** Yoga fundamentals, body awareness, concentration, relaxation

**Activity Focus:** Introducing young people to yoga as a tool for mindfulness, physical balance, and emotional well-being.

**Learning Objectives:** Learn basic yoga postures and understand their purpose. Experience how movement supports mental focus and calmness.

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Spacious, quiet area (indoors or outdoors) with enough room for each participant to move freely on a yoga mat.

**Materials Needed:** Yoga mats, comfortable clothing, speaker for gentle background music (optional), water bottles, towels.

**Instructions:** *Introduction* (10 min): Invite participants to set an intention for their practice (e.g., “to relax,” “to focus,” or “to feel grounded”). *Warm-Up* (10 min): Lead gentle stretches to prepare the body. *Main Yoga Flow* (25 min): Guide participants through a beginner-friendly sequence such as: Mountain Pose, Forward Fold, Downward-Facing Dog, Warrior I and II, Tree Pose, Child’s Pose. *Cool Down and Relaxation* (10 min): Supine Twist, Legs Up the Wall, and Savasana—with guided relaxation.



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**Reflection / Debrief Questions:** How did your body feel before and after the yoga session? Which pose or moment felt most relaxing or challenging? What did you notice about your breath during the movements? How might yoga help you manage stress or focus better? Invite participants to sit quietly, notice how their body feels, and share one word or phrase describing their experience.

**Facilitator's role:** Demonstrate poses safely, offer modifications, encourage self-awareness and acceptance, and create a calm and inclusive environment.

**Participants' role:** Follow the instructions mindfully, listen to their bodies, practice self-respect and patience, and share reflections openly if comfortable.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Encourage participants to honor their physical limits, avoid pain, and rest when needed; remind them that yoga is not about performance but personal experience and self-connection.





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**Activity title:** Silent Minds: Exploring Meditation for Focus and Calm

**Topic / Skill covered:** Meditation, mindfulness, concentration, emotional regulation

**Activity Focus:** Introducing young people to meditation as a practice for calming the mind and increasing self-awareness.

**Learning Objectives:** Understand the purpose and benefits of meditation. Develop awareness of thoughts and emotions without judgment.

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Quiet, comfortable indoor or outdoor space; enough room for participants to sit or lie down.

**Materials Needed:** Yoga mats, cushions or chairs for sitting, notepads/pens for reflection.

**Instructions:** *Introduction* (5 min): Briefly explain what meditation is and its benefits for mind and body. *Settling In* (5 min): Invite participants to sit or lie comfortably, close their eyes, and focus on natural breathing. *Guided Meditation* (20 min): Lead a meditation session, which could include breath awareness: noticing the inhale and exhale, body scan: observing sensations from head to toe, visualization: imagining a peaceful place or positive scenario. *Silent Reflection* (10 min): Allow participants to remain in silence, noticing thoughts and feelings without judgment.



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**Reflection / Debrief Questions:** What did you notice about your thoughts and feelings during the meditation? Was it easy or challenging to stay focused? Why? How does your body feel after meditating? How could you use meditation in your daily life? Invite participants to journal or discuss their experience, focusing on sensations, thoughts, and emotions noticed during meditation.

**Facilitator's role:** Guide participants through meditation, provide clear instructions and gentle reminders to stay present, ensure a calm and safe environment, and encourage reflection without judgment.

**Participants' role:** Engage fully in the meditation, respect silence, observe thoughts and sensations without criticism, and participate in reflection and discussion.

**Safety & Emotional considerations:** Remind participants that meditation can bring up unexpected emotions; they should move, open eyes, or take a break if needed. Create a supportive, non-judgmental environment for sharing experiences.





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# THEORETICAL INPUT

**Concept definition:** Mindfulness is the practice of intentionally paying attention to the present moment with openness and without judgment. It involves observing one's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations as they arise, fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation. By cultivating mindfulness, individuals can reduce stress, enhance focus, and develop a deeper sense of clarity and well-being.

**Key theoretical insights:**

- Mindfulness is rooted in Buddhist philosophy but has been adapted in modern psychology as a tool for enhancing awareness, emotional regulation, and stress reduction.
- Research shows that regular mindfulness practice strengthens attention, improves cognitive flexibility, and promotes well-being by reducing rumination and increasing present-moment engagement.

**Sources / Multimedia:** [The Power of Mindfulness: What You Practice Grows Stronger | Shauna Shapiro](#)



## KEY LEARNINGS

- Participants develop awareness of their thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations, enhancing self-understanding and emotional regulation.
- Through yoga and mindful movement, they learn to connect breath with body, improving physical balance, focus, and relaxation.
- Meditation practices cultivate concentration, calmness, and stress management skills applicable in daily life.
- The module encourages consistent self-care habits, helping participants build resilience, mental clarity, and overall well-being.





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# GLOSSARY

**Mindfulness:** The practice of intentionally focusing on the present moment with awareness and without judgment, noticing thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations as they arise.

**Yoga:** A holistic discipline combining physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), and meditation to enhance physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

**Meditation:** A practice of focused attention or awareness, often involving breath, visualization, or body scanning, aimed at calming the mind, increasing self-awareness, and fostering mental clarity.





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# APPENDICES

## Participant Handout

### Activities You Will Practice:

1. Mindful Moments: Exploring Awareness
2. Flow and Focus: Yoga Practice
3. Silent Minds: Meditation Practice

### Tips for Daily Practice:

- Dedicate 5–15 minutes daily for meditation or mindful breathing
- Incorporate simple yoga stretches or poses throughout the day
- Pause and notice your thoughts or emotions without judgment
- Use mindfulness techniques to manage stress and improve focus

### Reflection Questions:

- How do I feel before and after each practice?
- What thoughts or emotions did I notice during the session?
- Which techniques helped me feel most calm or focused?
- How can I integrate mindfulness, yoga, or meditation into my daily routine?



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**Module Title:** Recognizing and controlling of emotions and behaviours

**Partner Organization:** Connecting DOTS

**Social-Emotional Competence:** The ability to understand, express, and regulate emotions in yourself and others.

**Module Overview:**

This module equips learners with the knowledge and skills needed to identify their emotions, understand the connection between thoughts, feelings, and actions, and apply effective strategies to manage behaviors in different social and personal situations. Through self-reflection, interactive activities, and practical tools, learners develop greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and responsible decision-making.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify and accurately label a range of emotions in themselves and others.
2. Recognize physical and cognitive signs that indicate emotional responses.
3. Identify common triggers that lead to emotional reactions and behavioral choices.
4. Demonstrate effective strategies to regulate emotions (e.g., breathing, grounding, positive self-talk).
5. Apply impulse-control techniques to manage behaviors in challenging situations.
6. Make responsible choices that promote positive interactions and well-being.

**Target Group (age, number, setting):** Youth, 15-30 year old people.

**Methodology:** The module uses participatory and experiential methods: guided reflection, creative expression, journaling, role-play, and group discussion. These activities foster a safe environment for personal exploration, encouraging participants to share ideas, feelings and develop emotional literacy through active experiences.

**Keywords:** Emotional regulation, Self-regulation, Self-control, Behaviour management, Recognizing emotions, Identifying feelings, Understanding emotions, Controlling behavior, Emotional awareness



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## Activity title: Emotion Charades

### Topic / Skill covered:

- Recognizing and identifying emotions
- Interpreting facial expressions and body language
- Social-emotional awareness

**Activity Focus:** To help participants accurately recognize emotional cues in themselves and others through a fun, interactive, non-verbal guessing activity.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify a variety of emotions based on facial expressions and body movements.
2. Demonstrate understanding of how emotions can be expressed without words.
3. Improve empathy by interpreting and responding to emotional cues in peers.
4. Strengthen communication and observation skills.

**Duration:** 15–20 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:** Open space large enough for participants to move freely, Minimal distractions, Seating in a circle or semi-circle for easy viewing

**Materials Needed:** Emotion cards (words or pictures), Container or bag to hold the cards, Optional: whiteboard or flipchart to list emotions

### Instructions:

- Gather participants in a circle or group.
- Explain the rules: Each person will draw an emotion card and act out the emotion without speaking or making sounds.
- The participant draws a card, steps forward, and acts out the emotion using facial expressions, posture, and gestures.
- The group guesses the emotion being portrayed.
- Once guessed correctly, briefly discuss:
  - What clues helped you guess it?
  - How might someone show this emotion in real life?
- Rotate to the next participant until everyone has had a turn or time runs out.
- Optional variation: Use “scenario cards” (e.g., “You lost your backpack”) to act out emotions in context.





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## Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- How did you recognize the emotion shown by your peers?
- Which emotions were easiest or hardest to identify? Why?
- How do you usually show this emotion?
- Why is it important to be able to read other people's emotions?
- How can recognizing emotions help us make better behavior choices?

## Facilitator's role:

- Introduce the activity clearly and model an example if needed
- Provide emotion cards and manage turn-taking
- Encourage participation while ensuring a supportive environment
- Clarify misunderstandings about emotional cues
- Lead the reflection discussion afterward
- Monitor group dynamics and provide encouragement

## Participants' role:

- Engage actively by acting out and guessing emotions
- Observe carefully and respond thoughtfully
- Respect each participant's effort
- Share ideas during the reflection session

## Safety & Emotional considerations:

- Avoid using emotions that may be overwhelming or triggering (e.g., intense fear, grief) unless the group is prepared.
- Allow participants to "pass" if they feel uncomfortable acting.
- Maintain a respectful, non-judgmental atmosphere—no laughing at others' attempts.
- Ensure the space is physically safe for movement.
- Be attentive to participants who may struggle with expression or recognition and offer support.





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**Activity title:** Breathing and Grounding Exercises

**Topic / Skill covered:**

- Emotional regulation
- Stress management
- Mindfulness and self-awareness
- Calming strategies

**Activity Focus:** To teach participants simple, accessible breathing and grounding techniques that help calm the body and mind, reduce emotional intensity, and increase present-moment awareness.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate at least one breathing technique for emotional calming.
2. Practice grounding strategies to manage overwhelming feelings.
3. Describe how breathing affects the body during stress or strong emotions.
4. Apply these techniques during real-life moments of escalating emotions.

**Duration:** 10–15 minutes

**Venue / Space Requirements:**

- Quiet, comfortable room or area
- Chairs, cushions, or mats (optional)
- Space for participants to sit or stand without crowding

**Materials Needed:**

- None required

Optional:

- Soft background music
  - Visual posters of breathing techniques
  - Timer or bell
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**Activity title:** Breathing and Grounding Exercises

**Instructions:**

1. Introduction (1–2 minutes)

Explain that the activity helps calm the mind and body by focusing on breathing and the senses.

2. Breathing Exercise (4–5 minutes)

Choose one of the following or combine them:

A. 4-4-4 Breathing (Box Breathing)

1. Inhale for 4 seconds
2. Hold for 4 seconds
3. Exhale for 4 seconds
4. Hold for 4 seconds
5. Repeat 4–5 rounds

B. Balloon Breathing

1. Place hands on the belly
2. Inhale slowly, imagining the belly expanding like a balloon
3. Exhale gently as the “balloon deflates”
4. Repeat 5–7 times

3. Grounding Exercise (3–4 minutes)

Use the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique:

1. Notice 5 things you can see
2. 4 things you can touch
3. 3 things you can hear
4. 2 things you can smell
5. 1 thing you can taste

Remind participants to move slowly and pay attention to each sense.

4. Closing (1 minute)

Ask participants to take one final slow breath and notice how their bodies feel.

**Reflection / Debrief Questions:**

- How did your body feel before and after the exercise?
- Which part of the exercise helped you calm down the most?
- When could these techniques be useful in daily life?
- How do you think breathing impacts your emotions?
- What grounding method felt easiest or hardest for you?





## Facilitator's role:

- Guide participants calmly and slowly
- Model each breathing and grounding technique
- Maintain a quiet, supportive environment
- Encourage participation but allow participants to opt out
- Watch for signs of discomfort and offer alternatives
- Lead the reflection discussion gently

## Participants' role:

- Follow the guided breathing and grounding steps
- Stay quiet and respectful of others' experience
- Share reflections if comfortable
- Use techniques at their own pace

## Safety & Emotional considerations:

- Some participants may feel uncomfortable closing their eyes; offer the option to keep eyes open.
- Avoid forcing deep breaths—some may feel dizzy or anxious. Encourage slow, natural breathing.
- Ensure the grounding exercise stays within comfort zones (skip smell/taste if not appropriate).
- Allow participants to stop anytime if they feel overwhelmed.
- Keep tone gentle and non-intrusive; avoid personal probing.





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Activity title: The Feelings Thermometer

Topic / Skill covered:

- Emotional awareness
- Identifying emotional intensity
- Emotional regulation
- Early recognition of escalation

Activity Focus: To help participants understand that emotions can vary in intensity and to learn strategies to manage feelings before they become overwhelming. The activity teaches participants to notice early warning signs and choose appropriate coping strategies based on their emotional “level.”

Learning Objectives:

- Identify different levels of emotional intensity using the Feelings Thermometer model.
- Recognize personal physical, behavioral, and emotional signs at each level.
- Match appropriate coping strategies to different intensity levels.
- Use the thermometer to monitor and communicate emotions effectively.

Duration:15–20 minutes

Venue / Space Requirements:

- Classroom or quiet room
- Tables or floor space for writing/drawing
- Accessible seating for discussion
- Wall space to display a large thermometer (optional)
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Materials Needed:

- Printed Feelings Thermometer templates (5-level or 10-level)
- Markers, crayons, or pencils
- Sticky notes (optional)
- Large poster-sized thermometer (optional)





Instructions:

## 1. Introduction (2–3 minutes)

Explain that emotions can feel “small,” “medium,” or “big,” just like a thermometer rising in temperature.

Introduce the thermometer levels (e.g., 1 = calm, 5 = out of control).

## 2. Explore the Levels (5 minutes)

For each level of the thermometer, discuss:

- What emotions might appear
- What the body might feel like (e.g., fast heart, tense muscles)
- Behaviors that might happen at that level

Example (5-level system):

- 1 – Calm
- 2 – Slightly upset / worried
- 3 – Frustrated / nervous
- 4 – Angry / overwhelmed
- 5 – Explosive / out of control

## 3. Personalize the Thermometer (5–7 minutes)

Give participants a blank thermometer and ask them to:

- Label how they feel at each level
- Draw or write body signals they notice
- Add strategies that help at each level

Strategies could include:

- Level 2: deep breathing
- Level 3: take a break
- Level 4: grounding exercise
- Level 5: seek adult support

## 4. Group Discussion (2–3 minutes)

Invite volunteers to share their thermometers and talk about what they notice about themselves.

Reflection / Debrief Questions:

- Which level on the thermometer do you spend most of your time in?
- How do you know when your feelings are starting to rise?
- What level feels the hardest for you to manage?
- Which strategies work best at each level?
- How could this thermometer help you at home? In school? With friends?





## Facilitator's role:

- Explain the thermometer concept clearly and at an age-appropriate level
- Provide examples of emotional intensity and body cues
- Offer guidance as participants personalize their thermometers
- Encourage non-judgmental sharing
- Normalize all emotions
- Monitor for signs of discomfort and support participants individually

## Participants' role:

- Engage honestly in identifying their emotional levels
- Contribute ideas about body cues and coping strategies
- Complete their personalized thermometer
- Respect others' experiences and emotions
- Share reflections if they feel comfortable

## Safety & Emotional considerations:

- Avoid pushing participants to discuss personal or traumatic experiences.
- Validate all emotions—no emotion is “wrong.”
- Some participants may feel embarrassed discussing intense feelings; allow passing.
- Provide support for participants who become emotional or overwhelmed.
- Remind participants that this tool is for awareness, not shame or punishment.
- Keep the environment calm and private for emotional safety.





# THEORETICAL INPUT

## Concept definition

Recognizing and Controlling Emotions and Behaviours refers to the ability to identify one's own feelings, understand the signals that emotions create in the body and mind, and manage those emotions in ways that lead to positive, appropriate, and healthy actions. This concept includes being aware of emotional triggers, noticing changes in emotional intensity, choosing effective coping strategies, and regulating behaviours to respond calmly and responsibly in different situations.

## Key theoretical insights

- Emotional Awareness and Labeling: Recognizing emotions accurately is foundational. Theories like James-Lange and Schachter-Singer suggest that awareness and labeling of physiological and cognitive cues help individuals understand their emotional states, which is the first step toward regulation.
- Cognitive Appraisal and Reappraisal: According to Lazarus' cognitive appraisal theory, how we interpret events influences our emotional responses. By reframing situations (cognitive reappraisal), individuals can reduce negative emotions and modulate behaviour effectively.
- Self-Regulation and Behavioural Control: Bandura's social-cognitive theory emphasizes self-efficacy and self-regulation strategies (goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reinforcement) as critical mechanisms for controlling impulses, emotions, and adaptive behaviours.

## Sources / Multimedia

- You Aren't at the Mercy of Your Emotions — Your Brain Creates Them (a TED Talk by Lisa Feldman Barrett) — [TED+1](#)
- How to Manage Your Emotions (TED-Ed lesson) — [TED-Ed](#)
- Feelings: Handle them before they handle you — [youtube.com](#)
- "Emotional regulation strategies in daily life: the intensity of ..." by M. Kozubal (2023) — [PMC](#)
- "Emotion Regulation" (Psychology Today) — [Psychology Today](#)
- "Self-regulation for adults: Strategies for getting a handle on emotions and behaviour" (Harvard Health) — [health.harvard.edu](#)
- "Strategies and goals in Emotion Regulation models: a systematic review" (2024) — [frontiersin.org](#)



# KEY LEARNINGS

## 1. Self-Awareness is Foundational

- Recognizing emotions as they arise helps prevent impulsive reactions.
- Awareness involves noticing physiological cues, thoughts, and behavioural tendencies linked to emotions.
- Mindfulness and journaling are practical tools to build emotional awareness.

## 2. Cognitive Appraisal Shapes Emotional Responses

- How we interpret events determines the intensity and type of emotion we experience.
- Reframing situations (cognitive reappraisal) can reduce negative emotions and promote constructive behaviours.

## 3. Emotional Regulation Requires Active Strategies

- Strategies include:
  - Cognitive reappraisal: Changing the way we think about a situation.
  - Suppression or delay: Temporarily holding back emotional reactions when appropriate.
  - Problem-solving: Addressing triggers directly to reduce emotional impact.

## 4. Self-Regulation of Behaviour

- Self-regulation links emotion recognition to actions: setting goals, monitoring responses, and reinforcing positive behaviours.
- Strong self-efficacy enhances control over impulses and emotional reactions.

## 5. Social and Environmental Factors Matter

- Emotions and behaviours are influenced by social context, relationships, and environmental cues.
- Practicing empathy and seeking social support can improve emotional control and adaptive behaviours.





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# GLOSSARY

## A-C

- **Affect** – The experience of feeling or emotion; can be positive or negative.
- **Appraisal** – The personal interpretation of a situation that influences emotional response.
- **Behavioural Regulation** – The ability to control or modify one's actions in response to emotions or external stimuli.
- **Cognitive Reappraisal** – Changing the way one thinks about a situation to alter its emotional impact.

## E-M

- **Emotion** – A complex psychological state involving subjective experience, physiological response, and behavioural expression.
- **Emotional Awareness** – The ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions.
- **Emotional Intelligence (EI)** – The ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others.
- **Mindfulness** – Paying nonjudgmental attention to the present moment, including thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations.

## R-S

- **Regulation Strategies** – Techniques used to manage or alter emotional responses, e.g., reappraisal, suppression, or distraction.
- **Self-Control** – The ability to inhibit impulses, delay gratification, and act in line with long-term goals.
- **Self-Efficacy** – Belief in one's ability to manage emotions and behaviours effectively.
- **Suppression** – A strategy to consciously inhibit emotional expression.

## T-V

- **Trigger** – An event, thought, or stimulus that elicits a strong emotional response.
  - **Volitional Behaviour** – Actions performed intentionally and under conscious control, often influenced by emotion regulation.
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