

The background is a solid blue color with a pattern of overlapping, curved, light blue lines that create a sense of movement and depth. The lines are of varying thickness and curve in different directions, some following the diagonal of the page.

Making a positive contribution – being involved with the community and society, and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour

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Young people who are involved in their community and feel that they are part of the decision-making processes affecting their community are less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour or offending.

However, many young people do not feel they have a voice or can make changes either in their own lives or to their external environment. How we feel about ourselves is often reflected in our behaviour towards others and towards our physical environment: frustration can lead to vandalism; feeling cared for can help us to want to care for others. The activities in this unit therefore concentrate on helping young people to find a clear voice to state their needs and to effect the changes they want to make on a personal level and within their communities, as a means to leading them away from behaviours that are destructive to themselves and their community.

One of the best tools for overcoming internal barriers to change is maintaining a positive attitude. This can be very difficult for young people who have negative life experiences. But young people also need to understand that they do have a choice as to whether to view life from a positive or negative point of view. The extract below from Nelson Mandela's autobiography shows how important a positive attitude is when things are challenging, or we are challenging things.

I want to be able to communicate with people in a positive way.

Young man
aged 14

Even while enduring years of hardship in prison Nelson Mandela found ways to nurture a positive spirit. In his book, A Long Walk to Freedom, former South African President Nelson Mandela wrote about how important maintaining a positive attitude was during the 27 years he spent in jail for his role in the anti-apartheid movement:

To survive in prison, I developed ways to find satisfaction in my daily life. One can feel fulfilled by washing one's clothes so they are really clean, by sweeping a hallway so that it is empty of dust, or by organizing one's cell to conserve as much space as possible.

While I have always enjoyed gardening, it was not until I was behind bars that I was able to tend my own garden. A garden was one of the few things in prison that one could control. To plant a seed, watch it grow, tend to it, and then harvest it offered a simple but enduring satisfaction.

In some ways I saw a garden as a metaphor for certain aspects of my life. A leader must also tend to his garden. He, too, plants seeds and then watches, cultivates, and harvests the results. Like a gardener, he must take responsibility for what he cultivates; he must mind his work, try to repel his enemies, preserve what can be preserved, and eliminate what cannot succeed.

Thinking about change

Everyone has things about themselves and their environment they would like to change. Many people would like to change how they react to distress or provocation, develop a skill or talent, have a better social life or change something about their physical appearance or where they live.

Some people would like to make huge changes, others might just like to tweak a couple of things. Some people are very realistic about the changes they could make and the effort it would take, others less so. However big or small, change takes effort and needs to be planned for.

The activities in this section are about planning and managing positive change, to enable young people to get more out of life and achieve their goals. It is important to remember that vulnerable young people have often experienced a great deal of change and disruption in their lives, so keep activities focused on positive change.

Activity 18 is about young people practising how to state assertively and clearly what they want or need – without judgement and blame – so they can avoid using aggression or anti-social behaviour to express their frustrations.

Activity 19 invites young people to think about some of the changes they would like to make and what the implications of those changes are.

Activity 20 looks at obstacles to change. Some obstacles are external (poverty and discrimination), others are internal (a lack of confidence, fear, self-doubt and negativity). Often we accept life the way it is rather than facing the obstacles to achieving our goals and making the most of our abilities. Each of us faces obstacles, but it is through overcoming life's challenges that we grow.

In identifying our obstacles it is important to realise the importance of our attitude. Everyone sees the world differently, depending on how they grew up and the circumstances they have encountered. Emotions, fears and life experiences play a big role in determining how we view our reality.

Learning outcomes

Young people will:

- be able to state assertively what changes they would like to see happen (Activity 18)
- be able to identify the changes they want to make in their lives (Activity 19)
- be able to identify obstacles to change and implement strategies for overcoming the obstacles (Activity 20).

You will need

- one copy per participant of Worksheet 15: *Actions for change*
- flip chart paper
- two pens.

Suggested icebreakers:

What I would be

What I did

(See page 21)



Activity 18: *I statements*

1. Ask young people to think of a situation they have got annoyed about in the past.
2. In pairs or as individuals ask the young people to work on an 'I statement'. Encourage young people to help each other to make the statements 'clear' and 'clean'. Remind the group it is important for them not to use names but to focus instead on the situation or circumstance.)
 - When you...
 - I feel...
 - And what I want from you is...
3. Back in the whole group, invite participants to feed back with a few examples. Give others an opportunity to offer suggestions about how the statements might be improved.
4. Open up a discussion around the following:
 - how and when could you use 'I' statements?
 - what kind of effect do you think making an 'I' statement could have?

Reflection

What did you find easy or difficult about making an 'I' statement?

How can making an 'I' statement help a situation?

How would you use it in real-life situations?

What is the most helpful thing you have learned today?

Facilitators note

Using 'I' statements is a basic assertiveness tool that can be used directly with young people's own experiences. The key principles to remember are:

- 'I' statements do not offer instant solutions to problems. They are a way of opening up a discussion and inviting the other person's participation in helping to solve it. They don't always work first time and the original statement may have to be repeated several times or new ones developed as the discussion gets going.
- The format can seem strange to start. It is made from your point of view, stating how you feel and not blaming the other person for it. You take responsibility for the situation and make suggestions about what you could both do about it. It makes no demands and opens up possibilities rather than closing them down. It is the beginning of the communication rather than the answer to a problem.

'I' statements should be specific and to the point ('clear'), and free from judgements and blame ('clean'). They contain three basic elements:

- a statement of fact describing an action
- a description of how you feel about that action in which you take responsibility for the feeling rather than blaming the other person
- a declaration of the change that you desire.

The opposite of an 'I' statement is a 'You' statement. An example of each is given below:

- 'You make me so angry: you're always late. Why can't you ever arrive on time?' (You statement)
- 'When you arrange to meet me at a certain time and are late, I feel irritated and hurt. What I would like is for us to arrange a time to meet that we are both able to make.' (I statement)



Activity 19: **Actions for change**

1. Give each young person a copy of Worksheet 15 and ask them to fill it in.
2. When they have completed the worksheets ask for any volunteers to tell the group what they would like to change and how they think they could do so.
3. Ask those who volunteered if they would like the group to comment on:
 - whether their plan for change sounded realistic and, if not, how it could be made more realistic
 - how the group could support them in making the change.
4. Ask all group members to decide on a start date and an achievable date for when their changes could be made. Tell them you will follow this up to see how they are getting on.

Reflection

What have you learnt about your goal in this activity?

How easy was it to identify a realistic change you would like to make?

Do you think you will succeed in making a change?



Activity 20: **My life in my hands**

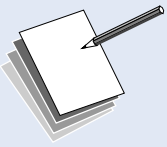
1. Divide young people into small groups and ask them to identify on a piece of flip chart paper:
 - one thing they have always wanted to do in their life but never acted on
 - the external and internal barriers they feel are keeping them from achieving their goal and dream
 - ideas for how they might overcome each of these and make them happen, both long term and short term
 - an idea for something they could do today as a first step.
2. If you think it would resonate with your group, share this quote from the Chinese Taoist philosopher, Lao Tsu: 'A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step'.

Reflection

Had you thought about what stops you making changes before?

Who can help you overcome barriers?

What is the most important thing you have learned in this session?



Worksheet 15: Actions for change

Name.....Date set.....Deadline.....	
My goal [write or draw a picture of your goal]:	
I will achieve this by:	
Action points:	By when:
Things that will help me achieve this are:	
I will know I have achieved my goal because:	
Tick off the action points as you do them, to help you meet your goal	

Making a positive environment

This section looks at how young people can participate in changing their environment. It aims to empower them to influence change for the better. Where we are affects how we feel: every place has positive and negative aspects. These may be a result of physical factors (interesting buildings, lots of trees) or social factors (littering, threatening or friendly atmosphere).

You will find inspirational stories of how young people have transformed their environments at:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/getinvolved/projects

The process of identifying what the young people do or don't like is the first step towards encouraging positive change. People will have different perceptions about what works and what doesn't, and the process of agreeing what needs to be changed and the impact of those changes on others is an important part of developing skills. It is important young people can follow through at least some of the actions they have identified through these activities.

Learning outcomes

Young people will:

- have identified an aspect of their environment they would like to change (Activity 21)
- recognise that how people feel about their environment is influenced both by physical and social factors (Activity 21)
- start to think about things they can do to make their environments more positive (Activities 22 and 23)
- recognise they can contribute to positive change (Activity 22)
- have identified some of the steps that need to be taken to bring about positive change (Activity 22 and 23).

You will need

- digital or disposable cameras for use in groups of three (if available)
- art materials
- enough copies of Worksheet 16: *Our plan of action* for each group.

Optional:

- case studies downloaded from www.bbc.co.uk/schools/citizenx/getinvolved/projects
- facilities for downloading, projecting or printing photos
- flip chart
- sticky notes
- felt tip pens.

Suggested icebreakers:

What I did

How I feel

(See page 21)



Activity 21: **Our environment**

1. Explain to the young people that in this session and the next, they will be thinking about what they like and dislike about their school or setting and how they can work together and with other people to make improvements.
2. In small groups, invite the young people to list some of the things they like and dislike about their school or setting. Draw out that both physical issues (for example, dark, ugly spaces) and social factors (for example, attitudes and behaviours such as bullying) contribute to how we feel about a place.

3. Either:

In groups, ask young people to use the digital or disposable camera to photograph aspects of their environment that they like and aspects that they dislike. Try to encourage each young person to find at least two examples of each. To illustrate the social and behavioural factors, they might want to enlist each other's help to create the scenes (for example, someone dropping litter or pretending to bully someone).

Or:

Using art materials, ask the young people in small groups to create a presentation of an area of their school/setting that they would like to change. It must be something that the young people can begin to make a real and achievable difference to over a fairly short period of time.

Reflection

What do you value and what would you like to change?

How can you begin?

Did you notice anything new about your school/setting when doing this activity?



Activity 22: **Plan of action**

1. Get the young people to share the issues they photographed or drew for Activity 21.
2. Either:
Ask the whole group to prioritise the issue they would like to do something about. Discuss what would be a fair and democratic way of deciding which issue will be chosen to work on. One option is to hold a straightforward vote, in which each group nominates an issue and has two minutes to explain why it is most important, before everyone votes.
Or:
Ask the small groups to decide which issue they would like to take action on.
3. Ask young people to come up with a list of ideas, skills and approaches to help them implement their action plan.
4. Give each group a copy of Worksheet 16 to discuss and complete. Alternatively, you could complete it as one large group. Make sure that each action has next to it the name of the person who will carry it out and the date they will do it by. When completing the action plan encourage the young people to come up with SMART actions that are:
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Time related.
5. Agree when you will review progress.
6. Ensure that you share the action plan with the head teacher or management committee and encourage them to offer their support and even a reward for carrying the plan out.

Reflection

How did you decide as a group which issue to focus on? How easy/difficult was this?

How will you monitor whether your plan is working?

How will you feel if it doesn't work?

How will you feel if it works?



Activity 23: **Poster power**

Either:

1. Divide the young people into small groups and give each group a copy of Worksheet 17: *Poster power*.

Or:

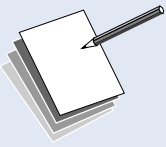
1. Write the examples from Worksheet 17 on a large piece of paper or board and go through them with the group.
2. Invite the group to discuss situations they have witnessed or experienced in which they felt angry, disrespected or disregarded. They might want to think about situations in the community such as in shops or on the street.
3. Either as one large group, or in small groups, ask the young people to agree on an issue they want to develop a group 'I' statement about and to produce a poster that tells the rest of the world what they feel about this issue. They should use the format of Worksheet 17 as the basis for their work, but may want to include pictures or symbols too.
6. Back in the whole group, invite participants to display their posters and share their message in whatever format they would prefer, for example as a rap, song or a group statement.

Reflection

How did you feel about making a strong clear statement in your group?

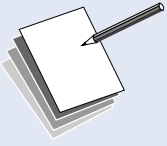
How might you use the skills you have learned today in the rest of your life?

How will you display your statement?



Worksheet 16: Our plan of action

We [give names]		
Would like to		
Because		
1) This is what we plan to do to improve things:		
2) These are the other people we will need to get help from:		
3) We will involve them by: (for example, talking to them, writing them a letter, making a poster, talking in an assembly)		
4) We will know we have been successful when:		
List of things to be done	Who will do them	By when



Worksheet 17: Poster power

- 1) Write a clear description of the behaviour the group objects to, for example:
- When you ignore me when I want serving in your shop...
 - When you don't take my ideas seriously...
 - Sometimes you assume I am causing trouble...

- 2) Explain what effect that has on you, for example:
- ...I feel small
 - ...It made me feel angry
 - ...I think nobody is on my side

- 3) Write a statement about what behaviour the group would like, for example:
- ...and I want you to stop
 - ...and I want you to know that...
 - ...and I want you to listen to what I have to say.