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# EDUCATING FOR SAFE AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

The Instructor's Handbook for  
the Civic and Social Competences  
Curriculum for Adolescents UCARE

**Marcin Sklad & Eri Park**  
University College Roosevelt





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## Colophon

Educating for Safe and Democratic Societies:

The Instructor's Handbook for the Civic and Social Competences Curriculum for Adolescents UCARE

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## FOREWORD

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Today, seventy years after the end of the Second World War, extremism and radicalization are rapidly becoming a serious problem in Europe once more. European countries are facing a growing polarization of opinions and the increasing appeal of populist rhetoric, both among electorates and political leaders. In some countries, even democracy itself does not seem to be completely safe, e.g., due to governmental actions or the slow collapse of the middle class. In addition, echoes of extreme ideologies fueling armed conflicts in other parts of the world are ringing loudly, particularly in Europe due to globalization and mass migration. Islamist terrorist attacks have become regular items on the news, and a considerable number of young people have departed from Europe in order to voluntarily participate in a war thousands of kilometers from their homes and to kill and die in the name of an ideology. How is this possible? Or more importantly, can we do anything to prevent it from happening?

Seeds of radical ideologies must fall on fertile ground to bear their fruits. Psychology has much to offer when it comes to understanding mechanisms involved in the process of radicalization. We can describe various circumstances, conditions, and characteristics contributing to radicalization, yet very little has been done to prevent it. Why? Possibly because even though the list of factors contributing to radicalization is finite, each individual's path might be unique and different factors might play a decisive role. Thus, there is no single universal root cause of radicalization. More importantly, only a few radical individuals engage in violence, while many remain passive. The circumstances and traits characterizing violent extremists are shared by large groups of people, out of whom a vast majority will never engage in violent acts. As the most prominent form of radicalization, terrorism, is a criminal activity, mainstream preventive efforts are directed at preventing the manifestation of drastic symptoms of radicalization rather than the process itself. Efforts lead by police forces are naturally focused on the detection of radical individuals who are preparing to engage in violence and on the prevention of criminal acts, but rarely on preventing radicalization. In any case, the police are poorly

equipped to prevent radicalization because feeling angry about the status quo or even adhering to extremist ideology is not a crime *per se* and does not inevitably represent a step leading to overt violence.

Furthermore, targeted prevention efforts aimed at individuals identified as being at a high risk of radicalization may have many potential negative consequences: (1) they support negative stereotypes; (2) they can stigmatize targeted groups and 'individuals under suspicion'; (3) they may produce 'martyrs' and 'heroes' of radical movements who may act as role models for other members of the targeted group; (4) they may give these individuals the impression that the state is against them, and (5) they may stimulate the polarization and division of society, which generates xenophobia and extremism among other groups. In this context, we embarked upon the ambitious task of developing a model intervention aimed at preventing radicalization: an intervention that targets the process of radicalization at its roots, rather than an intervention that merely suppresses the violent and tragic consequences of the most extreme and often final stage of the radicalization process. By its definition, such an intervention ought to be universal and should not require detecting or identifying individuals who are at the highest risk. The wish to identify individuals at risk may be based on wishful assumption that someone must be 'mentally deficient' to engage in terrorism. Unfortunately, psychological research suggests that terrorists do not suffer from any particular mental disorder and most people may be vulnerable to radicalization under facilitating circumstances. A casual examination of Europe's modern history may even convince us that radicalism and extremism are a 'natural' state of affairs, while moderate, pluralistic, liberal democracy is, historically, something rare that must be cherished and carefully protected. Although it might seem surreal today, it was not so long ago that European countries that are at the center of Western democracy today were engaging in systematic genocide in the name of an ideology and with the support of the majority of their population. In this context, inoculating citizens against radicalization ought to be one

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of the fundamental tasks of a democratic society. In practice, the responsibility for the task of preparing individuals to function in a democratic society is formally placed on the school system and realized through citizenship education. For this reason, we chose schools as the platform for delivering the intervention. Schools also provide a convenient institutional context within the framework of civic education. Additionally, schools are a particularly good place for universal intervention for three reasons: (1) they provide a natural context for learning activities and are areas in which young people spend a considerable amount of time; (2) they are, by default, non-discriminatory; and (3) school children are at the age when they are most susceptible to radicalization. If one looks into the contemporary cases of terrorists socialized in Europe, it becomes salient that many of them underwent the process of radicalization at secondary school age. From this, we conclude that in order to prevent this process of radicalization, preventive intervention must be conducted before it happens.

In the process of preparing the intervention, we first engaged in a thorough review of the scientific literature devoted to the processes of radicalization, followed by an analysis of evidence concerning possible interventions addressing each of these processes. Based on the existing research, we adopted and developed single lesson materials, including multiple interactive exercises, suitable for secondary school students. Each individual exercise was tested, piloted, and further adjusted over the course of two years. Finally, based on these exercises, we assembled a comprehensive curriculum consisting of seven connected units that build civic and social competences designed to halt radicalization-related processes. The complete curriculum has been successfully piloted and evaluated in several Dutch schools at various levels of secondary education. As a result of the pilot, this version of the curriculum manual has been further adjusted to address any limitations revealed during this pilot implementation.

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Goals of the curriculum

This curriculum is suitable for and beneficial to all young individuals, regardless of the type of violent ideology that they may feel attracted to and regardless of whether or not they are at an increased risk of radicalization. Because of its universal nature, the curriculum fulfills different goals for different perspectives: From the radicalization prevention perspective, the curriculum is a primary prevention measure aimed at truly preventing radicalization at its source by stopping its social-psychological origins even before the symptoms occur. From the school system perspective, the curriculum is primarily a civic and social competence program. From the student perspective, the curriculum is a set of exercises in practical and useful skills, which can contribute positively to well-being and social functioning. Within the workshops, the topic of radicalization is not mentioned explicitly; however, it may be spontaneously raised as a topic by students themselves throughout discussions after the exercises if they refer to news or information they have picked up from the media.

## Processes and phenomena involved in radicalization

Our study of literature pertaining to processes of radicalization clearly showed that the majority of violent radicals are not mentally disturbed. Concurrently, ideals, sentiments, and grievances to which radical groups appeal are shared by vast sections of the society. Yet, many people with a similar background never become radical. Why? Radicalization is, in its core, a group process. Many young people find themselves in a situation in which engagement in violent extremism is the easiest accessible means of satisfying their otherwise normal social needs; or, they find that engagement in violent extremism can prevent the frustration of certain social needs. Our literature review identified the ‘fulfillment of the need to be accepted and to belong’ among the most important processes supporting radicalization. Young individuals often seek radical groups because such groups can offer them a place and a means of fulfilling this need more effectively than any other group in their social context can. Many individuals also join radical groups in order to gain

acceptance from people who are close to them if these people are also radicals. Moreover, involvement in a radical movement can be a very attractive alternative for young individuals searching for a positive social identity and personal meaning, especially in a situation in which perspectives offered by mainstream society appear rather bleak. Most extremist groups offer a ‘pre-packaged’ identity perfectly suited for the youth to which they are attempting to appeal.

Satisfaction of individual needs may be a decisive factor for many recruits. Nevertheless, on a declarative level, only a small number of radicals would openly admit that personal psychological benefits were the main reason behind becoming engaged with radical groups. On the declarative level, another set of processes also comes into play. These processes provide an acceptable justification for violence and an ideology around which a group can form its identity and mission. Possibly the most important declarative reason for joining radical movements is frustration due to relative deprivation and a sense of discrimination. In the absence of a concrete grievance, a sense that the values or interests of a group championed by a radical movement are endangered may play a similar role. Personal experience of relative deprivation or frustration may play a role, but primary importance lies in the deprivation of the group. Acting on behalf of the wronged group provides an even more morally acceptable justification for violence than acting on one’s own grievance. The violence can be further excused by the conviction that legitimate means are ineffective; thus, extreme and radical violent acts are the only effective means by which to instigate the desired change.

By definition, a radical mindset requires an individual to perceive the reality as a clear cut conflict between an in-group (us) and an out-group (them), accompanied by a strong in-group bias: belief in the (moral) superiority of the own group. The radicalization process may occur in many ways, but usually it is a gradual process in which group conformity plays an important role. Within coherent groups, members tend to compete among each other by attempting to assume

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positions that have greater conformity with the perceived group norm than other members of the group. Therefore, due to internal competition, a homogenous group, initially holding opinions that are mildly sympathetic towards radical ideology, can relatively quickly drift towards more extreme positions. In the end, there is no place for critical thinking or individual reflection. The strong role of group conformity processes in radicalization explains the higher propensity of collectivist-orientated persons who engage in terrorism. In the preparation for violence, perception of the out-group (prospective victims) also plays a crucial role. Not only are they perceived as perpetrators responsible for in-group suffering, but they are also dehumanized or objectified.

The universal nature of processes involved in radicalization can serve as a clear warning that the danger of violent radicalization is not reserved for a few, but can quickly effect greater parts of the population. This happened, for instance, in Europe in the first quarter of the last century, or in Rwanda in 1994. However, the same universality of the nature of the processes involved in radicalization also gives us great hope for preventing radicalization. Despite this universality of psychological process, the majority of the population is not involved in directing violence at others who can be categorized as members of an out-group. This means that the aforementioned processes and needs can be either stopped, directed, or addressed in such a way that they no longer lead to radicalization, hostility, or violence. The education system can play a vital role in that respect. The UCARE curriculum is one of the efforts in this direction.

## **Addressing the processes of radicalization through education**

Firstly, the attractiveness of radical groups can be drastically reduced if young people are offered other, less costly means of satisfying their needs to belong and to affirm a positive identity. On a broader level, this can be achieved by creating a society that allows young individuals to thrive and to construe a positive identity within this society, irrespective of religious, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, or one's majority or minority status.

The UCARE curriculum attempts to contribute to this directly within participants' immediate social environments and school class. From its conception, the curriculum has aimed to stimulate social cohesion in the class, transcending ethnic and religious divisions by facilitating the perception of similarities between members of the class, giving them opportunities to find themselves in the same in-groups with classmates of other ethnic and religious origins, and improving their understanding of each other. The underlying assumption is that school classes are the most convenient and natural in-groups for students. If it is a cohesive class, this can satisfy needs to belong, a lack of this could lead students to turn to radical groups. In addition, strong bonds formed in school can continue performing protective functions even after graduation. Class coherence is particularly valuable within a culturally diverse setting. Forming one cohesive in-group that includes potentially conflicted groups is arguably the only effective way of eradicating an in-group bias. In this case, if the situation in the class can be directed in such a way that its members define their in-group as their class (versus other classes or schools), then there is a fair chance that they will be much less likely to discriminate within the class based on other possible categorizations, e.g., ethnicity and religion. This has several possible positive outcomes. One is that positive contact with members from other cultures within the class will likely lead to generally less prejudice against that culture. Moreover, experience with a culturally diverse in-group at school may make it easier for individuals to form and engage in a diverse in-group in the future. On the other hand, a culturally diverse class lacking social cohesion across ethno-cultural divisions, along with focusing on differences between ethnic fractions, can be a field of raging competition and conflict between groups that could provide a perfect breeding ground for radicalization.

The workshops included in this manual address both personal social needs and declarative reasons for engaging in radical movements. Workshop 1 aims to increase class cohesion and the perception of commonalities among classmates in order to satisfy the need for belonging that young people may experience. It also provides

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participants with a framework for constructing a positive identity by determining one's strengths and roles. It is conducted in the spirit of positive youth development and positive psychology. Workshops 2 and 3 are mainly devoted to stimulating resilience to group pressure. Workshop 2 is dedicated to increasing emotional control. In this workshop, participants are encouraged to develop and improve self-regulation and self-reflection skills. Workshop 3 is concerned with raising awareness of group pressure. Additionally, it provides opportunities and strategies for resisting group pressure through assertiveness. Workshop 4 aims to reduce tendency to use 'us versus them' construal. By creating insight into other people's perspectives, it is targeted at reducing prejudice and stimulating empathy towards the out-group. Practicing perspective-taking skills is proven to be the second most effective means to reduce prejudice against out-groups, after positive contact. Workshop 5 is devoted to stimulating critical open-mindedness and critical thinking. Critical open-mindedness is the opposite of dogmatism which characterizes violent radical ideologies, and simplified solutions offered by them. Stimulating critical thinking helps to make individuals resilient to the populist rhetoric of extremists. In Workshop 6 and 7 participants are encouraged to practice democratic means of defending and exercising their rights. These two workshops are dedicated to raising awareness of alternatives to violence. They are focused on empowering young people, including members of under-privileged groups. The practical knowledge of how to exert influence in a democratic way can form a feasible, and hard to deny, alternative to violence.

## Pedagogical approach

As this curriculum aims to promote democracy, critical thinking, and critical citizenship competences, explicitly promoting 'correct attitudes' and using a frontal, authoritative approach to teaching would represent the very antithesis of what some of the workshops intend to achieve. For this reason, the curriculum utilizes a democratic approach to learning and student-centered learning where trainers guide activities and discussions rather than lecture. This allows students to experience things and reach conclu-

sions on their own, which in turn helps them to take ownership of their newly gained knowledge. Within each workshop, discussions facilitated by a trainer help students to: (1) realize the implications of the exercises and learn from them by reflecting, (2) build a link between the message of the exercise in the workshop and their own experiences, and (3) build a link between the exercise and other exercises in order to develop a deeper understanding, resulting in an ability to generalize their knowledge to other situations. As a result of the nature of the instructional design, trainers should be clearly aware of the goals of each exercise and should be prepared to guide the reflection/discussion in such a way that the participants connect what they experience during the exercise with the *goals* of the exercise and with their own lives. At the end of the workshop, participants should not only have gained some insights or skills that will potentially prevent them from becoming violent radicals, but should also feel that they have learned something that can help them in their everyday lives.

To keep the curriculum internationally applicable across a longer time span, this curriculum is as context free as possible and without any references to current events or particular political developments. Therefore, trainers have the freedom to contextualize the material and choose examples most suitable for the specific youth they are working with. Trainers may also want to adjust the language and the method of guiding discussions to the target group, e.g., in some educational contexts students may need more time, and encouraging stimulation to feel prepared to actively participate in class discussions and to self-reflect.

The term radicalization is not mentioned explicitly in the workshop material, as there are no topics included in the curriculum that could 'backfire' without careful treatment. This means that trainers are not required to directly discuss politically loaded topics such as terrorism, fundamentalism, or ideological extremism. Nevertheless, these subjects are present in media and relate to the competences practiced in the curriculum. Therefore, such subjects may spontaneously be raised by students, and trainers may wish to be prepared

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in case this happens. The workshops mostly introduce the competences and mental habits on safe grounds. Once introduced, they can be practiced and used in other cases and eventually transferred to hot, polarizing issues. The basic curriculum can easily be extended by having more in-depth discussions and by covering the subjects in more detail. For synergistic effects, the curriculum may be introduced in combination with other prevention programs addressing school climate, greater community, or individuals at risk. The curriculum can greatly complement such programs and does not compete against them. The curriculum can set, in a safe way, a psychological foundation for future activities explicitly addressing radicalization. It can augment effectiveness of school climate programs by establishing base competences that can be further honed in an advantageous social environment.

## Personnel/Trainer

The curriculum has been designed to be applied by a ‘regular’ teacher or trainer; there are no special requirements in regard to extended knowledge of radicalization processes or psychology in general.

Knowledge of the participants, general experience in moderating classroom discussions, and ability to manage buzz groups is important because the success of the intervention relies on the trainer’s ability to guide group discussions and obtain the participants’ reflections on the material, rather than the trainer reciting the intended reflections themselves. As the trainer must properly understand the goals of each exercise in order to achieve them, it is advised to take training in implementing the curriculum.

## Structure of the curriculum

The core curriculum consists of seven workshops. Each workshop requires a minimum of 45 minutes to execute. The workshops can be easily extended to more than an hour. Additionally, some of the workshops can be used as freestanding interventions. The acquired competences and activities of the curriculum can be continued and utilized in other regular classes taken by the same students.

## Workshop structure

Most workshops follow a similar pattern, with the notable exception of the first and last workshop. The first workshop is unique in the respect that it sets the stage and atmosphere for the following sessions. During the first minutes of the first workshop, trainers introduce themselves, convince students how they can personally benefit from these lessons, and finally agree with participants on the rules of conduct for the entire program. Besides the explicit goal of the workshop, which is to learn about one’s own multiple identities and roles, the first workshop is also designed to build trust and cohesion within the class, e.g., across ethnic and religious divisions. In this workshop, realizations are created with little attention to explicit training skills.

Workshops 2 to 6 follow an identical structure:

- Introduction
- Setting the stage for the exercise
- Discussion & reflection
- Main exercise(s)
- Discussion(s) & reflection(s)
- Closing exercise/closure, recap, reflection & discussion

The welcoming ‘introduction’ (which is not explicitly covered in the manual) is designed to begin the workshop and has two purposes: (1) to get students into the ‘workshop mind-set’ created during the first workshop, and (2) to announce the general subject of the workshop and possibly which relevant skills the students will learn, e.g., ‘becoming aware of and in control of one’s thoughts and feelings.’ After having welcomed students, the workshop usually starts with a ‘setting the stage exercise.’ This exercise has the aim of demonstrating why competences covered later during the workshop may be of personal value to participants. The arguments on personal relevance of a certain competency are usually not stated explicitly by the trainer but are raised in the discussion that follows the ‘setting the stage exercise’ by the participants themselves. To be able to motivate the participants to the fullest, the trainer should be able to answer to himself/herself the following two questions: (1) what are the things that students will learn from the workshop?

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(2) Why would the students want to learn these things?

This ‘setting the stage exercise’ is the opening for the ‘main exercise(s)’ of the workshop. The main exercise(s) is (are) usually devoted to learning or practicing and strengthening a particular set of competences that are both personally and socially useful and may prevent radicalization. For the best effects, the skills, competences, and practices included in the main exercise(s) should be practiced at the school within the context of other lessons and activities. This brings a higher level of abstraction and synthesis and helps the students to translate what they have learned both to practicalities of their life and to broader social issues. For instance, practicing and stimulating open-mindedness and critical thinking can be performed in other classes using their subject material. Workshop exercises lay the competency foundation, allowing teachers to practice those competences in further classroom interventions. The practices of habits of the mind exercised on relatively safe topics during the workshop and other classes can then be generalized. Finally, the teachers can gradually move to critical thinking and critical open mindedness activities directly covering and involving explicitly hot topics that polarize opinions and are likely to be an object of radicalizing ideology.

The final activity ‘closing exercise/closure, recap, reflection & discussion’ aims to summarize, recap, organize, and consolidate realizations gained in the workshop. It involves participants mentioning the things they learned or realized as a result of the workshop. It also functions as an evaluation as it allows the trainer to gauge the degree to which the objectives of the workshop were attained.

The final workshop is also unique: the first half of the last workshop is a continuation of the previous workshop, and the last part of it is devoted to a closure, recap, reflection, and discussion of the

entire program, followed by a quantitative evaluation. The recap discussion of the entire program is particularly relevant to the trainers as it not only consolidates competency of participants, but also allows the trainer to reflect on which realizations and competences covered by the program were particularly vivid in the minds of the participants and which were quickly forgotten.

## Recipients

All workshops are designed to be suitable for 12–21 year-old students and for all levels of education. The ideal participant may be around the age of 15. As a result of the universality of the manual, the trainer conducting the workshop should adjust the activities to match the demands of a particular group, taking into account their age and type of education. This is especially true in the case of the language used and the form of discussion guidance. For the best effects, the curriculum could be used in culturally diverse classes, although all the exercises and activities can be executed in homogenous schools and remain beneficial. There is no specific demographic or ethnic target group and there is no focus on any specific type of radicalization.

## Contact Information

If you are interested in implementing the curriculum, please contact us at [m.sklad@ucr.nl](mailto:m.sklad@ucr.nl) in order to obtain further information on the implementation and evaluation tools. We are also able to provide teachers/trainers training; and this manual in other languages. Additional information and teaching material, including individual independent lessons for schools, which would like to implement these within subject classes or to extend the basic UCARE curriculum, can be obtained at the following address: <http://www.ucr.nl/academic-program/Research/Terra%20II/Pages/default.aspx>

# WORKSHOP 1

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## WHO ARE WE?

Topic: Identity and Our Roles

### Learning goals of the workshop

Learning goals of the workshop regarding students within the class community

- To gain a sense of trust within the class
- To feel a greater sense of belonging in the class
- To gain a greater sense of community and feelings of being understood in class and at school
- To gain a greater sense of social cohesion in an ethnically/culturally diverse class
- To become less biased and hostile towards others in a culturally diverse society

Learning goals of the workshop regarding a student as an individual

- To learn about one's identity
- To become aware of positive aspects of one's identity and of one's positive skills and qualities
- To realize similarities between one's own identity and the identities of classmates
- To become aware of the multiple roles and identities one has

Learning goals of the workshop regarding the individual within the group

- To experience success within a group
- To become resilient to the influence of groups

### Setting the Stage Activity

Aims of the activity

- To get to know the workshop instructor(s)
- To understand the format (and purpose) of the workshops
- To understand and adhere to the rules of the instructor(s)

Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: If you are beginning work with a

group of students for the first time, begin by introducing yourself. Next, explain that you will conduct seven workshops that will teach the class different skills. The workshops are based on psychological theories and will give students some knowledge that can help them to deal with other people and with themselves in everyday life. The skills might be useful in small daily encounters with other people, e.g., friends, family members, and strangers, but may also be useful if they wish to improve their communities and institutions in which they live, learn, and work, or even the greater society. Workshops include exercises through which students may strengthen and master the skills further. In some cases, they may become aware of issues they had not noticed before.

In order for the workshops to be useful, all students ought to actively participate. They must attentively listen to the teacher and their peers and are not allowed to make rude or judgmental comments. Anything that is shared within the workshops by other students must be handled confidentially. Students must treat each other with respect.

Discussion questions for the activity

- Ask the class if they have any questions about the ground rules or if there is anything that needs clarification.

Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- The ground rules can be written on a whiteboard or given on a sheet of paper to all students.

Materials

- No extra material is required.

Information for the teacher

- It is important that all the students are paying attention and listening to the instructions and ground rules.

## Activity 1A

### Activity 1A

#### Exercise I Am...<sup>1</sup>

##### Aims of the activity

- To get acquainted with the concept of identity
- To consider and reflect on one's identity

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Explain to the students the concept of identities. Give an explanation of the following definitions of 'identity':

- 'A person's knowledge that he or she belongs to a social category or group'<sup>2</sup>
- 'A person's conception of his/her roles and the ability to incorporate into the self the meanings and expectations associated with these roles'<sup>3</sup>
- 'Meanings individuals attach to themselves'<sup>4</sup>

To aid the students in understanding the concept of identity, show them your own personal identification card or an anonymous identification card. Use the examples given on the identification card to outline how we belong to several different identities. For example, I am... female, British, brown haired, 177 cm, 22 years old, student, student of..., student at...



Give each student the handout with the 20 'I am...' statements (see Workshop Materials). Without providing too many examples, ask each student to individually complete the 20 statements using words that relate to their own selves. Allow the students four to six minutes to complete the sheet by themselves, silently.

##### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- The exercise can be directly incorporated into Activity 1B if ALL group members trust and respect each other.

##### Materials

- Sheets of paper with 20 'I am...' statements (see Workshop Materials).

##### Information for the teacher

- The sheets are anonymous by default, but they will be collected at the end of Activity 1B. Students may be encouraged to mark them on the back in some secretive way so they can find their own sheet with ease.
- If students find it difficult to think of statements, give them a maximum of two examples (e.g., 'I am a girl', 'I am a sister'), and tell them that anything is acceptable as long as they feel the terms describe them.
- Students can write sentences that include physical, social, psychological, or holistic self-descriptions. Physical self-descriptions would include 'I am 16' and 'I am tall,' social self-descriptors refer to groups, social roles or relationships (e.g., 'I am on the football team'). Psychological self-descriptors refer to personality traits such as 'I am kind' whereas holistic descriptors may be vague characteristics, for example 'I am a person.'

<sup>1</sup> This exercise is inspired by Sinai, M., Kaplan, A., & Flum, H. (2012). Promoting identity exploration within the school curriculum: A design-based study in a Junior High literature lesson in Israel. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 37, 195–205.

doi: 10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.01.006

<sup>2/3</sup> Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory (pp. 255). *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63(3), 224–237.  
doi: 10.2307/2695870

<sup>4</sup> Dutton, J. E., Roberts, L. M., & Bednar, J. (2010). Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of positive identity and the building of social resources (pp. 266). *Academy of Management Review*, 35(2), 265–293. doi: 10.5465/amr.2010.48463334

## Activity 1B

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### Activity 1B Exercise Dividing My Roles

#### Aims of the activity

- To understand the notion of social roles with regard to students' own identities
- To become aware of the different social roles one has
- To understand the difference between social roles, personality characteristics, and physical characteristics

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Read the following text aloud to the class:

Now that you have written down 20 statements that you feel describe who you are, it is time to examine these statements further. The descriptions you have written down will generally fall into three categories: social roles, personality characteristics, and physical characteristics. Social roles are roles that are defined by your participation in a certain group or social context. For example, you have a different role with your friends when you are playing football (team member, defender) than in the classroom (student).

Depending on the age group and the students' educational background, you can add more examples of social identities/roles to make the task easier. The aim of this exercise is to make other social categorizations surface, not to strengthen the existing divisions; therefore, you should not explicitly mention ethnic and religious attributes because these will most certainly be brought up by the students themselves.

Even within different groups of friends you can have different roles. Personality characteristics are attributes that describe who you are and usually define how you behave, think, and feel. Lastly, there is the category of physical characteristics, which is defined by one's outer appearance. Now that you know what these categories are, try to divide your statements into these categories. After each statement, write down 'social role,' 'personality,' or 'physical appearance.' Some statements may belong to more than one category. Do not put your name onto your sheet; instead, draw something on it, e.g., an abbreviation or a symbol, that will allow you to identify your sheet after handing it in.

After the students have done this, you should collect the papers with the 20 statements in order to prepare for the next exercise. A very short discussion follows.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- Which category did most of your 'I am...' statements fall into?
- Do you have one or more roles? How many roles did you find?
- Were there any 'I am...' statements that were difficult to assign?

If enough time is available:

- What did you learn about yourself (about your identity) from this exercise?

If the exercise went well, ideally the conclusion should be as follows: We have many social roles, and they form a large part of our identity.

#### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- From this list of statements, students are asked to select all the social roles and copy them onto a new piece of paper, which they afterwards hand in. Then, the students can divide the remaining two categories, while you prepare for the next exercise.

#### Materials

- Sheets of paper with 20 'I am...' statements of Activity 1A (see Workshop Materials).

#### Information for the teacher

- It is helpful if the three categories are visually presented to the students on a board or by means of a PowerPoint presentation.
- It is helpful to students if the instructor walks around the classroom offering individual help and advice to the students.
- At times, students may ask challenging questions about roles that are difficult to categorize, e.g., age. It is important to raise in the discussion that certain physical characteristics are attached to certain roles or other identities and certain roles require us to behave in a certain way: e.g., as we have a certain personality (e.g., 'We are students so we must act politely.').

## Activity 2

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### Activity 2

#### Exercise Common Ground<sup>5</sup>

##### Aims of the activity

- To become more empathetic and understanding of one another
- To realize similarities between one's own identity and identities of classmates
- To become less biased and hostile towards others in a culturally diverse society
- To increase one's sense of belonging in the class
- To increase feelings of social cohesion in an ethnically/culturally diverse class
- To increase one's sense of community and feelings of being understood in the class and at school

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 15 minutes

Instructions: Collect the 20-statements sheets from the students and quickly select the statements that are: (1) social roles (group categorizations), (2) most likely, shared by multiple students in the class, and (3) not regular ethnic, religious categories that divide and polarize society (see also 'Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity' below). The statements should be selected by the trainer because if the students read aloud the statements themselves, it may increase social tensions within the class (see Note).

To save some time, the list of example statements (see 'Materials' below) could be used to start the exercise.

At the beginning of the exercise, instruct students to stand in a circle with their eyes closed. Then, the trainer in charge reads out selected statements, one at a time. For this, the most common statements from Activity 1A can be used; however, it is important to keep track of what kind of statements students wrote down (for more information, see below). This exercise is designed to allow students to realize that they have much in common with their classmates, thereby increasing group cohesion and making them feel safe about sharing personal information. Inform the students

that when the statement applies to a member of the group, he/she should take two steps forward into the circle, forming a smaller inner circle. The students in the inner circle are then given five seconds to open their eyes and silently greet and observe each other. All students in the outer circle will have their eyes closed all the time. You should stress that eyes should be kept shut in order to allow for an environment that is as safe as possible, in which students do not feel pressured when sharing personal experiences, beliefs, or opinions. After greeting their fellow students, they return to the outer ring and close their eyes again. This entire process is repeated with the other statements. The exercise can begin with simple statements about common physical attributes (e.g., gender or hair color) and quickly proceed to social groups and roles (e.g., 'I am a student') and possibly to more personally relevant details (e.g., 'I am from a divorced family').

Before concluding the exercise, ensure that all students have at least one shared identity/role with others so that everybody has stepped in the middle.

After the exercise, a discussion follows with the questions below.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** To ensure a sense of commonality, choose statements to which multiple students can relate. Furthermore, the statements should also reflect social roles to which possibly all students could relate; they should not increase feelings of diversity in the class (e.g., the statements 'I am Caucasian', 'I am Moroccan' should not be given). As there might be limited time to cover all of the statements from Activity 1A, a list of sample statements that the trainer could use is provided below and in Workshop Materials.

##### Discussion questions for the activity

- How did it feel?
- What did you learn about your classmates?
- What did you learn about yourself (your identity) from this exercise?
- Were there any surprises?

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<sup>5</sup> This exercise is adapted from "over the line" exercises from Challenge Day (<http://www.challengeday.org/>).

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If the exercise went well, students should feel that they share a lot with their classmates. Students' sense of belonging in the class should be strengthened.

*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- The amount of disclosure and the level of sensitivity of each statement should be adjusted to match the initial level of trust between the group members.
- For this exercise, the help of an assistant can be very useful. While the main trainer completes the previous exercise, the assisting trainer can collect the 20-statements sheets from the students and quickly select the statements.

**Materials**

- This exercise uses the list of most common roles and attributes from Activity 1A. The statements should refer to roles and characteristics shared by many students across ethnic and cultural groups. The reserve list containing statements that will be shared by most should also be prepared beforehand (this list can be used in case there is not enough time to evaluate the statements of Activity 1A):
  1. I am a student
  2. I am independent
  3. I am a girl
  4. I am a football fan
  5. I am fourteen years old
  6. I am helpful
  7. I am a son
  8. I am a sister
  9. I like swimming
  10. I am a tennis player
  11. I help others
  12. I am a friend of somebody who has a friend (or friends) from a different country or culture
  13. I am a friend of somebody from a different country or culture
- Statement 12 should always be used!
- Statement 13 should be used only in the case of a class with a very culturally diverse environment in which most of the students will have friends of this type.
- An additional list of common suitable example statements is included in Workshop Materials.

**Information for the teacher**

- The following statements should be avoided or used with great caution:
  - Statements not shared by at least a few students of the group.
  - Statements defining one as a member of ethnic, cultural, religious minority/majority.
  - Auto-evaluative statements such as 'I am good.'

## **Closing Activity: Discussion and Session Evaluation**

**Aims of the activity**

- To evaluate the 'take-home' message from the session
- To understand the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Learning about one's identity
  - Learning about basic self-reflection
  - Learning about one's positions and social roles
  - Understanding the complexity of one's identity
  - Becoming aware of the multiple roles and identities one has
  - Realizing similarities between one's own identity and the identities of classmates
  - Gaining a greater sense of belonging in the class
  - Gaining a greater sense of social cohesion in an ethnically/culturally diverse class
  - Gaining a greater sense of community and feeling of being understood in the class and school

**Description of the activity**

**Length:** Minimum of five minutes

**Instructions:** All students stand in a circle. The instructor throws a soft ball to a random student. Every student who catches the ball must then give a statement about what he/she has learned from the workshop. Remind students to think of something that has not already been said by another student. If a person receives the ball more than once, ask them to think of a new point.

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*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- If the class needs more encouragement to talk and/or throwing a ball around is not possible, try the ‘box of candy’ method: With all of the students sitting or standing in a circle, give a box of candy to one student and ask the student to state something he/she has learned from the exercises. When the student has voiced his/her opinion, the box of candy can be passed on to the neighbor. This continues until every student has had the opportunity to speak.
- Students can be given homework that asks them to consider every role they mentioned and note three good things this role brings them. For example, being a football fan gives you something to do with friends, a team to share victories with, instant acceptance of other fans of the same team, a feeling of strength when your team wins.

*Materials*

- A soft ball or a box of candy

*Information for the teacher*

- Try to include all group members, so if some students have not spoken, state their names and have a student throw the ball to them.
- If a student has no response or does not wish to speak, do not force them to respond, but ask them to self-reflect.

## Workshop Materials

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### *I am... statements for Activity 1A*

Complete the ‘I am...’ statements with the words that describe you. All words are acceptable if you believe they describe you.

1. I am \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am \_\_\_\_\_
4. I am \_\_\_\_\_
5. I am \_\_\_\_\_
6. I am \_\_\_\_\_
7. I am \_\_\_\_\_
8. I am \_\_\_\_\_
9. I am \_\_\_\_\_
10. I am \_\_\_\_\_
11. I am \_\_\_\_\_
12. I am \_\_\_\_\_
13. I am \_\_\_\_\_
14. I am \_\_\_\_\_
15. I am \_\_\_\_\_
16. I am \_\_\_\_\_
17. I am \_\_\_\_\_
18. I am \_\_\_\_\_
19. I am \_\_\_\_\_
20. I am \_\_\_\_\_

## Workshop Materials

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### Common example statements for Activity 2

These statements can be used in case there is not enough time to review the statements of Activity 1A.

Social groups:

I am...

- a student
- at a high school, technical school ...  
(type of school)
- a friend
- a son/daughter
- a sister/brother
- a fan of
- a fan boy/fan girl
- from (name of the country)
- born in (name of the town)
- Catalan, Zeeuws, Norfolk ...  
(name of the province) person
- a party person/animal
- a volunteer
- a YouTuber
- a gamer

- a biker
- a musician
- a runner
- a football player
- a hockey player
- a korfball player
- a sports fan
- an animal lover
- a film fan
- an FC Utrecht, Liverpool, Barcelona ...  
(local football team) fan

Personal and physical characteristics:

I am...

- fashionable
- short/tall
- quiet
- busy
- musically talented
- strong (cool)
- lazy
- helpful

## WORKSHOP 2 Activity 1A

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### YOU'RE IN CONTROL

Topic: Mindfulness

#### Learning goals of the workshop:

- To improve control over automatic thinking and emotions
- To become aware of the role of automatic, unconscious processes in the brain and to understand how these processes can be influenced by the conscious mind
- To understand the roles of different brain areas in automatic or conscious thinking
- To understand why behavior is not always rational and in which situations deliberate thinking might be impaired
- To learn methods of facilitating control over automatic processing
- To be able to observe one's own thoughts and inner processes and to become more aware of them
- To improve self-reflection skills
- To be able to practice mindfulness meditation

#### Setting the Stage Activity

##### Activity 1A

##### Exercise Something Stupid<sup>6</sup>

###### Aims of the activity

- To become interested in different ways of thinking and to understand the need of self-control
- To become aware of automatic and deliberate thinking
- To understand the roles of peripheral and central routes of consciousness
- To become more self-reflective
- To understand the importance of being aware of automatic, unconscious processes in daily life
- To be able to identify types of situations when rational, deliberate thinking may be impaired
- To appreciate rational, critical, and deliberate thinking

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Distribute papers. Read aloud to the class the following passage:

To most of us it happens from time to time that we do something stupid that we may regret afterwards. When we look back at these actions we often think that we 'should have known better' and that it was obviously wrong or stupid to have done it in the first place. Try to think of 1 (or 3) situation(s) in which you or one of your friends did something like that. For example, posting something on social media, trying to show-off and failing badly, doing something irresponsible, shouting at one's parents, throwing something at one's brother/sister, telling a small lie that backfired, being stubborn even if you were completely wrong, hurting a friend in the heat of the moment, being mean to someone, etc. If you cannot think of any situations about yourself, try to come up with a situation about someone you know, such as your friends, your family, but not a member of this class.

Individually, students write down situations in which they did something stupid. If time allows, students can be asked to share some instances of their behavior with the class (however, this is also part of the discussion that follows).

###### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Depending on the age of the students, adjust the examples of the 'stupid things' the students could have done. For older students, examples may include drinking too much alcohol or not revising for an exam. For younger students, examples could refer to saying something mean about a person or taking something from someone else.
- To model and increase trust, provide students with some personal disclosure: For instance, it once happened to me that I ...

###### Materials

- Paper for the students to write their answers on

###### Information for the teacher

- If students find it difficult to think of situations, provide examples relevant to their age, such as 'posted a nasty comment on a

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<sup>6</sup> This exercise is inspired by Baim, C., & Guthrie, L. (2014). *Changing offending behaviour* (pp. 94). Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

## Activity 1B

- social media website' or 'said something mean about a friend.'
- It is important to inform students that they need to write down the examples they give of when they did something stupid, as they are supposed to refer back to them in later workshops.

### Activity 1B

#### Discussion of Exercise 1A

##### Something Stupid

###### Aims of the activity

- To become actively involved in class discussions
- To understand the concept of different ways of thinking and to understand the need for cognitive control
- To become aware of the pitfalls of automatic thinking
- To understand the relevance of being aware of automatic, unconscious processes in daily life
- To be able to identify types of situations when rational, deliberate thinking may be impaired
- To become aware of how prone one might be to irrational behavior and to understand the reasons why it may occur
- To understand situational determinants of irrational behavior

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Guide the discussion by posing the questions below; use nonverbal communication to stimulate answers and avoid lengthy or off-topic speeches.

At the end, you can summarize the results by paraphrasing the points that students have raised in correspondence with the goals of this exercise.

###### Discussion questions for the activity

- Did you manage to come up with situations?
- What kind of 'stupid' actions could you come up with?
- In what kind of circumstances did 'something stupid' happen?

## Activity 2

- Did you/the other person consider your behavior or reaction before acting?
- Were you or the person involved experiencing strong emotions at the time?
- Were you alone or with other people?

The two questions below are optional. They can also be used later in the workshop concerning peer pressure:

- If you were with others, were you pressured by them? If so, could you say 'no'?
- Did you realize that back then?

The two questions below are optional. They can also be used later in the workshop concerning critical open mindedness:

- Did you optimistically hope that 'everything would be fine in the end'?
- In hindsight, do you think that you were pushing your luck?

The ideal result of the discussion would be that the students realize that it is common to do something regrettable. It happens more often when one is drunk, with others, under time pressure, driven by strong emotions, etc.

###### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- If it is not an option to have an open class discussion (e.g., due to a non-responsive class or a lack of positive rapport), the trainer could also use voting and take notes on a whiteboard to illustrate the results.
- If the class is very open and feels safe, ask for some examples from the students as well, beginning with a small personal disclosure. However, be careful that the discussion does not drift towards reporting non-personal (non-shameful) events.

## Activity 2

### Lecture and Discussion

#### Explaining the Brain Using the Hand Model

###### Aims of the activity

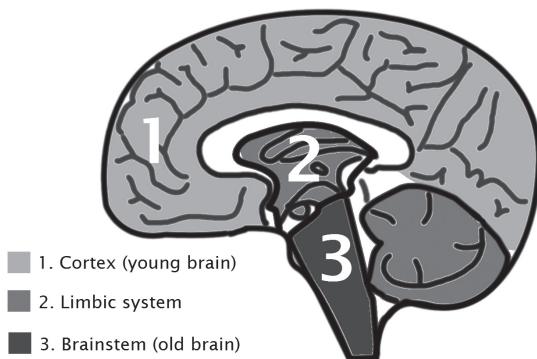
- To understand the roles of different brain areas in automatic or conscious thinking
- To understand the difference between conscious/deliberate decisions and unconscious/automatic decisions

- To understand sources of irrationality
- To understand situational cues that may trigger irrational actions

#### Description of the activity

**Length:** Minimum of 10 minutes

**Instructions:** First, give an overview of the different brain areas and their functions (for an explanation of the functions, see the hand model below). Then, explain the brain areas and their functions using the hand model, with all students actively imitating your demonstration. This explanation is followed by the ‘unconscious elephant’ analogy, and the deliberate-to-automatic line. Lastly, students are asked about mal/adaptive functions of brain areas.



#### The hand model by Dr. Dan Siegel<sup>7</sup>:

The hand model is an applied way of illustrating how occasionally the cortex is more active and other times the limbic system is more active. To make the explanation more concrete for students, they will physically imitate your demonstration using their hands. Perform the exercise and encourage all students to make the described movements with their hands as you read aloud the following text:

- Everyone hold up one open hand: The lower arm represents the spinal cord, which connects the brain to the rest of the body. The base of the hand represents the brain stem, or the reptilian brain: this is the oldest part of the brain, the part that developed first in the evolution process. Most incoming information to the brain passes through the brainstem, which sends information to all other parts of the

brain. The brainstem is responsible for the most basic human functions, such as breathing, sleeping, and controlling the heartbeat. These functions are unconscious, outside of conscious control. The lower arm represents the spinal cord, which connects the brain to the rest of the body.

- Everyone fold your thumb across your palm: The thumb represents the limbic system, a part of the ‘old brain’ that developed after the brainstem in evolution. Just like the brainstem, the limbic system mainly operates unconsciously. The limbic system is very important for survival, because it regulates instincts; it keeps track of which situations to avoid (e.g., snakes) and which situations to approach (e.g., food). The limbic system also regulates emotions, produces very quick emotional judgments/decisions and helps us to learn. The fast speed is adaptive when people are in danger and it activates the fight-or-flight response; (This is a physiological reaction developed to respond rapidly to a perceived threat to survival, an attack, or a harmful event.); however, the limbic system remains active even when there is no real danger. The ‘old brain’ and limbic system, in particular ‘the thumb,’ runs our lives without us noticing; therefore, it is important to learn how to use our attention to control our ‘old brain’ and limbic system when we want to. The main player in controlling emotions is the cortex, which is represented by ‘the fingers.’
- Everyone fold your fingers over your thumb to make a fist: The top part of the fingers and fingernails represent the pre-frontal cortex, which is an area of the brain that is specialized in thinking rationally, planning, and decision making. This area of the brain developed last in evolution, and is the area that is most sophisticatedly developed in humans. This area can operate consciously, which means that it can sometimes be controlled, and can influence other, unconscious brain areas. The cortex is slower than the limbic system; also, when the limbic system becomes very agitated, it becomes impossible to think clearly (demonstrate that the hand opens and the limbic system is revealed). When it decides that a situation is dramatic, it takes over to speed up the fight-or-flight decisions.

<sup>7</sup> This exercise is inspired by Baim, C., & Guthrie, L. (2014). Worksheet: Understanding my brain Part 1, Worksheet: Understanding my brain Part 2. In *Changing Offending Behaviour* (pp. 92–93). Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

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Fortunately, in most modern societies we do not have to fight for survival on a daily basis, but this means we are often unhappy when emotions ‘cloud our judgment.’ Luckily, it is possible to take control over the limbic system via the cortex.

#### The ‘unconscious elephant’ analogy<sup>8</sup>:

To illustrate the difference between the conscious and the unconscious, the following analogy should be read to the students, possibly accompanied by a picture of an elephant with a rider:

- Imagine an elephant with a small boy riding on its back. The elephant represents the unconscious mind, and the rider represents the conscious mind. The rider has the reins in his hand and can steer the elephant or tell the elephant to stop. However, when the elephant has a really strong desire, the rider may not be able to influence the elephant. The rider can help the elephant make better choices because he has the ability to see further into the future, can talk to others, and is able to plan a route by reading maps. However, the rider can hardly do anything against the elephant’s will. The elephant, representing the unconscious, includes automatic functions such as feelings, emotions, heartbeat, and temperature. The rider and the elephant can work well together and, when they do, they can be a brilliant team. However, sometimes they do not work well together.

#### The deliberate-to-automatic line:

A vertical line should be drawn/presented on the board: on the left side of the line, write ‘deliberate actions,’ and on the right side of the line, write ‘automatic actions.’

In order for students to understand when the elephant is in control or when the rider is in control, ask them to think of situations in which they acted deliberately (thoughtfully) and of situations in which they acted without thinking, situations in which they acted automatically (e.g., when strong emotions were at play). Ask a few students to share and indicate where in the deliberate-to-automatic line their situation would be placed. Discuss their examples very briefly. Possible examples of deliberate actions could include planning a trip, asking a favor of someone, doing homework, thinking

about what to say to a friend after insulting him, etc. Possible examples of automatic actions could include: shouting at one’s parent out of anger, running away from a mouse or spider, hurting a friend because of jealousy, crying after something sad has happened, laughing at someone, etc.

#### Do we always use the right method to make decisions?

No, sometimes we let the elephant (the unconscious mind) take control of our actions in situations where it would have been best to use the power of the rider.

#### How can we change how we make decisions?

First, we need to realize who is in charge of each task: the elephant or the boy. Then, we need the rider to take control of the elephant: one way to do this is by counting to ten; this way, you can give the elephant time to calm down and you give the rider time to think clearly about what to do next.

Then, inform the students how it is important to be aware of when the brain reacts emotionally or thoughtfully. This can be linked to mindfulness; counting to ten is one way in which you can gain more control over the elephant (unconscious processes). By being mindful, you can strengthen your ability to control your attention, and you will gain more insight into your mental processes.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- Do we always use the right method to make decisions?
- Look back on your ‘something stupid’ examples, how many of them are due to the elephant making a choice?
- Ask students to think of examples of situations in which they took the automatic or deliberate route.
- Ask students about situations in which the fast reaction of the old brain (among which is the limbic system) is adaptive, and of situations in which the fast reaction is maladaptive. Then ask them to think of examples of what they could do to gain control over their emotions (count to ten, focus on breathing, find a distraction, etc.).
- How can we influence the way we make decisions?

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<sup>8</sup> This exercise is inspired by Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom*. Cambridge, UK: Basic Books.

## Activity 3A

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Additional optional questions for this exercise or conclusion:

- What did you learn about the functions of the main brain regions?
- What did you learn about our own behavior and emotions?
- How could this exercise help you to gain more control over your emotions?

Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- With regard to the deliberate-to-automatic line, students could be asked to write down three situations: One situation in which they were on the left side of the line (deliberate), one situation in which they were in the middle (balanced between deliberate and automatic), and one situation in which they were on the right side of the line (automatic). Discussing this in pairs might be a good option.
- The video included in 'Materials' below could also be shown.

### Materials

- Optional: System 1 and 2 explanation video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiTzziqVHFw>

### Information for the teacher

- The discussion on the exercise should remain focused on students' daily lives, also including examples.

## Activity 3A

### Exercise Mindfulness Meditation

#### Aims of the activity

- To be able to practice the first steps of mindfulness meditation
- To learn how to self-observe
- To become aware of one's thoughts and to gain insight into one's mental processes
- To strengthen metacognitive insight and control
- To improve emotional self-regulation
- To learn how to dissociate from the outside world by means of the mindfulness meditation technique
- To learn how to concentrate and focus more effectively

- To decrease stress levels by promoting well-being
- To become aware of group pressure

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Introduce the topic of mindfulness by reading the following text aloud:

Mindfulness is the intentional, accepting, and non-judgmental focus of one's attention on emotions, thoughts, and sensations occurring in the present moment. It is one of the core social skills young people must learn to master; the Ancient Greeks also referred to it as 'know thyself.'

It helps:

- To not to be driven by initial emotional reactions to irrational decisions and unreasonable actions
- To decrease stress levels by promoting well-being
- To improve study skills and exam grades by increasing effective concentration and focus
- To resist group pressure and to become more assertive

Before starting the exercise read the key rules of the class:

- Respect other people by concentrating on yourself and do not disturb others.
- This exercise will only work if you remain quiet and focused.
- No laughing or talking during the exercise.

Then, read aloud the exercise instructions in a calm, slow voice, allowing time for students to experience each step.

Mindfulness is giving attention to the present moment without judgment. With this exercise, you will attend to your feet, your breath, and your stomach, and then you will return to your feet.

Start by closing your eyes, placing both feet flat on the floor, and your hands on your lap. With mindfulness, focus on your feet and ask yourself 'How does it feel to have my feet on the ground?' Explore the experience of your feet, what it feels like to have your feet in your socks or shoes, feel the different points of pressure on your feet and acknowledge the different temperatures. [Minimum PAUSE of 15 seconds of silence] Simply observe what you notice, there is no right or wrong. Anything that takes you away from this observing and noticing of your feet is a distraction. Any thought about the present, past, or future, any worry or expectation or any

## Activity 3B

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internal judgment, notice this thought briefly and then let it go. [Minimum PAUSE of two or three minutes of silence] Focus your attention back on your feet. [Minimum PAUSE of 15 seconds of silence] And when you are ready, let go of your feet and direct your attention to your stomach. This is the base for mindfulness of your breathing. Observe what it feels like to breathe in this present moment. Explore and discover your own way of noticing your breath. Anything that takes you away from your breath is a distraction. Acknowledge any intrusive thoughts that may come into your mind; this is okay, but let them go before focusing your attention back on your breath. Time and time again keep directing your attention back to your breath, always answering the question, ‘What does it feel like to breathe?’ [minimum pause of 30 seconds] When you’re ready, slowly draw your attention away from your breathing and focus back on the sensation of your feet. Slowly begin to move your toes, solely concentrating on the sensations you feel. Let your mind begin to focus on the other areas in your body as you slowly transition out of the mindfulness state. Move your mind to your body as you stretch your limbs and slowly bring your mind back to the present moment.

### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Depending on time constraints, this exercise can be extended or shortened. This also depends on students’ focus and attention span. It is most beneficial if mindfulness exercises can be conducted individually at several points throughout the day. Make the extra exercises<sup>9</sup> available to students to allow them to continue practicing mindfulness in their spare time (see Workshop Materials).

### Additional Materials

- Extra mindfulness meditation exercises (see Workshop Materials)

### Information for the teacher

- If someone feels uncomfortable closing their eyes, an alternative option would be to pick a spot on the floor and concentrate on that spot for the entire exercise.

## Activity 3B

### Discussion of Exercise 3A

#### Mindfulness Meditation

##### Aims of the activity

- To understand the mindfulness meditation technique
- To become aware of the benefits of mindfulness
- To gain insight into one’s mental processes

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Lead a class discussion based on the questions below. After the discussion, distribute the leaflet with extra mindful meditation exercises (see Workshop Materials).

##### Discussion questions for the activity

- How many different thoughts went through your head in five minutes?
- What came to your mind and (how) did you manage to let it go?
- When could the skill (observing and letting go of your thoughts and feelings) be applied and for what may it be beneficial? (observing and letting go of your thoughts and feelings)

The conclusion should be that it can help to control feelings and examine one’s thoughts, allowing the students to make more rational choices.

## Closing Activity: Discussion and Session Evaluation

##### Aims of the activity

- To evaluate the ‘take-home’ message from the session
- To understand the most important messages of the workshop:
  - Learning about the roles of different processes and brain areas
  - Learning about how these processes influence one’s behavior
  - Increasing awareness of the role of automatic, unconscious processing

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<sup>9</sup> Kabat-Zinn, J. (2004). *Wherever you go, there you are* (pp. 12–13, 17, 19, 46, 52, 62). London, UK: Little Brown.

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- Understanding that automatic, unconscious processing can be influenced by the conscious mind
  - Understanding why behavior is not always rational
  - Understanding in which situations deliberate thinking might be impaired
  - Learning ways that facilitate control over automatic processing
  - Being able to observe one's own thoughts and inner processes and become more aware of them
  - Being able to practice mindfulness meditation

**Description of the activity**

**Length:** Minimum of five minutes

**Instructions:** By asking the following questions, you can evaluate what students have learned and make them realize what they now know.

**Discussion questions for the activity**

- What have we learned today? (If necessary, make explicit references to the first activity of the unit to stimulate connecting all the activities.)

**Supportive questions:**

- How did the exercises help you to understand the functions of the main brain areas?
- How did the exercises help you to understand your own behavior and emotions?
- How did the exercises help you to learn how to get more control over yourself?

The result of the discussion should be as follows: We are not always rational, especially when we have little time, when we are excited, when we are drunk and when we are influenced by other people. The autopilot (the elephant) assumes control and this is not always beneficial for us in the long-term. By stopping and looking at ourselves in a non-judgmental way, we can notice what we are thinking and feeling and let it go if it is not in our best interest, before we engage in behavior that we may later regret or that may even cause us to suffer. We can learn to better control our autopilot by practicing. Also, we know when we are in danger of being irrational, and can be on guard in these kinds of situations: 'do not buy a house when you are rushed, excited, drunk, or when your friends are around to influence you.' Instead, postpone the decision and examine your feelings and thoughts and then make a choice. You cannot let the irrational thoughts and feelings go if you are not aware of them; however, you can make them vanish by exploring them and deciding if you really want them to 'ride' you.

**Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity**

- The discussion can also be conducted using the same format as the closing activity of the previous workshop.

## Workshop Materials

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### Extra mindfulness exercises for Activity 3A

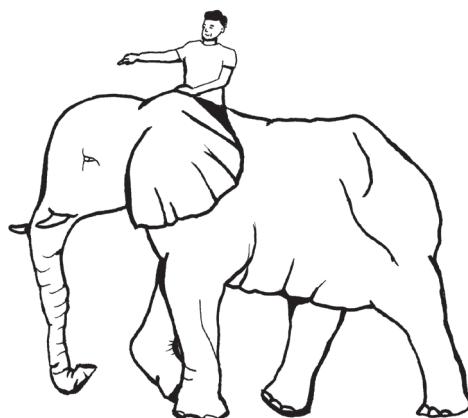
Remember: You're in Control<sup>10</sup>

For a few minutes each day, try sitting down, stopping whatever you are doing and focusing on your breathing. Let go of the present moment, everything that is happening right now and all of your current feelings. Do not attempt to change anything that's going on, just give yourself permission to relax and be mindful of your breathing and yourself.

Try breathing in and truly focus on the sensation. Stay mentally focused as you breathe in and out. Abandon any ideas of what needs to be done or where you need to go. Whenever your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breathing.

At different points during the day, remind yourself that your mind needs to be awake in the present moment. Ask yourself 'Where is my mind right now?'

Throughout the day try to allow things to happen in your life, without forcing them to unfold or rejecting events that you do not agree with into your idea of what should be happening. Try to identify the moments in your day that were easy, difficult, or average.



Whenever you feel you are becoming angry or impatient, try to adopt an alternative perspective, especially when you are feeling blocked from something you want or need to do. Instead of acting on that anger, mindfully question what this emotion is actually telling you. As you attend to these thoughts, instead of losing yourself, try to remain aware of your breathing.

Whenever you feel that you have too much work or your efforts are going unnoticed, consider that this might not be true and that these thoughts might just be thoughts. Giving to others is good as it helps you become more mindful of your inner wealth. By giving and observing its effects on others, you are discovering and transforming yourself.

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<sup>10</sup> Kabat-Zinn, J. (2004). *Wherever you go, there you are* (pp. 12–13, 17, 19, 46, 52, 62). London, UK: Little Brown. The elephant and its rider. Illustration by Abigail Pickard

## WORKSHOP 3 Activity 1

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### How to Resist Pressure

Topic: Assertiveness and Resisting Group Pressure

#### Learning goals of the workshop:

- To become aware of the different identities and roles one has in different situations and the influence of these identities and roles on one's behavior
- To appreciate and recognize the benefits of having multiple roles/identities
- To understand the need to compromise between different roles within one's identity in order to fulfill life tasks
- To learn about elements of one's own identity in relation to others
- To become aware of group and role pressure
- To become more resilient to the influence of groups
- To understand the usefulness of being assertive
- To learn strategies for becoming more assertive

### Setting the Stage Activity

#### Activity 1

##### Exercise My ‘Something Stupid’ Role

###### Aims of the activity

- To become aware of the different roles and identities one has in different situations
- To become aware of the influence of different identities and roles on one's behavior
- To understand the connection between automatic, unconscious behaviors (discussed in the previous workshop) and the influence of identities and roles
- To be able to identify types of situations and pressures that require different group roles

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Refer back to the previous workshop by asking students to recall the time they did something stupid:

In the previous lessons, we talked about situations in which we did something stupid, something we regret. We talked about the kind of situations in which we are more likely to do something stupid. These situations

included, for example, times when we were stressed, intoxicated (e.g., alcohol), or under the influence of other people. Now, take out your list of the situations in which you or your friend did something stupid.

Students should have kept this list from the previous lesson. If not all students kept their notes and there is suspicion that some may not remember the situations, you can recall aloud or provide your own example of doing something stupid when influenced by perceived expectations of other people.

Now we are going to examine these situations further. How often did you or your friend do something stupid under the influence of others because you/he/she assumed that others would be impressed by it or because you/he/she thought it was cool?

Use the questions from the handout (see Workshop Materials) and ask students to tick the boxes. Then read the questions one by one and ask the class to raise their hand if they said 'yes.' If time allows (e.g., a workshop of 60 minutes) you can ask students to provide examples. After every statement, count how many students raise their hands.

In a typical class, the results of the counting can be summarized in the following way:

**Vote 1:** 'Something stupid' often happens in the presence of other people.

**Vote 2:** Often we do 'something stupid' because we think it will be appreciated or is expected by others.

**Vote 3:** Sometimes we are openly pressured by others.

**Vote 4:** Theoretically we can say no; however, in practice, this does not always prove to be as easy as we assume.

**Vote 5:** Allow the class to think about the group role or identity they were in at the time when they did 'something stupid.' Often, we do things that are stupid or immoral because they were expected as part of a specific role.

**Vote 6 and 7:** Sometimes we are aware that we are pressured (when it is unpleasant), but often we do not even realize it. Have we already learned something that could help us to realize when it happens? The answer should be that the techniques learned in the previous workshop could be helpful.

## Activity 2

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**Vote 8:** We can probably avoid doing many stupid things just by surrounding ourselves with people who do not expect us to do stupid things or by remembering our other roles. But we do not always have a completely free choice. The first step is to realize we are pushed; then, we begin to have a choice, although it may still not be that simple to say ‘no.’ Therefore, we will practice this later today.

Discussion questions for the activity

Optional: If there are no time constraints, the questions below can be asked after every vote:

- Can you give an example?

The question below should be asked after vote 5:

- What role were you in when you did ‘something stupid’?

The two questions below should be asked after vote 8:

- Who influenced you/your friend to do ‘something stupid’ or who did you think would appreciate this behavior?
- If you had been with a different kind of people, how would you have acted differently? In what way would have ‘this kind of people’ been different?

The ideal result of the activity should lead to the following realizations: (1) often, the role that we play within groups or society influences our actions and the manner in which we behave because we may feel that we are under expectation to act in this way; (2) if we want to change our behavior, we can choose groups and roles in which we are allowed to behave in a manner of our choosing and avoid groups that expect us to engage in ‘stupid’ actions; and (3) we can also resist group pressure, but this may be difficult, especially since we often do not realize that we perform a certain behavior because we are influenced by our role or others’ expectations.

### Materials

- List of questions (see Workshop Materials)

Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Instead of students individually ticking the boxes of the handout with the list of questions, the activity can be conducted as an open discussion. If it is not an option to

have an open class discussion (e.g., due to a non-responsive class or a lack of positive rapport), you could ask students to answer the questions anonymously on a piece of paper.

- In the case of a short 45 minute class, the activity can be replaced by a short presentation by the instructor giving an example of ‘something stupid’ that he/she himself/herself or many young people commit due to social pressure: for example, eating extremely hot sauce, smoking cigarettes, taking drugs, or binge drinking.

## Activity 2

### Lecture Abandoning Roles

Aims of the activity

- To understand multiple roles, group norms, and pressure
- To understand how we sometimes change our roles
- To become aware of one’s different roles in daily life situations
- To understand that roles can sometimes be in conflict
- To understand the connection between automatic, unconscious behaviors (discussed in the previous workshop) and the influence of identities and roles

Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: To begin the lecture, ask students, e.g., if they have ever come home late, without letting their parents know where they were, because they were still with their friends. Most of the students will probably say that they have experienced this at least once. Then, ask the students why they did not send their parents a text, even though it is such a simple thing to do. The students are likely to not know an answer to this question. Therefore, you should explain that this was a result of them temporarily forgetting about their role as a son or daughter because they were focused on their role of being a friend. Many of the students should be able to understand how, when in a different role, they may act differently compared to when they take on another role. Adjust the story to make it appropriate for students’

## Activity 3

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ages and maturity levels (e.g., partying throughout the night or playing at a friend's house the entire day).

Continue by asking the following discussion questions:

### Discussion questions for the activity

- How do you act differently in different roles (son/daughter/friend)?
- Why do you act differently in different roles? (optional)
- Is it a good or bad thing that we act differently depending on who we are with?
- What are the advantages attached to the role of being a child? How do you personally benefit? (On the board, list all of the mentioned benefits of being a child)
- What are the advantages attached to the role of 'a cool kid' or friend? (On the board, list all mentioned benefits of being a friend)
- What are the advantages attached to the role of ... (pick a role that came up in the 'I am...' exercise that is appropriate for this question)?
- Do these roles sometimes limit you? (optional)
- Provide an example of when your roles were in conflict, then ask students if their roles are also in conflict sometimes. (optional)
- Do you think it is generally a good or a bad thing that you have multiple roles?

Ideally, the discussion should result in the following realizations: (1) Different roles can result in different behaviors; students should be able to relate this to their own daily experiences. Sometimes, as it is the case in the example, this can lead to 'bad behaviors' that we may regret in hindsight; other times, however, this can also be adaptive. (2) Roles can sometimes be conflicting. (3) Various roles/identities bring us different benefits; therefore, having multiple roles or identities ought to be embraced and appreciated.

*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*  
To illustrate that people sometimes also forfeit a role or are forced to do so, you could show a video of a cult member who escaped. In the video (see link below), the boy explains that during his time within the cult he was not allowed to celebrate

Sinterklaas (a Dutch tradition similar to that of Santa Claus) in his school. Use this example to explain to the students that this boy had to give up all of his roles, including the ones of a child and a student, as a result of his role as a cult member. Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqcZmxcsyZY> (part 0:00 - 2:30).

## Activity 3

### Demonstration Group Pressure

#### Aims of the activity

- To understand the influence that groups can have on individuals
- To be able to identify situations in which group pressure occurs

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes, including the video

Instructions: Show a short video (see link below) illustrating the effects of group norms.

- Ask students to pay attention to the video, but remember any questions or remarks they have.
- Type into YouTube 'WYFFT? Will People Follow the Crowd in an Elevator?' or follow the link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDD4IkVZWTM> (show between 0:35 until 3:11, to save time).
- First, ask the students to quickly recap (for themselves) what they saw and noticed in the video. Quickly check whether the class understands the content.
- After watching the video, use the questions below to guide a discussion about group pressure.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- How were the people in the elevator affected by the group?
- Can you think of everyday situations in which this could also occur?
- How do you think you are affected by group pressure?
- Do you think the experiment would have worked if there were someone else who did not follow the 'rules'? Why?

The ideal realizations from this reflection discussion should be—we are all affected by group

## Activity 4A

norms. It is much easier to resist the pressure of a role or group if there is an alternative group role available. For example, it is much easier not to conform to the ‘jock’ norm if you can be a ‘hipster’, a ‘nerd’, etc. So, again, it is good to have more than one role/identity and group.

### Materials

- A projector and computer to show the video

### Information for the teacher

- This activity should lead the students to think about themselves and about everyday occurrences of group pressure.

## Activity 4A

### Explanation Assertive Communication

#### Aims of the activity

- To learn about different techniques for being assertive
- To become more assertive in behavior and communication
- To be able to use assertiveness techniques in daily life situations

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: In activity 4B, students will engage in role-plays about assertiveness. Therefore, it is important that the concept of assertiveness is explained first. Also, students will first learn some basic strategies to act more assertively in the following exercise.

Read aloud the following text<sup>11</sup>: Assertiveness is in the middle between being aggressive and being passive. Someone who does not express his or her opinion and easily conforms to the values of the group can be seen as someone who is passive. Someone who expresses his or her opinion but acts without respect or disregards others’

## Activity 4B

opinions can be said to be aggressive. Someone who is assertive, however, finds a balance between passiveness and aggressiveness: he or she expresses his or her own opinion, but takes others’ opinions into account as well. Furthermore, someone who is assertive is less likely to fall prey to peer pressure and to conform to the group (unwillingly). There are certain techniques that could help one in becoming more assertive<sup>12</sup>:

- Use ‘I’ statements in order to accurately assert an opinion: ‘I do not think it is the right thing to do’ or ‘I disagree with you.’
- Show that you have understood the other person’s point of view: ‘I see what you mean, but I...’
- Remain firm if the other person is not listening to you, but also remain calm and focused.
- If you do not feel like you can make an immediate decision, do not be afraid to ask for more time: ‘I need more time to think about your proposal.’
- Try to maintain eye contact with the person you are talking to; you will begin to feel more in control and the other person will take your answers more seriously.
- Instead of using vague statements such as ‘I cannot’ and ‘I should (not)’ use decisive statements ‘I will (not)’ and ‘I (do not) want to,’ as these phrases clearly communicate that you are not ‘asking’ someone to convince you.
- Keep restating your message until it has been understood.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- What other techniques could help you act more assertively?

## Activity 4B

### Exercise The Broken Record Role-play<sup>13</sup>

#### Aims of the activity

- To practice assertiveness techniques
- To experience group and peer pressure
- To gain a sense of assertiveness

<sup>11</sup> This exercise is based on Hotta, M. (2014). Measuring the effectiveness of assertiveness training: An analysis of issues and a proposed model. *The Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology*, 61(4), 412–424.

Ames, D. R., & Flynn, F. J. (2007). What breaks a leader: The curvilinear relation between assertiveness and leadership. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(2), 307–324. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.2.307

<sup>12</sup> This exercise is based on Hunter-Geboy, C. (1995). *Life Planning Education: A youth development program*. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.

<sup>13</sup> This exercise is adapted from Pfeiffer, R. H. (2003). *The real solution: Assertiveness workbook*. New York, NYC: Growth Publishing.

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#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Separate the class into groups of four students. Each group member will take turns playing a certain role and each scene should last approximately two minutes.

In each scene, three of the group members (B, C, and D) are trying to persuade the fourth student (A) to do something that he/she does not want to do. Use the role-play scenarios (see Workshop Materials) as a guideline for each role-play scene. Students B, C, and D can say anything they wish to try to make person A agree with them. The trainer should make it clear that student A has to step completely into the role of a person who very strongly, on his/her own, does not want to conform to the requests of the other three. It is important that they understand that the exercise is not about being rigid and impervious to rational arguments, but it is about being able to resist social pressure and defend one's freedom. Student A must use the strategies from Activity 4A to successfully reject the proposal. However, student A must continuously repeat one specific phrase. As such, the statement must be thought out in advance and prepared following the guidelines from Activity 4A. Student A should not become defensive, make any excuses, question the arguments of the other three, or respond to them with counterarguments. Simply the fact that he/she does not want to do something is a sufficient reason for not complying with the request. Good friends will respect the wishes of their friend and will cease trying to persuade that person. Every two minutes, rotate the roles so that each student has the opportunity to act assertively as individual A.

*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*  
If time is limited, the exercise can be conducted in groups of three students instead of four.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- How easy/difficult was it to use these techniques?
- Did you feel that you were becoming more assertive throughout the role-play?
- Do you feel that you could apply these strategies to an everyday situation?
- Did you feel more powerful and able to assert your opinion by following the guidelines?

- Was it difficult not to become aggressive during the role-play?

#### Materials

- Role-play scenarios (see Workshop Materials).

#### Information for the teacher

- If time allows, certain groups or individuals could volunteer to demonstrate their role-play scenarios to the class.

## Closing Activity: Discussion Session and Evaluation

#### Aims of the activity

- To evaluate the 'take-home' message from the session
- To understand the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Becoming aware of the different identities and roles one has in different situations and the influence these identities and roles have on one's behavior
  - Learning about elements of one's own identity in relation to others
  - Becoming more resilient to the influence of groups
  - Understanding the importance of being assertive
  - Learning techniques to become more assertive

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: With all students sitting or standing in a circle, give a box of candy to one student and ask him/her to state something he/she has learned from the exercises. When the student has voiced his/her opinion, the box of candy can be passed on to the neighbor. This continues until every student has had the opportunity to speak.

#### Materials

- A box of candy

#### Information for the teacher

- If a student has no response or does not wish to speak, do not force them to respond but ask them to self-reflect.

## **Workshop Materials**

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### **Questions for Activity 1**

#### **Vote card**

Look at your ‘something stupid’ examples and tick the box whenever the statement is true for at least one of the ‘stupid’ situations you wrote down.

- 1. When you or your friend did something stupid, were you or was he/she with other people?
- 2. Did you or he/she feel that others would appreciate it or that other people expected you or him/her to do this?
- 3. Were you or he/she pressured by others?
- 4. If so, could you (or he/she) have said ‘no’?
- 5. Did you or he/she feel that you or he/she had to fit into a specific social role?
- 6. When you or he/she did something stupid, did it conform to the role you were in at that moment?
- 7. Did you or he/she realize back then that you or he/she was under pressure?
- 8. Would you or he/she have acted differently with different group(s) of people?

### **Role play scenarios for Activity 4B**

#### **Guidelines**

1. B, C, and D want to convince A to prank the teacher by putting glue on his chair.  
Person A does not want to do this, and says:

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2. A, C, and D want to convince B to anonymously send a very mean email to a classmate.  
Person B does not want to do this, and says:

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3. A, B, and D want to convince C to smoke cigarettes with them during a break.  
Person C does not want to do this, and says:

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4. A, B, and C want to convince D to skip class and go to the cinema with them instead.  
Person D does not want to do this, and says:

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## WORKSHOP 4 Activity 1A

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### STANDING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

Topic: Perspective-Taking and Conflict Resolution

#### Learning goals of the workshop:

- To improve one's perspective-taking skills
- To learn to recognize and respect other people's perspectives
- To understand that a shift in perspectives may be necessary to perceive the full picture
- To learn that being able to understand other people's perspectives may help when addressing difficult situations and for preventing potential conflicts
- To learn to accept the perspectives of people from different cultures

#### Setting the Stage Activity Activity 1A

##### Exercise The Chair Exercise <sup>14</sup>

###### Aims of the activity

- To experience how quickly people tend to form in- and out-group biases
- To understand that we are often prone to an in-group and out-group bias
- To understand how easily 'us vs. them' perceptions are formed
- To learn how prejudice can arise and how this can easily lead to conflict

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

###### Instructions:

- Place all available chairs in the middle of the classroom.
- Divide students into two groups and tell each group to go to opposite sides of the classroom.
- Instruct one group that their mission is to stack all of the chairs on top of each other within two minutes; instruct the other group that their mission is to place all of the chairs against the walls within two minutes.
- Also, check if there are any students who have previous experience of this exercise from

elsewhere. If there are, ask them to act as observers or to act ignorantly while participating (like they acted the first time they did it).

- Instruct both groups not to communicate with one another verbally as it could spoil the intent of the exercise. Ensure that the task is clear to both groups. Instruct all students not to communicate verbally with each other, not within their own groups and not with members of the second group, but non-verbal communication between group members can be allowed.
- When both groups are ready, give a signal to start. After two minutes, stop the exercise. You should now clearly explain what the tasks of each group were. You can ask each group: *Can you tell the other group what your mission was?* Then, when the mission is clear, you can rhetorically ask each group if they completed their mission.
- Theoretically, there are three possible outcomes: (1) both groups complete the task by stacking all chairs on top of each other against the walls; (2) one of the groups completes its task (all the chairs are either pushed against the wall or are stacked up); or (3) both groups fail as neither completed the task (some chairs are pushed against the wall and some chairs are stacked). The latter is the most likely outcome.
- The exercise must be accompanied by a discussion based on the questions mentioned below (see Activity 1B).

###### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- If the chairs cannot be stacked because of their construction or because of safety reasons, alternatively students could move every chair so that it touches the back of another chair. It is also possible to replace chairs with smaller objects, e.g., sport cones or books.
- To save time, instructions can be given to both groups on cards at the same time (see Workshop Materials). Make sure that the students understand the instructions and do not reveal their own instructions to the other group.

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<sup>14</sup> This exercise is inspired by Bounce young. (2014). Think About it. In Resilience training tool for youngsters (pp. 117–132).

## Activity 1B

### Materials

- Chairs and an open space
- Optional: Two instruction cards for groups (see Workshop Materials)

### Information for the teacher

- A thorough discussion is required in order to ascertain the goals of this exercise.
- The required minimum is one chair for every two students.

## Activity 1B

### Discussion of Exercise 1A

#### The Chair Exercise

##### Aims of the activity

- To understand why it is important to be able to understand other people's perspectives
- To learn that conflicts are unlikely to arise when groups/individuals understand each other
- To learn that communication can prevent hostility
- To learn about intergroup co-operation, competition, and hostility
- To learn about 'us vs. them' thinking

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: The chair exercise should be followed by an active class discussion to address some of the social dynamics that were exposed during the activity. Firstly, encourage the students to reflect on their impressions and discuss it within groups. After a few minutes, lead a discussion with the questions below.

##### Discussion questions for the activity

- Who assumed that they had to compete with the other group? (This question can be complemented by voting/raising hands.)
- What does this exercise reveal about our social dynamics? Use the language and terminology appropriate for the audience: For example, the rather abstract question above may be replaced or made more

## Activity 2A

specific by a series of semi-rhetorical, simpler questions:

- Who noticed how quickly teams were formed?
- Did the group you were randomly put in feel like 'your team' as soon as you faced the 'opponents'?
- How quickly did you start to favor your group over the other group?
- Depending on the outcome: Why were both groups successful? If so, emphasize the fact that the groups understood what the goal of the other group was. Make clear that when both groups understand each other's motivations, there does not need to be a conflict. If the groups were not successful, ask why they think they were not successful; stress that if the groups had had a better understanding of one another, there would not have been a conflict.
- How did you know how to collaborate? Why did you not know how to collaborate? Make clear that this was the case because the groups understood/did not understand the other group; on the other hand, people of the same group understood each other well. The discussion should make clear that the groups need to understand each other in order to complete the task; the chances of a conflict are reduced when both groups understand each other.

##### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Within a non-talkative class, students could also discuss questions in small groups first, and then each group can present their answer.

## Activity 2A

### Exercise The Letter Exercise<sup>15</sup>

##### Aims of the activity

- To improve perspective-taking skills
- To understand that taking other people's perspectives is crucial to obtain a complete picture

<sup>15</sup> This exercise is based on Baim, C., & Guthrie, L. (2014). Perspective-taking, Worksheet. In *Changing offending behaviour* (pp. 151–153). Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

## Activity 2B

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- To understand that other people might hold other perspectives that are just as valid as one's own perspective, even though one's own perspective might seem to be the most obvious one.

### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

#### Instructions:

- Give each student a piece of paper or the provided answer sheet to write their answers on (see Workshop Materials).
- Divide students into groups of four and have them sit around a table or an empty space with one student at each side of the space/table.
- Place the square piece of paper with the letter 'E' (see Workshop Materials) in the middle of the space/table. All students must be able to see the letter 'E' (although each student will see the 'E' from a different angle).
- Firstly, ask students: In front of you, there is a piece of paper with something written on it. Now, please write down what you see; you can come up with more than one thing, write down as many things as you can think of. Keep your answers to yourself. For example, a student might be able to see the letter 'M', but a different student may see the letter 'W', another, the number '3', etc.
- In the second step, give students the following instructions: Now that you have written down what you see, do not reveal it to your neighbors. Your peers, sitting on the other sides of the space/table, might have seen something else. Try to envision things from their perspective, then guess and write down what each of them could possibly see from their side of the table. Try to come up with as many things as possible for each person.
- In the third step: You have all written down what you saw at first sight yourself, and you have also thought about what the others could see. Now it is time to check how good you are in guessing what other people may see. Reveal to your partners at the table what you have written down and explain why and how you saw what you saw. Compare your guesses about what you thought your peers saw with what they actually wrote down they saw. For each correct guess, you can give yourself a point.

- In the last step, a class discussion about the exercise should be held (see Activity 2B).

### Materials

- One square piece of paper with the letter 'E' printed on it for each group (see Workshop Materials).
- A piece of paper or the answer sheet (see Workshop Materials) for each student.

### Information for the teacher

- You should ensure that it is not possible for students to see what other students in their group are writing on their sheet, nor allow students to discuss what they can see before they are asked to do so in the third stage of the exercise.
- After the exercise, and after the students have discussed their own answers, a group discussion follows that should lead towards the realization of the importance of recognition of (and respect for) other people's perspectives. This applies even more so when it comes to conflicts (see Activity 2B).

## Activity 2B

### Discussion of Exercise 2A

#### The Letter Exercise

### Aims of the activity

- To learn why it is important to be able to understand other people's perspectives
- To understand that other people might hold other perspectives that are just as valid as one's own, even though one's own perspective might seem to be the most obvious one

### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Ask the students questions below and stimulate the discussion.

### Discussion questions for the activity

- How is it possible that we are looking at the same letter, but are seeing different things?
- Is one particular perspective better than another? (The answer is of course, 'no, all perspectives are equally valid.') Why is this an important realization?

## Activity 3

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- How would you refer to what you have seen if multiple perspectives are possible? (optional)
  - Could you think of other (maybe more abstract) situations in which people have different perspectives on the same thing?
- The discussion should make clear that other people might hold different perspectives than one's own and that these perspectives are just as valid.

*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- Within a non-talkative class, students could also discuss questions in small groups first, and then have each group present their answer.

### Materials

- No extra material is required.

## Activity 3

### Exercise Abstract Social Roles and Conflict Resolution

#### Aims of the activity

- To improve perspective-taking skills
- To understand the relationship between roles, identities, and perspectives
- To understand how roles influence feelings and behavior
- To understand perspectives in an abstract social form
- To realize the role understanding perspectives has in preventing conflict escalation
- To understand that acknowledging others' perspectives is a step towards conflict resolution
- To understand that taking others' perspectives is crucial in order to obtain a complete picture
- To learn why it is important to be able to understand other people's perspectives
- To understand that other people might hold other perspectives that are just as valid as one's own perspective, even though one's own perspective might seem to be the most obvious one

#### Description of the activity

**Length:** Minimum of 10 minutes

**Instructions:** This exercise refers back to Activity 2 of Workshop 3 (when students were asked if they have ever come home late without letting their parents know). Two students engage in a role-play with one student assuming the role of a parent and another, the role of a child. These students then perform a scene in which the child returns home. The two students should only be given the instructions for the character they are assuming (see Workshop Materials).

Students perform the scene by following the instructions provided on the cards; the task is to enliven these roles and to think in a creative manner about how to respond to one another. Half of the remaining students should be given a card that reads 'parent' and the other half of the class receives a card that says 'child.' Whilst the two students are acting out the role-play, instruct the rest of the class that, based on their card, they must assume the perspective of that character and try to empathize with them. The students may be seated on opposite sides of the class, based on the perspective they are assuming. Two arrangements are possible: (1) observers sit behind the actor whose perspective they are to assume, or (2) observers sit so that they can face the actor whose perspective they are to assume.

#### Discussion questions for the activity

- What roles are the people in? The answer could be parent, child, or friend.
- What is expected from them in regard to their roles? The answer should be that the parent's role is to protect and teach their child; the child's role is to act like a good child; the friend's role is to act like a cool, independent kid.
- How does the child feel at the moment when he/she enters the house?
- How would you feel?
- How does the child perceive his/her parent's behavior?
- How does the parent feel at first?
- How does the parent perceive the child?
- How does the parent feel afterwards?

- What could the child and the parent have done differently by taking each other's perspectives into account?
- Can this kind of situation happen elsewhere? Between friends? At work? Between groups of people?

First, the observing students should share their thoughts before actors make their statements. Some of the questions should be addressed first by the opposite groups, and then by the assigned group.

The ideal result of the discussion is to make clear that understanding the perspectives and feelings of the other would result in a completely different dialogue between parent and child, with much less anger and conflict.

*Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- This exercise could be adjusted in accordance to the age of the students; for example, a child getting into a fight with another child or a child taking an item from a candy store without paying.

#### Materials

- The two role-play instruction cards (see Workshop Materials).
- A card for every student that says either 'child' or 'adult.'

#### Information for the teacher

- Ideally, within the role-play a conflict will evolve where the parent asks the child why he/she is late and accuses the child of being irresponsible. In turn, the child will make feeble excuses. Both parties may become angry and frustrated.

## Closing Activity Discussion and Session Evaluation

#### Aims of the activity

- To understand the 'take-home' message from the session
- To understand the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Improving perspective-taking skills
  - Learning to recognize and respect other people's perspectives
  - Understanding that a shift in perspectives may be necessary to perceive the full picture
  - Understanding that taking other people's perspectives might help to prevent conflicts
  - Learning that being able to understand other people's perspectives may help when dealing with difficult situations
  - Learning to accept the perspectives of other people

#### Description of the activity

Discuss with the class 'what we have learned' from each exercise and from the whole workshop. Firstly, ask the students what they have learned (and preferably give examples) and then add the missing points to their answers. This part of the lesson could be accompanied by a PowerPoint slide summarizing the main points of the lesson.

#### Materials

- A PowerPoint presentation on the main points of the lesson (optional).

#### Information for the teacher

- If time allows, it could be valuable to let the students write down three things that they learned from the session. This way, each student first evaluates the lesson individually. This also allows for the possibility to receive some students' feedback by collecting the answers.

## Workshop Materials

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Instruction cards for Activity 1A

### **Group A instruction**

Your group mission is to stack ALL chairs on top of each other within two minutes. If there are too many chairs, you can create more than one stack. During the game, you must not talk to other group members.



### **Group B instruction**

Your group mission is to put ALL chairs against the walls within two minutes. During the game, you must not talk to other group members.



## Workshop Materials

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*Handout symbol for Activity 2A*

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## Workshop Materials

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Answer sheet for Activity 2A

I see:



The person to my left may be seeing:

The person across from me may be seeing:

The person to my right may be seeing:



## Workshop Materials

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*Role play instructions for Activity 3*

**Parent card**

Your child was hanging out with friends after school even though he/she was expected to be home at 8 p.m. Now it is almost midnight and you are still waiting. At 9 p.m., you became worried, at 10 p.m., you tried to call your child but he/she did not answer. You imagined all kinds of horrible scenarios because you have recently read a news article about a child's corpse being found in a ditch. At midnight, when you are about to call the police, your child finally shows up.



**Child card**

Your friends took you to a cool pool party. You had a great time and there was a boy/girl there who you have a crush on, so time flew by and before you realized it was almost midnight. When your friends dropped you off at home, you saw several missed calls from your mom/dad on your phone. He/she will be mad at you. He/she would never understand. You must think of a reason for why you are so late, otherwise he/she will 'ground' you for at least a week.



## WORKSHOP 5 Activity 1A

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### THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Topic: Critical Open Mindedness

#### Learning goals of the workshop

- To become less dogmatic
- To increase resilience towards confirmation bias
- To understand which factors may lead one to use automatic judgment
- To be able to resist automatic judgments and reflect upon them
- To strengthen critical thinking skills
- To increase one's ability to think rationally
- To gain emotional control
- To learn to consider other perspectives
- To be able to examine information critically
- To understand the concept of critical open mindedness and closed mindedness

#### Setting the Stage Activity

##### Activity 1A

##### Micro-Lecture Mindfulness in Critical Thinking

###### Aims of the activity

- To understand the concept of critical open-mindedness
- To understand the concept of critical closed-mindedness
- To link critical open-mindedness to mindfulness

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of three minutes

Instructions: Inform the students in a language suitable for them: *Closed-mindedness is believing that your point of view is correct and cannot be proven wrong, whereas open-mindedness is the ability to remain open to other possibilities and to recognize other people's points of view.* In order to solve problems, to learn new skills and to question the validity of information, individuals must engage in critical thinking. However, critical thinking is not easy; we are prone to follow our first impressions and are likely to stick with them even though succeeding information may not support our opinion. You can get a first impression via hearsay, via your emotions, via automatic thoughts, etc. Without being able to think critically, we accept information as fact when it actually may be false. The skills learned in the mindfulness workshop will help us to be more

informed when it comes to receiving information and making decisions. Mindfully questioning a statement or fact allows us to critically evaluate the truth behind it and, in doing so, we can become more critically open minded.

To help students to appreciate the value of critical thinking, it may be worthwhile to highlight the personal relevance and personal usefulness of critical thinking. This can be done by referring to the experiences they shared in the 'something stupid' exercise and asking them how a lack of critical thinking skills and a closed mind played a role in it. The following discussion questions can also help in this task: Now think back to the second workshop and what we did there at the beginning. Do you remember? We all thought of situations in which we did something stupid, something we regretted afterwards. Do you remember the story about the boy rider (the conscious/deliberate) and the elephant (the unconscious/automatic)? We discussed these situations, and found that we sometimes let the elephant take control.

###### Discussion questions for the activity

- Now try to think of situations in which you or your friend acted stupidly. (Optional: see 'Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity' below.)
- Did doing 'something stupid' seem like a great idea at that moment? Did you/he/she optimistically think that 'everything would be fine'?
- Looking back, do you think now that you/he/she was pushing your luck?
- Can you think of any situations in which you/your friend acted with a closed mind and did 'something stupid' because you/he/she were/was not open to other possibilities or to other people's views? (optional)
- How did having a closed mind (to other possibilities or to other people's views) influence what you/he/she did in this/these situation(s)? How could having an open mind change what you/he/she did?
- Can you avoid having a closed mind? How?

The following question should be used in the case that mindfulness is not raised spontaneously in the answer to the question above:

- How could you use mindfulness to help you to be more open-minded?

## Activity 1B

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Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- If the class is short (e.g., 45 minutes) or if there is a serious concern that participants may not remember their own examples of the ‘something stupid’ exercise, instead of asking students to recall their own ‘something stupid’ examples, you can refer to one or two suitable examples of situations mentioned by students in the second workshop and the discussion can be based on this or even on an example from the teacher’s personal life with which students can identify.

### Activity 1B

#### Exercise The Bat and the Ball<sup>16</sup>

##### Aims of the activity

- To experience the inaccuracy of automatic judgment
- To be able to identify conditions when automatic judgments prevail<sup>17</sup>
- To experience internal pressure to follow initial judgment even when the evidence contradicts it
- To become aware of one’s vulnerability to make incorrect snap judgments
- To understand that one often makes incorrect decisions when facing external pressures

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of seven minutes

Instructions: Ask the class the question below, informing them that they must write down their answer to the question as quickly as possible, put the pen away, turn the page over, and raise their hand without saying anything, and that the first 10 people who come up with the correct answer will win a candy. Ask the students: If you have experience of this puzzle from elsewhere, please remain silent in order to not spoil it for the others. If I buy a bat and a ball for one euro and 10 cents, and the bat costs one euro more than the ball, how much does the ball cost?

Then, the teacher should write the names of students according to the order in which they raise

their hands. When the majority has indicated that they have their answers, the teacher should ask each of them for their answer. Most students will likely immediately state ‘10 cents.’ However, the correct answer is ‘five cents.’ Most likely, the majority of students who are quick with their replies will give an incorrect solution, thus showing that when we are under time pressure we do not think through a problem properly. Briefly explain the correct solution to the problem: The ball cannot cost ten cents because then, as the bat costs one euro more than the ball, the bat would cost one euro and 10 cents. This would make the overall cost 1 euro and 20 cents. This exercise should be accompanied by a discussion based on the questions below.

##### Discussion questions for the activity

- Which answer is correct?
- How did you come up with 10 cents? How did you come to the correct answer?
- Relate this to the metaphor of the boy rider and the elephant we discussed in the mindfulness workshop. Who would always say ‘10 cents’? The elephant or the boy? Who is able to give the answer ‘five cents’? When does the answer of the elephant prevail?
- What made you choose the ‘elephant’ (automatic) way? Students should realize that they choose the automatic way as a result of time pressure.
- Is there anything other than time pressure that can make you choose the ‘elephant’ (automatic) answers?
- After learning that five cents was the correct answer, did this solution confuse you? Do you still have a gut feeling that there is something wrong about it and that your proposed solution of 10 cents feels right?
- When you did not have enough time to carefully think about the right answer what did you do? Did you rely on your intuition? Did you accept the answer suggested by other people without giving it a second thought?
- How do you think your answer would have changed if you had more time to solve it?

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<sup>16</sup> This exercise is inspired by Nagin, D. S., & Pogarsky, G. (2003). An experimental investigation of deterrence: Cheating, self-serving bias, and impulsivity. *Criminology*, 41(1), 167–194. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2003.tb00985.

<sup>17</sup> These conditions may include limited cognitive resources, time pressure, lack of attention, etc.

## Activity 1c

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- How do you think you could avoid making mistakes in similar questions?

Ideally, the discussion should result in the following realizations: Automatic processes can provide wrong answers/wrong first impressions; we choose them every time we must decide quickly and when we do not allocate enough resources to think things through. More importantly, we have the tendency to defend and stick to our initial impressions. The first idea can also come from outside.

### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Alternatively, the class can be told to shout the answers instead of writing them down; however, this may ruin the demonstration once the first person shouts the actual correct answer.
- The main purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate that quick intuitive judgments might often be wrong. If you have only a small amount of time or if the task is too challenging for the class age and level, this exercise can be replaced with examples of incorrect intuitive judgments that can be demonstrated more quickly. Instruct students to continuously repeat the word ‘white’ and then quickly pose the question: *What does a cow drink?* Students falling for automatic processes will give ‘milk’ for an answer instead of ‘water.’

### Materials

- Piece of paper and a pen.

### Information for the teacher

- The aim of this exercise is to get the students to respond to the question as quickly as possible.

## Activity 1c

### Exercise Guessing the Sequence<sup>18</sup>

#### Aims of the activity

- To understand the confirmation bias<sup>19</sup>
- To experience how prone one is to using confirmation bias
- To appreciate the consideration of alternative or opposite viewpoints when making a decision
- To learn to consider another, opposite viewpoint when confronted with a problem

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Give students the following instructions: *If you have experience of this game from elsewhere, please remain silent in order to not spoil it for the others. I am going to give to you a three-number sequence. I have a rule in mind that these three numbers obey. I want you to figure out what that rule is. The way in which you can get information about the rule is by proposing your own set of three numbers to which I will say, ‘yes that follows my rule,’ or ‘no, that does not follow my rule.’ Raise your hand when you think you know the rule. You can guess the rule as often as you want. You do not need to continue the sequence; you can propose any different sequence. I will just say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ depending on whether your sequence follows the rule. Is that clear?*

Show the students the number sequence ‘2, 4, 6’ on the board; after this, they can begin proposing their own sequences to obtain information.

The rule is that the sequence contains any increasing integers. If, for example, students propose ‘26, 28, 30,’ you say, ‘Yes, this sequence follows my rule.’ When the students then propose that the rule is numbers increasing by two, you say, ‘Your sequence follows my rule; however, this is not my rule.’

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<sup>18</sup> The 2-4-6 confirmation bias exercise was first developed by Wason, P. C. (1960). On the failure to eliminate hypotheses in a conceptual task. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 12(3), 129–140. doi:10.1080/17470216008416717, ISSN 1747-0226

Instructions for the exercise were inspired by Muller, D. [Veritasium]. (2014, February 24). *Can you solve this?* [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=vKA4wzO6iXo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vKA4wzO6iXo)

<sup>19</sup> We seek confirmation of our preconceptions, rather than falsification of them.

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Let students guess the sequence for a while. If students do not find the rule after some time, you might want to help them by saying: You want information, I have the information. It could be very useful to you to guess sequences that do not seem to fit the rule.

Most students will believe that the rule is that the numbers increase by two each time. When they give examples, they will normally ask whether numbers that fit into their belief of increasing by two would fall into the sequence, e.g., '18, 20, and 22.'

Once students have found the rule, or after you have told them the rule, you can explain the following to them: *The most effective strategy to test your guesses would be to ask me about sequences that did not follow your rule. Instead, you were trying to confirm what you believed. You were looking for a sequence of which you expected the answer to be 'yes.'* You guessed sequences that confirmed the rule you had in mind, instead of sequences that would contradict your rule. In psychology, this is known as the confirmation bias. However, testing the opposite of what you believe would be much more informative because it could immediately give you information that your guessed rule was not correct; therefore, you should ask questions disconfirming your own hypothesis in order to figure out which sequences do not follow the rule.

#### *Discussion questions for the activity*

- What influenced you to say that the numbers increased by two each time?
- Did you have any other ideas when first seeing the numbers?
- Can you relate the confirmation bias to the boy and the elephant metaphor? What was the rule provided by the elephant? What did the boy do to test the rule provided by the elephant? Did it work?
- How could we avoid making the mistake of guessing the incorrect rule? What could the boy do in order to not get carried in the direction chosen by the elephant?

- Do you think the confirmation bias can occur in other situations? Think about other instances in which you form first impressions.

The discussion should lead to the realization that one way to think critically is to not immediately accept one's first impression; rather, it is better to evaluate information by trying to disprove it.

#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- The main purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate confirmation bias. If you are short of time or if the task is not appropriate for your class, it can be replaced with examples of confirmation bias, e.g., self-fulfilling prophecy. If, based on a first impression, you assume that another person is unpleasant and you treat this person coldly, eventually, the other person may dislike you and become unpleasant to you.
- You could also demonstrate this via a video, for instance with: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=vKA4w2O61Xo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=vKA4w2O61Xo)
- A simplified version is to give the number sequence '4, 5, and 6.' Most students, when asked to guess the rule, will say that it is increasing by one each time. However, the correct rule is just any number different from the preceding number (e.g., 5, 2, and 6).
- A more complicated example may also be used, such as the sequence '2, 4, and 8.'

#### *Materials*

- The number sequence '2, 4, 6...' written on the board.

#### *Information for the teacher*

- Students should realize that one step needed in order to think critically is to not immediately accept one's initial judgment (a so-called hypothesis) to be true, but to try to falsify it (to try to prove an idea to be incorrect). This helps to form non-biased opinions that are more open to critical evaluation.

## Activity 2

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### Activity 2

#### Exercise Standing on the Other Side

##### Aims of the activity

- To strengthen perspective-taking and critical thinking skills
- To become open to arguments opposing one's point of view
- To be able to argue from multiple viewpoints
- To strengthen debating skills
- To stimulate critical open mindedness

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 15 minutes

Instructions: In this exercise, students will devise arguments for and against a certain issue.

- First, the topic needs to be explained clearly.
- Then, ask the students to pick an argument side (or divide them into groups):

**Group A:** 'We want to prohibit the sale of violent video games to those under 21.'

**Group B:** 'We are against prohibiting the sale of violent video games to those under 21.'

- For the first three minutes, each group must think of as many arguments as possible that support their statement. Then, for five minutes, each group is asked to think of as many arguments as they can that challenge and/or contradict their original position. For each argument for their original position, they can give themselves one point. For counterarguments, arguments making their original pro arguments look weak or invalid, they can give themselves two points; for a list with example arguments, see Workshop Materials.
- The class has approximately seven minutes to discuss their arguments within the group. When the time is up, each group will present their arguments to the rest of the class.
- After both groups have presented their arguments in favor or against a certain statement, the groups will be asked to present the counterarguments they thought of (These should be new arguments that were not mentioned by the other group.).
- Groups count their score: An argument for their original position is one point. Valid arguments against their initial opinion constitute one point plus one bonus point

if they were not mentioned by the other group, a valid original counterargument is worth two points.

- After every group has had the chance to talk, students should be encouraged to engage in a discussion, explaining their personal opinion on the topic (optional) and considering whether (and how) taking different perspectives has affected their personal thoughts about the topic.
- This exercise is followed by a discussion (see questions below).

##### Discussion questions for the activity

- Do you see the benefit of viewing a statement from multiple perspectives?
- Did you find that your original opinion changed after hearing other students' arguments?
- Was one perspective easier to take than the other?

The conclusion of the discussion should be that being able to see multiple perspectives can change your opinion about certain issues and can help you to stay critically open-minded.

##### Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity

- Students can be asked to make an initial decision about whether they are for or against the content of a statement. It is then interesting to examine how their perspectives change after the group discussion.
- Depending on the background of the class, different subjects can be used (e.g., zoos should be closed down with regard to animal welfare vs. zoos should not be closed down; private ownership of guns should be prohibited vs. private ownership of guns should not be prohibited; you should delete your Facebook account vs. you should not delete your Facebook account).

##### Materials

- No extra material is required.

##### Information for the teacher

- The example provided asks for arguments against and in favor of banning the sale of violent video games to those under 21. You

## Activity 3

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may choose any subject that is relevant for the students as long as it does not create a division of the class across ethnic or religious lines. If there are students in the class who already hold strong opinionated political or religious views, it is advised to practice critical open-mindedness first with a ‘safer,’ less emotionally loaded topic. Eventually, the acquired skills may be transferred to the domain in which the students hold dogmatic views. Nevertheless, immediately asking individuals to directly challenge their dogmatic views may be too challenging and could be met with opposition.

- Give students sufficient time to formulate good arguments in favor of and against the statement.
- Encourage students to take different perspectives in order to consider different opinions.

### Activity 3

#### Exercise Questioning the Reliability of a Source

##### Aims of the activity

- To learn about different types of sources
- To be able to examine information critically
- To learn about the difference between evidence-based information and non-evidence based information

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: Introduce a subject that has recently been in the media so that most students are already familiar with it. Alternatively, you can also use the example sources (see Workshop Materials). Briefly explain the background of the case; then distribute the materials to students. Materials should consist of set of excerpts from different sources containing statements about the issue. The source should be indicated with every excerpt.

Give a short lecture on evaluation of a source’s reliability, including the importance of questioning the reliability of a source and how to do it. In order to question the reliability of information, students should ask themselves key questions, such as:

- Is it a fact that can be verified or an opinion?
- If it is an opinion, is it supported by a fact? (Is there scientific evidence?)
- Does the interpretation really agree with the provided facts? Are there arguments that contradict the interpretation? Is the argument behind the information strong and clear?
- If it is a fact, is it from a trustworthy source? Where does the evidence come from? Does the source have credibility? Was the source written by an expert?
- Is there potential bias? Is the information of benefit to the person giving the evidence or is it an opinion? Is the person/institution obliged to be objective?

This list can be distributed to students in the form of the rubric to evaluate sources (see Workshop Materials) or remain on display by means of a PowerPoint presentation for the students to refer to.

Now students should evaluate by themselves every excerpt in regard to how much they trust it to be true based on the criteria listed. For instance, students could give a star to the excerpt for each question it scores positively on. Then, the list of the excerpts together with the sources can be displayed on a teaching board and you can discuss it collectively as a class, using an example of one or two excerpts and asking whether the answer to each question indicates it is trustworthy information.

After reading aloud each excerpt, ask the students to which degree they believe the statement is valid and why.

##### Discussion questions for the activity

After the activity, ask the students the following questions:

- How easy do you feel it is to determine the validity of a statement?
- Which source do you believe can be trusted the most?
- Which sources do you feel cannot be easily trusted?
- Are there some subjects/areas for which it is easier to acquire trustworthy information?
- After today’s session, will you question the legitimacy of something you read differently?

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#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- Facts and opinions from only one recent media event can also be used. Depending on the level and age of the students, different facts and opinions can be used that are more strongly related to the class.

#### **Materials**

- Handouts of the rubric for evaluating sources (see Workshop Materials).
- Printed copies of a set of excerpts obtained from different sources of various credibility and/or a PowerPoint presentation containing them. All materials should consider a subject that has recently been in the media so that most students are already familiar with it to some degree. Ideally, the issue should be mildly controversial so that there are at least two opposite points of view and possibly also conflicting interests. The set of materials should contain different, possibly opposing, statements concerning the case. It should be balanced by including voices on both sides. The materials should come from types of sources of different validity, level, and direction of bias. For example:
  - Academic article
  - Scientific report
  - Review of scientific reports
  - Government report
  - Wikipedia
  - Newspaper article
  - Foreign major newspaper
  - NGO document or website
  - Independent NGO report
  - TV or radio broadcast
  - Comment on YouTube
  - YouTube video
  - A Facebook page/comment
  - Tweets
  - Website of a group engaged in an issue/Activist website
  - Hearsay
- With every excerpt, information relating to the source should be provided.
- Alternatively, you can use copies of the materials provided in the example sources list (see Workshop Materials).

#### *Information for the teacher*

- This activity stands independently; therefore, in case of a lack of time, this activity can be omitted without affecting the other exercises. It can also be extended to fill a complete additional 45-minute workshop.

## **Closing Activity: Discussion and Session Evaluation**

#### *Aims of the activity*

- To evaluate the ‘take-home’ message from the session
- To understand the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Understanding the concept of critical open-mindedness and closed mindedness
  - Becoming less dogmatic
  - Increasing resilience to confirmation bias
  - Understanding which factors may lead one to use automatic judgment
  - Being able to resist automatic judgments and reflect upon them
  - Strengthening critical thinking skills
  - Increasing one’s ability to think rationally
  - Gaining emotional control
  - Learning to consider perspectives other than one’s own
  - Being able to examine information critically

#### *Description of the activity*

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Description: On the whiteboard or on a large sheet of paper, write down the topic of the workshop (Critical Open-mindedness) in the center with a bubble around it. Going around the classroom, ask all students to give one word or phrase that they feel describes an aspect of the workshop. At the end of the activity, the students will have formed a mind map of key features and words related to critical open mindedness.

#### **Materials**

- Whiteboard/large sheet of paper and marker pens.

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*Information for the teacher*

- The goal of this activity is for students to reflect on the workshop. Ideally, keywords mentioned should be emotional control, critical thinking, and mindfulness.
- In order to help the students think of words, a small number of examples could be given at the beginning of the exercise.

## Workshop Materials

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### Example arguments for Activity 2

#### Group A

'We want to prohibit the sale of violent video games to those under 21.'

1. Violent video games could increase violence in youth.
2. Violent video games could make violence more 'normal' to the players.
3. Children might imitate the behavior of violent characters.
4. Violent video games are used to train soldiers to kill.

Counterarguments (targeting the arguments above):

- There is no academic evidence that violent video games increase real violence. Is it always bad to be violent? (arguments 1 and 2)
- TV, comic-books, etc., can stimulate violence in the same way as violent video games. (argument 3)
- Scout training is also similar to military training. Many countries had or even still have mandatory defense lessons at schools; some combat training might be good. (argument 4)

#### Group B

'We are against prohibiting the sale of violent video games to those under 21.'

1. Youth will still be able to obtain violent video games outside the law.
2. Violent video games can provide an outlet for stress and anger, leading to less aggression in real life.
3. Video games are just video games; the players know the difference between a video game and real life.
4. There are many young people who play violent video games, of which only a few actually have a violence-related problem.
5. Violent video games could provide an opportunity for children to learn how not to behave and to develop a moral compass.
6. Violent games sell the best; the game industry would collapse.

Counterarguments (targeting the arguments above):

- In a situation where they cannot buy them officially, even if some will get them anyway, there will be less young people playing these games. (argument 1)
- There is no proof that it works this way; besides, if one is not a very good player they can also become very frustrated. (argument 2)
- However, it might influence them. (argument 3)
- There are many people who smoke and do not develop cancer; the relationship might not be very strong, but can still be there. (argument 4)
- In video games, the player is rewarded for killing so it is unlikely that children will develop a moral compass because of these video games. (argument 5)
- It is likely that most of the games produced contain violence so the best sellers are bound to be violent; however, there are many great games with little violence (Sims, Minecraft, Tetris, etc.). (argument 6)

## Workshop Materials

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### Example sources for Activity 3

Specific sources for which reliability can be evaluated:

- Newspaper article by The Guardian: 'Akon: I don't think charities in Africa work'  
<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/oct/05/akon-charities-africa-lighting-energy-access>
- Newspaper article by The Wall Street Journal: 'Why Foreign Aid Is Hurting Africa'  
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB123758895999200083>
- Report by the UK Parliament: 'The Economic Impact and Effectiveness of Development Aid'  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/l201012/lselect/ldeconaf/278/27803.htm>
- Background paper to a book and to the Australian Aid and International Development Workshop: 'Does Foreign Aid Really Work?'  
<http://devpolicy.org/2014-Australasian-Aid-and-International-Development-Policy-Workshop/Papers/Keynotes/Roger-Riddell-Background-Paper.pdf>
- Report by the International Monetary Fund: 'Development Aid and Economic Growth: A Positive Long-Run Relation'  
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2009/wp09118.pdf>
- Opinion piece on CNN: 'Why foreign aid is important for Africa'  
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/OPINION/08/13/aid.africa.abugre/>
- Scholarly article by Stephen Kosack: 'Effective Aid: How Democracy Allows Development Aid to Improve the Quality of Life'  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X02001778>
- Oxfam annual report  
[https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/story/oxfam\\_annual\\_report\\_2014\\_-\\_2015.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/story/oxfam_annual_report_2014_-_2015.pdf)
- The Facebook page of the Advocacy Initiative for Development (AID)  
<https://www.facebook.com/AIDingAfrica/app/250457581338/>

General sources for which reliability can be evaluated:

- Twitter comments about charities  
<https://twitter.com/search?q=charity&src=typd>
- Scholarly article by Gustav F. Papanek: 'Aid, Foreign Private Investment, Savings, and Growth in Less Developed Countries'  
[http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837329?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1837329?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
- Wikipedia page: United States foreign aid  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_foreign\\_aid#Usage\\_of\\_Money\\_for\\_Support](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_foreign_aid#Usage_of_Money_for_Support)
- Article on a random website: 'Myths about Aid and Charity'  
<https://www.givingwhatwecan.org/get-involved/myths-about-aid/>
- Newspaper article by The Washington Post: 'Five myths about foreign aid'  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-foreign-aid/2011/04/25/AFoozo5E\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-foreign-aid/2011/04/25/AFoozo5E_story.html)
- Newspaper article by The New York Times: 'The Truth About Foreign Aid'  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/27/opinion/the-truth-about-foreign-aid.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/27/opinion/the-truth-about-foreign-aid.html?_r=0)

## Workshop Materials

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Rubric to evaluate sources for Activity 3

<b>Quality of the arguments:</b>				
Does the piece state a fact that can be verified?	Yes +2	No	?	Does not apply
If it is an opinion (not a fact), are supporting facts (scientific evidence) provided?	Yes +1	No	?	Does not apply
Does the interpretation really agree with the provided facts?	Yes +1	No	?	Does not apply
Are there arguments that contradict the interpretation considered?	Yes +1	No	?	Does not apply
<b>Quality of the source (Where does the evidence come from):</b>				
Do (supporting) facts come from a trustworthy source?	Yes +1	No	?	Does not apply
Does the source have expertise and knowledge?	Yes +1	No	?	Does not apply
<b>Is there a potential bias:</b>				
Does the information benefit the person giving the evidence or opinion?	Yes -1	No	?	Does not apply
Is the person/institution obliged to be objective?	Yes +2	No	?	Does not apply

<b>Reliability scores</b>				
Source	1	2	3	4
Score				

## WORKSHOP 6 Activity 1

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### SUPPORTING THE CAUSE

Topic: Political Self-Efficacy 1

#### Learning goals of the workshop:

- To gain a sense of political self-efficacy
- To gain a sense of political empowerment
- To become, as a citizen, a powerful agent who knows what can be done and how to do it, and someone with the motivation to contribute to socio-political change
- To take ownership of an issue and practice the process of advocacy with this issue
- To understand the concepts of stakeholders, decision makers, allies, and opponents in the advocacy process
- To be able to identify stakeholders, decision makers, allies, and opponents in the advocacy process
- To gain better perspective-taking skills

#### Setting the Stage Activity

##### Activity 1

##### Exercise Complaining Session

###### Aims of the activity

- To identify an issue (cause) and to take ownership of it
- To practice the democratic process of decision-making

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 10 minutes

Instructions: First inform students that this and the following workshop will allow them to use (for a greater good) many of the competences they learned in previous workshops and that the goal of the two following workshops is to become aware of how to change things in the world, starting with their local environment (such as their school or neighborhood). The topic of these exercises will cover two classes; therefore, it is important to keep proper notes so that we can continue next time from

where we stop. We will begin by finding out what you would like to change.

In this exercise, students should identify relevant issues worth changing in their immediate environment. You can provide examples of some simple issues, for instance dog feces on the street, community facilities that are unavailable (such as schools or cantinas), or bullying during the lunch break. Allow approximately five minutes for students to discuss, in pairs or small groups, problems that they are aware of.

The brainstorming session could be replaced by an individual activity in which students generate potential issues to change and then briefly present them to the group.

After gathering students' ideas, make a list on the flipchart<sup>20</sup> and let them vote to decide which issues they find most relevant. When all of the issues have been voted on, the instructor should select the three issues with the most votes and that can be realistically tackled within the setting. After the issues have been identified, either allow students to choose which of the three issues they wish to address or assign students to each of the three issues so that there are three equal groups based on the students' preferences. This can be done by first assigning students interested in the least popular issue of the three and then asking the remaining students who are interested in the second most popular issue. The students that are still remaining will be assigned to the first issue. Students working on the same issue sit together and will receive a group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on a large (A3) sheet of paper on which they will write their names and their problem in the designated box.

It is advised to avoid controversial issues that could divide the class, especially across racial/ethnic/religious lines, in order not to break the cohesion of the class. For instance, the issue of prayer rooms for Muslim students would not be suitable for this exercise.

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<sup>20</sup> You should not evaluate the issues. Concurrently, you should make sure that only local issues that can be addressed are on the list. If the proposed issues can only be addressed at a national or international level, you can point out that they are good issues, but to be able to work on them you would need to gather information about institutions involved, which would take more than the hour that is available for the exercise. Therefore, the class should focus on a local issue for now; however, exactly the same procedure can be applied to issues of a larger scope.

## Activity 2A

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### *Discussion questions for the activity*

In order to encourage students to think about important issues, the following questions could be used to guide the discussion:

- Can you think of a time when you were frustrated about an issue in your immediate surroundings that affected you and your peers?
- Are there any problems in your local environment you wish you could solve, but you do not know how?
- What do you consider to be annoyances or problems at the school?
- What do you think your local council could do to improve the community?
- Are there any local problems that you might have thought of a solution for?

### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- The ‘setting the stage’ activity can be performed a week ahead of the following activities. The discussion and selection of the issues can be conducted outside of the classroom; students can use social media or a forum for any step of this activity if it is not performed in the classroom. The challenge of this mode of execution is the assurance that all students participate.

### *Materials*

- A flipchart, whiteboard, or blackboard.
- Three copies of the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on large sheets of paper (A3).

### *Information for the teacher*

- This introductory activity will form the basis for the next activities. To keep the workshop interesting and relevant to the students, the problems identified in this activity should be relevant to the students’ daily lives.
- Sometimes, students will immediately think of solutions to the problems; these solutions will not always be thought through or ‘reasonable.’ If students think of an ‘unreasonable’ idea or solution, the trainer should not reject the issue, but help students to work back to the core issue underlying the ‘unreasonable’ idea and help students consider what would be a ‘reasonable’ solution

worth advocating. For instance, if students come up with the idea to fire a teacher whom they do not like (a solution), get to the core of the issue as follows: What does the teacher do that causes the antipathy of the students? Then, encourage the students to discuss and determine if there is any solution that they could advocate that would help the school to stimulate teachers (in general) to prevent what is going wrong in this case. Another example could be students wanting bigger tables. The classrooms cannot be rebuilt to fit bigger furniture without large investments; however, if the issue of a crammed working space is identified, there are many possible solutions that can be advocated for; for example, removing some other furniture, reducing group sizes, acquiring external funding, using alternative spaces or forms of instruction, etc.

## Activity 2A

### Mini-Lecture Social Change

#### *Aims of the activity*

- To understand the principles of campaigning and democratic social change
- To understand that successful social change involves convincing, advocating, lobbying, and persuading individuals

#### *Description of the activity*

**Length:** Minimum of three minutes

**Instructions:** A small lecture on democratic social change should be given using the following information (and PowerPoint slides provided in Workshop Materials):

Now we know what it is that bothers us, we can think about how we want to make it better. Advocacy is when a person or a group of people attempts to implement a change in attitudes, practices, and/or policies. In most cases, campaigns aim to create a positive change by democratic means. Democracy should be about fulfilling the ‘will of the people.’ Therefore, democratic campaigns are based on communication and often about creating support for a certain solution to an issue through building awareness, engaging with other people, and presenting arguments and evidence for why and how the change should happen. Advocacy can aim to (1) influence public behaviors and attitudes, and/or

## Activity 2B

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(2) change policies or public practices. Many different activities are used in advocacy as the efficacy of each strategy is based upon the desired outcomes. Successful advocacy requires effective planning and can be conducted on a local, national, or international level.

The first stage of creating social change is defining a problem and thinking about possible solutions you would like to support. This is followed by creating a clear message. The primary message must be broad, simple, and direct, but should also outline the theme and issues raised by your campaign. The secondary messages are supportive of the primary message and explain how change can be achieved. In addition, the campaign must also help the target audience answer the question 'Why does this have anything to do with me?'

Creating social change can come from a variety of methods such as reaching out to media to raise awareness, lobbying with policy makers, gaining the support of people with more power, and helping to fund projects or charity work. Advocacy of an issue can either be locally based or can be global, although global issues are often more difficult to change as quickly.

Several points must be considered in the process of advocacy:

1. Aims: The first step to advocacy is identifying which problem you want to solve and what you wish to achieve (aims). These aims must be achievable, specific, time-bound, and realistic. The rest of the advocacy process should follow naturally from these aims. Also, you must know how your issue could be resolved (e.g., through advocacy and public attention). Furthermore, specific objectives will help determine what actions need to be taken and whether you have been successful or not. If your objectives are not clearly defined and are difficult to understand, you will not be able to resolve the problem, or the solution may not be worthy of advocating.

2. Cause: When seeking solutions, it might be very useful to determine what the main cause of the problem is. Furthermore, you must be able to demonstrate that there is a problem; for this, you need to build evidence. Also, you must be able to explain what the arguments in favor of the advocated solution are.

3. Specificity: Most of the time, social change has a long-term impact, which means that a problem may take some time to be resolved. However, some problems can be solved quickly and affect just the short term, so it is good to consider a time frame for an advocacy project. Also, consider whether the problem is local, national, or international. Sometimes, your goal may just be a small step towards a larger social change. For example, you may decide to provide a camping tent to each homeless person in your area, which ultimately may spread to the entire country. The steps towards a larger, long-term goal should be ambitious but still attainable and specific to your own circumstances.

### Materials

- The PowerPoint slides on advocacy included in Workshop Materials.

## Activity 2B

### Discussion The Problem and Objectives

#### Aims of the activity

- To think in terms of solutions
- To understand the difference between problems, aims, actions, and objectives
- To be able to formulate solutions and objectives based on a problem
- To be able to place a problem within a broader context



## Activity 3A

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### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Using the information given in Activity 2A, each of the groups should have a discussion amongst themselves to identify all of their possible objectives. During the time that the groups are having the discussion, the flowchart slide should be presented (see Workshop Materials). As a result of the discussion, students should complete the designated boxes on the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials).

### Discussion questions for the activity

Look at your problem and think about the following issues:

- What is the timeframe of your problem? (optional)
- What is the scope of your problem: Is it only local? Or is it a local manifestation of a bigger issue? (optional)
- What would your aim be?
- Think about what change would be required to solve the problem (policy, public behavior, practice).
- What specific objectives should you have (potentially attainable and specific)?

### Materials

- Copies of the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on large sheets of A3 paper.
- The PowerPoint slides on advocacy included in Workshop Materials.

### Information for the teacher

- To help the students understand the difference between actions and objectives, they can use their selected issues to create a few sentences that outline the objectives and then the possible solutions.

## Activity 3A Mini-Lecture Stakeholders

### Aims of the activity

- To understand what stakeholders are
- To be able to identify the stakeholders in specific issues

- To understand that social change always involves more than one person
- To strengthen critical open-mindedness skills

### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of three minutes

Instructions: Give students the following instruction: We already know what it is we want to change and how we would like it to be, and maybe we even know how it could happen. Now, if we want to bring the change about in a democratic way, we must consider all interested parties and their points of view and interests. A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in or is involved in an issue. Advocacy (and campaigning) is always undertaken by the person or people who are affected either directly or indirectly by an issue, or is undertaken on their behalf. Without someone pushing an issue, it will remain unchanged. Through working together with other stakeholders that hold an interest in an issue, the power of the people becomes much stronger and is more likely to be effective. As such, it is crucial to identify and include as many stakeholders as possible.

The key stakeholders are affected directly by advocated change (such as having a play area that they can use). However, there are also people or institutions that advocate for a change that does not directly benefit them (such as providing a homeless shelter in the locality). Advocates not directly affected by an issue can still campaign on behalf of the primary stakeholders who are affected. Most social issues have multiple stakeholders with diverse interests in the issue.

In order to understand who the stakeholders are, the following questions should be asked: 'Who could potentially benefit from the change: how and why?' 'Who is interested in maintaining the status quo, and why?' Here are a few examples of stakeholders: A sixteen-year-old boy is about to take exams that will determine whether he goes to a school or straight into work. Obviously, the outcome directly impacts the boy, so he is the primary stakeholder. However, many other people would also be affected by the outcome or hold an interest in the boy's results. For example, his parents hope that he does well and works hard because they want him to be successful and happy with his work, but it also means that they will have to support him for more years. His friends are also stakeholders, as they may want the boy to go to the same school as them or the same workplace. His girlfriend is invested in the boy's

## Activity 3B

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situation because she wants him to get a successful job and earn money for their future family or because she wants him to live on his own as soon as possible. His current teachers hope he does well in his exams because this then implies that they have taught him well and are good teachers. The examiners have an interest in the issue because they must ensure that achievement is evaluated justly and objectively. Furthermore, the future school or future employers of the boy are interested in the boy's result because this could mean the student joins their workforce or school. The government is also involved in the outcome of the boy because, depending on how well he does in his exams, it could mean in the future that he will require a student loan or financial aid if he has no job. As you can see, many people and institutions, of both close and far proximity are involved and interested in the result of the boy's actions, so are ultimately stakeholders.

Another example of stakeholders can be found in global issues such as the world's oil reserves. There is much global conflict about the available oil in the world, particularly about which country owns oil. The main stakeholders would be Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Canada, and Iran because they possess 20%, 18%, 13% and 9% of global oil reserves, respectively. However, many coastal countries possess a small amount of oil and, therefore, are all invested in the world's oil availability. Even countries that have no oil resources are stakeholders in this issue because they depend on oil, and must negotiate with the other countries. Even the residents of a country are stakeholders in the world's oil reserves as they hold interest in the price and availability of oil for their own individual use. Moreover, there are international companies that make money through the use of oil (extraction, processing, transporting, etc.), chemical industries that use oil as a material, energy industries that use oil, and energy industries that use other means of generating energy, motor industries, environmental protection groups, agencies, etc.

### Discussion questions for the activity

Both questions are optional:

- Can you think of any other possible stakeholders in regard to the teenage boy or the world oil reserves problems?
- Who do you feel are the most important stakeholders in these situations?

### Materials

- The PowerPoint presentation on stakeholders (see Workshop Materials).

## Activity 3B

### Discussion Stakeholders Involved in the Chosen Issue

#### Aims of the activity

- To be able to identify parties involved in an issue
- To be able to understand the perspectives of different stakeholders

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Using the information given in Activity 3A, each of the groups should have a discussion amongst themselves to identify all of the possible stakeholders in their assigned issue. The groups write down, in the designated box on the group notes sheet, the stakeholders that are important in relation to their issue (see Workshop Materials).

#### Discussion questions for the activity

In order to help the groups to think of stakeholders, pose the following questions:

- Who has an interest or is involved in the issue? Who are stakeholders in your case?
- Which of them could benefit from change: how and why?
- Who would feel the costs of the change: how and why?

### Materials

- Copies of the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on large sheets of paper (A3).
- The PowerPoint slides on stakeholders (see Workshop Materials).

### Information for the teacher

- If the groups are small, a larger class discussion could be held with all three groups helping one another. However, it is also possible to have a group discussion amongst the group members and then share ideas with the rest of the class.

## Activity 4A

### Activity 4A

#### Mini-lecture Stakeholders with Decision-Making Power

##### Aims of the activity

- To understand the concept of stakeholders with decision-making power
- To understand that social changes affect multiple parties

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of three minutes

Instructions: Briefly use the following information to explain to the class that stakeholders with decision-making power are the main targets of advocacy:

With campaigning and advocacy, the primary targets of a campaign are the decision makers, as they ultimately possess the ability to make a change. In any advocacy or campaign, the stakeholder with the most power is often the decision maker as he/she can either accept or reject a proposal for social change. The other important audiences are the influential stakeholders because decision makers listen to them. Influential stakeholders are able to provide support for or block your effort and should be the secondary audience of your campaign. They may include other groups and organizations, representative bodies, community leaders, celebrities, teachers, professionals, and consumers.

The key to creating any social change is identifying the decision maker(s) because only then can productive and beneficial action be taken. It is also important to find out the decision makers' backgrounds and values, and the possible obstacles and challenges the decision makers might pose. Knowing about these factors can help identify which arguments, methods, and proposals must be used in order to persuade the decision makers. Very often, the decision maker's freedom is restricted by the stakeholders whom he/she must satisfy. For instance, arguably the most powerful single person decision-maker in the world, the president of the U.S., cannot achieve much without the support of his party, which in turn relies on support from voters and lobbyists who sponsor the party's/the president's election campaign or claim to be able to affect a large number of voters.

To give another example, if people in the community wish to have cleaner streets, the primary decision makers are the dog owners, since they decide whether or not

## Activity 4B

to clean up after their dogs. However, the mayor could be another primary decision maker, since the mayor can choose to spend money on cleaning pavements on a daily basis, on hiring more people, or on better cleaning methods. The mayor could also address the local council to implement changes to influence dog owners, such as introducing a fine for people who do not clean up after their dogs or building more 'dog toilets.' In this example, depending on the solution, your decision maker and ultimate target of the campaign would be either the dog owners, the mayor, or the council. All of them have the ability to make a decision and, therefore, can be considered decision makers, depending on the chosen solution.

An example of a different decision maker would be in the advocacy of having a longer lunchtime break and shorter mid-morning and afternoon breaks at school. In this case, the decision maker would be the head teacher of your school and/or the school board.

After the mini-lecture, a discussion should be held (see Activity 4B).

##### Materials

- The PowerPoint slides on stakeholders with decision-making power (see Workshop Materials).

### Activity 4B

#### Discussion Stakeholders with Decision-Making Power

##### Aims of the activity

- To be able to identify decision makers and to be able to locate the power involved in the issue

##### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: After giving the explanation of stakeholders with decision-making power in Activity 4A, each of the groups should have a discussion to identify who are the primary decision makers for their issue. Allow five minutes for the students to discuss in groups, to write down their notes on the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials), and to present their ideas to the rest of the class.

## Activity 5A

Discussion questions for the activity

For each solution for the issue you think of, answer the following questions:

- Who has the power to decide? How?
- Is it one or more individuals who have to make a change?
- Is it one big decision or more small decisions?
- Who can influence the decision makers?

### Materials

- Copies of the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on large sheets of paper (A3).
- The PowerPoint slides on stakeholders with decision-making power (see Workshop Materials).

### Information for the teacher

- Ideally, the group should already have listed the decision makers (without identifying them as decision makers) in their list of stakeholders in Activity 3B, which means that now students simply need to identify these persons/institutions as decision makers.

## Activity 5A

### Mini-Lecture Special Kinds of Stakeholders: Allies and Opponents

#### Aims of the activity

- To be able to identify allies and opponents in the advocacy of an issue
- To be able to take the perspectives of different stakeholders
- To strengthen critical open-mindedness skills
- To strengthen critical thinking

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of three minutes

Instructions: Give students the following explanation: In almost all cases, advocacy and campaigning are contested by groups or individuals. If this were not the case, then these issues would have been solved already. Even solutions to issues that everyone seems to want to change have opponents, as social change almost always carries a cost for someone (everyone may agree that no one should die of malnutrition, but most would oppose being forced to pay for free food for all those in need). Therefore, concerns of opponents should be identified and addressed, if possible.

## Activity 5B

It is important to involve both allies and opponents in advocacy in order to find common solutions and gain the support of those who have influence on decision makers. Involving allies can mobilize them to express their support. Involving opponents can lead to changing their opinion and allowing the advocates to address their, often valid, concerns in a proposed solution. In order to convince the opponents of the proposed solution, it is important to understand the motives of the opponents. These can then be addressed by counterarguments.

### Materials

- The PowerPoint slides on special stakeholders (see Workshop Materials).

## Activity 5B

### Discussion Special Kinds of Stakeholders: Allies and Opponents

#### Aims of the activity

- To be able to identify allies and opponents
- To be able to take the perspective of different stakeholders
- To strengthen critical open-mindedness skills
- To strengthen critical thinking
- To gain better perspective-taking skills

#### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Have each group identify and write down the specific allies and opponents in relation to their assigned issue and consider the point of view of the opponents. Ask each of the groups to identify at least two possible opponents/allies for their proposed social change issue. The students can write their answers on the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials). Afterwards, discuss the answers briefly as a class and determine if the groups can assist each other. In addition, it is important that you collect the group notes for safekeeping or instruct the students to keep the notes because the students will need these notes in the next workshop. Furthermore, ask the students to consider how the different stakeholders see the issue, and encourage the students (if they are motivated) to ask the stakeholders.

If you collect the forms, it is good to make copies for students so they have them and can think about them.

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#### *Discussion questions for the activity*

- For each stakeholder on your list, try to stand in their shoes for a moment:
  - Do they support the change or do they want to maintain the status quo? Why, what are their reasons?
  - If they support a solution, would it be the same as your solution or would it be different? Why?
- Who is your natural ally in this issue? Are there any allies who already work for the change or work for similar broader issues? Are there any institutions that already have the issue in their mandate? Movements? Beneficiaries? Are there any passive allies that can be mobilized?
- Who is interested in maintaining the status quo, and why? What could convince them otherwise?

#### *Materials*

- Copies of the group notes sheet (see Workshop Materials) printed on large sheets of paper (A3).
- The PowerPoint slides on special stakeholders (see Workshop Materials).

### **Closing Activity:** **Discussion and Session Evaluation**

#### *Aims of the activity*

- To evaluate the ‘take-home’ message from the session
- To understand the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Gaining a sense of political self-efficacy
  - Gaining a sense of political empowerment

- Becoming, as a citizen, a powerful agent who knows what can be done and how to do it, and who has the motivation to contribute to socio-political change
- Taking ownership of an issue and practicing the process of advocacy with this issue
- Understanding the concept of stakeholders, decision makers, allies, and opponents in the advocacy process
- Being able to identify stakeholders, decision makers, allies, and opponents in the advocacy process
- To gain better perspective-taking skills

#### *Description of the activity*

Length: Minimum of three minutes

Instructions: Instruct all students to write down three things they learned from this lesson. After the students have written down three things, collect the notes and read aloud the most relevant points made. You can also add things that have not been said by the students.

#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- Instead of letting the students keep their own notes, you could also keep these for the students.

#### *Materials*

- Paper sheets.

#### *Information for the teacher*

- It is important to stress that students should write down the most relevant things they learned in this lesson, things they think they will use more often in life.

## Workshop Materials

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Group notes sheet for Activity 1, Activity 2 and Activity 3B

### Changing the world: Group notes sheet

**Names:**

<b>Activity 1: Problem and solution analysis</b>
What is your problem?
What is the scope of your problem? Is it local or is it a local manifestation of a bigger issue?
<b>Activity 2: The problem and objectives</b>
What is the solution you are proposing?
To reach your solution, what change would be required (policy, public behavior, practice)?
What specific objectives should you have (potentially attainable and specific)? (optional)
What is the timeframe of your problem (days, weeks, months, or years)?
<b>Activity 3: Stakeholders</b>
Who has an interest and/or who is involved in the issue? Please list every person or institution you can think of that is affected by the issue or the proposed solution. Please think of how each of them may benefit from change (and/or from the current situation) and/or whether they would be negatively affected by it (put + and/or - behind every stakeholder).

## Workshop Materials

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### **Activity 4: Stakeholders with decision-making power**

Who has the power to decide?

Is it one or more individuals who must make a change?

What is required? A one-time big decision or is a process composed of many small decisions?

Who influences the decision makers?

### **Activity 5: Special stakeholders: Allies and opponents**

For each stakeholder on your list, put yourself into their shoes for a moment:

Do they support the change or do they want to keep things the way they are? If so, why? What may be their reasoning?

If they support a solution for the problem, would it be identical to your proposition or would it be different? If so, why? How?

Who is your natural ally in this issue? Are there any allies who already work for the change or work for similar broader issues? Are there any institutions that have it in their mandate? Movements? Beneficiaries?

Are there any passive allies who could be mobilized?

Who is interested in maintaining the status quo, and why? What arguments could convince them otherwise?

## **Workshop Materials**

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*PowerPoint slides for Activity 2*

**Changing  
the world**

# **Workshop 6**

## **SUPPORTING THE CAUSE**

# Problem

**Something in the school or the neighborhood that bothers us**

The rules are the same if we want to solve big, global issues. In this case, there are many more details to take into account and much more information to collect. We have only two hours, so we will focus on local issues for which we already have most of the information.

# Campaigning steps



**Problem:** Something that is currently wrong

**Aims:** How it would be ideally

**Solutions:** Realistic change that can move us from the problem towards the aim

**Objectives:** Specific goal representing the aim  
(e.g., 20% less dog feces on the street)

**Actions:** Something that we can do in order to implement the solution

## **Workshop Materials**

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*PowerPoint slide for Activity 3*

# **Stakeholders**

**Everybody affected by the situation**

**Everybody affected by the problem and everybody affected  
by the solution (positively or negatively)**

# **Special stakeholders**

**Decision makers**

The ultimate target of the campaign

Decision makers are not completely free: they must take into account other people they may depend on. Dog owners are influenced by the police and neighbors; the mayor is influenced by the council, voters, local businessmen, political parties, etc.

## **Workshop Materials**

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*PowerPoint slides for Activity 4*

# **Special stakeholders**

## **ALLIES**

Because of their interest they are likely to support our solution

We can mobilize them

## **OPPONENTS**

Because of their interest they are likely to oppose our solution

If we understand them, we can win them over, appease them, or convince them through arguments

## WORKSHOP 7 Activity 1

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### TIME TO MAKE A CHANGE

Topic: Political Self-Efficacy 2

#### Learning goals of the workshop:

- To gain a sense of political self-efficacy
- To gain a sense of political empowerment
- To become, as a citizen, a powerful agent who knows what can be done and how to do it, and who has the motivation to contribute to socio-political change
- To further strengthen advocacy skills
- To understand how the skills learned in all workshops can effectively create solutions and strategies
- To gain actual political competence

#### Activity 1

##### Mini-Lecture Modes of Campaigning

###### Aims of the activity

- To understand the possible methods of campaigning
- To be able to identify modes of change

###### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of five minutes

Instructions: Give a lecture on modes of campaigning connected to the previous workshop.

Return the group notes sheets to the groups and inform them that you want to continue where the last class stopped: By now, we know what the issue is and what we want to address, the solution we have chosen, and who the stakeholders are. We know who are our potential allies and opponents are, what kinds of objections these opponents might have, and what we can do to address these objections.

Now, we can put this knowledge to work and plan our campaign.

The campaigning goal will often be to influence decision makers, either by convincing them directly or by mobilizing allies that can have an influence on decision makers, or by finding a compromise that appeases influential opposition or even turns them into allies. There is no single best way to approach advocacy.

It depends on who the decision maker(s) is (are), who they listen to, who can influence them, and who the stakeholders are: e.g., your natural allies/opponents, whether they need to be mobilized, etc.

For instance, groups campaigning for a change can take two types of approaches to convince the decision makers: (1) a direct approach (communicate directly to the decision maker), or (2) an indirect approach (convince those who have power over decision makers; for example, posters addressing dog owners or addressing the mayor to convince them to implement fines for messy dog owners).

Using the PowerPoint slides provided (see Workshop Materials), give a small presentation on modes of exerting democratic power and having your voice heard (e.g., through petitions, letters, representatives, campaigns, lobby, etc.).

The most effective approach depends on the context and issue you are tackling. It is important to ask yourself: who do we want to convince/change? What would convince them? How to communicate it? What are the resources we have (allies, communication channels)?

Depending on the answers to these questions, you can decide on an effective strategy. Strategies usually consist of the following elements:

1. Building evidence that supports the message. The evidence can convince: (1) the decision makers that there is a public need for a solution; (2) the decision makers and other stakeholders that the proposed solution is good (effective); and (3) potential opponents that the proposed solution will not harm their interests. For example, having people sign a petition could be a way of convincing decision makers that there is support for a certain change in the community. This is important in order to convince them of the importance of the issue. This will make it more likely for them to take the issue seriously and actively try to address it. Another example would be demonstrating that the proposed solution worked very well elsewhere.
2. Creating awareness: The media have a significant role in influencing and forming the public's attitudes and behavior. Choose the media that reaches your target audience. Whatever type of media you use, be enthusiastic, confident, clear, and concise about your issue. Organize an event outlining the issue (e.g., a play, concert, debate, etc.). This could also increase public awareness.

## Activity 2

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**3. Communicating your advocated change to decision makers:** Increasing awareness through the media is important; however, if you advocate for a policy change it is just as important to communicate the proposed change to the policy makers because they have the power to change the issue. Policy makers could, for example, include local representatives, politicians, and leaders. You can communicate directly with the policy makers (e.g., via petitions or meetings), but you can also do it indirectly, through representatives of key stakeholders and/or via allies whom decision makers must reckon with.

**4. Building coalitions and lobbying with allies:** It is important to build coalitions with allies to obtain more support for the proposed issue. Furthermore, sometimes it is not possible to influence policy makers directly; in this case, it is important to communicate with allies and to gain their support so that they can influence the policy makers instead. This might also be more effective because the allies could have a larger influence on the policy makers.

With all of these activities, it is important to include all of the relevant stakeholders and to keep people informed of your plans and progress. Aim to create affiliations with related parties and individuals. Do not forget that different events will target different people; therefore, it is important to reach out to people through different methods. However, deliver consistent messages through these various methods so that the aims and focus are clear and comprehensible.

### Discussion questions for the activity

To make the mini-lecture more interactive, the following discussion questions could be used:

- How do (groups of) people try to instigate change?
- What do (groups of) people advocate for, and what methods do they use?

You could ask the students to put all of the methods mentioned on the board.

### Materials

- The PowerPoint slides on campaigning (see Workshop Materials).

## Activity 2 Exercise Action Plan

### Aims of the activity

- To gain a sense of political self-efficacy
- To gain a sense of political empowerment
- To become, as a citizen, a powerful agent who knows what can be done and how to do it, and has the motivation to contribute to socio-political change
- To understand how social change can be made in a democratic way

### Description of the activity

Length: Minimum of 20 minutes

Instructions: Based on the problems that each group has focused on during the previous workshop, have each group sketch a small action plan on how to change the issue.

Advise the students that their action plan should be brief and clear but, concurrently, detailed and precise about the aims. Consider all forms of communication to target the right people (e.g., letters, emails, interviews, radio, and petitions).

The students should follow the steps of the workshop and consider each step of the advocacy process.

After having sketched an action plan, one person from each group acts as the spokesperson and explains the action plan to the rest of the class. This should be a very brief presentation of approximately 1.5 minutes per group, with time for some quick questions from other students. You should then encourage the students to put their plan in action.

### Discussion questions for the activity

To help develop and present their action plans, the students can answer the following questions:

- What is the problem/situation?
- What are your goals and objectives?
- Who are your stakeholders and target audience?
- What key messages are needed to target your audience?
- How will you communicate to convince the target audience?

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#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- If there is enough time, the groups can swap their problems to allow the other groups to give their input on the best strategy and action plan to use. In this case, there needs to be adequate time for the groups to review each other's ideas and give feedback to one another.
- If there are many groups or if there is little time left, the groups can be asked to produce a poster on an A2/A3 sheet of paper, providing an overview of their intended message and how they wish to make a change. These can then be placed in the room so that all of the students can assess each other's work.

#### **Materials**

- A large sheet of paper and pens for each group to record their action plan.

#### **Information for the teacher**

- The teacher should encourage students to put their plan in motion.

## **Closing Activity: Discussion and Session Evaluation**

#### **Aims of the activity**

- To understand the 'take-home' message from the session
- To become aware of the most important parts of the workshop:
  - Gaining a sense of political self-efficacy
  - Gaining a sense of political empowerment
  - Becoming, as a citizen, a powerful agent who knows what can be done and how to do it, and who has the motivation to contribute to socio-political change
  - Strengthening advocacy skills further
  - Understanding how the skills learned in all workshops can effectively create solutions and strategies
  - Gaining a sense of political self-efficacy

#### *Description of the activity*

**Length:** Minimum of five minutes

**Instructions:** Firstly, the discussion should focus on what 'we have learned' from (each exercise of) the last workshop. Secondly, the discussion should address the question 'what have we learned?' in terms of the entire program.

Have all the students sit in a circle and choose a random student to state one thing they learned from the workshops. The student then chooses which way around the circle to go and all students take it in turns to state something they have learned.

#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- You can ask students to write down what the three favorite things they learned from the program are, and then discuss these.

## **Program Closing Activity: Evaluation**

#### *Description of the activity*

**Length:** Minimum of 15 minutes

**Instructions:** Students individually complete the evaluation forms.

#### *Alternative ways in which you can conduct the activity*

- It is possible to devote more time to the activities and the session evaluation. In this case, completing the evaluation should take place in another class as soon as possible after the end of the program. The trainers should then make an arrangement with the teachers/school to assure that the questionnaires are administered and collected from the school.

## **Workshop Materials**

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PowerPoint slides for Activity 1

# **Workshop 7**

## **DOING IT!**

### **Campaigning**

- **Building evidence**
- Need for a solution
- Proposed solution is good
  - Effective
  - Not harmful
- **Creating awareness**
- **Communicating your advocated change to decision makers**
- **Building coalitions and lobbying with allies**

# **Successful campaign**

## **Keys to success:**

Knowing what you want to achieve

Knowing how to do it (solution)

Knowing and taking into account the viewpoint  
of all stakeholders (also opponents)

Having clear convincing messages

Communicating these messages in the right way

## **Workshop Materials**

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*PowerPoint slides for Activity 2*

### **Action plan (need to know)**

- **What is the proposed change?**
- **Who can make required decision?**
- **How to reach the decision maker?**
  - To whom does the decision maker listen?
    - Public opinion
    - Representatives
    - Allies
    - Lobbies
  - What arguments will work?
    - Benefits of the solution
    - Concerns of the opposition

"Sklad and Park have produced an outstanding guide for educators in schools where radicalization of youth is a real possibility. The exercises they offer educators are both practical and based on the latest research. The authors write clearly and without technical jargon. This is a highly valuable contribution and I strongly recommend it to educators."

**Fathali M. Moghaddam, Professor and author of 'The Psychology of Democracy' (2016) and 'The Psychology of Dictatorship' (2013), Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA**

"At a time when Europe is experiencing growing societal polarization and extremism, Sklad and Park have produced a theoretically sound yet very practical and accessible handbook that can be used to prevent radicalization. Its various and tested approaches constitute valuable tools for educators throughout the continent."

**Dr. Lorenzo Vidino, Director of the Program on Extremism at the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, George Washington University, USA**

"This curriculum answers a very pressing need, with clear, structured, evidence-based safeguarding and educational approaches set out, and innovative, multi-disciplinary tools made accessible to regular teachers and trainers. It is a great addition to a crucial yet under-resourced domain, with hours of quality material to help promote social cohesion at an important age, pre-empting and answering difficult questions on identity, empathy and exploitation. This simply must be adopted by schools around the world!"

**Jonathan Russell, Head of Policy at Quilliam Foundation, the world's first counter-extremism think tank**

The authors developed the Universal Curriculum against Radicalization in Europe (UCARE) as an innovative program drawing on a framework of Citizenship Education and Social Emotional Learning with reference to established theories and empirical findings from the discipline of Social Psychology. It aims to increase social and citizenship competences and, concurrently, to prevent processes of radicalization that can lead to violent behavior. The program achieves this by providing young people with alternative methods of satisfying their needs and addressing their social grievances. It is a unique intervention, as it aims to tackle radicalization at its source without singling out or stigmatizing individuals at risk. Honed competences are of every-day relevance for young people and are addressed in a manner that makes their personal usefulness for individuals immediately salient. The manual describes seven consecutive workshops that can be applied within regular school classes and that can be executed by a teacher or an external trainer; additional teaching material for extending sessions is also included. The step-by-step trainer instruction makes preparations easy and the delivering of the workshops does not require expertise in psychology or in-depth knowledge about the processes of radicalization.

[http://www.ucr.nl/academic-program/Research/Terra II/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ucr.nl/academic-program/Research/Terra%20II/Pages/default.aspx)



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