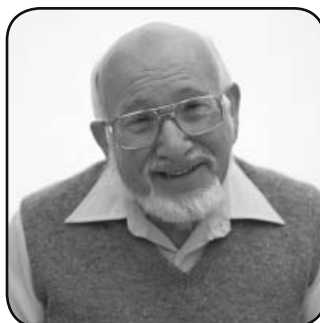
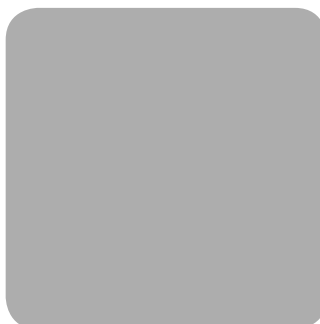


Careers Advice PLUS



Believe in yourself

Session plan for working with groups



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

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Leading learning and skills

Believe in yourself

Session plan for working with groups

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the workshop participants will:

- Recognise some factors that can impact on self-confidence
- Accept that feedback is about what they do, not their whole personality
- Understand that most challenges in life have more than one answer
- Understand the impact of being relaxed and focussed on their ability to complete a task
- Be aware of the benefits of networking
- Understand that they have the chance to control their own behaviour

Preparation and materials required:

- A picture or object made by a child under five years old or some toilet tubes badly glued together!
- Sheets of A4 paper

Content and timings:

Timings:	Content
10 mins	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions, health and safety information, housekeeping.
10 mins	Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell a story similar to this one...<p>“The first step to believing in ourselves is accepting compliments.</p><p>We’re great at this when we’re young. This picture is the first thing my son brought home from school. He brought it home when he was thirteen.</p><p>No, he was about four or five. What did we say to him?</p><p>Did we say “That’s brilliant that, well done, I love the way you’ve done the body etc, etc”. Or did we say “Well that’s rubbish! The body is out of proportion and the legs are wrong”.</p><p>Obviously we chose the first option. We pretty much praised our son non-stop whilst he was small. The result; he believed in himself. He thought he could do or be anything or anyone. For a while his ambition was to be a Jedi. What a great ambition, to travel the Universe with a light sabre!”.</p> <p>Explain that:</p> <p>Children generalise praise for a specific skill to mean praise for their whole person (identity). This is fine whilst there are young but potentially dangerous for teenagers because they may hear far more criticism of their (lack of) skills from adults and peers. If this is generalised to their sense of identity they’ll believe things like ‘I’m thick and useless because I’m in the lower Maths group’. The intention may be to help children form a realistic idea of their strengths and skills (I’m only telling you you’re useless for your own good!) but the danger of generalising a lack of skill in one specific area to mean a belief we’re a useless person is ominous. Ask the group how many of them hear a little voice in their head saying ‘you’re useless and the world is going to find out’ just before important events like dates, job interviews or presentations? Chances are all of them will agree.</p> <p>Sometimes the reverse happens. Contestants on TV programmes fuse their sense of identity and skill to convince themselves they are the next Leona Lewis or Paul Potts because they think “I’m a great person and want to be a singer therefore I’m a great singer”.</p> <p>So what’s the answer? How can we become confident, self-aware adults with a realistic and accurate sense of our strengths and areas weaknesses? The solution is to be offered and accept specific and evidence based praise for what we do well to help us to discover what we’re good at doing. We can then learn to accept praise without feeling we’re being arrogant and accept feedback (not criticism) without doubting our self worth, who we are.</p>

5 mins

Inside Out

So, being good or bad at something (a skill) doesn't mean you're a good or bad person (identity). We often forget this. Inside Out explores this.

- Ask the group to stand up. Say "I'm going to give you two options and I'd like you to stand or sit down depending upon which one suits you better".
"I'd like you to stay standing if you ignore negative stuff said to you (it bounces off) or sit down if you accept it (take it inside)".
- Next, repeat the activity but this time for positive stuff, do you let it bounce off (stand) or take it inside (sit down)? Discuss the impact for those who stand and those who sit.

After the activity most people see that they take in negative comments but don't take in positive comments. They can see how this will lead to a negative self image.

For example, if someone says you look nice you might think they don't really mean it, or say it's the top I'm wearing that's nice not me! Whereas, if someone says you look awful you might believe it and feel bad, saying to yourself, Oh yes, I'm awful me as you run through in your head all the things you think are awful about you!

The opposite way, taking in only positives and ignoring negatives can make us deluded e.g. people in the early rounds of TV talent shows

15 mins

Parachute Jump

- Ask the group to jump from an imaginary plane and as they land mark their life out of 10 up to today. Most people score an average 4 to 7. Explain that it's as if we're all coasting along - thinking I could have a great life but I just can't be bothered yet.
- Next, ask for pairs/groups to come up with ways to survive a parachute jump when the parachute fails. People often stop trying because they think they'll be wrong. They think doing something wrong (a skill) means they're a bad person (identity). When we're wrong we feel bad so to stop feeling bad we stop trying things. This means we risk not learning about ourselves and never discovering our strengths. Explain that being wrong can only happen if we're asked questions that only have one correct answer. Most questions, or tasks and challenges as they are presented in work and life, have more than one answer. Even questions with one answer can have different paths to the same answer.

The Parachute Jump question gives people the chance to think of many possible answers, some funny (landing in a pillow or mattress factory) or some ingenious (landing on a giant spring, jump from a small height)

At the end of the exercise explain that statistically, survival rates are highest when people land in soft snow or trees.

To summarise, we can think differently about being wrong. Reframing questions can be helpful; particularly if it prevents us from destroying the self belief and entrepreneurial spirit we need to flourish.

10 mins

Paper Wait

- Ask the group to predict how many times they can fold a piece of A4 paper in half.
- Ask for suggestions from the group and note the lowest and highest predictions, usually 4 to 10.
- Give each person a sheet of A4 and ask them to fold it until they can't make any further folds and they arrive at an answer, usually 6. Explain that this activity illustrates the value of letting people find the answer themselves safely and without fear of ridicule. This is particularly important when what they're exploring is themselves.

You could also suggest that this activity uses the scientific method:

Have a thought, make a prediction (guess), test it enough times for a rule or answer to emerge, then know something new or interesting.

5 mins

Body talk

Body balancing illustrates in a physical way the idea we are stronger and better when we're relaxed rather than tense or angry. Our focus is sharper and directed when we're relaxed and thinking of the task in hand. Group members good at performing in sport, drama, dance or music will confirm this. Superficially, anger can appear to give us strength and determination but it blurs and distorts real strength. Peak performance results from a relaxed strength, sometimes referred to as flow, being present and in the zone.

Our brains work better when relaxed and focused on the task.

- Ask the group to tense their buttock muscles and hold for three seconds and then relax and repeat 3 times. Apparently it is impossible to be angry whilst carrying out this activity! It may partly be due to the group laughing.
-

15 mins

First date

- Ask the group to think about how they'd behave when they want to make a good impression e.g. first date, first day at work. They could draw a little version of themselves on a sheet of A4 and write down how they'd be around the drawing. (Alternatively they could work on a group answer, or discuss and feed back after a suitable time). Polite, washed, smart, funny, happy, cool, nervous are common responses.
 - Ask the group - How often are you at your best? What could you achieve at your best? The more time we spend trying to be our best; the better results we'll achieve. For example, at work we start off coming in early and staying late to finish off projects and our faces can hurt with all the concerted smiling we do to anyone more senior that passes us in the corridor. Then after three months we're ignoring people and eating crisps over our keyboard.
-

25 mins

Speed dating

Start by explaining that to believe in yourself you need to share information about yourself, to give and receive feedback so that you can build an accurate picture of your real strengths. This can also start the process of networking. One of the things successful people have in common is the willingness to enthusiastically share information and ideas about their aims and ideas. The people we talk to can often offer information or advice or suggest we contact someone they know who could help you. It is said that we all know everyone else in the world within six people. This means we know someone who knows someone who knows David Beckham (or anyone)! This activity is a simple example of sharing information and we soon find out the things we have in common, or not, with others. Young children are naturally gifted at this. If they don't know how a toy works they shove it in front of an adult for a demonstration; they are natural net-workers.

- Run a mock speed dating session in the group to illustrate this point. Use a musical chairs approach or randomly walking around approach so that each person talks to at least 4 other people. This works best when done quickly. Don't give people time to think themselves out of joining in! Give a question with a strict time limit (15 to 30 seconds per person). Questions could include:
Which famous person would you most like to be or meet and why?
What are you most scared of?
What's your most and least favourite food?
Which is your favourite TV show?
If you could have one wish what would it be?
How would you spend a million pounds in a week?
Find out something your partner is good at (DIY, Fishing, etc)
Reveal questions one at a time to add to the element of excitement and surprise.

15 mins

Line up

You can use different questions for this session, for example:

- Line up in order of the month in which you were born, January this end through to December the other end and then share with the person you're standing next to the best and worst Birthday present you've received. This example can be used instead of speed dating if you feel the group would prefer less talking.
- Line up based on the distance traveled to the room you're in, shortest distance one side to furthest on the other.
- Environment can have a major impact on our life chances. Compare the life chances of someone born in Africa to Europe. Equally it is for each person to take control of their own destiny and not look for reasons to explain future failure. The character played by Jack Nicholson in *The Departed* put it well when he said "I didn't want to be a product of my environment, I wanted my environment to be a product of me". Wow, what an attitude. Part of believing in ourselves is to believe we are in control of our own destiny.
- When Natasha Bedingfield (singer) was asked What's the best advice you've been given? Her reply was "to remember I'm in the driver's seat. It reminded me never to be a victim. Whichever way my career is going, I'm always in control".