SKYE AND LOCHALSH YOUNG CARERS
RAISING SELF ESTEEM
TRAINING PROGRAMME

Getting to know yourself and
learning how to become more confident
This Self Esteem Training Programme has been put together by young carers and their workers to meet needs which were identified through one to one support sessions, group sessions and young carer assessment questionnaires. Young people who have caring responsibilities are recognised as being at higher risk of developing lower than average self esteem and confidence levels.

The activities described in this document have been positively evaluated by the young carers, their workers and some family members. Some of the activities may require adaptation to suit different age groups, skill and maturity levels.

The observational skills and experience of the people delivering this programme will affect the outcome, knowing the young people you are working with and being prepared to be flexible in your approach are the keys to its success. Be open to the use of pictorial working to support the young people, particularly those with literacy or attention difficulties.

This training programme has been put together to primarily assist others working to support high school aged young people and is based on worker and young carer experience and developed knowledge. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the vast amount of valuable internet, literary and verbal expertise and resources which helped to inform our ideas and activities to meet the identified needs of the young carers we were working with.

Implementation Guidance from Children & Young People Mental Health Worker:
Before beginning to work with any of the ideas/tools enclosed it is vital that you have the opportunity to build a working relationship with the young person/people you are supporting. In order for this to happen you should:
1. Ensure the child/young person has a clear understanding of your role, what you can offer and why you think this might be of use to them.
2. Establish when, where and how often you will be able to see them.
3. Be clear about privacy/confidentiality—i.e. what can be kept confidential and when information would have to be passed on.
4. Be open, honest and direct.
5. Be consistent and reliable.
6. Be open and sensitive to how the child/young person feels, particularly any anxieties or fears the work may create.
7. Be sensitive to the fact that the child may face considerable challenges in their life and be interested in working with them to discover the strengths they have to help them meet these challenges.

The above list is not intended to be daunting or challenging. These are all things that we can do with a little thought, preparation and planning and are a crucial part of day to day work at the Young Carers service.

Disclaimer -
The content of this training programme is provided for general information and should not be relied upon. Whilst the Skye and Lochalsh Community Care Forum uses all reasonable efforts to ensure that the content is current, accurate and complete at the date of publication no representations or warranties are made as to the reliability, accuracy or completeness of such information. The Skye and Lochalsh Community Care Forum cannot therefore be held liable for any loss arising directly or indirectly from the use of, or any action taken in reliance on any information within this document / training programme.
CONTENTS

Stepping stones to increased confidence and self esteem

1. Self Evaluation
2. Increasing confidence and self esteem
3. Dealing with criticism

MODULE ONE - Self Evaluation (pages 4 - 7)

1. Self evaluation - Getting to know yourself
   Questionnaire 1
2. Self evaluation - Recognising strengths and weaknesses
   Questionnaire 2

MODULE TWO - Increasing confidence and self esteem (pages 8 - 13)

1. Recognising confidence levels
   Three exercises
2. Giving and receiving compliments
   Two exercises
3. Recognising the positives
   One exercise
4. Recognising achievements and strengths
   Questionnaire 3

MODULE THREE - Dealing with criticism (pages 14 - 16)

1. Dealing with criticism
   One exercise
2. Dealing with criticism 2
   One exercise
3. Turning negative thoughts into positive ones
   One exercise

Evaluation - Page 17

Training Programme Aims:
- To promote Personal and Social Education (PSE) through raised confidence and self esteem
- To develop worker empathy, evaluation, and creative working skills
- To promote positive self image

The modules are best worked on a weekly basis with a minimum allocation time of 20 minutes - always allow additional time for discussion to overrun. When the modules are used in group work sessions it is helpful to have a high ratio of adult support to nurture the aims of a positive approach.
### MODULE ONE

1. **Self Evaluation - Getting to know yourself**

**Aimed at**

We have successfully used this evaluation tool with children and young people aged 10 years and over. This activity encourages the young people to start analysing themselves.

**Resources needed**

- Individual copies of the sample questionnaire 1 (page 5)
- Pens or pencils

**Challenge**

Explain that the challenge is to enter a tick in the box which best describes them. Emphasise that only truthful answers are required here as there are no right or wrong answers. This challenge can be done in either a group or a 1-2-1 setting.

**Trainer notes**

Some young people may require assistance, particularly if they have literacy difficulties or are not used to considering their own perceptions and characteristics. Use the positive self esteem answers below to help assess the individual level of self esteem of the participants.

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<th>Yes</th>
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<td>13.</td>
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**Comments**

This exercise proved to be a very useful and non threatening introduction to self evaluation, it prompted increased awareness and interesting discussion.
MODULE ONE

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

To help you to learn more about yourself, answer the following questions:
Please note that only truthful answers are required as there are no right or wrong answers -

1. Do you usually enjoy playing and being with other people?  
   YES  NO

2. Do you speak up for yourself and give your opinions?  
   YES  NO

3. Do you like yourself?  
   YES  NO

4. Do you think other people are better or better off than you?  
   YES  NO

5. Is it important for other people to tell you you’ve done well?  
   YES  NO

6. Do you usually admit your mistakes?  
   YES  NO

7. Do you like trying new things?  
   YES  NO

8. Do you trust other people and give them a chance with you?  
   YES  NO

9. Do you usually feel bad when people criticise you?  
   YES  NO

10. Do you think you spend a lot of time pleasing other people?  
    YES  NO

11. Do you think more about the things that go wrong for you rather than the things that go right?  
    YES  NO

12. Do you usually feel good about the way you look?  
    YES  NO

13. Do people tend to say you over react to things?  
    YES  NO

14. Do you usually feel a failure if things go wrong for you?  
    YES  NO
MODULE ONE

2. Self Evaluation - Recognising strengths and weaknesses

Aimed at
We found this exercise suitable for young people aged 12 years and over. This activity aims to help young people recognise their personal strengths, motivators and weaknesses.

Resources needed
Individual copies of questionnaire 2 (page 7)
Pens or pencils

Challenge
Explain that the challenge is to recognise the statements which they feel best describes them. Hand out individual copies of questionnaire 2 and invite everyone to put a tick against the statements they feel applies to them. They should then look to see which section has the most ticks as this will help them see which category they predominantly come under. Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers. The challenge is best done in either a small group or a 1-2-1 setting.

Following completion of the questionnaire use the information below to share with participants which population grouping they predominantly belong to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimist</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pessimist</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materialist</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

Now invite each person to show the list to some of their friends or other people who know them well and discover where they would place them. Point out the advantages of recognising our own characteristics so we can capitalise on our strengths and support our weaknesses.

Ask what would be the best possible group of people to create a successful group – the answer is a representation of all categories although this can prove difficult as some types are rarer than others!

Explain that employers often use evaluation systems in the workplace; even some football managers have used it - if they understand what motivates people to succeed they are more likely to get the best from them.

Examples:
Optimists can make good: Inventors, designers, media advertisers, salesmen etc.
Pessimists can make good: Accountants, risk assessors, architects, planners etc.
Materialists can make good: Businessmen, investors, salesmen, teachers etc.
Extrinsic people can make good: Care workers, teachers etc.

Comments
The young people found this exercise useful and intriguing. Those who found it difficult to place themselves in the appropriate category found it helpful to discuss it with others. They thought it was helpful to know their predominant characteristics; particularly when they realised that other people may well be assessing them in the future!
It was useful to omit the information held in the category boxes on the questionnaire as some initially thought that being a pessimist was a ‘bad’ character trait.
MODULE ONE

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

CATEGORY 1
- You see the positive side of things and people
- You tend to look for the best possible things to happen
- You are eager to do things and encourage other people
- You are usually described as a happy person
- You are sometimes described as a dreamer
- You tend to have lots of energy to do things, particularly in the beginning
- You tend not to consider the risks in doing things— you sometimes lose more than you gain
- You tend to miss out planning things properly which can lead to failure
- You can often waste your time on things which won’t work out or benefit you

CATEGORY 2
- You tend to go very carefully with your ideas and activities
- You are usually described as a thinker
- You tend to use your energy well and don’t waste it
- You are good at seeing the problems involved in doing things
- You tend to play safe rather than take risks
- You quickly recognise the negative sides of things and people
- You can hold back good ideas because you concentrate so much on the problems
- You can lose helpers because you concentrate too much on what they can’t do
- You can miss out on opportunities by being worried about what might go wrong
- People can find it hard being with you if you are critical a lot of the time

CATEGORY 3
- You tend to take calculated risks based on your knowledge and experience
- You are enthusiastic and enjoy the results of what you do
- You tend to make very good use of your time, money and energy
- You quickly recognise the benefits of doing things
- You usually like to lead or share the lead on things
- You tend to be better at making decisions others find difficult
- You can concentrate so much on the results of things that you miss out on the fun of taking part
- You can miss out on friendships because you tend to look at what you will gain from people
- You tend to avoid activities which don’t benefit you so you are described as selfish at times

CATEGORY 4
- You prefer to get on and do things rather than talk about them
- You tend to be a good organiser and problem solver
- You like to be “hands on” and like working with other people
- You tend to be seen as someone who supports others to get involved in things
- You are usually good at recruiting and encouraging other people to do things
- You can get involved in things but find that your lack of planning can result in failure
- You can find yourself taking on too much work and then end up not doing it all properly
## MODULE TWO

### 1. Activity - Recognising confidence levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aimed at</th>
<th>These activities worked best with young people aged 10 years and over. This activity aims to increase the young person’s understanding of confidence and self esteem.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources needed</td>
<td>Flip chart &amp; flip chart pens</td>
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</table>
| Challenge | 1. In a group setting ask the young people what they understand by ‘confidence’ and ‘self esteem’. Concentrate on confidence with younger participants if they appear to have less understanding of self esteem. A group representative or supporter should write up responses on a flip chart or board.  

1.1 In the same setting as previously look at how low confidence and low self esteem might affect us, the answers will reflect the opposite of what was identified in 1.  

1.2 Repeat the exercise, but this time explore how over confidence might affect us. |
| Trainer notes | Examples for Activity 1:  
Being happy, You respect yourself, You can take risks, You feel good about yourself, You are strong, People like you, You think a lot of yourself, You’re able to do things, You’re outgoing, You’re not bullied, You like yourself, You don’t worry about yourself, You’re not nervous of people, You don’t over react about things, People respect you, You can show your feelings, You don’t envy other people, You can speak up for yourself, People listen to you, You can be a leader and in control, Your body language tells people you are happy with who you are.  

Organising role play can help illustrate the examples and also encourage those with less confidence - workers should also be prepared to take part.  

Examples for Activity 1.2:  
People might class you as a show off  
You are likely to be a poor listener  
You can come across as being bossy / bullying  
You think you know it all so you stop learning  
People might avoid you because they find you over powering  
You might attract false friends who see you as a prop to use to protect them  
You can get away with doing things – people can be scared to challenge you  
Your walk and actions can give people a false impression of what you’re really like You can feel safe – people are less likely to be able to hurt you.  

Using role play again can help to lead discussion into the importance of finding a healthy balance. Explain that there are ways to build low confidence and low self esteem and if people are over confident then knowing how it can affect them and others can help them manage it more effectively. |
| Comments | The young people found it helpful to think of people they knew who came across to them as confident e.g. teacher, policeman, doctor or businessperson. This exercise helped to illustrate to them the value of confidence and self esteem and it was interesting how many of them felt there was no need to differentiate between the two. |
MODULE TWO

2. Activity - Giving and receiving compliments

Aimed at
These activities worked best with young people from the age of 10 years and over. The aim of this activity is to promote the comfortable giving and receiving of compliments and praise.

Resources needed
Sheets of paper, Pens, Envelopes

2. In a group setting give out individually prepared sheets of paper with the questions and participant’s name written on it. Challenge everyone to answer the following questions about themselves without help from others:

1. What do you like about the way you look?
2. What are you good at doing?
3. What do you like about your personality?
4. What do other people say they like about you?

Gather in the sheets and keep them in a secure place for later.

2.1 While sitting in a circle give everyone an envelope with a different participant’s name on it, have a sheet of paper enclosed with the questions below written on it. Workers should supervise to ensure that the named person on the envelope does not see their own named sheet as it is being passed around and completed. Challenge everyone to write only positive comments.

1. What do you like about the way they look?
2. What do you think they are good at?
3. What do you like about their personality?
4. How could they improve even more?

Gather in all the sheets and match them up with those completed in 2.

Complete the exercise by creating double sided certificates, write on one side what each person liked about themselves and write on the other side what other people said about them. Invite each participant to take turns to sit on a ‘special’ seat to hear what is written on the certificate about them, finally distribute the certificates for the individuals to keep.

Due to low self esteem some young people found it very difficult to think of any positive comments about themselves, we said this was ok and if they could think of nothing then it was alright to answer ‘nothing’ or don’t know. The group feedback they read on the reverse had a powerful impact “This is the best thing that’s ever been done for me, can I get it laminated so it won’t get damaged”. The result was that we laminated all the certificates and kept copies on file in case they ever needed replacing at home.

A couple of young people were too uncomfortable to face their peers to hear the comments so they opted to sit on the ‘special’ seat facing away from people, it was interesting to note that although they felt they could not face people they still wanted to sit on the ‘special’ seat to receive the comments.

Prompt discussion by asking how each person felt after hearing the positive comments, did they believe the comments and if not why not? Explore whether they felt it was easier to receive compliments anonymously or directly and why this might be?
3. Activity - Recognising the positives

These activities worked best with young people from the age of 10 years and over. This exercise is useful to help reinforce and build on the growth from the previous sessions. It works well in either a 1-2-1 or group setting.

Sheets of paper and pens

Prepare and distribute the following 2 questions to the participants, allow a maximum of 10 minutes per questionnaire and emphasise that the challenge is to put down a variety of only positive statements.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am……………………………….</td>
<td>I can……………………………….</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am……………………………….</td>
<td>I can……………………………….</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am……………………………….</td>
<td>I can……………………………….</td>
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</table>

If done in a group setting—invite the participants to read out their answers starting with those who present as being more confident within the group. Allow those with fewer answers to add to their personal list as they feel appropriate when listening to the statements of others.

Some participants might need some examples to start off with question 1, this can include things like age, sex, and height before leading on to personality traits.

The young people benefited from a couple of examples to get started with, there then followed a mixture of insightful, thought provoking and humorous personal self evaluation statements. They enjoyed reading out their answers and the process helped identify shared traits and interests within the group.
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<tr>
<th>Aimed at</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These activities worked best with young people from the age of 12 years and over. This exercise builds on the previous session work. It is best delivered in a 1-2-1 setting or very small group setting.</td>
<td>Questionnaire, spare blank paper for answers Pens</td>
<td>Complete questionnaire 3 (on pages 12 and 13) with support from a worker or volunteer. Work to a time scale of 20 to 30 minutes per person, if additional time is likely to be required the questionnaire should be broken down into 2 separate sessions.</td>
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This exercise was time consuming for both the young people and the service workers however the results more than justified this with many opening up and identifying significant strengths and values which had previously either been taken for granted or not recognised.

The questionnaire proved to be a very useful relationship building tool and the more trusting the relationship with staff the more the young person was able to open up, share and explore. The young people benefited from the private space and time offered to them, many unloaded feelings, issues and frustrations in this supportive environment.

The process also gave staff the opportunity to challenge negative thinking and promote personal responsibility and positive decision making. An unforeseen evaluation outcome was that without exception the young people participating requested that they have more opportunities to access this kind of skill development one to one support work in the future.

Young carer evaluation comment: “The questionnaire was good but hard as it made you think about yourself and challenge your own views– as a result the questionnaire was extremely helpful”.

MODULE TWO
4. Activity - Recognising achievements and strengths
You might have difficulty identifying your strengths and qualities, this doesn’t mean they aren’t there – it just means that perhaps you’re not in the habit of noticing and valuing them. Here are some questions to help you indentify them:

1. **What do you like about yourself?**
   Think about something you have been able to appreciate about yourself.

2. **What positive qualities do you have?**
   Include qualities that you might not feel you don’t possess 100% or that you don’t show all the time.

3. **What challenges have you faced?**
   What difficulties have you tackled? What skills and emotions did you use to deal with them?

4. **What do you feel you have achieved?**
   You’re not looking for things like winning the Olympics! Think of all the things you have mastered over the years.

5. **What skills have you developed over the years?**
   What tasks can you complete? Include things like, household chores, social skills, sporting skills, leisure and academic skills. For example do you know how to text, use a computer, ride a bike, work a microwave, swim or dress a wound? Are you good at supporting people, appreciating jokes, learning languages, or making friends? Think about all the different areas of your life and write down the skills you have in them.

6. **What talents do you have, however modest?**
   What do you do well? Remember ‘well’ does not mean perfectly. Include the little things - you don’t have to be a pop star or a business tycoon, if you can for example make a good cup of tea, play a tune or make people laugh by doing something then add it to your list.

7. **What do other people like or value about you?**
   What do they thank you for, ask you to do or complement you on?
8. **What strengths and actions do you share with other people?**
   What are the positive qualities that you share with others and appreciate? Remember you don’t have to do it as completely or as well as the other person you must just share it.

9. **What small positives have you missed out?**
   You might feel that you should only include major positives but if you acknowledge the small negatives in your life you should also be able to acknowledge the small positives. By doing this you will have a more balanced view of yourself.

10. **What strengths and actions do you have that you would appreciate in another person?**

11. **What negative things might other people be that you are not?**
   Sometimes people can find it easier to think of negative qualities before they start thinking of positive ones. This will help you see the positives and strong points that might otherwise be missed and taken for granted. Think of negative qualities (e.g. irresponsible, cruel, dishonest, violent) are you these things? If your answer is ‘no’ then you must be something else so what are you (responsible, caring, honest, kind)? Write down the opposite of the negative qualities you have identified and again, don’t discount them because you think you’re not constantly showing that quality.

12. **How might another person who cares about you describe you?**
   Think about someone you know who you believe cares about you and respects you. What sort of person would they say you were? What positive words would they use to describe you? How would they see you as a friend, son/daughter or member of your group or community?

If there is someone close to you that you value and trust, it would be good for you to ask them to list the things they like and value about you. This will be enlightening and might well lead to your relationship becoming even stronger. Watch, however, that you don’t fall into the trap of discounting or dismissing what you read (e.g. they’re only doing it to be kind). Remember you should be able to value and accept the positive opinions of those close to you.
MODULE THREE
1. Activity - Dealing with criticism

Aimed at

These activities worked best with young people from the age of 10 years and over and in a group setting. This module aims to break the cycle of self-criticism, negative thinking and critical attitude and behaviour which is common among young people with low self esteem. This cycle is recognised as a major barrier to these young people feeling good about themselves and what they have to offer.

Flip chart paper and pens

1. Challenge the young people to give examples under the headings provided and write the responses onto flipchart paper.

HEADINGS:
CRITICISM

Examples:
It’s poor work
That’s not a good colour for you
That’s not the way to do it!
You shouldn’t have missed that!
Do it properly!
That’s a poor standard
You’re making it painful for me
You’re not healthy
You still haven’t finished
You’re slow in the morning

REJECTION

It’s rubbish!
I don’t like it at all!
Leave it to me!
You’re useless!
Don’t bother!
It’s spoilt!
I’ll get someone else
You can’t keep up
Your sister will do it
You’re a waste of time

NEGATIVE COMMENTS

It could be better
Where did you find that!
Is that the best you can do?
Try a bit harder next time
Ask for help next time!
A child could do better!
That hurts!
Hurry up!
You’re so slow
You’re lazy!

Allow time to discuss which category the young people think is most difficult to deal with and which is likely to have the most damaging affect on someone’s confidence and self esteem.

The majority felt that the rejection comments were the most damaging and difficult to deal with. “You don’t get the chance to improve”. Others felt that constant criticism or negative comments were just as damaging long term. “You end up being frightened to try anything because you feel it will never be good enough”.

Trainer notes

Comments
### MODULE THREE

#### 2. Activity - Dealing with criticism—part 2

Aimed at

This activity worked best with young people from the age of 10 years and over, in a group setting. The challenge aims to help young people differentiate between helpful constructive criticism and unhelpful, potentially damaging criticism.

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<td>Flip chart and pens</td>
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<td>Paper and pens for notes</td>
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Challenge

To decide if criticism is helpful or unhelpful and whether it should be accepted or rejected ask the young people to consider the following questions:

1. Has the statement been said by someone whose opinion you know to be trustworthy?
2. Is this a fact which should be accepted or is it just a personal opinion?
3. Is this the opinion of more than one person you trust?
4. Is accepting this criticism going to help you learn and move on?
5. Has this statement been said to help you or to hurt you?
6. Has this statement been said to help another person feel better about themselves?
7. What does your gut feeling tell you, is the statement reasonable or unreasonable?

Now consider the following scenarios remember the previous questions:

**Sample Scenario 1:**

*Please don’t keep doing that, you know the noise gives me a headache, you’ve stressed me enough this week with having the school on my back. The trouble you bring home is enough to make anyone ill!” “Mum, I told you Alan and his gang were after me, I told you to speak to the Head for me but you wouldn’t so I’m not going back, it’s your fault I’m not going?”*

**Sample Scenario 2:**

“For goodness sake Sarah you look a state, you’re not coming out with us looking like that! You were told you could come to make up the numbers so we could all get a discount, not so you could embarrass us. Looking like a Goth really doesn’t suit you!*

The final part of this exercise is to challenge the young people to consider these questions when they are being self critical in the future – are they being unreasonable or unfair on themselves at times?

**Comments**

One young carer considered it to be part of his caring role to accept negative criticism as it had the positive outcome of making the person he cared for feel better about themselves and less guilty about their illness and behaviour at times. He now acknowledges that this was not healthy for him as it had resulted in him being made to feel he was the problem and therefore a burden.

Another participant shared this interesting experience: “When my brother was born my grandparents, aunts, family friends and health visitor all asked if he was a ‘good’ baby. At the time I thought what a cheek, how can he be good or bad when he can’t make choices! My mum explained they were asking if he was sleeping and feeding well as this would be good for her so she could get a rest. Even a baby is expected to try to please those around him before he is considered good! Just as well he didn’t understand what was going on; it could have damaged his self esteem!”
Aimed at

This activity worked well with young people from the age of 10 years and over, in a group setting. It is best organised around a session with games, crafts or other activities available so conversations flow naturally. The exercise can also be introduced in a supportive 1-2-1 setting for young people who find group work more daunting.

Resources needed

Flip chart and pens
Games, crafts or other activity materials

Challenge

Invite the young people to help each other in a fun way to recognise and challenge negative statements about; themselves, other people, objects or events.

Whenever someone says something negative, someone else should try to counter with a positive statement. Emphasise that this is a fun challenge where people should work at acknowledging their negative traits and accepting the counter challenge with good grace.

Examples:

“I'm fed up”  “I wasn’t when I saw you arriving”
“I can’t do this!”  “You’ve managed 75% of it”
“It’s chucking it down!”  “The plants will love this weather”
“I’m soaked through!”  “Isn’t it good your skin is waterproof!”
“You’re a pain!”  “Isn’t it good to be noticed by people!”
“Look at the state of me!”  “The face is as good looking as ever!”
“That tastes vile!”  “It’s good to know what you like/dislike!”
“I feel cold!”  “Isn’t it good we can put on the heating!”
“I don’t want to!”  “Isn’t it great to have a choice!”
“I’m rubbish at this!”  “Rubbish is worth money these days!”

Workers should engage with the challenge to support the interaction as much as possible.

Initially the workers needed to lead on this exercise but the young people soon took over and enjoyed the challenge; there was a lot of good humour banter and fun as is evidenced by the examples provided. They stated that they had previously not been aware of how negative they tended to be about themselves, other people and events, this was something they really wanted to work on.

It soon became apparent which young people were quicker in their responses and it was interesting to see them thrive in this role of positive supporter. Even months later some continued to respond with positive challenges to other people’s negative comments—this helped reinforce the learning.
EVALUATION

*Increased confidence and self esteem programme*

We used the Lickert scale method up to four weeks after the activities so the young people had time to test what they had learned and evaluate it’s usefulness to them. They were asked to scale each module on how enjoyable / helpful they found it; 1 being not good at all / unhelpful and up to 10 being very helpful / excellent. Having an additional column for feedback and ideas for future working proved to be very interesting and useful.

We then worked out the average scores for the groups to assess overall effectiveness and success of the work. The average of our overall compiled scores was 8.9.

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*This training programme was produced by Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers during 2009 as part of the Big lottery Transition Mission Project.*

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