Skills For Life

A toolkit to raise the profile of Skills for Life.

MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

Contents

Skills
For Life

Councillor Luthfur Rahman

Executive Member for Skills, Culture and Leisure

In Manchester we have a bold ambition to make our City the best for children and young people to grow up, work and live in. Children, young people and their voice are at the heart of everything we do, recognising that Manchester's young people are the future of our City.

Our Skills For Life programme is an example of how we have listened, and put into action what children and young people have told us. The Skills For Life programme will ensure that young people are prepared for life and engaged within democratic processes to influence policy and shape the city.

We want all children and young people across Manchester to understand what Skills For Life means to them, to understand the common language which is being used across all the services they access, whether that be education, leisure, culture or youth and play settings.

As always, we are learning and developing, and proactively responding to feedback and evaluation children, young people and professionals provide us about the programme in the hope that we can collaborate, develop and support positive outcomes for all children and young people in Manchester.

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Skills
For Life

Amanda Corcoran

Director of Education

Skills For Life promotes the use of a common language to promote five key skills and a commitment to increase opportunities for Manchester's children and young people to practice these skills.

Our ambition is that all providers and establishments in Manchester who work with children and young people adopt this language; create opportunities for children and young people to develop these skills, and support them to recognise and value their progress with these skills.

This Skills For Life toolkit is a really simple and exciting initiative which provides a 'golden thread' linking together not just our family of schools and settings but all of the services and resources available in Manchester for children and young people. Therefore everyone is working together to ensure that young people have the skills to support them in leading happy, healthy, safe and successful lives.

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Background

Background

In Manchester, over 20,000 young people voted in the annual 'Make Your Mark' youth ballot. In this youth ballot young people voted for a curriculum that prepares them for life. The Skills For Life programme is Manchester City Council's response to this request.

Skills For Life has been piloted with over 1600 children and young people in schools and youth settings across Manchester. Findings from the pilot project indicated that Skills For Life should be a universal and flexible approach which should be embedded into new and existing projects across the City.

Our Mission is to ensure that children and young people have the right skills to be able to grow up happy, healthy, safe and successful. We will achieve this by promoting a common language and developing quick and easy to use resources as well as creating a city-wide movement to embed Skills For Life across Manchester.

At Skills For Life we recognise that there are multiple providers working towards the skills agenda and we aim to develop partnerships to further raise the profile of skills across the Manchester.

Toolkit Aims

- To create a universal language and approach for recognising the five skills across Manchester.

- To provide resources and ideas to embed the five skills into different settings.

Background

The foundation for Skills For Life is based upon research carried out by UK Youth Employment which reviewed 13 skill-based frameworks and 86 reports regarding young people, skills and employment.

This research identified that the top five universal skills are:

- Communication
- Problem solving
- Self-belief (Inc: motivation, resilience and positive attitude)
- Self-management (Inc: initiative, organisation and accountability)
- Teamwork

The Skills For Life icons will help to raise the profile of the skills and ensure that children and young people can see the multiple contexts where they are developing their skills.

To engage with a younger audience a series of characters have been developed. All versions are available in the Skill for Life Resource Pack.
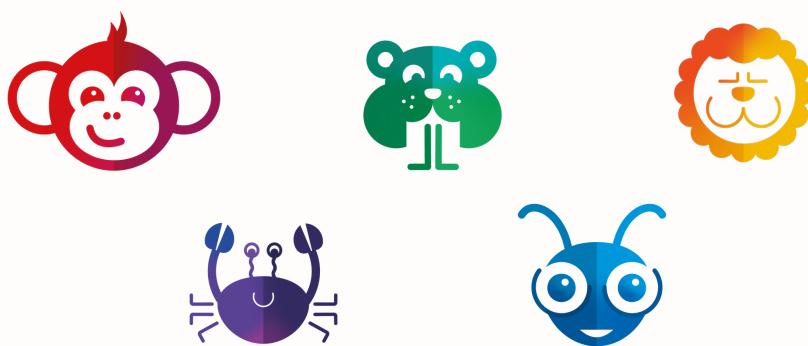
Where to Start?

1. Raise the profile
2. Adopt the language
3. Create & recognise the opportunities
4. Value the learning

Where to start?

Findings from the Skills For Life pilot project clearly indicated that the five core skills were viewed very positively with multiple settings commenting on how they were 'a great foundation' and were 'building blocks to life'. The skills were identified as overarching and applicable to different settings that young people engage with.

There was a clear response that the skills should be woven into existing projects and that Skills for Life should remain simple, flexible and be universally recognised across Manchester.

To do this we have developed a simple four stage process:

1. **Raise the profile**
2. **Adopt the language**
3. **Create & recognise the opportunities**
4. **Value the learning**

This toolkit is divided into these four sections and each will be explored in more detail. An accompanying Skills For Life Poster Pack and Certificate Pack are available to further promote the skills agenda in different settings.

1. Raise the Profile

1. Raise the Profile

Skills for Life is an approach which can be applied to different settings and contexts.

At Skills for Life we suggest that any work starts with raising the profile of skills and have provided ideas and resources to help to achieve this.

Suggestions

- Inform staff, parents, pupils of what you are doing.
- Hold an assembly or meeting and explain what the five skills are and why they are important.
- Use the Skills For Life icons when you are talking about each skill.
- Set up a Skills For Life display board.
- Display posters about the skills encouraging children and young people to stop and reflect.

To support this the following resources have been developed:
- Skills For Life information leaflet
- Skills For Life introduction PowerPoint
- A range of different posters with a primary and secondary focus.

If you have any ideas for other promotional resources contact @_SkillsForLife_ or email natalie.dodd@manchester.gov.uk

Promoting Skills

Examples of the posters available in the Skills For Life Poster Pack.

Be yourself, everyone else is already taken

Skills For Life

WHAT DOES GOOD TEAMWORK LOOK LIKE?

WE WORK TOGETHER

WE RECOGNISE OUR GOALS AND WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE THEM

WE LISTEN TO EACH OTHER

WE MAKE SURE EVERYONE IN THE TEAM IS INVOLVED

Teamwork
Skills For Life

WE ALL HAVE A JOB TO DO IN THE TEAM

Skills For Life

YOUR SKILLS SHAPE YOUR FUTURE.
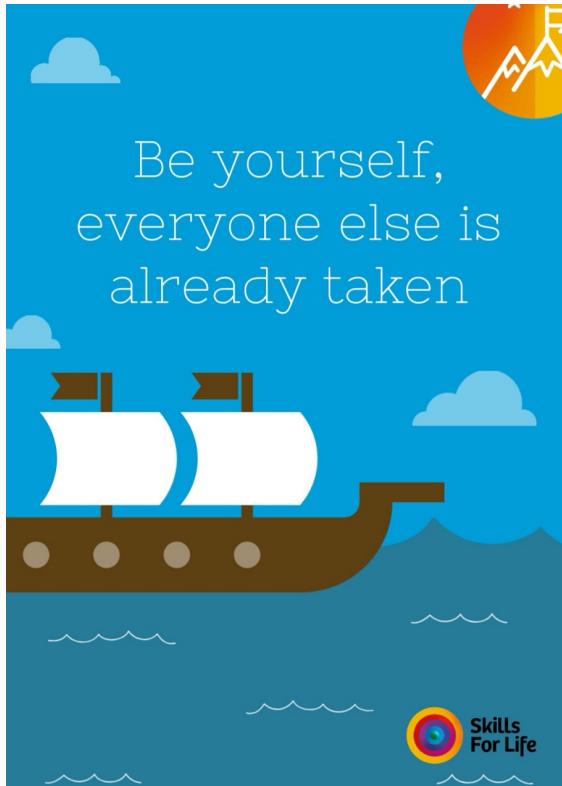
HOW YOUR SKILLS CAN SAVE THE PLANET

TEAMWORK
Get your crew together. Your friends or family, set your goals and work together to achieve them.

The planet needs your help to tackle the big climate problems we are facing today.

SELF-BELIEF
Change starts with you, believe that you can make a difference, be motivated and you will.

COMMUNICATION
Shout about it! Whatever you do, write about it, talk about it, make videos about it and share your messages with others.

SELF-MANAGEMENT
Use common sense, make plans, gets organised and keep going when the challenge is tough.

PROBLEM SOLVING
What problems do you want to solve? Where can you have the greatest impact? Make a plan and take action to make change.

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2. Adopt the Language

2. Adopt the Language

Suggestions:

- Use the language of skills and weave it into existing projects.
- Ask staff to reflect on the skills that they use throughout the day and share this with young people.
- Ask students to talk about the skills that they have practised.
- Tweet it, share it and let people know what skills you are working on.
- Ask each visiting speaker to reference how they use the five skills in their workplace as part of any session that they deliver.

To support this, the following resources have been developed:

- Universal definitions of each skill
- A more in depth overview of each skill

If you have any ideas for other resources contact @_SkillsForLife_ on Twitter or email natalie.dodd@manchester.gov.uk / ruth.denton@manchester.gov.uk

Definitions

Communication is:

- Being connected to others.
- It means the transfer of information from one person to another. It can be verbal, non verbal, written or even visual.

Problem solving is:

- Problem solving is the process of working through details and ideas with the aim of finding a solution. The ultimate goal of problem solving is to overcome obstacles to find a solution that resolves an issue.

Self-belief is:

- Self-belief is about having a positive outlook, the drive or inspiration to have a go and the resilience to recover from setbacks whilst seeing mistakes as learning opportunities.

Self-management is:

- Being prepared and being ready.
- It means being organised, being accountable for your own actions. It's using your head and your initiative to take action without being told what to do.

Teamwork is:

- Being together and working towards a shared goal.
- It means that you can recognise each others' skills and strengths to help the team to achieve their goal in the most effective way.

Communication Overview

- Humans have been communicating since the beginning of time. Communication occurs everywhere! Babies cry to get attention and as they grow up they develop more sophisticated ways to let others know what they want and to tune into what others are saying.

- Communication is one of the most important skills you need to succeed. Every relationship is affected by a person's ability or inability to communicate well.

- Main types of communication include verbal, non-verbal, body language, written and visual.

- Communication is a two-way process, it is the transfer of information from one person to another which can be done in many ways. This includes being a good listener in a way that gains the full meaning of what's being said and makes the other person feel heard and understood.

- Effective communication sounds like it should be instinctive but it is not! When we communicate the message can go astray and can lead to misunderstandings, frustration and even conflict. This can cause problems and tension at home, school, and in relationships. School reading, writing, expressing yourself well and being able to listen are four of the most critical communication skills to learn.

- Learning these skills can create a foundation for being able to communicate effectively in relationships and beyond that into the workplace. Most people know how to communicate, but this does not mean that they have engaging and effective communication skills.

Problem Solving Overview

- A problem is a situation or issue that is unwanted, unwelcome or even harmful and it needs to be dealt with or overcome.

- Problem solving is the process of working through ideas and being able to weigh up your options before making decisions and taking action. The ultimate goal of problem solving is to overcome obstacles to find a solution to resolve the problem.

- Problem solving can involve being curious and creative to make changes to improve a situation.

- Problem solving skills will help in every aspect of life and is one of the most critical skills that a young person and adult can learn.

- Problems are usually solved either intuitively, which means that a person automatically knows what they need to do or systematically when they work through a process to find a solution to the problem.

- Learning to solve problems takes time. It can take hours, days, weeks or months depending on the complexity. Problems can have different parts that need to be completed like a puzzle, making solving it more time consuming.

- Solving a complex problem comes with a process. It involves taking a series of steps in a certain order. This is important because knowing how to think about a problem as a whole is an important life skill.

- **STEP - Simple problem solving method.**
  1. Say the problem (without blame)
  2. Think of solutions (safe and respectful)
  3. Explore the consequences (what could happen if...)
  4. Pick the best solution (make your plan)

Self-belief Overview

- Self-belief is confidence in your own ability.

- Self-belief is how a person thinks and feels about their skills and abilities. It is how a person feels about who they are, what they can do and their attitude and approach to life. Self-belief can affect almost every area of a person's life and that is why it is so important.

- The three key elements to self-belief are:

  1. Having a positive outlook
  2. Having motivation
  3. Having resilience

- Everyone makes mistakes, experiences setbacks or even failure. It might be not getting the grades wanted, losing at a game or even failing an exam. All of these setbacks can affect a person's feelings towards themselves. These feelings can also affect whether that person attempts the tasks again.

- Self-belief is that inner voice which tells us that we 'can' or 'can't' do that task and how a person responds to that.

- Healthy self-belief is not about bragging or boasting. It is a realistic and optimistic evaluation of a person's abilities and a sense of trust and confidence in themselves.

- Employers value self-belief and confidence in their employees.

Self-management Overview

- Self-management is the ability to see tasks that need completing, being organised to be able to get the task done and then taking responsibility to see that the job is done properly.

- The three key elements to self-management are:

  1. Being accountable for your actions
  2. Being able to organise yourself
  3. Using your initiative

- Accountability is when a person takes responsibility for their actions. It also means that they care and want to complete the tasks to the best of their ability.

- Organisation is being able to structure your time, your tasks and your resources effectively. Something as simple as arriving on time and having the right kit and books for the day are simple ways to demonstrate this skill. Having a daily 'To do' list is another simple but good example of strong organisational skills.

- Initiative is about taking action rather than waiting to be told what to do. It is having the ability to decide in an independent way what to do and when to do it. Showing initiative is especially useful in stressful or problematic situations. Using your initiative means that you can think for yourself and aren't reliant on others.

Teamwork Overview

- A team: when two or more people come together to achieve a common goal. A team must include at least two members and teams range in size from two to one hundred or even more.

- Team worker/player: Someone who enjoys working in a team or group of people.

- Leader: someone other people look to. Leadership takes many forms and different leadership skills can be divided amongst various members of a team.

- Teamwork: the combined action of a group, especially when effective and efficient. Teamwork is present in lots of different areas of life but most commonly where a group of people are working together to achieve a common goal.

- Good team work recognises each person's skills and strengths to help the team to achieve their goal in the most effective way. When team roles are matched to a person's skill it can contribute towards effective team working.

- Working together on a project such as a school council or eco-council are examples of teamwork. The team identifies the goal, makes a plan and works together to make the plan happen.

3. Create & Recognise the Opportunities

3. Create & Recognise the Opportunities

Opportunities for children and young people to identify, practice and reflect on their skills development are being missed. Children and young people take part in a vast spectrum of activities. From sports to arts to cultural to competitive activities. Within schools and youth projects young people take part in clubs, campaigns, projects and initiatives. Within their lives they have friends, relationships, problems and challenges. These are all missed opportunities to identify, practice and reflect on their skills.

At Skills For Life and through these resources we aim to support settings to align skills into new and existing initiatives so that young people can clearly see the benefit that they gain by taking part.

To support settings further a number of additional resources are available:

- Small Steps Independent Living Resource primarily for SEND parents
- The Junior PCSOs Toolkit
- A School Council Toolkit

To support schools and providers to start to create and recognise opportunities, detailed below are examples of where skills can be aligned into existing parts of a young person's life.

- Group performance, play or assembly
- Sports day / team competition
- Eating together at school
- Taking part in a campaign
- Behaviour for learning
- Managing Relationships

Performance, Play or Assembly

Communication
- Speak clearly and at a volume appropriate to the audience.
- Use body language and tone of voice to convey the message.
- Listen and follow instructions and guidance.
- Create promotional materials to promote the event.

Problem Solving
- Use and try out different problem solving strategies when problems appear.
- Keep calm if problems arise during performance.

Self-belief
- Have the confidence to speak / perform in front of an audience.
- Be resilient if it doesn't go right the first time.
- Show pride.

Self-management
- Learn and remember lines.
- Take responsibility for your own part.
- Be able to maintain focus.
- Attend rehearsals on time.

Teamwork
- Work together to produce an assembly/show.
- Make sure that everybody has a part to play.
- Show leadership and help to organise others.
- Support and motivate others.
- Be patient with people less confident.
- Celebrate your team's achievement.

Sports Day / Team Competition

Communication
- Make a creative and colourful banner
- Listen to instruction/feedback/information from teammates and coaches.
- Communicate verbally with teammates.
- Write a story or news article about the event.

Problem Solving
- Use and try out different problem solving strategies when problems appear.
- Make changes during competition to overcome a problem.
- Talk honestly about what went well and what could be improved.

Self-belief
- Realise that there can only be one winner and lose graciously.
- Be confident and talk about what you are good at.
- Use positive self-talk.
- Put yourself forward for difficult tasks.

Self-management
- Show dedication to practice/training
- Arrive on time.
- Remember all of the things that you need.
- Be organised and prepare the night before.

Teamwork
- Put in 100% effort for the good the team.
- Create a team name together.
- Respect each other and each other's efforts.
- Motivate each other.

Eating Together

Communication
- Speak at an appropriate volume at the table.
- Ask politely for your food and remember to use manners.
- Carry out surveys about school dinners/healthy eating or even write to the kitchen staff to tell them what you liked about the food.
- Talk to teachers or your school council if you want to give feedback on the menu.
- Create a campaign to educate others about healthy eating, meat free days etc.

Self-belief
- Try new foods that you've never tasted before.
- Eat all of your food and try not to be wasteful.
- Be responsible for choosing your own food options.

Self-management
- Learn to set the table.
- Queue and wait patiently.
- Behave appropriately in the dinner hall e.g no running/shouting.
- Remember your packed lunches.
- Dispose of food waste/packaging properly.
- Work with others to organise recycling.

Teamwork
- Be kind and offer water to others on your table.
- Lead by example and show younger children how to behave in the dinner hall - be a lunchtime monitor.
- Offer to be a buddy to others or younger children in the dinner hall.

Working on a Campaign

Communication
- Listen actively to others.
- Use different methods of communication e.g leaflets, posters, films, assemblies etc.
- Develop a slogan or motto.
- Explain your ideas to others.

Problem solving
- Identify a problem, develop solutions and then decide which is the most effective course of action to take even if it isn't your idea.
- Identify when problems can occur.
- Be able to change and let go of a plan if it isn't working out.

Self-belief
- Believe that you can have an impact and want to make a change.
- Be willing to try new things to make a difference.
- Demonstrate motivation to make a change and inspire others.
- Be resilient when faced with challenge or criticism.

Self-management
- Be organised and know what needs to be done and the deadline.
- Create a timeline for the project or plan.
- Take minutes during meetings and follow up on actions.
- Be punctual and ready to focus on the tasks.

Teamwork
- Work together to set a goal that the group works towards.
- Ensure that everybody's voice is heard.
- Complete tasks and show that you are reliable.
- Trust team members and their abilities to complete their tasks.

Behaviour for Learning

Communication
- Demonstrate that you are ready to learn.
- Practice active listening when another person is speaking.
- Consider the words, tone and volume you need to respond.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand something.

Problem Solving
- Before asking for help try to solve the problem yourself.
- Try and use some different strategies when problems arise.

Self-belief
- Stop, think and check your work.
- Try your best and be proud of your work.
- Learn from your mistakes and take action to correct them.
- Believe in yourself and your abilities.
- Set small achievable targets to success.
- Ask for feedback to make improvements.

Self-management:
- Be organised and ready for the day e.g pack your bag the night before.
- Face the front and focus on the lesson/put your hand up to answer questions.
- Plan your time and focus to get homework done.
- Leave your phone/tablet in another room when you are revising or working.

Managing Relationships

Communication
- Listen to others and what they are saying, without interruption.
- Be able to communicate how you feel.
- Consider the words and images used either face to face or online and how they could be interpreted by others.

Problem solving
- Explore problems through listening and develop solutions together.
- Understand that actions have consequences and take steps to avoid negative consequences.

Self-belief
- Understand that it's normal for people to have conflicts and be resilient when it happens.
- Have a positive outlook.
- Accept differences and be willing to resolve conflicts.

Self-management
- Be accountable for your own behaviour.
- Use your initiative to say 'sorry' without being told to.
- Deal with issues or conflict before they get worse.

Teamwork
- Treat others fairly and respectfully in all relationships.
- Ensure that everybody is given a chance to contribute.
- Be kind and considerate in friendships and relationships.
- Show leadership and take first steps to make things better.

4. Value the Learning

4. Value the Learning

It is essential that children and young people have the opportunity and are supported to reflect on their skills regularly.

- Create opportunities for young people to reflect on their skills.
- Provide feedback on the skills that you have seen students demonstrate.
- Support students to recognise success in themselves and others.
- Encourage young people to keep a record of what they have done and the skills that they have developed.
- Use Skills For Life awards and school reward systems to recognise success.

Some certificates are shown below. There is a full certificate pack available alongside this Toolkit.

To value and recognise success, a number of certificates and badges are supplied for both primary and secondary aged children.

If your setting would like to access to a small number of badges to reward your children and young people. Please contact natalie.dodd@manchester.gov.uk.

Primary schools- Button badges
Secondary schools - Pin badges

Skills For Life is also aligned to the Youth Buzz Awards and any young person who has demonstrated outstanding progress can be nominated for these awards.

For further information follow @mycthehive for updates and events.
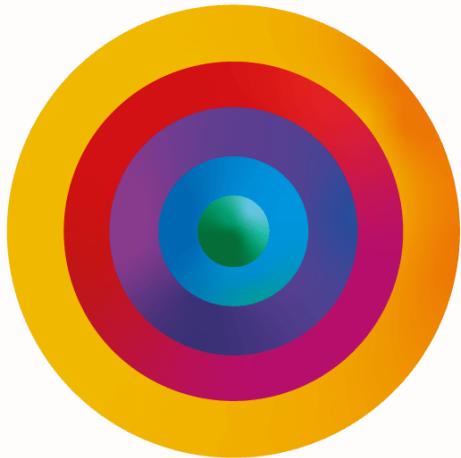
# Skills For Life

This is a special certificate for

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who has developed all of their skills
for life by

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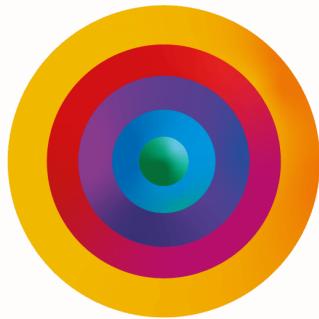
Skills
For Life

Skills For Life

Certificate of Achievement

is awarded to

for an outstanding demonstration of communication, problem solving, self-belief, self-management and teamwork skills.

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Resources

Lesson Plans and Activities

It is essential that children and young people have a solid understanding of skills.

The following resources are available:

- Promotional posters (See Skills for Life Poster Pack)
- Skills For Life introduction Presentation
- Session plans to explore the skills
- Certificates (See Skills For Life Certificate Pack)
- Badges to award students available to settings who sign up and share best practice.

Within this toolkit a number of introductory activities have been developed to promote the skills in different settings.

The sessions are flexible and can be delivered over about 20-30 minutes or doubled up into longer sessions. They can be delivered to classes or in smaller groups. The sessions can easily be delivered with limited preparation and without specialist knowledge.

The 9 sessions include:

1. What is Skills For Life?
2. When are the skills used?
3. Importance of skills
4. Communication - Listen and Draw
5. Communication Maze
6. Self-belief - Standing in my Shoes
7. Solving Problems
8. Self-management
9. Teamwork

Skills Practised

By taking part in these sessions students will have the opportunity to develop their Skills For Life. See below for examples:

Communication Skills
- Verbal/non verbal communication
- Visual communication through displaying their ideas
- Following instructions
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Active listening

Problem solving
- Creative thinking
- Practising problem solving process
- Exploring consequences and making decisions

Self-belief
- Self reflection
- Practising positive self talk

Self-management
- Keeping to task and time
- Finishing the tasks given

Teamwork
- Working with others on a shared task
- Trusting your partner
- Demonstrating leadership
- Involving and including others

What is Skills for Life?

This activity is a simple introduction to Skills For Life and can be used in informal and formal settings.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: copies of Skills For Life icons and Skills For Life Definitions (see Skills for Life presentation).

1. Ask what are the most universal skills in life? Students might be inclined to state specific skills such as cooking and computer skills etc. Encourage them to think universally and of skills that can be applied to every situation.
2. Display the Skills For Life icons and logo.
3. Ask what skills the icons represent.
4. Mind map what those skills mean and ask the group to create definitions. Alternatively challenge the group to create definitions using 10 words only.
5. Share definitions with the rest of the class.
6. Ask which skills have been used in this session and how they think they could have improved these skills.

When are the skills used?

This activity covers where, when and how useful the Skills For Life are.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: Skills For Life icons

1. Display the Skills For Life icons and ask students what the icons represent, or ask them if they remember what they represent.
2. Challenge the group to list as many everyday situations as they can where they will need each skill.
3. Challenge the group to think of a situation, or an age, when they would not need to use at least one of the skills. The only answer given so far has been sleeping!
4. Ask the group to list any examples of when they have used one or more of the skills in the past week. Encourage students to think of activities outside of school too.
5. Ask the group to share their experiences with somebody else.
6. Ask for examples and whether the group are surprised by how universal the skills are?
7. Ask which skills have been used in this session. Get students to choose one skill that they would like to practise over the next week and share this with somebody else.

Importance of Skills

This activity introduces the importance of the lifelong skills and how they are used throughout life.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: Skills For Life icons and a simple timeline template appropriate for the group.

1. Ask the students to pick one of the skills then to complete the timeline from birth to their current age and to map out how they have used this skill already and then feedback (can be done individually, in pairs or groups).
2. Ask the group to then think of an adult or elderly person and to draw another timeline and write down how that they might use the skill throughout their life.
3. Feedback to the rest of the group and discuss.
4. Ask the group to reflect in pairs on what this activity has told us about the skills.
5. Ask the group to reflect and choose a skill that they would like to focus on. Create a final timeline for themselves for the next 12 months with potential opportunities to practise this skill.

Communication Draw & Listen

This activity highlights the importance of giving clear concise instructions and how asking questions can help.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: Drawing Worksheets (4 versions available below)

1. This activity can be delivered as a group or in pairs. The aim of the task is for each person to end up with the same image.
2. Partners sit back to back. One person in each pair will need blank paper and a pen - they are the receiver. The other person will need the worksheet - they are the information giver. The information giver should keep their image a secret.
3. The information giver needs to describe the image verbally to the best of their ability. The receiver/drawer cannot ask any questions. No looking! Give the pairs two minutes to end up with the same image.
4. Ask the pairs to compare images and reflect on their success.
5. Hand out a new picture and swap the roles around.
6. As a group discuss: what worked and didn't work? Was it describing or was it the listening? Was it because they couldn't ask questions to clarify? Did it make a difference not being able to see the person to get the visual clues e.g. nodding or frowning etc? What about the noise in the room, was it a distraction when you needed to listen intently?
7. List tips for effective communication and what can be done to create a good environment for listening.
8. Ask students to reflect on how they could improve their communication skills.

Worksheet 1

Your task is to describe the image below. You cannot show your partner the picture in anyway or answer any of their questions.
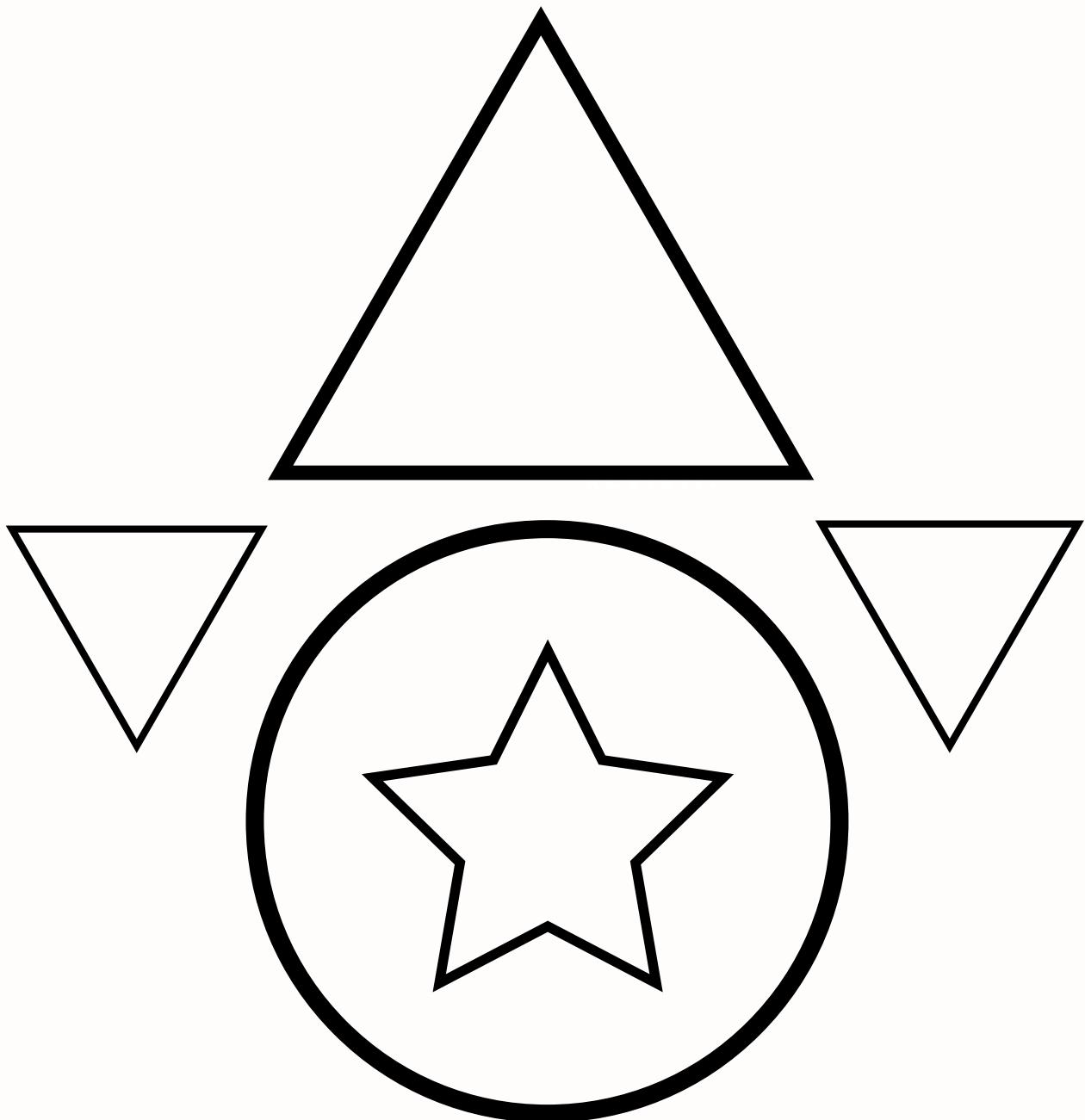
Worksheet 2

Your task is to describe the image below. You cannot show your partner the picture in anyway or answer any of their questions.
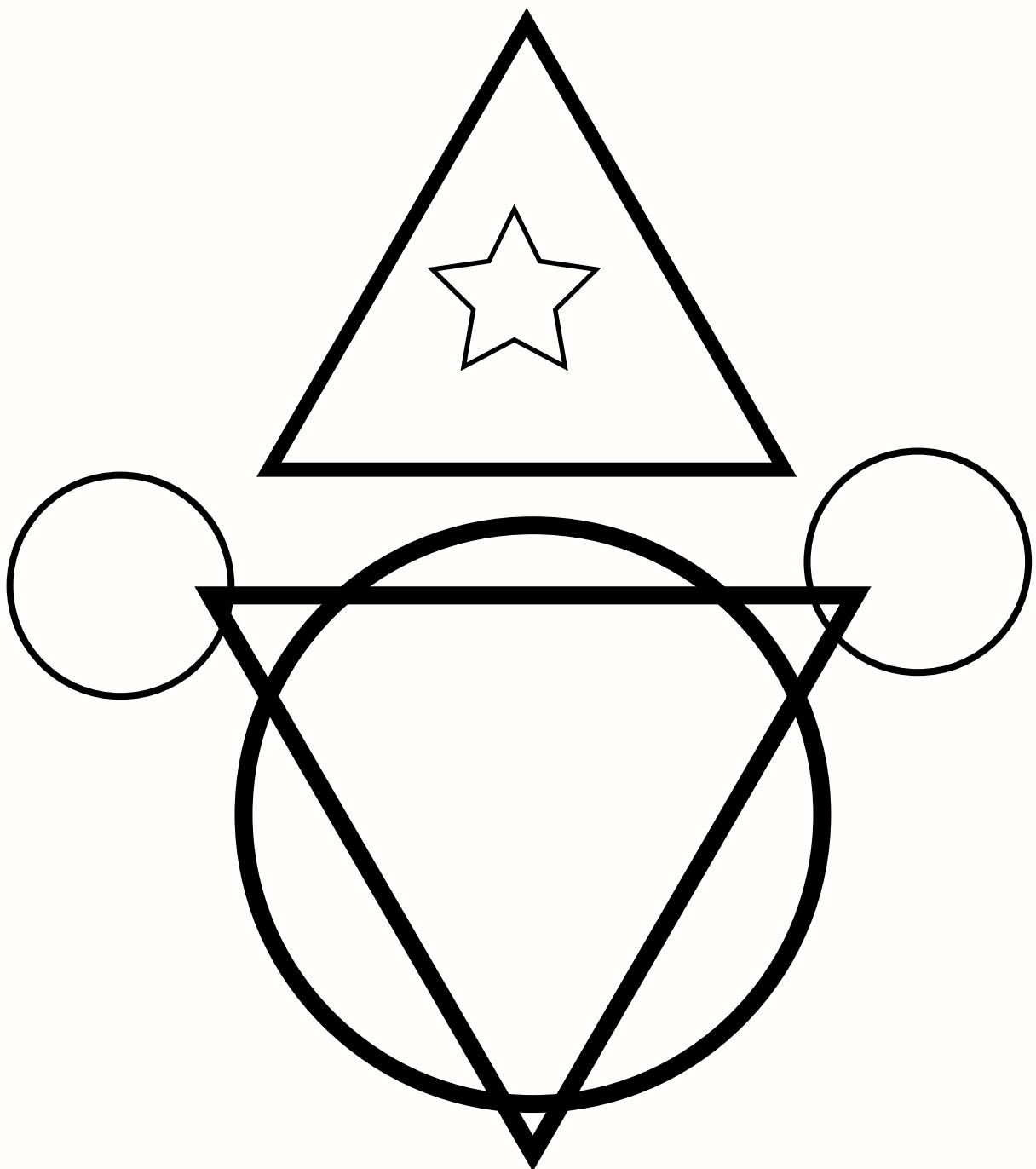
Worksheet 3

Your task is to describe the image below. You cannot show your partner the picture in anyway or answer any of their questions.

Worksheet 4

Your task is to describe the image below. You cannot show them the picture in anyway or answer any of their questions.

Communication Maze

This activity demonstrates the importance of good verbal communication.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: Space to set up a 'maze'. Objects (hazards) which the group can walk around.

1. Find a space big enough to set up a maze (hall or playground).
2. Place the items (boxes, chairs, water bottles, bags, etc.) around the room so there's no clear path from one end of the room to the other.
3. Divide the group into pairs and blindfold one person in each pair.
4. The other person must verbally guide their partner from one end of the room to the other, avoiding the "hazards".
5. The partner who is not blindfolded cannot physically guide the other.
6. If you want to make the activity more challenging, have all the pairs start the maze simultaneously so teams must find ways to strategically communicate over each other.
7. Ask the group to list important aspects of verbal communication and where these skills could be transferred to.
8. What skills have they used in this lesson? What skills went well? How could they improve?

Self-belief
Standing in my shoes

This activity demonstrates practising positive self talk.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: Optional shoe templates (for younger students). These are best placed in the front of the group/class to further build upon the idea of self belief.

1. Explain that we are all different and all have different worries, concerns and challenges and that positive self-talk can have a positive impact on these areas.
2. Ask group to mind map what things might make someone feel worried e.g speaking in front of a group, holding a tarantula, meeting new people and introducing themselves, interviews etc.
3. Ask the group to imagine that their best friend or somebody that they know is about to do one of these things and that they need to coach, support and motivate them to go for it. What would they say and how they say it? Or ask the group to imagine that they are going to have to do one of these things. What positive self-talk and actions could they say/do to get through it?
4. Ask if anyone wants to share any examples of when they have overcome personal challenges and what they learnt about self-belief.

Continued...

Standing in my Shoes Continued

5. Ask the group to sit and think what events and challenges that they have coming up in their lives, do any of these events worry them? How could positive self-talk help to improve that situation? Could they speak to a friend, family member or teacher to ask for advice?

6. Dare/challenge to do one one thing that worries them and to be brave and give it a go.

Shoes!

- These are best cut out, laminated and placed in front of the group.
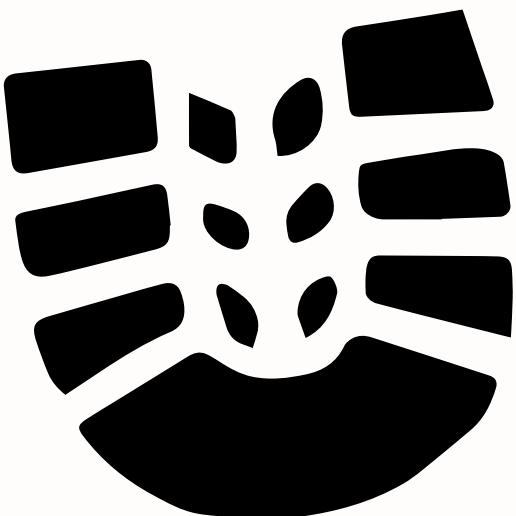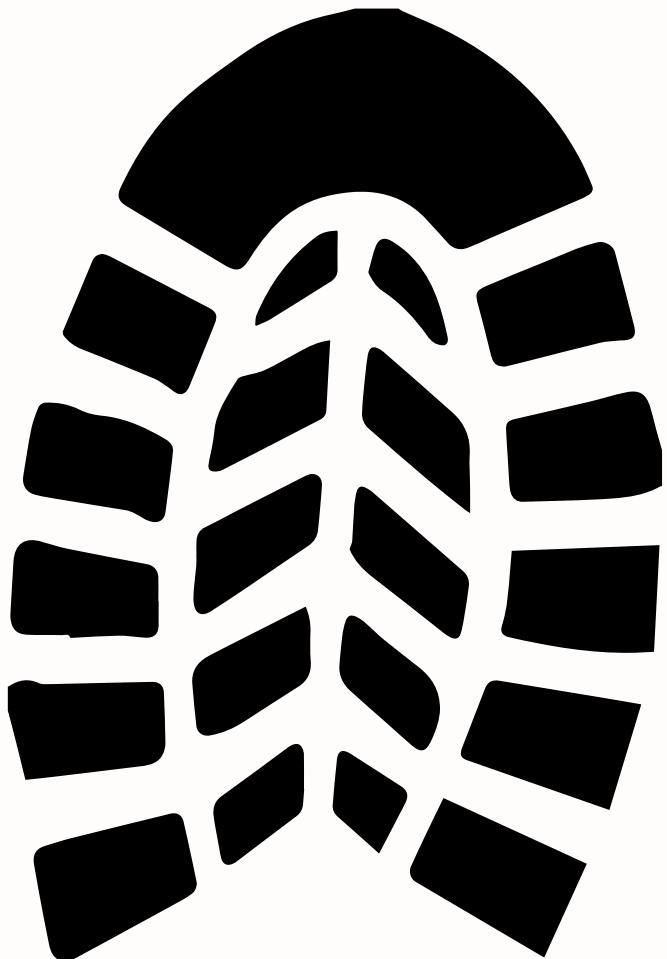
Shoes!

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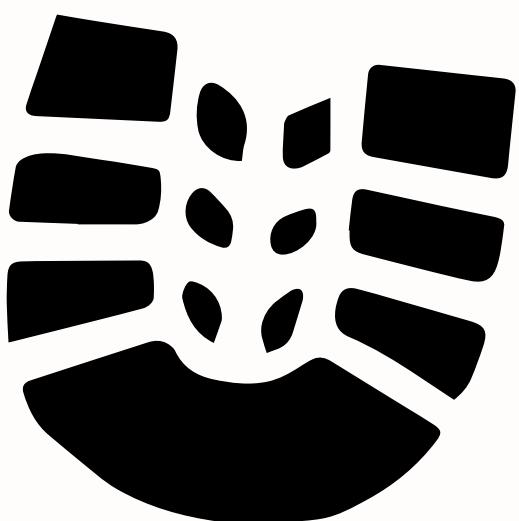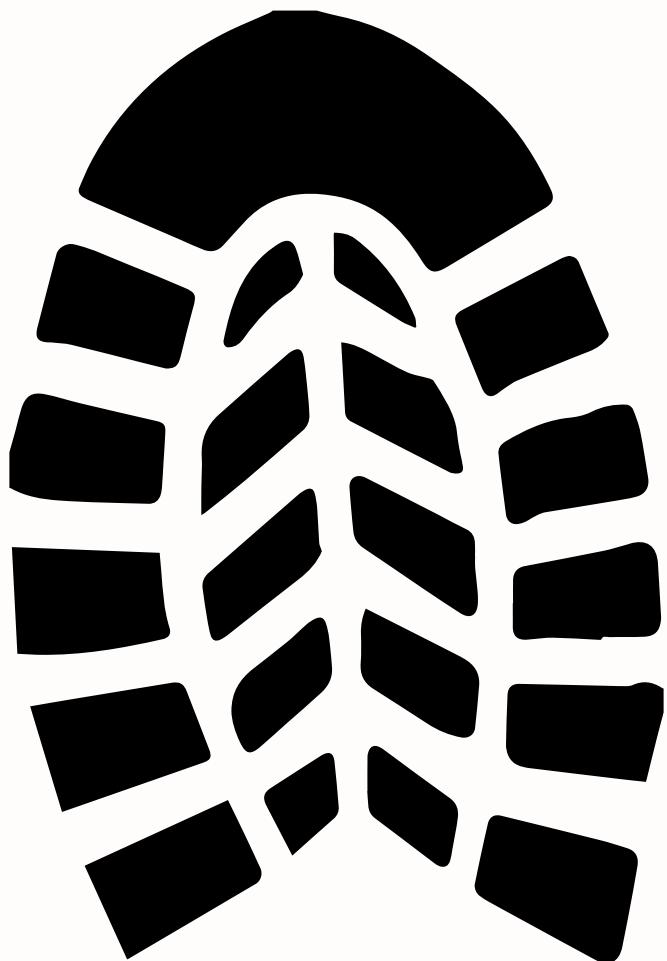
Solving Problems

- This activity introduces the process of problem solving and gives students the chance to practice the approach in relation to everyday problems.
- The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.
- Resources required: 'STEPS: Problem Solving Model' worksheet. Optional: 'Problem Scenario' resource or students can create their own.

1. Explain that throughout life humans will always have problems to solve. The good news is that problem solving is a transferable skill and this means the skill can be used at all times and places within our lives.
2. Ask 'what kind of problems they can think of'? They can be personal problems or those that are facing the school, community or planet right now.
3. List these on the board, then display the 'Steps Model' and ask the group if they can see how this could be used.
4. Ask the group to use the Steps Model to solve one of the problems that they identified.
5. Ask if the tool helped, what were the benefits of breaking the problem down into smaller parts?
6. Reassure the group that talking about problems is a good thing and from there solutions can start to be developed.
7. If appropriate remind the group of people in school that they can talk to if they have personal problem. Also remind them of agencies that can help e.g Kooth/Childline 0800 11 11.

Problem Scenarios

Problem 1:
Now that you are getting a bit older you are allowed to walk home from school. When you get home there isn't anybody home and you haven't got a key.

Problem 2:
You are working as a team in a school competition, normally you are really successful and so you haven't needed to put in much effort. Recently your scores are starting to drop and you might not get through the next round. How can you fix this?

Problem 3:
You are starting to notice that the people you hang out with say a lot of nasty things about other people, you still want to be friends with them but don't like the things they say. What could you do to make things better?

Problem 4:
You are at your friends house, they have a mobile phone, they start downloading lots of apps even if they aren't old enough. Before you know it they start getting messages from somebody who says that they recognise you from school. What should you do?

Problem Scenarios

Problem 1:
As a group of students who all care about the environment and want to do something to improve recycling in your school as you have recently realised there is just too much waste.

Problem 2:
Recently you've been feeling really stressed and can't seem to focus on your school work and so you are falling behind. Things keep getting worse but you just can't seem to be bothered. You do want to get back on track but just don't know how. What could you do?

Problem 3:
You often take the train home, however on this occasion there is problem with the service so you have the take a replacement bus which will drop you off in a different place and so you can't get picked up. Your phone battery is also flat. What could you do?

Problem 4
You and your friends do not like the food at lunchtime at school. Some people have started to say horrible things to the staff who serve them. How could you and your friends make a positive change instead?

STEPS: Problem Solving Model

1. State the actual problem (as much detail as possible)

2. Think of a solution

2. Think of a solution

2. Think of a solution

3. Explore your solutions

Pro's - Cons

Pro's - Cons

Pro's - Cons

4: Pick your best solution:

Self-management

This activity explores the topic of self management and encourages reflection on how people can improve their own skills.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: 'Self-management Statements' worksheet

1. Explain that self-management is a skill that can be developed and this activity will help to identify where to start.
2. Display the self-management icon and mind map/recap what it means.
3. Present an overview of the skill: Self-management is about managing yourself and your actions. It includes being organised, accountable and when a person uses their initiative.
4. Hand out the Self-management Statements worksheet, ask students to rank the statements from 1-9. The statements can also be cut out as cards and then sorted into a diamond shape. They need to rank the statements that they are good/confident at the top and the ones that that they are less confident about at the bottom.
5. Once ranked ask the group to look at the two or three statements at the bottom of the diamond and highlight that these are areas for improvement.
6. Ask students to reflect individually, or in pairs, and to list ways that they think that they could develop this skill.
7. Ask for feedback and cluster ideas and discuss which they think that they could actually have a go at and try.
8. Ask where and why they think these skills will be useful and to consider what the benefits are of having these skills
9. Finish with: one thing I have learnt about self-management is...?

Self-management Statements

Rank the statement below from 1-9.

1= Means you are less likely to do it. 9= You do this a lot of the time.

I forget the things I need to or need to do

I am a creative person and can come up with ideas

I am confident that I can work independently

When I have a lot to do I can prioritise what needs to be done first

I complete tasks such as school work to the best of my ability

I am organised and can get things done on time

I can assess situations and see what needs to be done rather than being told.

When I have been given a task, I finish what I am responsible for (accountable)

I can manage my own emotions and behaviour during times of stress

Teamwork

This activity creates the opportunity for students to practise their team working skills by working on a shared task.

The session can be used in primary and secondary schools and can take between 15-30 minutes.

Resources required: old newspapers, magazines, scrap paper, scissors and sellotape.

1. The task is simple, students are challenged to build the tallest free standing structure.
2. Split the class into groups of 5 or 6.
3. Explain that each group will have a maximum of 20-25 minutes to create their structure.
4. The first 3 minutes students are not allowed to touch any of the resources they can only discuss potential strategies/roles.
5. Once the time is up ask students to reflect on how they worked as team.
6. Award one group the 'best team' for those who demonstrated cooperation, communication and the best team working skills. This might not be the team with the tallest tower.
7. Sample questions include: What did you do that demonstrated teamwork? Was everybody included and involved? How could you improve your skills?

Next Steps

Future Developments

A number of Skills For Life resources are currently being developed. If you would like to be involved in the pilot or if you have any further ideas for development please contact: natalie.dodd@manchester.gov.uk

Initiatives currently in development include:

- Skills to Save the Planet - a resource pack to help students identify skills whilst working on climate change projects.

- Junior PCSOs Toolkit / Clean Air Crew Toolkit - a resource pack to train primary school students to tackle idling outside school gates.

- School Council Booklet - a booklet for the school council to reflect on the skills that they use and develop by being a member of their school council.

- An online recording tool will be piloted between Sept 2020-21. The online tool will help students to reflect upon and record their skills in relation to projects that they are involved in. Schools and settings can create digital badges and will be able to obtain data on the skills developed as part of any project taking place.

- The next phase of Skills For Life will also focus on further resources, specifically to aid young people to reflect, evaluate and record their skills meaningfully.

Feedback

Skills For Life is a flexible approach that can be applied to different settings and contexts with the aim that children and young people can identify, practice and reflect on their skills development.

This toolkit is the first resource published and any feedback is welcomed. For feedback, suggestions or ideas for future developments, please contact:

natalie.dodd@manchester.gov.uk or
ruth.denton@manchester.gov.uk

In Autumn/Winter 2020, all schools will receive a short feedback survey regarding this toolkit. All feedback from this survey will be considered and any amendments will be made accordingly.