iCan

*Working with Adolescent Boys Affected by Trauma*



The Big Lottery Fund has awarded Kent County Council 5-year programme funding to support 10-16-year olds in Kent. The HeadStart ambition is to equip young people so they can better deal with difficult circumstances in their lives, preventing them experiencing common emotional and mental health problems. The iCan programme is a one-to-one and group trauma informed programme which harnesses the strengths of young men aged 13-16 (school year 9-11) so they can go on to meets life’s challenges.

This toolkit enables the programme to be delivered in way which will support young people to build their resilience and support networks.

The toolkit has been developed by Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium, through a pilot programme funded through Kent County Council. We want to ensure this toolkit is a practical and effective resource and will continue to adapt it based on user feedback. This toolkit will be used as the basis for the iCan programme across Kent until 2021.

Should you wish to share your comments please contact us at XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

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Part 1: Introducing iCan

iCan focusses on male adolescents aged 13-16 who are disengaging in their communities. This could be because they live, or have lived, in a home that lacks stability, have been traumatised by domestic abuse or have unhealthy relationships with their peers or families. It is expected to be accessed for 24 sessions but is flexible to shortened or extended.

This toolkit sets out the iCan approach to trauma informed one-to-one and group support for young men. An approach that is flexible, person-centred and harnesses the strengths of young men, so they can go on to meets life’s challenges.

Adapting to the personality and interests of each young man creates a therapeutic and fun way to meet the objectives young people set. By encouraging practitioners to work in a way that is proactive and creative in finding ways to engage and work with young people we are replacing a staid model of sitting still to explore a long list of problems with something where we get up, move and find solutions.

# Why is iCan needed?

Our strengths are identified through challenge and tested by hardship. For some young people, these hardships can be so great that their strengths have been reduced or they struggle to recognise the strengths in their lives, and as a result, their resilience is reduced.

A violent home is an attributing factor to a range of serious health conditions such as depression and substance abuse. Research confirms exposure to multiple forms of violence, including community violence, domestic abuse and a family climate of hostility, doubles the risk of self-reported youth violence.

Children are at higher risk for school difficulties, such as peer conflict or impaired cognitive functioning, truancy, suicide attempts and delinquency which often leads to developing offending behaviour.

Difficulties associated with experiencing abuse within the home at an early age include externalising, such as antisocial behaviour, and internalising, such as anxiety, as well as academic and physical health difficulties, social and interpersonal relationship problems. Some studies indicate that externalised symptoms may be greater in boys than in girls, with research indicating that boys who engage with aggressive behaviour may be more likely to do so as they age than girls. The social scripts around their gender are often posited as the cause but the work of neuroscientists also evidences that trauma affects boys’ and girls’ brains differently.

Through these studies recommendations are made for early intervention that reduces aggressive behaviour. They evidence the need to consider gender as an important factor when designing and implementing interventions – with boys having a greater focus on reducing aggression whilst girls may need greater attention on prosocial skills.

We want these young men to grow up to be confident and resilient so that they have ambition and contribute to society, breaking the cycles of abuse and disadvantage and form positive relationships as adults. We believe that their needs are often overlooked when the adults around them are in crisis but also during the recovery phase and that the representation of their suffering may become associated with their perceived ‘male-hood’ rather than their experiences.

# Model and Approach

## Trauma Informed

The iCan approach is trauma-informed and includes the use of mindfulness and trauma stress physiology knowledge which we share with our clients in order to give them a range of skills and knowledge to grow. Being trauma-informed means that everyone running the project must understand how trauma can affect individuals and families that they support.

Trauma happens when someone feels intensely threatened by an event they are involved in or witnesses. Trauma is the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope. There are lots of situations that can result in trauma – bullying, community violence, physical & emotional abuse, traumatic grief or domestic abuse to name a few.

This trauma affects the way our brains function and interfamilial relationships, particularly where abuse has been present. iCan practitioners must be aware of the impact of domestic abuse on parenting where they seek to engage families. For instance

* the family may have a distorted experience of power and control where the assertion of control is equated with abuse.
* parents may be unable to recognise potential risks or provide appropriate protective responses
* Parents may themselves be emotionally dysregulated and therefore have difficulty teaching these necessary skills to their children
* the risk of role reversal, parentification of the young person, projection of mother’s negative perceptions and experiences (he’s just like his father)

Survivors of trauma often feel inappropriate guilt or shame about their reactions during the traumatic incident(s). Helping clients to recognise thinking errors like hindsight bias, holding idealised standards or black-and-white thinking is important in alleviating this.

We’re mindful of *trauma triggers*: events that might activate conscious or unconscious memories and stimulate defences mechanisms. It might be that a client is unable to confront these issues directly. We are led by our clients and can use our skills as practitioners to teach skills and impart coping tools without retraumatising.

Before offering alternative-thinking strategies, clients must first feel safe and grounded and know how to create physical and emotional safety for themselves. Re-traumatisation can occur when services replicate the power, control and silencing experienced during trauma. Letting our clients create their own path through the service is a therapeutic act.

## Client Centred

Each support journey is different, and our clients need to help shape their own path. Clients can engage with iCan in a way that suits them, addressing *their* visions for a better future. Understanding the whole picture helps us build rapport and engage with adolescents in ways that are meaningful to them.

iCan uses five guiding principles to ensure that our clients are at the centre of their support:

1. We tailor our services to their needs
2. We involve clients in the decisions that affect them
3. We deliver support in a setting that reflects their choices and goals
4. We respect and listen to our clients
5. We collaborate with the people and agencies in a young person’s life to advocate for them

## Strengths Based

Working with individuals and families who have specific needs has often followed a deficit model. Using this model, assessments and support plans become lists of problems and inadequacies. By using a strengths-based model we shift the focus to the skills and strengths that all clients have in addition to specific unmet needs and traumatic life experiences. It is these strengths that will be the building blocks of change for any client.

Strengths-based practice produces a stronger, less confrontational, relationship with clients as we recognise and value positive attributes and behaviours. It also facilitates more sustainable change; eliminating negative patterns and conditions is less likely to be successful than one that balances the reduction with an increase in positive mechanisms.

Using the **ROPES**acronymhelps practitioners to identify areas for strengths-based dialogue. If practitioners consistently seek out and explore these core elements with clients, they can transform the focus from problems to possibilities:

* **R**esources
* **O**ptions
* **P**ossibilities
* **E**xceptions
* **S**olutions

## Resilience Focussed

**Why is resilience our ultimate goal?**

This programme has been designed to give boys the skills to navigate and understand their emotions and responses. It doesn’t set out to fix aspecific crisisbut to allow young people to meet the challenges in their lives as they come up. Why? Because lives are messy and unpredictable. We don’t know what our clients will face, but we want them to have the best chance to face it well, and to come out the other side healthy and whole and not on a downwards spiral.

This ability to face life’s challenges, and adapt to adversity, is resilience. We believe that resilience can exist both on a personal level and within a family unit.

**What creates Resilience?**

If resilience is the aim, how do we get there? How do we build resilience in ourselves and in others?

Daniel and Wassell identified 6 resilience domains, areas that, if developed, contribute to our ability to cope in difficult situations. By having resilience conversations, we give young people the skills to develop competencies in these areas and encourage families to establish positive habits that reinforce healthy coping strategies.

HeadStart Kent have adapted this model, through consultation with young people, to reflects the needs of young people in Kent and use language that is more accessible. The new model recognises 6 areas of resilience and provides a Resilience Conversation Tool.

### The Resilience Wheel

1. **Feeling Secure** **-** How secure you feel in yourself, in physical places, and with those around you
2. **Education -** Your learning, trying new things, and the support from others to help with these
3. **Talents and Interests -** Being able to access activities you enjoy, are good at, or want to do
4. **Emotions & Behaviours -** Having the skills to manage your emotions and behaviours as well as feeling positive about the future
5. **Health -** The health and wellbeing of you and of those around you
6. **Friendships -** The importance of having friends, positive peers, and being a good friend

Factors within each of these areas of a child's life are known to contribute to their level of resilience to adversity such as abuse, neglect and loss. Wherever possible a strength in one area can be used to boost a weaker area.

iCan uses these areas to shape our work over the 24-week support period; identifying strengths, building upon them and fostering the development of new achievements and aspirations.

# Getting practical

### Referral Criteria

This service is for adolescent boys aged between 13 to 16 years, who identify with one of the situations below. They:

* Have been affected by trauma, such as domestic abuse, either in their family or in their own intimate relationships
* Are presenting with behaviours linked to trauma which may include low-mood, anxiety, disengagement, difficulty in building and maintaining supportive (safe & healthy) relationships, challenging and risk-taking behaviour
* Are socially isolated with a limited support network

The referral criteria are deliberately broad as iCan doesn’t set out to fix acrisisbut to help young people develop resilience where this has been reduced, whatever the reason.

A referral form can be accessed in Appendix 1.

### Understanding Your Landscape

Before accepting referrals, you should take time to understand what is on offer locally. Make a list of the sports groups, youth groups, theatres, after-school clubs etc.

We want to increase the availability of a protective environment – adults that are good role models, friends and time in a space that is happy and productive. Starting with a list will help you to suggest activities that are relevant to your client’s interests.

### Safety and Risk with iCan

Making families safe is a core requirement in supporting vulnerable clients with low resilience; working with this toolkit requires an ability to assess and manage the risks faced by families.

We feel it is inadvisable to work with clients who are currently living in a home with active high-risk domestic abuse, as change in behaviour will heighten the risk posed to a young person. Relevant assessment following a referral is necessary and any signposting or onwards referrals should be made where iCan is not deemed appropriate.

Whilst working with young people you are part of a wider safeguarding system. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility; to properly safeguard it is important to share information where it is relevant to safety as no one professional will see the full picture. Your confidentiality agreement will make clear to your client when it would be necessary for you to share information to keep them safe.

Where safeguarding concerns are identified it is important to ensure the client’s wishes and feelings are considered and, wherever possible, a course of action should be decided upon together.

Agencies running the iCan programme must have an up to date safeguarding policy and training. Young people referred to iCan may be particularly vulnerable to:

* child sexual exploitation
* gangs & youth violence
* substance use
* engaging in risky behaviour
* bullying
* absconding from home or care setting

Relevant safeguarding training should be sought. For access to training and information regarding referrals to Children’s Specialist Services you should visit the Kent Safeguarding Children Board website.

## Engagement

We believe that participation is not just about using services or attending programmes. To truly bring about change for the adolescent, the service must be flexible and meet their individual needs at a time that is right.

To do this we have a number of support pathways.

1. One-to-one work looking at promoting resilience using the Resilience Conversation tool as a structure - this can be completed in a number of settings and integrated with other support pathways.
2. Offering group creative sessions which are shaped by the adolescents we’re supporting. Offering arts and drama or outdoor and sporting activities works well, especially for those who find classrooms difficult, are less confident or for adolescents with learning difficulties or disabilities.
3. The opportunity to explore a family focus with sessions open to including other family members such as a non-abusing parent or sibling. This can help new skills, or new ways of understanding our responses, be embedded within a family. This will be explored where appropriate and with the needs and wishes of our young person always paramount.
4. Drop in sessions remain open to all who have accessed iCan, so if future issues arise they can access support before life spirals out of control.

Using arts and creative sessions within group and drop in activity days during school holidays or after school weekly groups, encourages adolescents to express their views and ideas in a comfortable environment. It offers a great opportunity to understand and make sense of young people’s experiences.

The group and drop in activities should be chosen by the adolescents you are supporting, previously stencil art workshops, animation creation, gaming, music-writing and MCing have been offered.

**Engagement methods**

Time will be given to build trust between practitioners and clients, and within groups. This allows a supportive relationship to develop where young people feel comfortable and respected, in order to explore the repercussions of traumatic events, their visions for the future and the skills and resources needed to get there.

The initial conversation and assessment determine the pathway for the adolescent. If they are living with current domestic abuse then the approach would be a risk-led one, with the focus on trauma-informed recovery taking place once safety is attended to.

Where it is assessed as safe, the young person can shape their participation according to their needs and wishes. They determine the means of engaging with the project, whether it is through one-to-one sessions, activity-based group work or electronically.

Our experience has shown that outcomes improve where the young person is consulted about the method of support and this in itself becomes therapeutic and empowering. The programme has built-in capacity to be adapted to the individual interests of the clients.

### Involving Parents

The iCan model is open to working with parents and family members to help bolster resilience and improve relationships. However, iCan is focused on your client - inviting other people to join the process must only happen at the client’s request. They should be told that this is an option and that you will ask again if it’s something they would like to do. It may be that there are particular skills or knowledge that your client would like to share with family.

Family sessions can facilitate a supportive environment to rehearse newly attained knowledge and skills at home, can improve communication or promote understanding of the adolescent’s feelings and perceptions.

Throughout this toolkit you will find activities that are designed for use within the family unit. The interactive and client centred principals remain in place – engage in spaces where the family is comfortable and in activities that are active and enjoyable. We would recommend starting the process by creating some ground rules together to ensure that there is a common understanding of each other’s boundaries.

Signposting an adult to access additional services may help the long-term resilience of their unit but this is auxiliary, not the primary purpose of family engagement with iCan.

### Group Work

Setting up a group can create a positive environment to share experiences and learning and to build supportive networks. This toolkit provides group activities that will help to promote growth in the six resilience areas.

Ground rules need to be made between the group and worker that

1. Create a positive group environment
2. Acknowledge the boundaries and communication styles that create a positive atmosphere

Clients should be asked to think of their own ground rules. Workers can prompt thinking by asking the group to think of a time they had a positive experience within a group, as well as when they had negative experiences and writing ground rules that reflect these.

### Electronic Support

Engaging clients in ways they would like to communicate means that support may be offered electronically. Video calls, messaging or live chat can be utilized to compliment face-face support.

If a client wishes to engage in this way managing expectations is key – set up specific times for communication and let your client know that you are not always able to reply to messages outside of these times.

## Collaboration

iCan is an intensely collaborative process. Resilience is not the trait of an individual, although individuals do manifest resilience in their behaviour and life patterns. Resilience is only possible in community, with relationships and cultural investment.

No one can survive alone and iCan works to integrate young people in their community so that they can take part and benefit from social capital. It is important that through this support young people are introduced to their community resources and that their positive social networks are encouraged.

Resilience rests, fundamentally, on relationships. The desire to belong is a basic human need and positive connections with others lie at the very core of psychological development; strong, supportive relationships are critical for achieving and sustaining resilient adaptation. – Luthar, 2006

By involving other groups, services and inviting positive role models to talk at groups we widen young people’s understanding of the networks available to them. By collaborating we are modelling and promoting the use of external resources.

### Environment

Both one-to-one and group-sessions should be held in relaxed, non-educational environments with a flexible structure. iCan providers should create links in the community and contact relevant youth clubs and groups to utilise activities and spaces on offer.

## Impact and Outcomes

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is key to providing better-quality services and evidence of what works. It helps shape future services both within our organisations, with partner agencies, referrers and in the wider Kent and national communities.

iCan aims to make three differences in the short term, three in the longer term with three overall impacts.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **iCan Results** | | |
| K1 | **Short term outcomes** | Greater understanding of safe non-coercive relationships |
| K2 | **Short term outcomes** | Increased self-acceptance, confidence and resilience |
| K3 | **Short term outcomes** | Increased understanding by key agencies of the needs of adolescent males who have experienced multiple events of domestic abuse in the home |
| K4 | **Long-Term Outcomes** | Adolescent boys able to adopt more positive ways of coping with their emotions and behaviours |
| K5 | **Long-Term Outcomes** | Increased engagement in education, training and fewer risk inducing behaviours |
| K6 | **Long-Term Outcomes** | Improved relationships with family, peers & community |
| K7 | **Impact** | Risk of offending, violence and victimisation is significantly reduced |
| K8 | **Impact** | Reduced cost to society in terms of healthcare & justice system |
| K9 | **Impact** | Adolescent boys have improved aspirations and life chances |

To measure these iCan employs three outcomes measures – the resilience conversation, the young person’s CORE and the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. Together with qualitative feedback from the young person, their families and schools these will enable you to assess increasing resilience.

When conducting these measures remember that this is a chance to discover more about your client and for them to share their concerns and experiences. Don’t be apologetic when introducing the measures – they are a tool for discovery and discussion.

The measures are available in the folder accompanying this toolkit.

### Measure One

The Resilience Conversation tool acts as an assessment tool within the first weeks of the service and can then be used to help you and the client to see progress as sections turn from red and amber to green.

**Scoring:** Red, Amber, Green

**Frequency:** The Resilience Conversationmust be completed by clients prior to (or at) the first face-to-face contact with a practitioner and can be revisited to discuss progress.

### Measure Two

The Young Person’s CORE is a 10-item scale that was designed for use in the 11-16 age range. It addresses global distress and is therefore suitable for use as an initial screening tool and outcome measure.

**Scoring:** The total score is calculated by adding the response values of all 10 items. The minimum score is 0 and the maximum 40.

The total clinical score is calculated by dividing the total score by the number of completed item responses (normally 10) and multiplying by 10. For a client with all 10 items completed, the total clinical core is equal to the total score. The higher the score the more problems the individual is reporting and/or the more distressed they are.

**Frequency:** The CORE must be completed by clients prior to (or at) the first face-to-face contact with a practitioner, and immediately preceding their final session.

### Measure Three

The Shortened Edinburgh Warwick Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWS) is a scale of seven positively worded items, with five response categories. The scale is validated for use with individuals aged 13 and up. Well-being can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.

Organisations using the SWEMWS should register by completing the [online form](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/researchers/register/) via Warwick Medical School.

**Scoring:**

SWEMWS should be scored by first summing the score for each of the seven items and then transforming the total score for each person according to a [conversion table](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/researchers/guidance/swemwbs_raw_score_to_metric_score_conversion_table.pdf). The minimum total scale score is 7 and maximum 35.

**Frequency:** SWEMWS must be completed by clients prior to (or at) the first face-to-face contact with a practitioner, and immediately preceding their final session.

Part 2: iCan Support

Part two is structured to provide information on first and final sessions and is then divided into resilience area sections.

Each section outlines some possibilities for support – providing theory and activities for use in one-to-one, group and family work. Use these tools to put together a programme of support that will benefit your clients and groups.

# The Support

iCan meets clients where they are – at the level of engagement they feel ready for. The individual journey is determined by the adolescent’s own vision of the end result.

## Session Outlines

Understanding a young person’s resilience factors are crucial when planning to intervene effectively.

Plans need to consider both the external protective factors and internal resilience. These should then be understood in the context of the adversity and protective factors within the young person’s family, friends, community and environment.

## Week One

To introduce the service, you should talk about:

* why the referral was made
* what the service is
* that their interests and the way they like to spend time & learn will shape what you do together, and how you do it
* that they can choose the type of engagement (one-to-one, family sessions, group activity or not at all)
* that they can move between these types of engagement

You will need to complete

* the Confidentiality Agreement
* the Young Person’s CORE
* the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
* the resilience conversation

### Resilience Conversation

The resilience conversation will aid you in getting to know the young person. As well as providing focus, the young person may feel more open to discussion, and can pull out the areas that they feel confident about.

More guidance on how to hold a resilience conversation can be found in Appendix 2.

During your resilience conversation you will guide the young person to consider each of the resilience areas. There are explanations for each of the areas below as well as some questions to help you explore their strengths and vulnerabilities.

The worksheet (available in Appendix 2) guides you to think about resilience in each aspect of their lives:

* self
* family
* with significant others
* in the wider community

Ask the client to colour in each section red, amber or green – or mark with an R, A or G. They can do this alone or as they discuss sections with you.

##### Introduce the idea of resilience

*When things go wrong, resilience is what helps you to cope and get through hard times. It is what gives people the mental strength to cope with stress and hardship.*

People deal with things in different ways, and that is ok, but there are things we can do to make sure that the next time that something stressful happens we can bounce back quickly.

There are six different areas that we think contribute to this ability to bounce back.

###### Feeling Secure

This is all about how secure you feel, within yourself, your relationships and the places where you spend a lot of time. It’s about the bonds you have with your family and important people in your life. It’s also about the places you feel safe.

* Where/When do you feel secure?
* Are there times when you do not feel secure?
* Do you have someone you trust?
* Do you get on with your parent/carer?
* Do you have someone outside of your family to talk with?
* Do you feel safe outside of your home?
* Do you feel safe inside your home?
* Do you use the internet safely?
* Do you feel like you can keep yourself safe?
* Do you think people around you feel safe?

###### Education

This is all about how you enjoy learning, taking opportunities to try new things and thinking about your future.

* What is good about school?
* Is something making school difficult for you?
* Are there subjects you enjoy?
* Do you have someone at home who helps you get to school?
* Do you have someone who helps with your school work if you need it?
* Do you have somewhere you can do your school work?
* Do you support other people in your class or friends when they need it?
* Can you access sites online that support your learning?
* Do you have someone at school that understands your wellbeing?

###### Friendships

Friendships can be really positive. Having friends that make you feel good about yourself is important. Being a good friend is also important.

* What about your friendships is good?
* Is there anything about them that worry you?
* Do you have a good friend who you trust?
* Does your parent/carer like your friends?
* Do you have friends outside of school?
* Do you have somewhere to be with your friends?
* Do you show respect to your friends?
* Do you treat your friends online as you would face to face?

###### Talents and Interests

Talents and interests are the things you like doing in your free time - things you are good at or enjoy. Having a talent, or things you are interested in, can make you feel good.

* What do you enjoy doing?
* Is there anything that stops you from doing these things?
* Do you have an activity that you like doing?
* Do you do activities with your family?
* Do you have someone who helps you to do an activity?
* Would you like to start a new hobby or go to a new club?
* Are you open to trying new things?
* Do you use the internet to find out about new opportunities in your area?

###### Health

When we talk about our health we should consider our physical health, mental health, and social wellbeing. We should also think about that of those around us, as their health can have an impact on us too.

* What is positive about your health?
* Is there something about your health you’d like to improve?
* Do you consider yourself to have good physical health?
* Do you consider yourself to have good mental health?
* Do your family have good health and wellbeing?
* Do your family support each other to remain well?
* Do you know where to go if you are concerned about your health?
* Do you know where to go if you are concerned about others?

###### Emotions and Behaviours

Across a day, a week, or a month we often experience a vast range of different emotions. It’s normal to experience a variety of feelings as we encounter different situations in life so try not to think of certain emotions as being ‘bad’ or ‘negative’ - all emotions are valid.

It’s normal to feel anxious or worry but we can develop skills to manage these worries and express ourselves healthily. We should be able to feel positive about the future so if you are struggling to do this speak to an adult you trust.

* When are you good at dealing with your emotions?
* When are you proud of the way you have behaved?
* Do you ever find your emotions difficult to handle?
* Do you feel good about yourself?
* Does your parent/carer expect you to take responsibility for your actions?
* Do you express your emotions without harming others or property?
* Are you looking forward to the next few years?
* Can you manage your worries and anxieties?
* Do you know how to deal with things you see on the internet and how they impact you?

**Discussing the Resilience Wheel**

Once the resilience wheel has been coloured in (or marked with R, A & G) talk to the client about why they have graded them in the way they have. Talk first about the greens, exploring the positive influences on their resilience before looking at the amber and red sections.

This conversation will give you an insight into what is happening in the young person’s life at the moment.

#### In the future

If the young person decides to work with you in the iCan project which of these areas do they feel is the most important for you to work together and try to improve? If they had to pick three areas, what would they be?

You don’t need to discuss specifics – why when and how – just to have an idea of their priorities.

You can also explore whether they think best while they’re moving, drawing, talking or listening. This might help you pull out particular activities that they will enjoy or get the most out of.

#### Planning the next session

Ask your client whether they would like to meet again. Would they like to engage in any of the group activities?

If they would like to meet again you need to ask them where and when they would like to meet – has the venue today worked? Is there a better one, somewhere they would be more comfortable? Is there anything in particular that they would like to talk about or do?

It is important that they have your contact details, and that you have theirs. What’s the best way to keep in contact? Text, WhatsApp, email, phone call? Tell them that if there are any changes to the plan that you will let them know. Ask them to let you know in advance if they need to change any of your plans too.

Remember that individual support tailored to the strengths, interests and wishes of the client becomes a therapeutic act.

## Ongoing Support Sessions

iCan is not a prescriptive programme – the direction support will take will be governed by the needs and wishes of the young person. However, they should be grounded in the resilience conversation – using the young person’s strengths to raise their resilience in areas that are more vulnerable.

The next section will divide into the resilience areas so that you and your client can pick and choose the most appropriate. Some are worksheets, others are ideas and activities.

# Feeling Secure

Feeling Secure is provided through a relationship with one or more sensitive and responsive attachment figures who meets the young person's needs and are a safe haven when they’re distressed or worried.

Simply put, feeling secure is when a child feels a sense of belonging and security. This model can be used to think about the strengths and difficulties of caregivers and their children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Caregiving dimension | Developmental benefit |
| Availability | Helping the child to trust   * Reliable routines and boundaries * Be available to give support and comfort * Spend time together * Look for opportunities to have family activity together |
| Sensitivity | Helping the child to manage feelings and behaviour   * Listening to problems and experiences * Acknowledging difference and other experiences * Responding to physical and emotional needs |
| Acceptance | Building the child's self esteem   * Unconditional positive regard |
| Co-operation | Helping the child to feel effective - and be co-operative   * Participating in the decisions that are made |
| Family membership | Helping the child to belong   * Responsibility and role within the family system; feeling part of a whole. |

The following section will look at models that can help you promote feeling secure as well as activities and ideas to use in one-to-one, family and groupwork.

### Mentalisation

Mentalisation is the process of understanding the thoughts and mentality behind a person’s behaviour – their needs, feelings, beliefs, and reasons. It’s to see ourselves from the outside and others from the inside.

When we aren’t able to see a situation from someone else’s point of view we misunderstand their reactions, and this can lead to conflict and painful emotions.

**Modelling Mentalisation:**

* Be empathic about how they are thinking and feeling
* Accept and explore different perspectives
* Identify difference – ‘I can see why you think that, but it could also be that they had a lot to deal with rather than ignoring you because they hate you’
* Using questions like
* Why do you think that they said that?
* How might they feel about it?

Example:

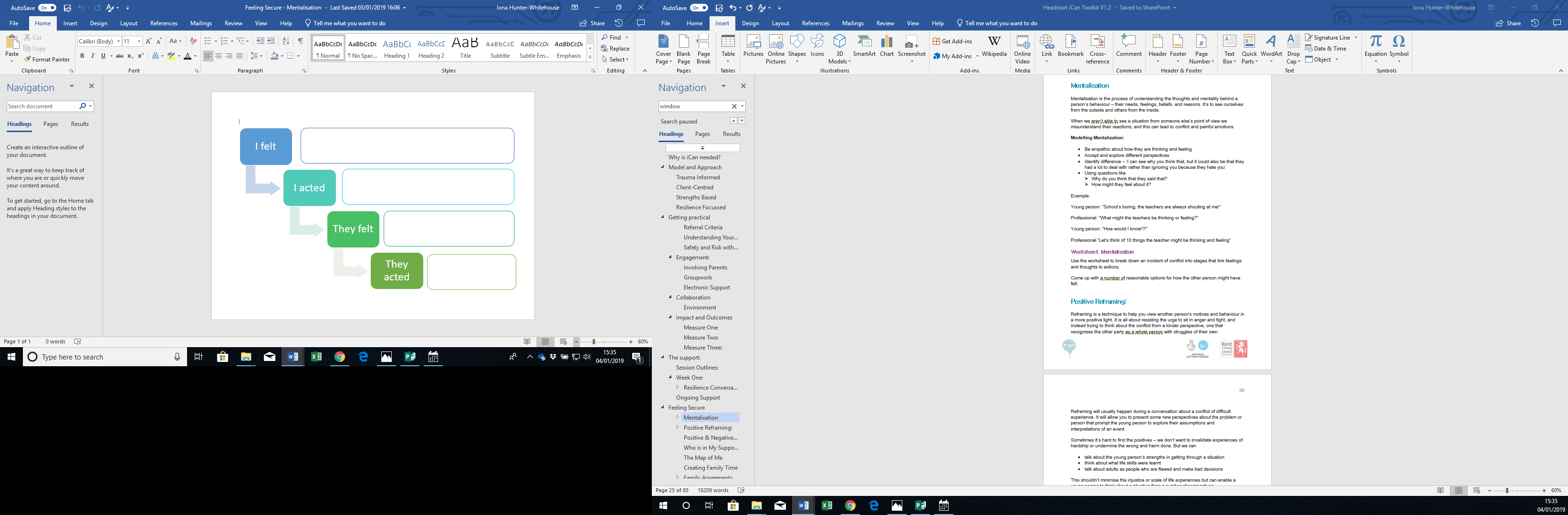
Young person: “School’s boring, the teachers are always shouting at me!”

Professional: “What might the teachers be thinking or feeling?”

Young person: “How would I know!?!”

Professional “Let’s think of 10 things the teacher might be thinking and feeling”

##### Worksheet: Mentalisation

Use the worksheet to break down an incident of conflict into stages that link feelings and thoughts to actions.

Come up with a number of reasonable options for how the other person might have felt.

### Positive Reframing

Reframing is a technique to help you view another person's motives and behaviour in a more positive light. It is all about resisting the urge to sit in anger and fight, and instead trying to think about the conflict from a kinder perspective, one that recognises the other party as a whole person with struggles of their own.

Reframing will usually happen during a conversation about a conflict or difficult experience. It will allow you to present some new perspectives about the problem or person that prompt the young person to explore their assumptions and interpretations of an event.

Sometimes it’s hard to find the positives – we don’t want to invalidate experiences of hardship or undermine the wrong and harm done. But we can;

* talk about the young person’s strengths in getting through a situation
* think about what life skills were learnt
* talk about adults as people who are flawed and make bad decisions

This shouldn’t minimise the injustice or scale of life experiences but can enable a young person to think about a situation from a number of perspectives.

You should always empathise and validate feelings and experiences of a situation before reframing.

##### Worksheet: The Silver Linings

You can use the silver linings to analyse a situation to try and unpick some of the positives.

Draw or write the situation in the middle and think about the

* **R**esources
* **O**pportunities
* **P**ossibilities
* **S**trengths
* **E**xceptions

that have been uncovered as a result.

### Positive & Negative Strokes

A ‘stroke’ is a unit of recognition (social interaction) that we all crave from other people. A stroke can be verbal or physical. In its simplest form, as a greeting “good morning” or a nod of the head. All strokes acknowledge that the other person exists.

There are different types of stroke: positive or negative, conditional or unconditional. The only thing worse than an unconditional negative stroke is no stroke at all - we all need acknowledgement.

Positive strokes, by definition, are strokes that leave the recipient feeling good and provide a positive experience while those of a negative nature are exchanges that one may describe as painful in which the recipient is left feeling perhaps hurt or ‘not ok’.

A conditional stroke is received for something you did rather than for who you are. If someone tells you that you’re a nice person, an unconditional stroke has been given for who you are instead of in exchange for what you did.

For a young person to feel secure means that caregivers give lots of unconditional positive strokes, lots of conditional positive strokes and should only give conditional negative strokes to set boundaries and ensure safety.

##### Positive Strokes Activity Ideas

**One-to-One:**

* You can explore the strokes that you give out to family and friends – are they positive or negative? Are they verbal or non-verbal?
* Make a stroke bank and write strokes you have received and want to keep in your bank on a piece of paper and place them inside.
* You can use the tables below to explore how often we give strokes.
* Explore a recent situation, thinking about the strokes we give.

**Family:**

* Write down positive strokes to give each other
* Talk about your favourite things about each other
* Family activity – write down positive things about each other – provide them with a laminated sheet of paper and dry wipe pen – strokes can be added through the week.

**Group:**

* Make your own “warm fuzzy” and “cold prickly” strokes. Facilitator to provide resources for the group to make their own “warm fuzzies” and “cold pricklies”
* Make a stroke bank and write strokes you have received and want to keep in your bank on a piece of paper and place them inside.
* Once the group has got to know each other you can have an envelope for each member. Every member of the group can write something positive about that person to put in their envelope.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **How often do you:** | **Give positive strokes to others?** | **Refuse to give the positive strokes others expect from you?** | **Accept positive strokes?** | **Ask others for positive strokes?** |
| **All the time** |  |  |  |  |
| **Quite a lot** |  |  |  |  |
| **Sometimes** |  |  |  |  |
| **Rarely** |  |  |  |  |
| **Almost Never** |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **How often do you:** | **Give negative strokes to others?** | **Refuse to give negative strokes?** | **Accept negative strokes?** | **Ask others (even indirectly) for negative strokes?** |
| **All the time** |  |  |  |  |
| **Quite a lot** |  |  |  |  |
| **Sometimes** |  |  |  |  |
| **Rarely** |  |  |  |  |
| **Almost Never** |  |  |  |  |

### Who is in My Support Network?

Family is what we make it, it’s not just people we’re related to but can be people we choose too. We get social support, as well as physical and emotional comfort from family, friends and others. Who is in your network?

1. Write your name in the centre
2. In the first ring from the centre, write the names of those individuals you confide in most and depend on first for emotional support. These individuals are the significant others you love and care about.
3. In the second ring, list those individuals you are not as emotionally close to as first-circle members, but who are still supportive
4. In the third and outermost ring, list those individuals or agencies you have little personal involvement with, but could provide you with needed assistance.

### The Map of Me

Ask the client or group to draw an Island – it’s their island and they can make it anything they want. Ask them to add all of their qualities, their talents, interests, hobbies and resources to the map. These are all the things that make you, you.

**Qualities:**

* Kindness
* Loyalty
* Determined
* Hard working

**Talents, Hobbies & Resources:**

* Cooking
* Football
* Clever
* My family

In a family session you can explore each other’s islands – what are the things that you really appreciate about the other person? These can be put in the water around the island.

### Creating Family Time

Is it possible to encourage a family to step outside of their routine to do something they all enjoy together? You can explore what they like to do. What are their favourite things?

They don’t have to cost money

* A film night
* Going on a walk
* Cooking together
* Playing a board game

Remember the feeling secure principles set out in the table at the beginning of this section – can the decision be made together? Can the young person take responsibility for a small aspect of the plan? This promotes family membership, co-operation and availability.

Can there be time set aside each week to spend as a family?

### Family Agreements

A family agreement is a great way to start a conversation with the whole family about how we want to behave and act.

Remember:

* Promote cooperation – decide together what is and isn’t acceptable, make sure it’s not just about negative behaviour. Include positive activities like spending time together and give rewards.
* Make sure the agreement works for the whole family and everyone is happy with it.
* Review the agreement in the future to make sure it reflects the current needs and ages the family.
* Include steps for each family member to make and replace an inappropriate behaviour with a more appropriate one
* The contract should only focus on a couple of things and they should also be specific
* There should be agreed rewards and consequences

Example:

A: “When I feel frustrated I will…. Tell someone, ask for some time to think, I will write it down, so we can talk about it…”

B: Mum will agree to give you time to calm down or explain why she can’t. There will be set time to talk about the frustrations each day.

##### Worksheet: The Family Agreement template

Goals: these are to remind the family what their vision is for their family, why they are going to commit to following the agreement. Their vision could be that they all feel happy and safe in the house, or that they have a peaceful Sunday roast. The vision can be big or small.

There is space the young person’s commitments and for the parent corresponding commitment as well as the rewards and consequences for breaking the contact.

# Education

Education is a crucial area for developing personal resilience. The ability to find solace in the school setting provides access to a protective environment and the support of other adults. A vulnerable young person can break from material and situational adversity during school hours. Research has found that good relationships with teachers and positive school experiences are especially helpful for young people facing risks at home or in the community.

Not only does fostering an interest in education act as a diversion from difficult experiences at home it acts as a compensating locus for achievement and self-esteem. If a young person is supported to succeed academically, whatever that means for them, then the achievements will foster confidence, aspiration and the stepping stones to becoming a fulfilled and contributing member of their community.

### Find joy in learning

Is there something the young person has always wanted to learn how to do? Is this something that you can help to facilitate during or through the sessions? Is it something longer term? Could you identify the steps between where the client is now and achieving this?

### Life Skills

Learning life skills can be an important part of working with a group or one-to-one. Learning a new skill is a practical achievement, as well as promoting teamwork and problem solving. Life skills sessions can be held by the group facilitator or by collaborating and involving other players. There might be other places that the young person could join or volunteer at to acquire these skills.

Some examples

* Changing a tire
* Cooking a meal
* Baking a cake
* Lighting and cooking on a barbeque
* First Aid
* Swimming
* Gardening
* Map Reading
* Coding
* Interview Practice
* Musical instrument

In family sessions think about a skill that a parent/carer can pass on.

### Advocating

Where a young person is struggling in school can you use some of the problem-solving techniques below to think about what could make it easier? Let’s be solutions focused – using the mentalisation skills (p.25) to think about what is practical from teachers’ and parents’ points of view.

How can you help the young person to communicate these ideas/needs?

### Problem Solving & Resilience

Problem solving is an essential life skill that makes children more resilient when things go wrong. Being able to stop and think before reacting, to generate alternative solutions, weigh the consequences, and be open to seeking support when needed, builds resilience to adversity.

We must be client centred and strengths based by encouraging young people to generate their own solutions rather than imposing our own “best solution”, however obvious it may appear. This allows children to practice thinking creatively about solutions to their problems rather than relying on adults to be there to sort everything out.

All problem-solving processes start with identifying the problem and then must assess potential courses of action and choose the best way to tackle the problem.

### The Problem-Solving Cycle

##### Worksheet: The Problem-Solving Cycle

You can use this cycle to help young people to break down a situation and find a solution.

Provide it before attempting the activities below – revisit the stages in the debrief.

### Problem Solving Activities

After looking at the problem-solving cycle ask your client(s) to do a problem-solving activity – this can be done one-to-one, with family or in groups.

Here are some ideas:

**Stranded**

Your group has been stranded in a school during a national crisis (zombie apocalypse, nuclear winter etc) everyone else has gone home and they don’t have phones or a means of communicating with the outside world.

The doors are locked and knocking down the doors or breaking the windows is not an option. Give your group 30 minutes to decide on 10 items in the school they need for survival and rank them in order of importance. The goal of the game is to have everyone agree on the 10 items and their ranking in 30 minutes.

**Tallest Tower**

Give your groups some building materials – paper, spaghetti, masking tape, balloons etc. Give them 15 minutes to create a freestanding tower.

**Treasure Hunt**

Set out a list of items that you want your teams to find – within a building or outdoors. Ask them to collate their finds by taking a photo of each item or bringing it to you.

**Waterworks**

Provide two buckets, one full of water. Ask them to move as much water as possible without touching the buckets.

When the activity has finished discuss how they went about solving the problem? What did they learn (about themselves, process, etc)? Would they do anything differently next time? Did they use the problem-solving cycle?

### Quick problem-solving techniques to use with families, groups or one-to-one:

* Come up with the silliest or most unrealistic solutions to the problem at hand first. This stops the negative life script ‘yes, but’ and gets the conversation going. Besides sometimes there is value in the simple, silly solutions.
* Wait until you’ve finished brainstorming before judging any of the ideas – judging them will slow down the process and make people self-conscious of speaking up
* Use the ‘yes, and’ technique to build on ideas and expand
* What would X do – pretend that you are someone famous, or someone that you know. How would they approach the problem? This lets people consider solutions that they might not think are available to them and is a helpful mentalisation task.
* Use experiences and exceptions – have you solved a problem like this before? What happened then?

### Bucket Lists

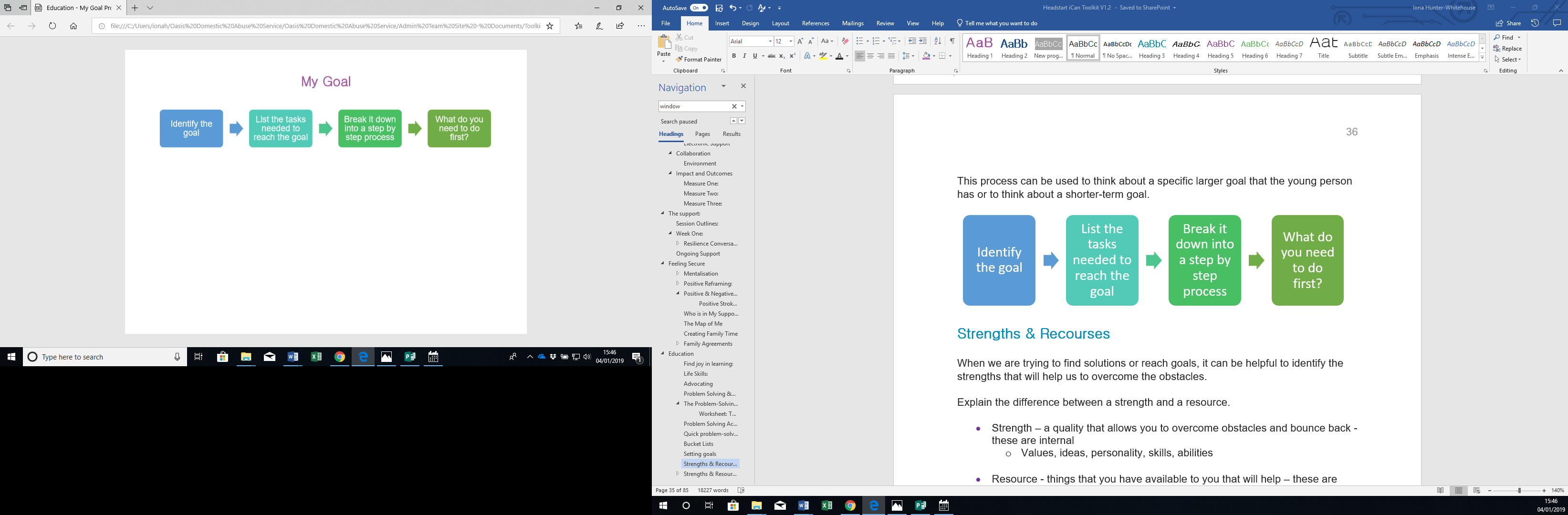
Making a bucket list can be a fun way to start a group or one-to-one session – what things do they want to do? It doesn’t have to be practical, they don’t have to be things that they think are likely – just a list, drawing a poster or a discussion about the possibilities.

By being open and creative about what our futures could look like we visualise new possibilities. We can also think about what’s important to us and think about our ultimate aims in life. So, it’s fun – but useful too.

### Setting goals

Learning about the process of setting a goal and then breaking down the steps to get there is an important life skill. You can do this in a group, one-to-one or family session – the process below is available in the Resources & Handouts folder.

This process can be used to think about a specific larger goal that the young person has or to think about a shorter-term goal.



##### Worksheet: My Goal Process

You can use this worksheet to break down a goal into smaller steps.

### Strengths & Resources

When we are trying to find solutions or reach goals, it can be helpful to identify the strengths that will help us to overcome the obstacles.

Explain the difference between a strength and a resource.

* Strength – a quality that allows you to overcome obstacles and bounce back - these are internal
  + Values, ideas, personality, skills, abilities
* Resource - things that you have available to you that will help – these are external
  + Friends, home, community, school

It’s hard for everyone to talk about their strengths. We can find it hard to see our own strengths or embarrassing to talk about them. It’s often easier to name as many strengths and resources as possible and then to think about the ones that are particular to you.

### Strengths & Resources Activity Ideas

**One-to-One:**

* Write a list of strengths and resources
* Think about what a friend of family member would say your strengths are
* Draw a map of their best qualities
* Explore a moment when they were their best selves, when they were proud of what happened. Use open ended questions to explore the significance of this moment.
  + What happened? What was important about it? What happened next? How did they feel? When was this? Who else was there? Where were they?

Remember that ‘why’ questions come across as judgmental so it’s best to avoid these.

**Group:**

* Think about other people’s strengths. Use a well-known TV show or film and ask about the skills and strengths that help those characters. Note the differences and that having a team with different strengths seems to be important.
* An Envelope of Compliments

Remind your group of the basics of giving a good compliment – that they should:

* Be positive
* Be truthful, make sure you believe what you say
* Think about what you like or admire about the person
* Consider the persons strengths and talents

The facilitator should be ready to write their compliments for each member of the group too.

Each person should write a compliment on a post-it note or slip of paper for each of their peers on the programme and one for the facilitator. It can be different inspiration/learning points they took from each other – they can be anonymous if they want. Put these into their named envelope.

Participants can now take the envelope home to read in their own time or read in the group

This exercise can also be used to illustrate Positive Strokes.

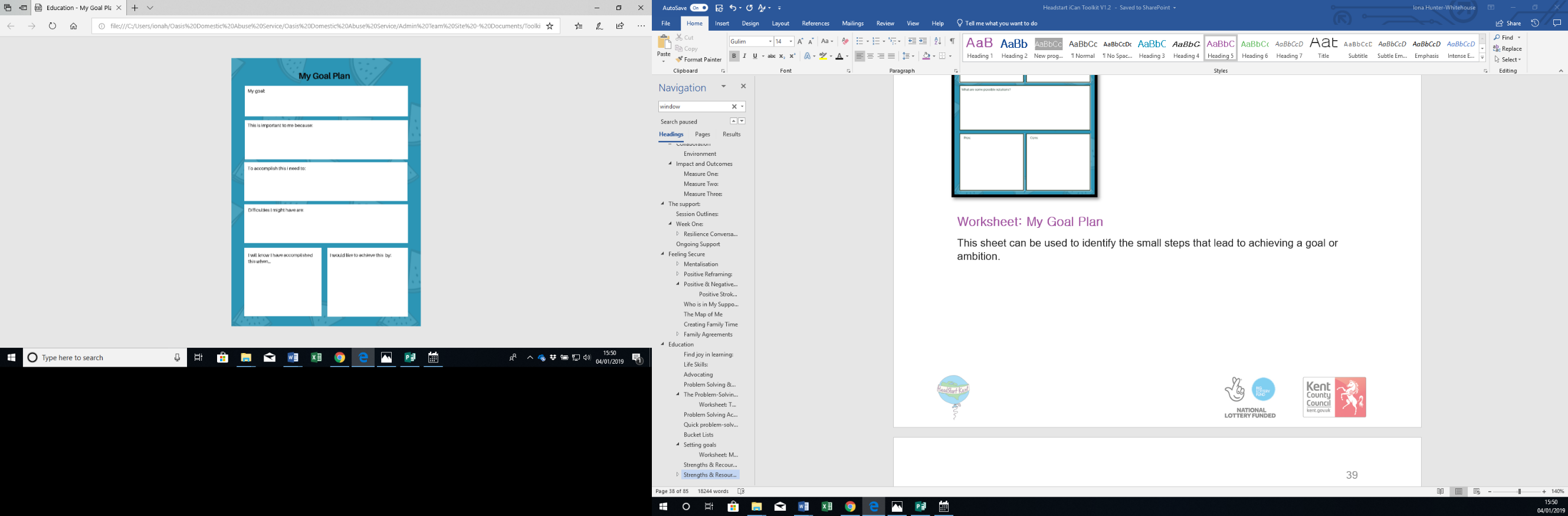
**Family:**

* Create an envelope for each member of the family fill it with
  + A compliment
  + A strength
  + A positive memory
* What is the best day you’ve spent with your family this year? What did you do? What was it that made it special?
* Use the ‘Our Family Strengths’ Worksheet to help families identify their strengths and what is special about them
* Use the ‘Obstacles’ Worksheet to help a family see the things that they have overcome together

##### 

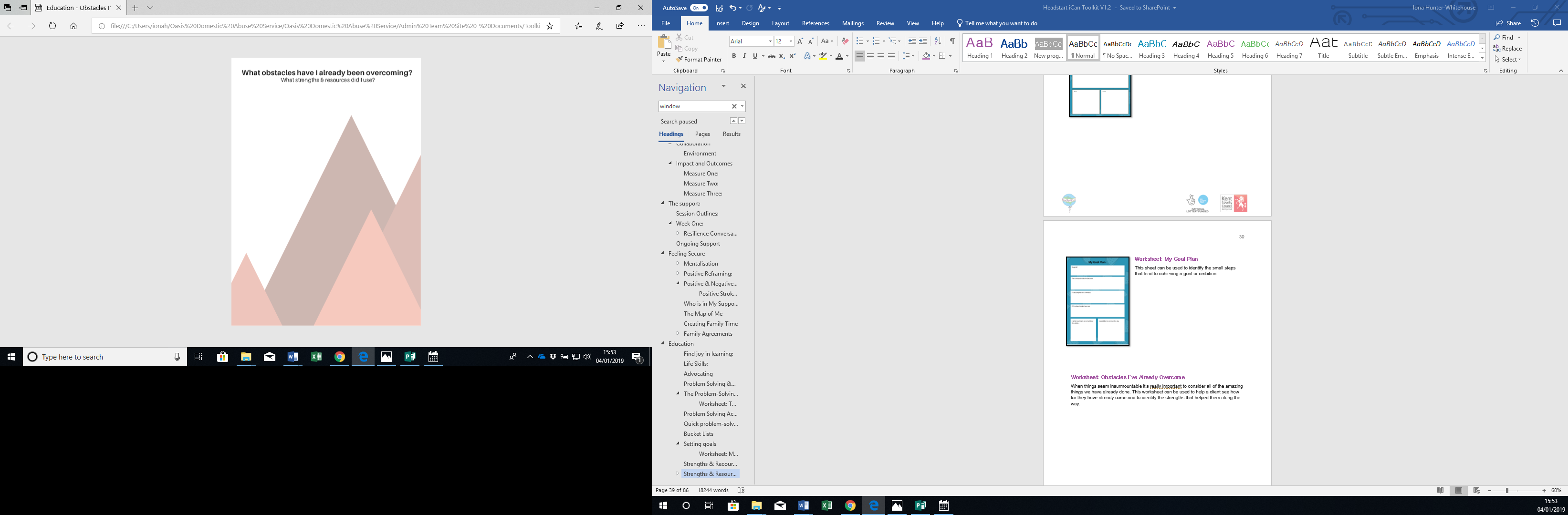
##### Worksheet: Finding a Solution

Use this worksheet to focus on finding a solution – you can use this after introducing the problem-solving cycle.



##### Worksheet: My Goal Plan

This sheet can be used to identify the small steps that lead to achieving a goal or ambition.



##### Worksheet: Obstacles I’ve Already Overcome

When things seem insurmountable it’s really important to consider all of the amazing things we have already done. This worksheet can be used to help a client see how far they have already come and to identify the strengths that helped them along the way.

##### Worksheet: Our Family Strengths

Use the ‘Our Family Strengths’ Worksheet to help families identify their strengths, what is special about them. Remember that families who have had professional intervention might find it difficult to talk about or identify their strengths – it’s important to reflect these back at the family where the strength is evident.

# Friendships

Research has shown that friendships are incredibly protective, and that loneliness has a negative impact on our health and wellbeing. Our health, especially mental health, is closely linked to community and connection. Studies have shown that a single close relationship can be extraordinarily protective in even the most vulnerable of children.

Young men who have lived with familial domestic abuse, in chaotic households or who are withdrawing from their communities may have difficulty in forming positive-relationships, including friendships. Young men are also growing up with societal expectations that can make it hard to maintain supportive friendships.

### Why are friends important?

Ask for ideas –

* Someone to confide in
* To rely on
* Talk through problems
* They’re on your side
* Spend time with them
* Pursue interests

Friends are good for your wellbeing – seeing friends regularly is as effective as anti-depressants, a study showed that over a 10-year period a strong friendship also significantly reduces your chances of getting ill or dying.

When discussing friendships think about:

* What are the qualities of a good friend?
* What are things you do, that make you a good friend?
* Can good friends argue?
* How do you know if someone is a real friend?
* What would an unhealthy friendship look like?
* When we feel down we can withdraw from friendships? How can we reconnect if this happens?

### Men & Friendships

There is a recognisable shift in the language boys use around their friendships as they move from their tweens to teenagers. They become uncomfortable with vulnerability and emotion where status and the stereotype of the lone wolf prevail.

Ask your group or client about male stereotypes: – what are they and how do these affect friendships?

* Lone wolf
* Strong
* Not emotional
* Emotions as feminine
* Shoulder-to-shoulder not face-to-face
* Competition with other men

There is a crisis in male friendship – men don’t have as many friendships and they aren’t as deep as their female counterparts. However, research is clear that men crave friendship just as much as women do.

To be close friends people need to share their feelings, vulnerabilities and insecurities as well as sharing successes and spending time together. This is an emotional risk that can be scary. It risks a loss of status.

This means you might need to model how to be a good friend to other people.

### Peer Pressure

The teenage brain prioritises the danger of being excluded by the peer group over known risky behaviour like smoking or drinking. Peer pressure can have both positive and negative forms and consequences – following the crowd in one direction or another.

**Topics for discussion:**

* Describe the term peer pressure in your own words.
* Give an example of positive peer pressure.
* Which kinds of pressure seem to be the hardest for you to resist?
* Is it harder to resist being pressured by friends or by people that you have never met before?
* Have you ever resisted peer pressure? How? What did you say/do?

**Ways to have group discussions:**

1. Think, Pair, Share – look at the questions in pairs, then share with the group at the end
2. Fishbowl – a couple of people talk about each question, then move to the next pair for the next question
3. Silent discussion – write down answers and put them in a hat

### Grooming Vs Friendship

Young people can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional. Grooming is when someone falsely gains your trust to persuade or trick you into doing something you wouldn’t otherwise do. It often starts out looking the same as a friendship. So how can we tell the difference?

How to recognise Grooming:

Ask yourself

* Are they singling me out?
* Do they want things to be secret or private?
* Do they buy me things that are valuable or ‘grown up’ like drugs or alcohol?
* Do I feel pressured?
* What is the age gap? Does that feel ok?
* Is there a power imbalance?

### Understanding Our Boundaries

Boundaries are the rules that we create that allow us to keep our balance and protect ourselves, it’s the ability to say yes and no. They are the limits, rights and expectations that allow us to stand up for ourselves.

There are times when it’s not safe to put our boundaries in place – this is where our reptilian brain might kick in telling us to fight, flight or freeze. We can also go along with a situation until we feel there is a safe way to get ourselves out.

* *In what situations would it not be safe to put our boundaries in place?*

Healthy boundaries help us to express the way we expect to be treated by other people. These boundaries protect us from being overwhelmed by other people’s feelings and provide us with a sense of identity and self-worth.

When our boundaries are unhealthy they can be too rigid, keeping everyone else out, or not firm enough, and we become unable to say no. We can have different types of boundaries with different people.

##### What Are My Boundaries?

Before you can implement boundaries, it can be useful to think about what your rights are. In pairs, spend 5 minutes listing things that you have the right to do and expect. Remember that these are also the things that other people have the right to expect from you.

Here are some examples

* The right to express opinions
* The right to respect
* The right to be listened to
* The right to independence

You could make a collage, poster or list out of these or keep it to a verbal list only.

##### Ways To Say No

* **The Broken Record** – keeprepeating your response in a calm way, you don’t need to provide explanations, this is clear, and you won’t get side-tracked or caught arguing a number of points.
* **Explanations vs. Excuses** – Explaining why you are saying no is clear and direct, scrabbling around for an excuse when you don’t want to do something is easier to pick apart. Excuses shift the blame or responsibility onto something, or someone, else rather than talking honestly about our choice.

Q: Can I borrow your Xbox?

Excuse: I would but my mum wouldn’t like it

Reply: “Then don’t tell her”

Or

Explanation: “I’m sorry, I can’t lend you the Xbox, it is too important to me.”

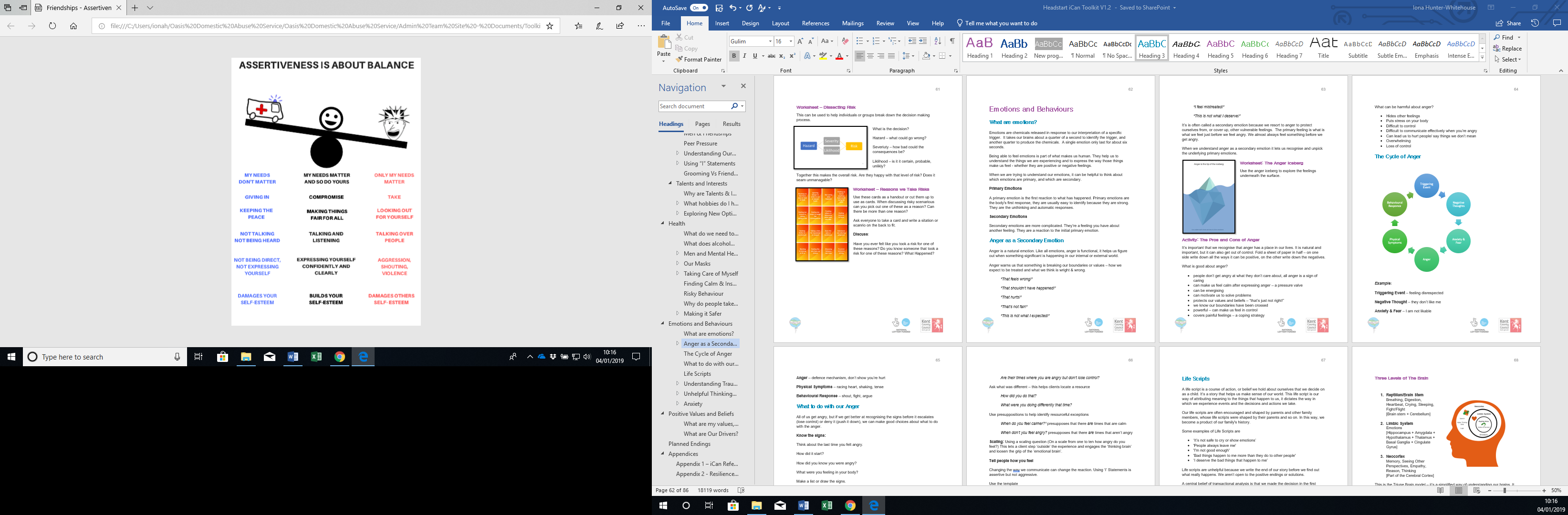
* **Find an alternative** – There might be a way to help someone achieve their goal without compromising your boundaries. You can say “No, but you could try…” or “No, but I would be willing to…”

i.e. “I’m sorry, I can’t lend you the Xbox, but you can come round tomorrow to play on it.”

* **Give yourself time** – If you need time to think about it, that’s okay. You can say “Give me a minute to think about…” or “I’ll talk to X and get back to you”
* **You don’t need to justify it** – you can say no all on its own, without having to explain yourself.

##### Worksheet: Types of Boundaries

You can use this worksheet to think about the way we behave in different relationships – perhaps we have rigid boundaries with a family member, or porous boundaries with a friend.



##### Worksheet: Assertiveness is about Balance

This worksheet looks at balancing your communication style – introducing the idea of passive, assertive and aggressive communication.

##### Worksheet: Ways to Say No

Worksheet available to help clients review different ways to say no.

Use these to think about a situation in which you could use each. In groups ask pairs to create a role play using one of the techniques.

### Using “I” Statements

Appropriate assertiveness is being able to state your case without arousing the defences of the other person. “I” statements let speakers be assertive without making accusations. An **“I” statement** focuses on your feelings or beliefs rather than the thoughts and characteristics of the person you are speaking to.

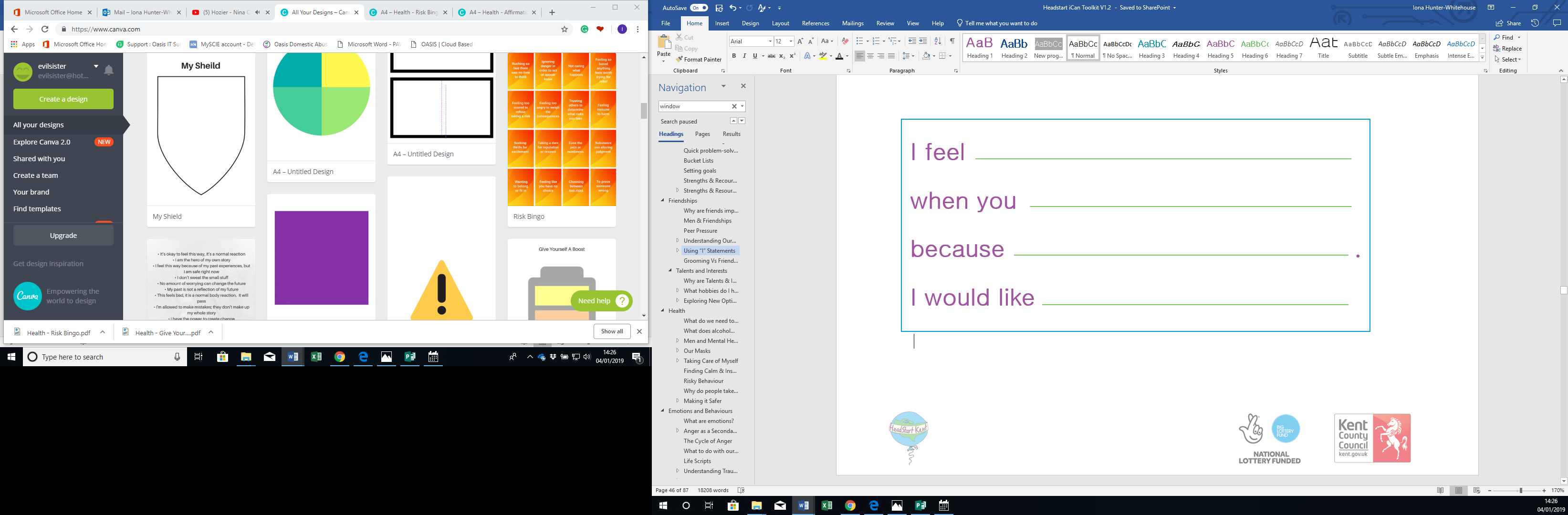
‘’I’’ statements usually have three parts

1. I feel (the emotion)
2. When (the situation)
3. Because (thoughts about the event)

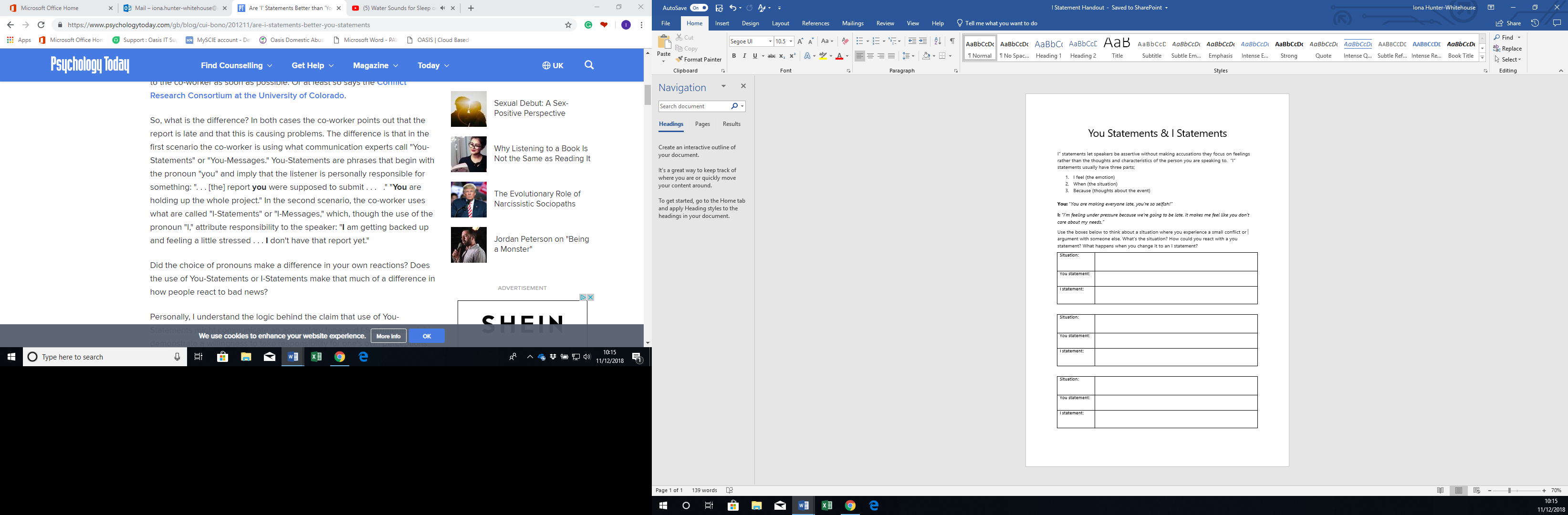
For examples a parent might say “Why are you never home on time! You don’t care about how worried I am.” and the young person might get defensive. Using an I statement changes this to “I get really worried when you come home late without calling, it feels like you don’t care that it scares me.”

Think about a time when you had a strong reaction to what someone else did. What were you feeling? Can you give an example of the you statement and an example of the I statement?

What do you think the different reactions would be to the statements?



These templates can be used within sessions or taken home. Can you ask a family to practice using these I statements? It can be hard to change the way we speak – sometimes it can be easier to write it down first.



##### Worksheet: You Statements & I Statements

Goal: To think about the real-life situations in which we can start to use I statements. This can be used in one-to-one or group work.

Use the template to outline a small conflict or argument. What’s the situation? How could you react with a you statement? What happens when you change it to an I statement?

# Talents and Interests

Engaging with talents and interests fosters the potential for the young person to build greater self‐esteem, strengthen mental health and open new social relationships. Hobbies allow us to spend time in an enjoyable and relaxing way whilst learning new things. Our self-efficacy increases and as a result so does our self-esteem.

‘Talents & Interests’ links to many other resilience areas – Friendship, Health, Feeling Secure, Education, Emotions & Behaviours – depending on the interest they would like to pursue.

When exploring this resilience area, it’s important to be client led – hobbies, talents and interests are personal. What one person will enjoy doing with their time might not be interesting to someone else. Encouraging people to step outside of their comfort zone is important but it must be for an activity that appeals to them.

To encourage people to step out of their comfort zone and try something new being strengths based (using the clients pre-existing strengths) or taking advantage of a stronger resilience area, is central to success. For instance, if one of a client’s strengths is creativity but they struggle to make friends you could suggest they attend arts workshops as part of the iCan groups. If another client has a strong parental relationship in the Feeling Secure area they could do an active activity together (family walk, football, biking).

### Why are Talents & Interests important?

Talents and interests are the things you like doing in your free time - things you are good at or enjoy. Having a talent, or things you are interested in, can make you feel good.

They:

* give you a sense of identity and belonging
* can improve your mood
* can lead to other opportunities
* give you enjoyment and a reason to feel good about yourself

### What hobbies do I have now?

Consider how you spend your time at the moment – what do you do when you’re not in school? What are you interested in? What are you good at?

Explain that the way we spend time can be put into four categories:

**Active** – making, doing, learning

Benefits: being healthy, release stress, self-expression, exercise releases good endorphins

**Passive** – listening, watching, online

Benefits: Entertaining, you can learn about different topics, puts you in other people’s shoes (empathy)

**Social** – talking, teamwork, together

Benefits: Make friends, problem solving, good for mental health, self-esteem

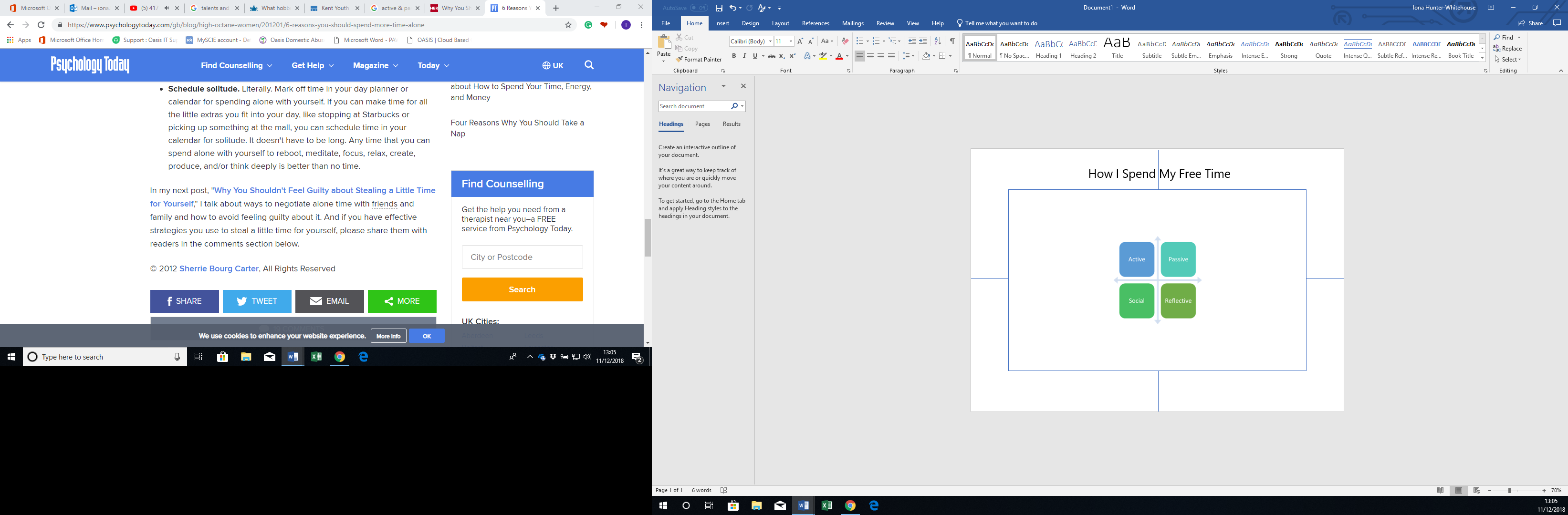
**Reflective** – relaxing, quiet, alone

Benefits: Time to think, process experiences, identify emotions, unwind

It’s important that the way we spend our time is balanced, all four of these areas are important for different reasons.

By thinking about the benefits of being active, passive, social and reflective we are asking young people to make the link between the way they spend their time and the way they feel – that they have the power to change things about their lives.

##### Worksheet: How I Spend my Time

What to do:

Ask the group/person to list things they do with their free time

Introduce the four categories

Use the ‘How I spend my time’ handout. Ask - What are the benefits of each category? Put these around the outside edge.

Ask them to use their list of things they do in their spare time and put the hobbies around the section they think it best fits in. Some hobbies might be in two categories – e.g. running is active and reflective. Watching movies with friends can be passive and social.

Consider – is there a section that doesn’t have much in it? Is there a talent or hobby that you would like to do that you don’t at the moment?

### Exploring New Options

##### Clubs and Activities

Researching what clubs and activities are available locally and through the school can help young people identify an activity they might be interested in doing. By engaging in other groups there can be a long-term benefit to the client, even after iCan mentoring has stopped.

##### Talents & Interests Grant

The HeadStart ‘Talents & Interests Grant Scheme’ is designed to support young people, any trusted adult from the school or communities can apply for a grant on the young person’s behalf to access hobbies such as sports, the arts, or music. You can bid for £50 to £500 per grant to support your client to pursue their talents & interests.

##### Be Collaborative

By being creative and collaborative we can open up new experiences for young people – helping young people to complete volunteering applications or inviting input from other organisation like youth groups or sports teams can help them take the first steps to becoming more involved in their community.

Exploring talents & interests within groups, family and one-to-one sessions can help give young people the confidence to start something new. Taking a group or one-to-one session to a community garden might enable them to go back or arrange a regular time to volunteer where this would have seemed to be intimidating before.

##### New Ideas

Archery

Army Cadets

Art

Astronomy

Baking

Biking

Boxing

Camping

Coding

Cooking

Drama

Duke of Edinburgh

Fishing

Football

Foraging

Fundraising

Gardening

Golf

Hiking

Lifeguards

Martial Arts

Movies

Museums

Music

Photography

Pottery

Reading

RNLI

Rock Climbing

Rugby

Running

Sea Cadets

Skateboarding

Skydiving

St John's Ambulance

Swimming

The Gym

Travelling

Trials Riding

Volunteering

Windsurfing

Woodworking

Writing

Yoga

Youth Clubs

# Health

When thinking about our health we may look at the impact our lifestyle, our surroundings, and our genetic makeup has on it. We have the ability to control some of these aspects, but others are out of our control and specific medical advice or treatment is needed. To ensure you’re in good health, it’s also important to know where to go for information and support when you need it.

### What do we need to be healthy?

Ask your group for their ideas on how to stay healthy. What about the things we should avoid? Make a big spider diagram. How many of these do they think they do regularly?

Consider physical health:

* Healthy eating
* Sleep
* Drinking water
* Exercise
* Stop smoking
* Drugs & alcohol
* Stop eating sugar

What about mental health?

These are the 5 steps to mental wellbeing from the NHS Moodzone. What do you think? Can you come up with examples for each?

* **Connect** - with the people around you
* **Be Active** – exercise releases endorphins
* **Keep Learning** – a sense of achievement and confidence
* **Give to others** – kindness improves your self-esteem and social networks
* **Be Mindful** – be aware of the moment, your body and your breath

If they were to do one additional thing to increase their health what would it be? What would be something they could give up or limit to increase their health?

### What does alcohol do to you?

* Taking risks
* Alcohol poisoning
* Sugar and calories
* Links to depression
* Liver disease & damage
* Drinking affects your sleep patterns
* Links to mouth, throat, bowel, liver and breast cancer

You can find out more about the effects of drinking at [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

Find out more about drugs at <https://www.talktofrank.com/>

Ways to deal with peer pressure around drugs - <https://www.talktofrank.com/get-help/dealing-with-peer-pressure>

### Men and Mental Health

Split a page down the middle. On the first side write the answers to your first set of questions.

1. What does it mean to be a “good man”? What qualities do the men you respect and admire have?   
   What values and morals do they live by? What kinds of things do they say and do?

On the other side of the page write the answers to your second set of questions

1. What does it mean to be a “real man”? What do people mean when they say, “be a man” or “man up”? What qualities are “real men” assumed to have? How are they expected to speak and act? How are they not supposed to behave?

Is there a difference? Why? The ideas we have about masculinity can be confusing – we hear a lot about toxic masculinity, but we can also see positive qualities that are associated with men. Stereotypes can be really damaging – and stereotypes about gender are complicated.

Research shows that there is little difference between male and female brains at birth. But because we are socialized in different ways we don’t know how much of the behaviour considered ‘male’ or ‘female’ is about biology and how much is about environment.

So, what are the stereotypes about men that make it more difficult to deal with our mental health? Circle those already on your board

* Boys don’t cry
* Boys should be gentlemen
* Boys aren’t emotional
* More violent
* Men are aggressive
* Man up!
* Stoic
* Men don’t have as many feelings as women
* Boys will be boys
* Should be tough
* Should earn more
* Boys aren’t as mature as girls
* Boys are strong and aggressive
* Nice guys will finish last

Where do these stereotypes come from? Are they true? If they are true some of the time, are they true all of the time? Can you think of ways that people we know don’t fit into these stereotypes?

What do you think the effect of trying to live up to these stereotypes will be on mental health?

* Not asking for help
* Pushing emotions down
* Reacting with anger – an acceptable emotion
* Embarrassed to express feelings
* Suppress empathy
* Less physical comfort offered/accepted
* Less open with friends & family

When we restrict the kinds of emotions boys and men are allowed to express we make them cut off a big part of themselves.

Did you know that 67% of 18-24-year olds felt compelled to display “hyper-masculine” behaviour in tough situations and 55 per cent said crying in front of others would make them feel like less of a man?

##### Worksheet: What Makes a Man?

This worksheet asks clients to examine the stereotypes about men, which of these stereotypes they think would make it harder to deal with a mental health issue and make the link between societies expectaions and their behaviour. It also asks them to think about what they think makes a ‘good man’. To be used in one-to-one or group.

### Our Masks

There are two videos that can support this activity – they look at the same project. You can watch them together or send them to your clients beforehand. There is mention of domestic abuse in video two – you should watch it and warn your clients. If think video 2 is not appropriate with your client use the shorter video.

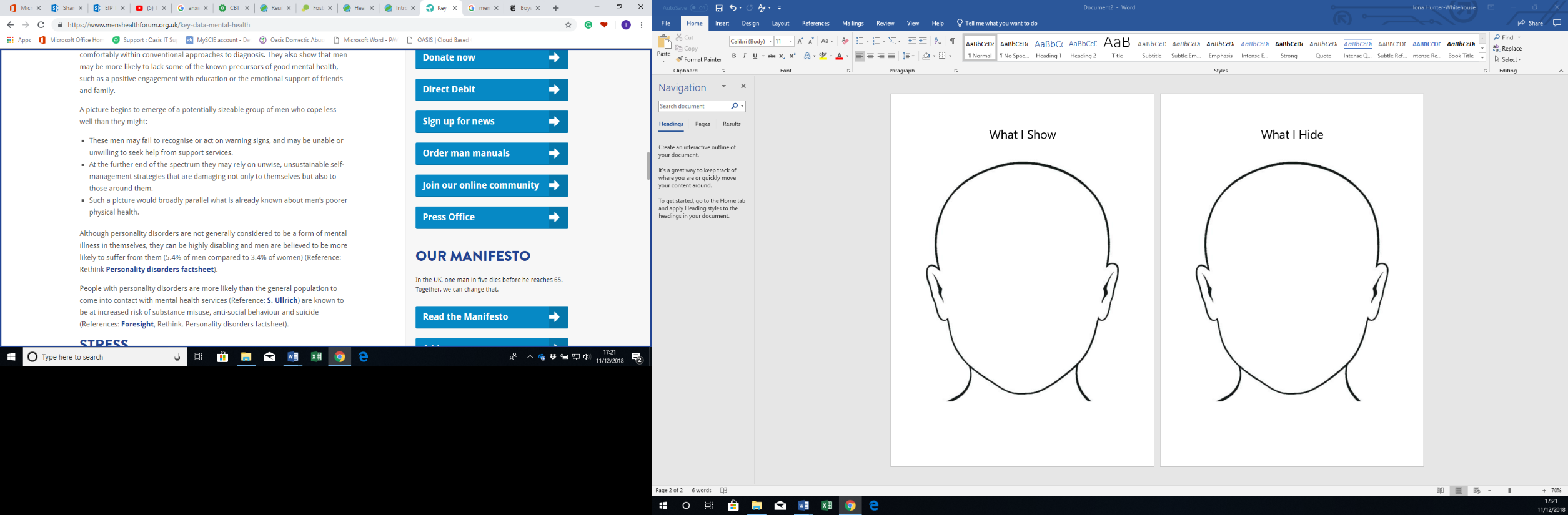
The Mask you live in: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc45-ptHMxo> – 3 minutes

The Masks We All Wear: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M34wU5kXajI> – 10 minutes

*TW – Domestic Abuse*

Explain that we all have a self that we show the world and a self that we keep more private – but when we hide the big stuff all of the time it can get unmanagable. Hiding our true selves is bad for our mental health. Use the worksheet below.

##### Wroksheet – What I Show – What I Hide.

This worksheet allows young people to explore what they show others and what emotions they hide in a creative non-verbal way.

Print double sided.

### Taking Care of Myself

There’s a misconception that self-care isn’t for everyone.  Self-care often comes with connotations of being girly, but self-care is an essential part of maintaining a healthy balance in our lives. In fact, there is a lot of research that says men wait longer to acknowledge that they are sick, take longer to get help, and talk to friends and loved ones less. This all has a negative impact on health.

**What is Self-Care?**

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health.

Examples:

* Get enough sleep
* Relaxation exercises
* Laugh
* Turn off screens
* Good hygiene
* Go outside
* Say no to things that aren’t helpful
* Write down your worries
* Make a list
* Eat something healthy

Ask each person to think about something that they could do to take care of their mental health this week that they wouldn’t normally do. They don’t need to share it, just have it in mind and think about engaging in some self-care before the group meets again.

##### Worksheet: Give Yourself a Boost

Get your client to consider things they can do to give themselves a boost when they feel like there energy or mood is running low.

### Finding Calm & Inspiration

Do you have a motto? Something you say to yourself when things are difficult? These can sometimes be called positive affirmations. They can provide inspiration and comfort and help us to step away from negativity in the way we talk to ourselves or see a situation.

Examples:

* It’s okay to feel this way, it’s a normal reaction
* I am the hero of my own story
* I feel this way because of my past experiences, but I am safe right now
* I don’t sweat the small stuff
* No amount of worrying can change the future
* I have the power to create change
* My past is not a reflection of my future
* This feels bad, it is a normal body reaction.  It will pass
* I’m allowed to make mistakes; they don’t make up my whole story
* I will not compare myself to strangers on the internet
* My needs and wants are important
* I don’t need to rush, I can take things slowly
* I am already good enough
* I choose to see this challenge as an opportunity
* I’m doing my best and that is enough
* I can learn from this and it will be easier next time
* Today is the future I created yesterday
* I can use my coping skills and get through this

##### Worksheet: Affirmations

This worksheet has positive affirmations (mottos, inspiration).

Ask:

Do any of these sound good to you? Discuss what you think are the best ones. Are there any you don’t like?

Do you have others you want to add to the list?

Spend 10 minutes researching positive or inspirational quotes. Write them down and put them all in a hat. Read them out at the end of a session.

### Risky Behaviour

Risky behaviours are the things we do that can expose us to harm. Teenagers often do things that baffle the adults around them

*“Why couldn’t you see that was a bad idea?”*

*“Are you stupid? That was so dangerous!”*

*“You’re not actually invincible you know.”*

The teenage brain isn’t the same as an adult brain, they prioritise different things. The self-monitoring, problem-solving and decision-making part of the brain – the prefrontal cortex – develops last. The teenage brain is built to seek out new experiences, risks and sensations – it’s all part of building and refining brain connections.

Risk-taking isn’t always a bad thing. Come up with reasons together that risk taking can be a good thing.

* Fearless
* Challenges
* Confidence
* Opportunities
* Take leaps of faith
* New experiences
* Meet new people
* Adventure
* Willing to be outside of comfort zone

The teenage brain prioritises the danger of being outcast from a group over the known risks to actions.

Jordan is 13 - he knows that smoking is bad for you. His mum used to smoke but she gave up after his grandad had trouble with his lungs. She made him promise not to smoke but when he’s out riding his bike with older friends he does smoke.

Put yourself in Jordan’s shoes. What are the risks of continuing to smoke? What are the risks of not smoking? How likely is it that these will happen? Are there short term or long-term consequences?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hazard | Likelihood | Consequence | Long or short term? |
| Smoking:   * Being found out * Getting in trouble * Yellow teeth * Premature aging * Finding the money * Getting addicted * Health problems   Not smoking   * Seen as uncool * Friends might not want to hang out |  | Guilt  Grounded  Unhealthy  No money for other things  Loneliness  Friends might not care – respect ability to say no |  |

There are five major categories of bad risk-taking behaviour, can you come up with some situations for each? Identify the hazard, the likelihood, possible consequences and then rate the risk – is it green, amber or red?

1. Behaviour that may lead to violence or injury
2. Unsafe sexual behaviour
3. Alcohol, substance, and tobacco use
4. Unsafe driving or riding
5. Poor self-care

### Why do people take unhealthy risks?

We’ve looked at some of the positive and negative consequences or taking risks. But why do some people take more risks than others?

* Rushing so fast there was no time to think
* Ignoring danger in order to act or appear brave
* Not caring what happens
* Feeling immune to harm
* Feeling too scared to refuse taking a risk
* Feeling too angry to weigh the consequences
* Trusting others to determine what risks you take
* Feeling so bored anything feels worth trying
* Seeking thrills for excitement
* Taking a dare for reputation or respect
* Ease the pain or numbness
* Substance use altering your judgment
* Wanting to belong or fit in
* Feeling like you have no choice
* Having to choose between two risks

### Making it Safer

Making ourselves safe is an important part of self-care. It means valuing ourselves now and valuing our future, having the confidence to be assertive and feeling worthy of safe, healthy, options.

No one’s safety is the same – we all have different things to consider when we make plans to keep ourselves safe.

What can we do to make things safer?

* Emergency code words
* Keeping a phone charged
* Make plans and stick to them – unless they become unsafe
* Let people know where you are
* Childline – talk to people
* Know your safeguarding officer at school – who can you talk to?
* Safety Apps (Hollie Guard)
* Avoid dangerous places
* Make an exit strategy
* Focus on long and short-term rewards
* Make decisions ahead of time
* Choose to make decisions that value your safety

##### ****Create Scenarios:****

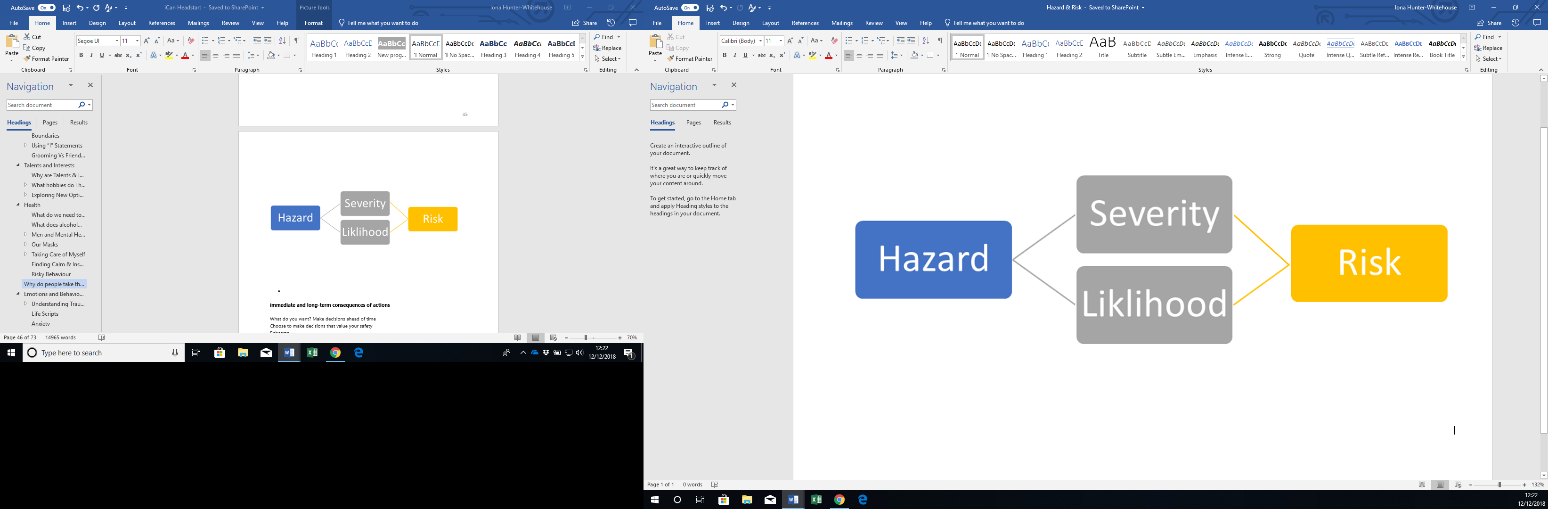
**Ask everyone to come up with a scenario in which someone takes a risk.**

Ask them to

1. Identify the hazard
2. The worst possible consequences
3. The severity of the consequence
4. The likelihood of the consequence

##### Worksheet – Dissecting Risk

This can be used to help individuals or groups break down the decision making process.

What is the decision?

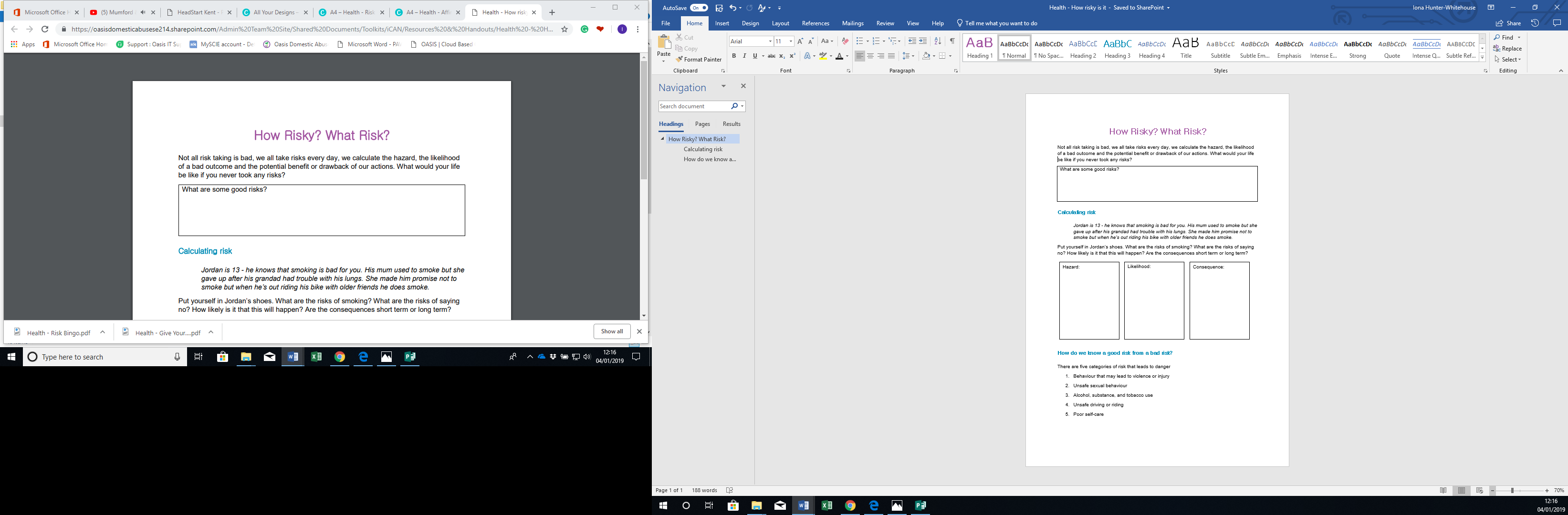
Hazard – what could go wrong?

Severity – how bad could the consequences be?

Likelihood – is it it certain, probable, unlikely?

Together this makes the overall risk. Are they happy with that level of risk? Does it seam unmanagable?

##### Worksheet – How Risky is it?

This worksheet looks at good risk taking, bad risk taking and how to calculate the risk. It uses the scenario of Jordan, a 13 year old boy who has started to smoke when out with his friends.

##### Worksheet – Reasons We Take Risks

Use these cards as a handout or cut them up to use as cards. When discussing risky scenarious can you pick out one of these as a reason? Can there be more than one reason?

Ask everyone to take a card and write a sitution or scenrio on the back to fit.

**Discuss**:

Have you ever felt like you took a risk for one of these reasons? Do you know someone that took a risk for one of these reasons? What happened?

# Emotions and Behaviours

### What are emotions?

Emotions are chemicals released in response to our interpretation of a specific trigger.  It takes our brains about a quarter of a second to identify the trigger, and another quarter to produce the chemicals. A single emotion only last for about six seconds.

Being able to feel emotions is part of what makes us human. They help us to understand the things we are experiencing and to express the way those things make us feel - whether they are positive or negative feelings.

When we are trying to understand our emotions, it can be helpful to think about which emotions are primary and which are secondary.

**Primary Emotions**

A primary emotion is the first reaction to what has happened. Primary emotions are the body's first response, they are usually easy to identify because they are strong. They are the unthinking and automatic responses.

**Secondary Emotions**

Secondary emotions are more complicated. They’re a feeling you have about another feeling. They are a reaction to the initial primary emotion.

### Anger as a Secondary Emotion

Anger is a natural emotion. Like all emotions, anger is functional, it helps us figure out when something significant is happening in our internal or external world.

Anger warns us that something is breaking our boundaries or values – how we expect to be treated and what we think is wright & wrong.

*“That feels wrong!”*

*“That shouldn’t have happened!”*

*“That hurts!”*

*“That’s not fair!”*

*“This is not what I expected!”*

*“I feel mistreated!”*

*“This is not what I deserve!”*

It’s often called a secondary emotion because we resort to anger to protect ourselves from, or cover up, other vulnerable feelings.  The primary feeling is what we feel just before we feel angry. We almost always feel something before we get angry.

When we understand anger as a secondary emotion it lets us recognise and unpick the underlying primary emotions.

##### Worksheet: The Anger Iceberg

Use the anger iceberg to explore the feelings underneath the surface.

##### Activity: The Pros and Cons of Anger

It’s important that we recognise that anger has a place in our lives. It is natural and important, but it can also get out of control. Fold a sheet of paper in half – on one side write down all the ways it can be positive, on the other write down the negatives.

What is good about anger?

* people don’t get angry at what they don’t care about, all anger is a sign of caring
* can make us feel calm after expressing anger – a pressure valve
* can be energising
* can motivate us to solve problems
* protects our values and beliefs – “that’s just not right!”
* we know our boundaries have been crossed
* powerful – can make us feel in control
* covers painful feelings – a coping strategy

What can be harmful about anger?

* Hides other feelings
* Puts stress on your body
* Difficult to control
* Difficult to communicate effectively when you’re angry
* Can lead us to hurt people/ say things we don’t mean
* Overwhelming
* Loss of control

### The Cycle of Anger

***Example:***

**Triggering Event** – feeling disrespected

**Negative Thought** – they don’t like me

**Anxiety & Fear** – I am not likeable

**Anger** – defence mechanism, don’t show you’re hurt

**Physical Symptoms** – racing heart, shaking, tense

**Behavioural Response** – shout, fight, argue

### What to do with our Anger

All of us get angry, but if we get better at recognising the signs before it escalates (lose control) or deny it (push it down), we can make good choices about what to do with the anger.

**Know the signs:**

Think about the last time you felt angry.

How did it start?

How did you know you were angry?

What were you feeling in your body?

Make a list or draw the signs.

**Healthy ways of expressing anger:**

Anger can act as an emotional valve – we feel calmer when we let off steam! Come up with ways that you can express this anger, and feel the calm, safely.

* Exercise
* Write it down – what’s the situation, how does it feel?
* Punch a pillow
* Talk about it – vent with a friend of parent
* Scream
* Cry
* Talk to the person you’re angry with

As a group you can throw clay – put up a sheet or tarpaulin and take turns throwing the clay as hard as you can.

**Find the Exceptions:**

Ask about times when the anger isn’t a problem

*When don’t you feel angry?*

*Are their times where you are angry but don’t lose control?*

Ask what was different – this helps clients locate a resource

*How did you do that?*

*What were you doing differently that time?*

Use presuppositions to help identify resourceful exceptions

*When do you feel calmer?”* presupposes that there *are* times that are calm

*When don’t you feel angry?* presupposes that there *are* times that aren’t angry

**Scaling:**

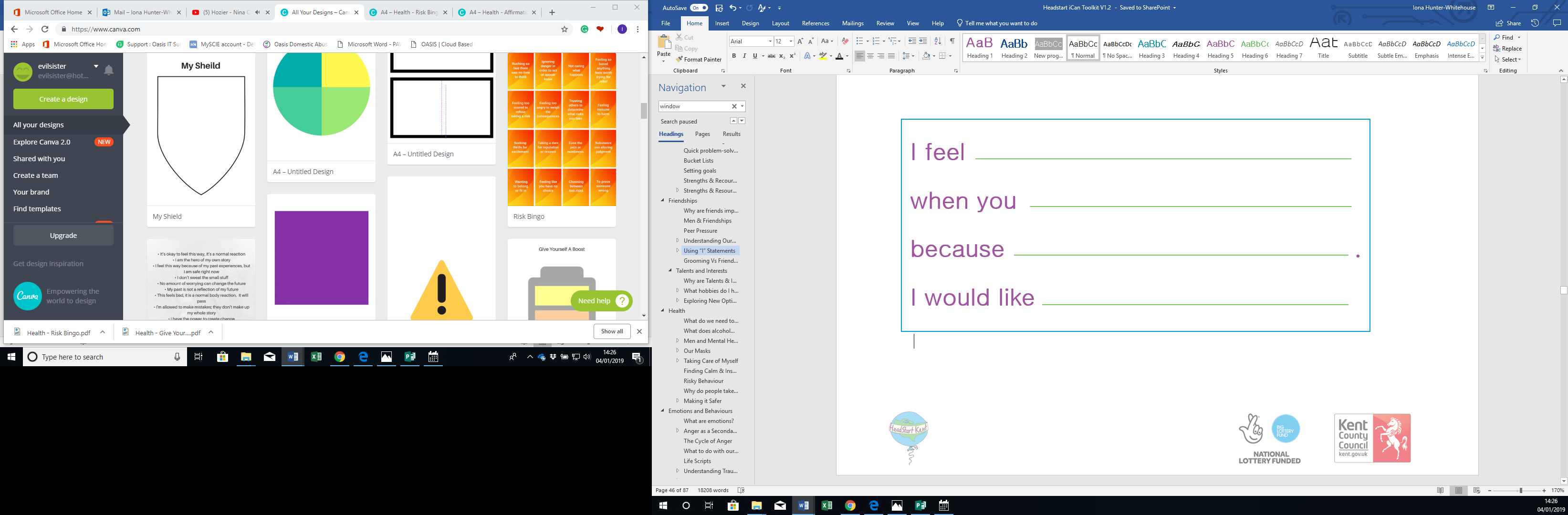
Using a scaling question (On a scale from one to ten how angry do you feel?) This lets a client step ‘outside’ the experience and engages the ‘thinking brain’ and loosen the grip of the ’emotional brain’.

**Tell people how you feel**

Changing the way we communicate can change the reaction. Using ‘I’ Statements is assertive but not aggressive.

Use the template

1. I feel (the emotion)
2. When (the situation)
3. Because (thoughts about the event)



See Using “I” Statements in the Friendships Section for more information.

### Life Scripts

A life script is a course of action, or belief we hold about ourselves that we decide on as a child. It’s a story that helps us make sense of our world. This life script is our way of attributing meaning to the things that happen to us, it dictates the way in which we experience events and the decisions and actions we take.

Our life scripts are often encouraged and shaped by parents and other family members, whose life scripts were shaped by their parents and so on. In this way, we become a product of our family's history.

Some examples of Life Scripts are

* ‘It’s not safe to cry or show emotions’
* 'People always leave me'
* 'I'm not good enough'
* 'Bad things happen to me more than they do to other people'
* ‘I deserve the bad things that happen to me’

Life scripts are unhelpful because we write the end of our story before we find out what really happens. We aren’t open to the positive endings or solutions.

A central belief of transactional analysis is that we made the decision in the first place, so *we have the power to change it*.  There is always hope that we can do things differently once our script is brought into awareness.

### Understanding Trauma

What is Trauma?

When someone feels intensely threatened by an event they are involved in or witnesses, we call that event a trauma. Trauma is often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope. There are lots of situations that can result in trauma:

* Bullying
* Community violence
* Domestic abuse
* Neglect
* Emotional abuse
* Physical abuse
* Traumatic grief

This trauma affects our brain and the way we function.

##### Three Levels of The Brain

1. **Reptilian/Brain Stem**

Breathing, digestion, heartbeat, crying, sleeping, fight/flight

[brain stem + cerebellum]

1. **Limbic System**

Emotions

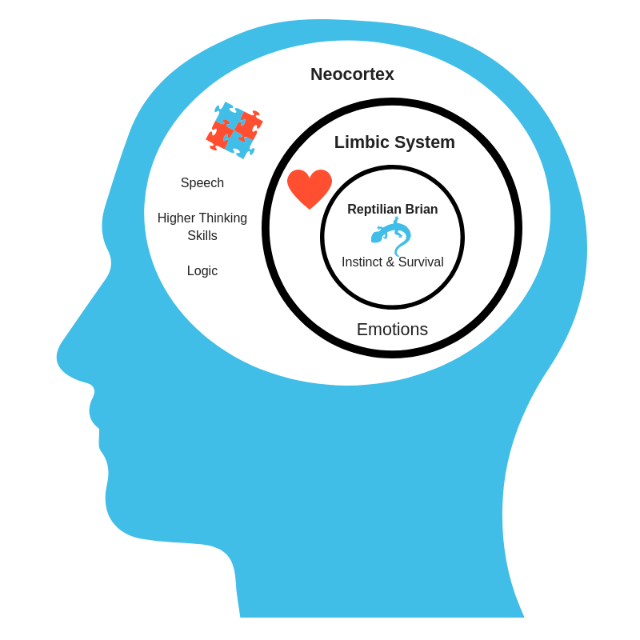
[hippocampus + amygdala + hypothalamus + thalamus + basal ganglia + cingulate gyrus]

1. **Neocortex**

Memory, seeing other perspectives, empathy, reason, thinking

[part of the cerebral cortex]

This is the Triune Brain model – it’s a simplified way of understanding our brains. It can be helpful when we are trying to understand the brain’s reaction to trauma.

**Reptilian/Brain Stem**

This is the most primitive part of the brain. It directs the functions that keep you alive - your breathing, heart rate, and basic physiological functioning. The responses are automatic, not consciously chosen, this is where our first response to trauma or stress happens.

Your body experiences the impulse to fight, flight or freeze. This trauma response feels, and is, out of your conscious control.

**Limbic System**

This is where your emotional responses register and where we hold intense emotions and reactions. There are no bad emotions but sometimes they can be overwhelming and take over when it would be beneficial to think, choose a course of action and then respond.

**Neocortex**

This is the area of executive function; the place in the brain where we make conscious decisions. Sometimes we can become stuck in the reactions of our reptilian brain and limbic system.

You can practise ways to bring yourself out of being controlled by the reptilian and limbic system and into your neocortex. It’s often called grounding.

* Counting down from 10
* Name things that you can see
* Name things that you are touching
* Name what can you smell
* Name what you can hear

##### Worksheet: The Three Levels of the Brain

Use this worksheet to illustrate the three levels of the brain and the effect that trauma has.

##### Trauma Ideas and Activities

* Make a trauma tree – you can do this one-to-one or as a group activity. Make a tree with roots that show the traumas and events, the trunk with the beliefs and learning and leaves that show the actions and behaviours that result. Be as creative as you want with paints, collage, papier mache etc
* Make a brain – use papier mache to create the three levels of the brain. Use three balloons in increasing sizes so that you can stack the brain together. You can decorate the brains fill them with their function and the responses they cause
* Trauma in the body – make a big outline of the body, you could draw around someone or draw freehand. Put the trauma triggers around the outside, with the levels of the brain, and the way it makes us feel inside e.g. heart racing, hands clenching, feet running etc.

##### The Window of Tolerance

When a person is within their window of tolerance they are feeling safe and comfortable - the brain is functioning well and can respond effectively. You can make decisions calmly without feeling either overwhelmed or withdrawn.

During times of stress we can experience periods of either hyper or hypo-arousal.

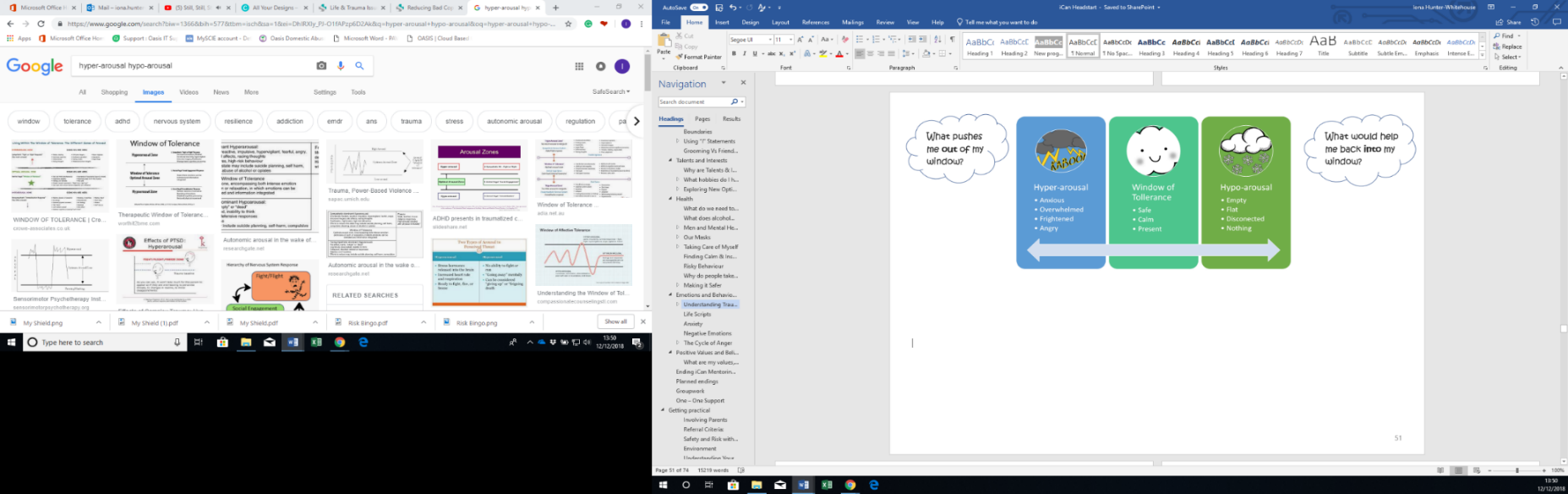
* Hyper-arousal = hypervigilance, feelings of anxiety and/or panic, and racing thoughts.
* Hypo-arousal = feelings of emotional numbness, emptiness or paralysis.

We all have a unique window of tolerance – some people have smaller windows than others. We also have unique triggers that push us out of our window of tolerance. Trauma can mean that we respond to what other people think is a small stress in a big way – our windows are smaller.

Notice - Communicate – Manage

* What pushes me out of my window?
* How do I know I’ve moved outside it?
* Where do I go – hypo or hyper?
* How can I tell people why I am reacting?
* What can people do to help?
* How can I get back into my window?

##### Worksheet: My Window of Tolerance

Use these worksheets to help explain the window of tolerance and explore what your client’s window of tolerance is, and the techniques they have for maintaining their window.

### Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Unhelpful thoughts may upset us, but usually we are able to move on quickly with what we are doing. Unhelpful thoughts become an unhelpful thinking style when they become habits.

Once you can identify your unhelpful thinking styles, you can start to notice them. Once you notice them, you can challenge the thoughts and see the situation differently.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Unhelpful Thinking Style** | **Explanation** | **Example** |
| **Mental Filter** | Only paying attention to certain types of evidence – usually the negative | I made a mistake so it’s all rubbish now – I need to throw it away. |
| **Jumping to Conclusions** | Mind reading (imagining we know what others are thinking) or fortune telling (predicting the future) | They haven’t replied, I must have done something to upset them.  I’m not going to go, no one will like me. |
| **Personalisation** | Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn’t completely your fault. Or blaming other people for something that was your fault | My mum is stressed out, I’m a bad son.  You made me do it. I wouldn’t have done that if you hadn’t … |
| **Magnify or Minimize** | Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important | I don’t know the answer, I’m going to fail all of my exams.  It didn’t matter to me anyway. |
| **Black & White Thinking** | Seeing only one extreme or the other - you are either wrong or right, good or bad | Everything they do is wrong and stupid. |
| **Shoulding and Musting** | Using absolute words like ‘should’, ‘must’, or ‘ought’ can make us feel guilty, and create unrealistic expectations | I must always stay strong and not show them how I feel |
| **Overgeneralisation** | Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw | No-one has ever helped me.  I could never do that. |
| **Labelling** | Assigning labels to ourselves or other people even though there are many more examples that aren’t consistent with that label | I’m useless. |
| **Emotional Reasoning** | Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true | I feel embarrassed, it must be my fault. |
| **Disqualifying the Positive** | Discounting the good things that have happened, or that you have done, for one reason or another | That doesn’t count – they were just trying to be nice. |
| **Hindsight Bias** | Thinking that because it did happen, it was (or should have been) obvious. | I knew all along it wouldn’t work.  I’m stupid for trying, everyone knew it |

***Thought Challenging*** is a technique to help you reduce the impact of your unhelpful thoughts. Instead, you will learn how to recognise and challenge your unhelpful thoughts by examining evidence for and against them.

***Behavioural* *Experiments*** then provide a way to test out these new balanced thoughts in everyday life.

##### Worksheet: Unhelpful Thinking Styles Matching Exercise

Cut up this worksheet so that your client can match the unhelpful thinking style with the explanation and example. Do any of these thinking styles sound familiar to them? Can they think of other examples?

##### 

##### Worksheet: A Vicious Cycle

Sometimes unhelpful thinking styles create a vicious cycle of low mood. Each of these areas has a knock-on effect on the others and can have a big impact on our lives.

This worksheet asks you to connect the unhelpful thinking to the emotions, behaviours and physical feelings that follow.

##### Worksheet: Recognising Unhelpful thoughts

This worksheet invites people to write down some of their own unhelpful thoughts and find a category. It introduces techniques to challenge these thoughts.

If this is too emotionally direct invite them to think about people on a TV show – can they recognise unhelpful thinking styles when they watch a soap opera?

##### Worksheet: Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

This takes one unhelpful thought and looks a bit deeper. How do we challenge this thought. Can we replace the unhelpful thought with a balanced thought?

### Anxiety

Anxiety is a common and sometimes helpful response to danger and stress.

The teenage brain is vulnerable to anxiety - while the prefrontal cortex is not yet developed the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for processing fear, is overactive. However, sometimes anxiety can become severe, frequent and unhelpful.

We all experience anxiety on some level at some time in our lives. Can you name times when people feel anxious? Are any of these true for you?

It’s important to remember that anxiety has nothing to do with strength, character or courage. Courage is all about being scared and finding the power to do it anyway. If you’re not scared, there’s no need to be brave.

What does anxiety feel like?

* Racing heart
* Tightening in the chest
* Butterflies
* Tense muscles
* Shaking hands
* Feeling like you might be sick
* Dizzy or light-headed
* Feeling like you might cry
* Feeling angry

Everything you feel when you have anxiety is to do with your body getting ready for fight or flight. It’s difficult when there is no need for either.

##### Ways to deal with anxiety

There are lots of things we can do to help ourselves feel less anxious. Thinking about our self-care and coping skills when we’re not currently anxious will make it easier to use them when we are.

**Mindfulness**

Mindfulness helps with anxiety in two ways

1. Mindfulness trains the brain the way exercise trains the body. It strengthens the connections between the amygdala, the reptilian brain in charge of fight & flight and the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that deals with logic and higher thinking. The stronger the connection, the more we can use our pre-frontal cortex during anxiety and calm things down.
2. It teaches the brain to stay in the present. Anxiety is driven by a brain that has been cast into the future. Thoughts start out as ‘what ifs’ and build from there.

**Exercise**

The effects of exercise on mental health are proven and powerful. It also gives the energy that anxiety has produced something to do – utilise your fight or flight!

**Breathe**

Strong, deep breathing initiates the relaxation response. an automatic response that can counteracts the surge of chemicals that cause the physical feelings of anxiety.

Breathe in through your nose for 3, hold for 1 and then out through your mouth for 3.

**Activities:**

* Write down your worries and keep them in a particular place – for example, you could write them in a notebook, or on pieces of paper you put in an envelope or jar.
* Make a list of everything that makes you feel anxious. You don’t have to share it.
* Split the list into the worries I can control and the worries I can’t
* Draw the way anxiety feels on a body outline. In a group you can draw around someone – then add the feelings as a group.
* Use exceptions & scaling – see (‘what to do with our anger’ p.66)
* Stop and think – is this a fact or an opinion?
* Think about the situation, what can you control? What can’t you control? Can you take steps to do what you can to improve the situation?
* Use your problem-solving skills
* Use your self-care skills.

# Positive Values and Beliefs

Knowing your own mind makes it easier to stay true to ourselves. Positive values help young people avoid risky behaviour and help guide their day-to-day actions and interactions.

Values are principles or standards of behaviour; they are our personal judgement about what is important in life.

These values shape our relationships, behaviours, choices, and our sense of self by helping us to understand our needs, to put boundaries in place and make positive decisions in difficult circumstances. Spending time thinking about our values is an opportunity to learn about ourselves and each other.

### What are my values, what do I believe in?

You can use these questions to help your client to explore their values – record their answers as you go along or make a values poster.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Values & Characteristics | | |
| Altruism  Assertiveness  Authenticity  Autonomy  Boldness  Bravery  Caring  Charity  Citizenship  Commitment  Community  Compassion  Competency  Consistency  Courage  Creativity  Curiosity  Dependability  Determination  Discipline | Empathy  Enthusiasm  Equality  Fairness  Faith  Friendship  Generosity  Gentleness  Happiness  Honesty  Humility  Humour  Integrity  Justice  Kindness  Leadership  Learning  Love  Loyalty  Openness | Optimism  Perseverance  Pragmatism  Punctuality  Respectfulness  Responsibility  Restraint  Safety  Security  Sensitivity  Spirituality  Stability  Status  Success  Thoughtfulness  Transparency  Trustworthiness  Wisdom  Zeal |

### What are Our Drivers?

Drivers are unconscious internal pressures that make us do things in a certain way, e.g. quickly or with emotion. Drivers develop when we understand what is approved of, and disapproved of, by the grownups around us and we attempt to adapt to them to feel ok about ourselves.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The Five Drivers | | |
| Values | **Result in Messages** | **Result in Drivers** |
| Achievement, autonomy, success, being right | **Don’t:** Make a mistake, take risks, be natural, be childlike | Be Perfect |
| Consideration, kindness, service | **Don’t:** Be assertive, important, different, say no | Please Me |
| Courage, strength, reliability | **Don’t:** Show your feelings, give in, ask for help | Be Strong |
| Persistence, patience, determination | **Don’t:** Be satisfied, relax, give up | Try Hard |
| Speed, efficiency, responsiveness | **Don’t:** Take too long, relax, waste time | Hurry Up |

Self-awareness helps increase our self-esteem, improve relationships and manage stress. Understanding our own and others’ Drivers can give us insight into their values and behaviour.

Use a driver questionnaire to help clients learn about themselves, these can be found online. Read the characteristics, benefits and drawbacks of their leading drivers.

Is it what they expected? Do they recognise themselves in the description? Would they like to take a couple of copies home to try with family members?

##### Worksheet: The Five Drivers

Use this worksheet in conjunction with a drivers questionnaire to explore characterisitcs, benefitrs and drawbacks to each of these motivating drivers.

##### Positive Values Activities:

* Introduce the idea of values – ask clients to call out and name as many values as they can think of. You can illicit new answers by thinking about situations – what about in your family? In school? In religion?

Once you have several sheets of values get each person to pick their top 10 – they can be creative and present them in whatever way they want. Compare everyone’s personal values – share your own too – what are the differences? What are the similarities? Can anyone share why something in particular was important to them?

* Ask clients to think about a role model. What do they admire about them? Make a list
* Random Acts of Kindness – come up with ideas. How would this make you feel? How would it make other people feel?

There are grants available of up to £1000 from the HeadStart Kent ‘Pay it Forward’ scheme for young people to carry out a project that helps others.

* Think about the possibility for volunteering, community engagement & or looking after the environment

# Planned Endings

Support services should always be viewed as a contained relationship with clear parameters; the length of the intervention should be discussed with the client throughout support. This lets the client know where they stand, and avoids endless, purposeless interventions. The exit from the service is therefore a planned and expected event.

Some clients may have their support extended and/or may travel between different engagement styles.

Towards the end of an intervention all clients should be left with a move-on plan. This may be a conversation or may involve supporting them to have a written action plan, and could contain:

* Where will they go if they need help again
* What are the key concerns they have and what can you action plan now to help these
* Who is their support network?
* What services are available that they may not yet be aware of
* Prospects for volunteering, joining clubs etc.
* Attending drop in or holiday sessions

The final support session should be used as a chance to review achievements and set self-motivated goals and expectations for the future. Use the resilience conversation to structure your review.

You will need to complete the YP CORE and the shortened Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.

In groups you can use compliments activity in the Friendships Section to end support in a way that is positive and affirming.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – iCan Referral Form

|  |
| --- |
| **iCAN Programme referral form** |
| **Please return completed form to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX administrator.** If you require to send referral form by other means than email, or if you have any questions, please contact 07XXXXXXXXXX or email XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX |
| **By email** (preferred) [referrals@XXXXXXXXXXXXt.com](mailto:referrals@XXXXXXXXXXXXt.com)  XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.cjsm.net |
| **Email requirements**  All referral forms must be sent via CJSM or be password protected.  Passwords should not be emailed; the administrator should be informed of the password by telephone or text. In your email, please include a contact number to call you on to confirm the password. |
| **Referral criteria**  This service is for adolescent boys aged between 13 to 16 years, who identify with the criteria listed below (please delete as appropriate)   * Have been affected by domestic abuse, either in their family of origin or in their own intimate relationships? Yes/No * Are socially isolated, with a limited support network (friends, family, school)? Yes/No * Presenting with behaviours linked to trauma which may include low-mood, anxiety, disengagement, difficulty in building and maintaining supportive (safe/healthy) relationships, challenging and risk-taking behaviour. Yes/No |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Referrer’s details** | |
| **Date of referral:** | **Referral agency:** |
|  |  |
| **Contact name (referrer’s):** | **Contact role:** |
|  |  |
| **Contact number:** | **Contact email:** |
|  |  |

**Young person’s contact details:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First name:** | **Surname:** | | **Date of birth:** |
|  |  | |  |
| **Address:** |  | | |
| **Mobile phone number:** | | **Home phone number:** | |
|  | |  | |
| **Is it OK for us to contact the client by landline telephone?** YES / NO (please delete) | | | |
| **Is it OK for us to contact the client on their mobile phone?** YES / NO (please delete) | | | |
| **Is it OK for us to leave a message/text on their mobile phone?** YES / NO (please delete) | | | |
| **Is it OK for us to contact them at their address?** YES / NO (please delete) | | | |
| **If NO to any of the above, is there someone we can safely pass a message on to?** YES / NO (please delete) | | | |
| If YES, please give details | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Young person’s details** | | |
| **School name:** |  | |
| **Has the young person given consent for referral?** YES / NO (please delete) | | |
| **Has the parent/carer given consent for referral?** YES / NO (please delete) | | |
| **Other agencies currently involved?** | | **Reason for involvement** |
| **Other agencies previously involved?** | | **Reason for involvement** |
| **Reason for referral (including any other details you feel are relevant, use separate sheet if necessary)** | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Other client information** | |
| **Does the young person have a disability?** YES / NO (please delete) | |
| If YES, please give details | |
| **What is the young person’s ethnicity?** |  |
| **Is the young person using drugs/alcohol?** YES / NO (please delete) | |
| If YES, please give details | |
| **Does the young person have any criminal convictions for violence?** YES / NO (please delete) | |
| **Does the young person have a mental health diagnosis?** YES / NO (please delete) | |
| If YES, please give details | |
| **Is the young person currently living in an abusive environment?** YES / NO (please delete) | |

## Appendix 2 - Resilience Conversations

For more information please follow the links below to the HeadStart Kent website.

Resilient Conversation Guidance:

<https://www.kscb.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/85137/Resilience-Conversation-Guidance.pdf>

Resilient Conversation Flowchart:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/85138/Resilience-Conversation-Flow-Diagram.pdf>

The Resilience Conversation Tool is available in the Resources & Handouts Folder.