



**A TOOLKIT**  
for Soft Skills Development for Young People

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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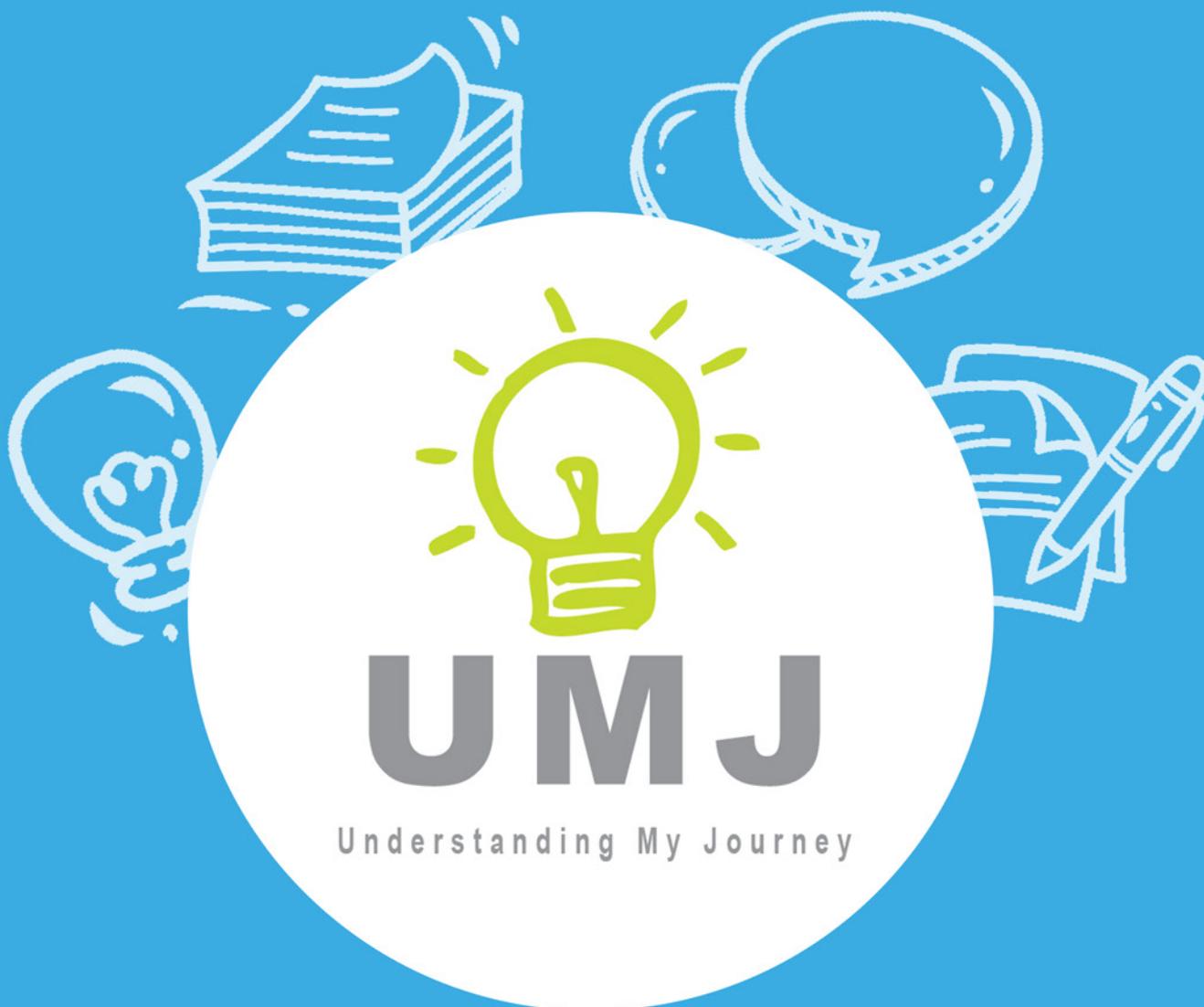
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**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE**

# UNDERSTANDING MY JOURNEY

## A Toolkit for Soft Skills Development for Young People



**Welcome to the UMJ Toolkit.** Before you start your journey, you should read these notes first. The notes will help you to make the most of this Toolkit.

### What are soft skills?

These are the skills which you develop as you go through life, and which many people often struggle to identify and describe. They are often known by different names, such as 'transferable skills' or 'core skills'.

Within this Toolkit we'll be focusing on the following 8 soft skills:

1. Positive Attitude
2. Communication
3. Adaptability
4. Time & Energy Management
5. Work Ethic
6. Problem Solving & Analytical Thinking
7. Teamwork
8. Leadership

### Why are soft skills important?

These are the skills you'll need for employment, and for further education and training. In many cases, employers think that these skills are just as important as qualifications, and for some jobs, they might be even more important.

Obviously, qualifications and technical skills are also really important, but that's only part of the picture. Imagine a plumber who can't be relied on to arrive on time, or a football player who can't get along with other people, or a nurse who doesn't listen to his or her patients. They might have excellent plumbing, football or nursing skills, but their soft skills will let them down.

The problem is that these skills are rarely taught at school, college or university. They need to be developed through experience in the real world. For young people without a solid work history, it can be difficult to show how you've developed these skills during your activities outside of the classroom or workplace. The Toolkit will show you how to do this.

### Who is the Toolkit for?

Any young person can use this Toolkit. You can work through it independently, section by section, or you can choose the sections most relevant to you.

It's mainly intended for young people who are already involved in some kind of activity or project, such as youth volunteering projects, work experience or employability training. You can use this Toolkit alongside your chosen activity.

However, whilst it's been designed to be worked through independently, some young people might need help to use it. You might also be using the toolkit with other young people and if so, your teacher or youth worker will give you further guidance and instructions.

## Who has developed the UMJ Toolkit?

Understanding My Journey is a European project, and has been developed by organisations working to support young people in 7 countries. It is funded by Erasmus+. This is the European agency which promotes co-operation across Europe in education, training, youth volunteering, culture and sport.

	Republic of Ireland	Ballymun Job Centre	<a href="http://www.bmunjob.ie">www.bmunjob.ie</a>
	United Kingdom	REY Europe	<a href="http://www.reyeurope.org">www.reyeurope.org</a>
	Portugal	ANESPO	<a href="http://www.anespo.pt">www.anespo.pt</a>
	Italy	IFOA	<a href="http://www.ifoait">www.ifoait</a>
	Greece	Action Synergy	<a href="http://www.action.gr">www.action.gr</a>
	Croatia	OAZA	<a href="http://www.oazainfo.hr">www.oazainfo.hr</a>
	Poland	STRIM	<a href="http://www.strim.org.pl">www.strim.org.pl</a>

The Toolkit is available in English, Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Croatian and Polish.

## What other resources are available?

Check out the Understanding My Journey website at [www.understandingmyjourney.eu](http://www.understandingmyjourney.eu)

As well as the UMJ Soft Skills Toolkit for you to download and print, there's also an interactive Smart Phone App which you can use alongside this Toolkit.

For youth professionals (such as youth workers, teachers, lecturers, trainers and advisors) there's a Practitioners' Guide, with additional resources to support young people to use this Toolkit.

# HOW TO USE THE UMJ SOFT SKILLS TOOLKIT

## What's inside each section of the Toolkit?

Each of the 8 sections inside the Toolkit follows a similar structure.

An **introduction** to the soft skill, and why it is important. Learning Outcomes. These give you an introduction to what you will learn as you work through each section.

**Before the Journey - Skills Check.** This includes a task to help you start thinking about this soft skill, followed by an initial skills check to assess and record your current level.

**Continuing the Journey - Development Activities.** This includes several tasks to help you understand how to develop this soft skill in more detail. This leads into...

**Action Planning.** This shows you one or two more ways to develop this soft skill, and includes some tasks designed to apply this skill in your daily or weekly activities.

**Reflecting and Evaluating.** After trying these tasks, you will think about what you did, how you did it, and how your skills have developed. Again, this leads into...

**After the Journey - Skills Check.** You should come back and take the skills check again, and see how far you have travelled in your soft skills journey.

**Moving On.** This task asks you what new or improved skills you will take with you on your journey, and gives you some space to record how you can include these in situations in the future, such as job applications and interviews.

## How much time do I need to work through each section?

There isn't a fixed answer to this question. However, we recommend that you should give yourself at least 3-6 weeks to work on developing each soft skill.

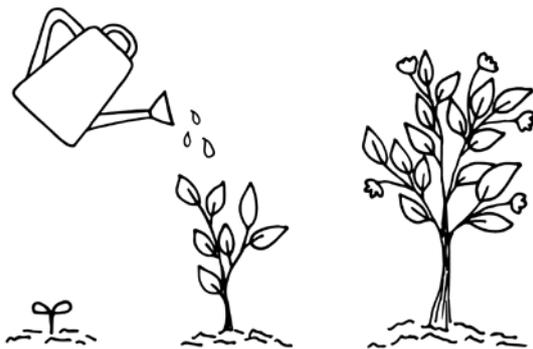
You don't need to work on one skill at a time, you can work on several skills all at once. However, it's probably too much to work on all the skills at the same time, all in one go.

We've designed the Toolkit to help you develop your soft skills in whatever 'real life' activities you find yourself taking part in. Once you have assessed and recorded your initial level of the soft skill, this toolkit gives you tips and hints about how to develop the skill. You will then decide on a set of actions that will let you practice the skills in real life situations, and then record how things worked out. These actions will be over a period of weeks, as it takes time, and repeated practice, for skills to develop. After the weeks of practice, you will then reflect on how it has gone, and revisit the skills check and reflect on how you have changed.

Developing your skills may not be a quick process, since you will have to develop the confidence to try out new approaches with other people, and then keep on reflecting and practicing until you feel you're getting better and making progress.

## How can I measure a soft skill?

Because of their nature, soft skills are very difficult to measure. We have used a very simple approach using just three levels:



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

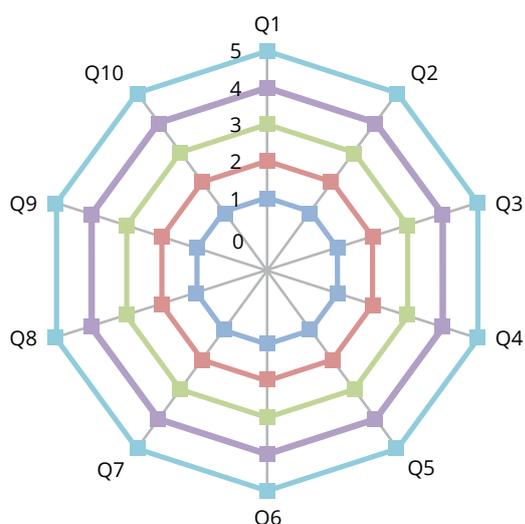
In order to understand your level, you will be asked to think about how well you currently practice ten aspects of the soft skill. For each of the ten questions, you will consider the current level of skill that you practice, against one of the following scores:

1. Never – I struggle with this
2. Hardly ever
3. Sometimes
4. Usually, but not always
5. Always – no problem

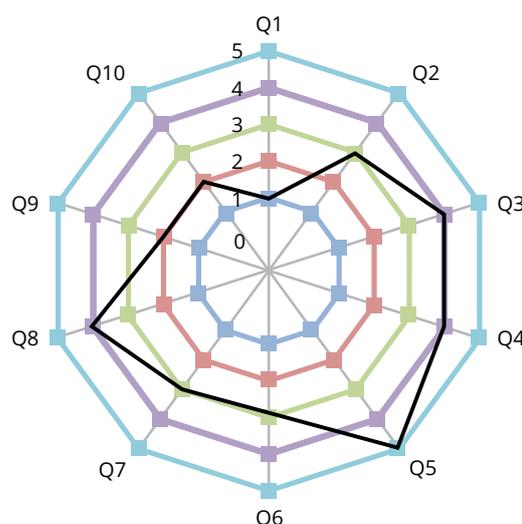
The Toolkit includes the use of spider's web graphs to give a picture of the results of the assessments of skills. The graph looks like a spider's web with a set of lines or spokes which start from the centre of the diagram. Each spoke represents one of the ten aspects, with points 1 to 5 radiating out from the centre.

In order to produce the graph, mark the score that you recorded for the aspect against the relevant numbered spoke. A completed example is shown below:

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		1 Never - I struggle with this	2 Hardly ever	3 Sometimes	4 Usually, but not always	5 Always - no problem!
1	I think through ideas before I speak or communicate them	1 X	2	3	4	5
2	I communicate positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3 X	4	5
3	I know if what I say has been understood by the person I am speaking to	1	2	3	4 X	5
4	I know when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4 X	5
5	I listen openly and attentively to other people during conversations	1	2	3	4	5 X
6	I am aware of and respect the cultural values of the people that I am communicating with	1	2	3 X	4	5
7	I pay attention to my body language when in conversation with another person	1	2	3 X	4	5
8	I know when and how to ask questions	1	2	3	4 X	5
9	I understand and follow instructions to carry out a specific task	1	2 X	3	4	5
10	I recognise situations when I need help and know who to ask	1	2 X	3	4	5



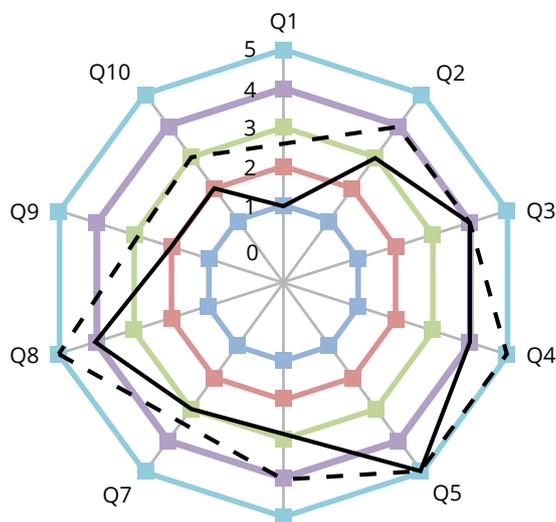
Example of a blank spider's web graph



Example of an initial spider's web graph (black)

From the spider's web diagram, it is possible to see which aspects are not yet fully developed, and this gives you help in deciding the next steps in using the Toolkit. From this example, questions 1, 9 and 10 would be your weakest aspects, which you probably need to think about improving (thinking through your ideas, understanding instructions, and knowing when to ask for help). Question 5 would show you are very strong at listening. However, you can still develop this skill further if you want to.

After completing each section of the Toolkit, you will do the skills assessment again, and draw a new spider's web graph to see how far you have travelled in your journey to develop the soft skill.



Example of an initial spider's web graph (black) and second after development (dotted line)

In this example, it's easy to see there has been an improvement in all aspects of the soft skill. The second diagram (dotted line) is more 'round'. This indicates that you have assessed yourself as having better skills than before – it's easy to compare 'before' and 'after' by looking at this.

However, if there is a decrease in some aspects of your skills, don't worry. This may mean that, even though you have developed some skills, you haven't been able to pay much attention to others. You might develop a better understanding of this soft skill, and score yourself less well, because of this new (and better) understanding the second time.

This is nothing to worry about. Skills development can be a complicated journey. It's all natural, and part of life.

### Why do I need a second opinion?

This is a self-assessment process, but we suggest that, wherever possible, you should also involve another more experienced person who knows you well, such as your teacher, a youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor. This is to understand how other people see you, and how they think your skills are developing. It can be very difficult to gain a true and accurate picture of how other people see us, but it's important that we're all aware of this, so that we can set realistic and appropriate goals for ourselves.

It's very, very important that you choose someone who knows you well, and who you trust to be honest and open with you.

You will need to explain to them that they will be involved twice – initially at the start, and secondly some time later when you have completed the activities. It is often useful to talk through your plans with another person as they may be able to offer suggestions or advice.

If your assessment of your own skills is different to the other person's, this could be a way of starting a discussion about why. It could be that the other person is unaware of the activities or responsibilities you take part in outside of your time with them. Equally, people might think you are actually better at

some of these skills than you think you are yourself. If so, getting the opinion of someone else you trust can really boost your confidence and self-esteem.

### **How can I practice developing my soft skills?**

Soft skills are difficult to learn from theory – you need to practice them in safe situations in real life. You can't just sit in a classroom and learn them. If you are using the Toolkit as part of a personal development or learning programme, then discuss situations where it is sensible to tackle specific activities with your tutor, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment support worker.

Possible scenarios to practice soft skills include:

- Work experience
- Volunteering
- Fundraising
- Playing sports
- Organising events, e.g. social or music events

Sometimes it is easier to take new approaches to situations with new people in these scenarios, rather than trying out new ways of doing things with people who know you well, and who may have preconceived views about you.

### **Is there an order in which to develop the soft skills?**

Each part of the Toolkit is designed to be self-contained, but there are overlaps between all the different elements. It's not really possible to view them as completely separate from each other.

For example, your ability to problem solve is key to your adaptability skills; developing a positive attitude is essential to being able to communicate with empathy; having strong time management skills is crucial for being able to demonstrate a solid work ethic. Equally, teamwork and leadership are best described as a cluster of skills, in that they contain elements of all of these skills, all at once.

We'd strongly suggest starting your journey with Positive Attitude. This will provide a firm foundation for moving on to the others, and for staying motivated.

Before starting your journey, though, we recommend that your next step is to take the First Skills Check. This will allow you to try out a skills check before you start out on your journey, and might help you to identify where you should start, and what you need to work on.

For this part, there's no need to do a spider's web. Just answer the questions as honestly as you can. For those skills where you score mainly 1 or 2, you might want to start developing these skills first. Everyone's journey will be different.

If you need to, look back at the instructions on pages 4 and 5 before you complete the First Skills Check.

# FIRST SKILLS CHECK

Date of First Skills Check:		Emerging	Consolidating		Established		
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5	Positive Attitude
2	I have realistic goals which I feel I am progressing towards	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I value my friendships and find time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I think through ideas before I speak or communicate them	1	2	3	4	5	Communication Skills
5	I can communicate positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I know when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I see changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5	Adaptability Skills
8	I try to overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I am open to other people's suggestions about how I might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	Time and Energy Management
11	I regularly write 'to do' lists and tick off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5	
12	When I start doing something, I like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5	
13	I can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done	1	2	3	4	5	Work Ethic
14	I own up to my mistakes and am happy to ask for help and advice when I need it	1	2	3	4	5	
15	I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4	5	
16	I step back and look at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5	Problem Solving and Analytical Skills
17	I set up and follow a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5	
18	I think creatively and come up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5	
19	I understand how my role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5	Teamwork Leadership Skills
20	I do as I say, and people trust me to act in accordance with my values	1	2	3	4	5	

# BEFORE YOU SET OUT...

## Planning your Journey

We've called this 'Understanding My Journey' because you're about to embark on exactly that – a journey. A good way to think about each soft skill is to imagine that you are climbing a mountain.

In fact, if you are using the app alongside this Toolkit, you'll find that each soft skill is actually a mountain adventure! Here's what you need to do to reach the top:

- **Start at the foothills.** Before you start climbing, you need to know that you have the correct equipment, and that you understand the route to the top. Think of this as your skills check. You can then start to climb up the mountain.
- **Find a cave to rest in.** Developing your skills isn't easy. If it starts raining, you'll need to find shelter in a cave. Think of this as where you can rest and think about your skills check – what you can already do well, and what you need to improve.
- **Reach the training camp.** After climbing a little while, you'll need some more skills to get further up the mountain. Think of the mountain training camp as your development activities. The **evening campfire** is a good opportunity to read up on how to develop your skills.
- **Climb up to the summit.** You can now make good progress up the mountain, and plant your flags each time you tackle a difficult part of the climb. Think of this as your action planning, and the things you'll do to develop your skills.
- **Arrive at the mountain top.** You've made it – you can look back at your progress, and feel really proud of yourself. To see how much you've achieved, you can take a skills check again, and look back on how far you've travelled. You can also think about what to take with you on the next mountain you'll climb.



Now that you've done your First Skills Check, think about which mountains you're going to climb first. You can write a number in the box next to each mountain.

# ENJOY THE JOURNEY, AND GOOD LUCK!



1 Positive Attitude



Communication Skills



Adaptability Skills



Time and Energy Management



Work Ethic



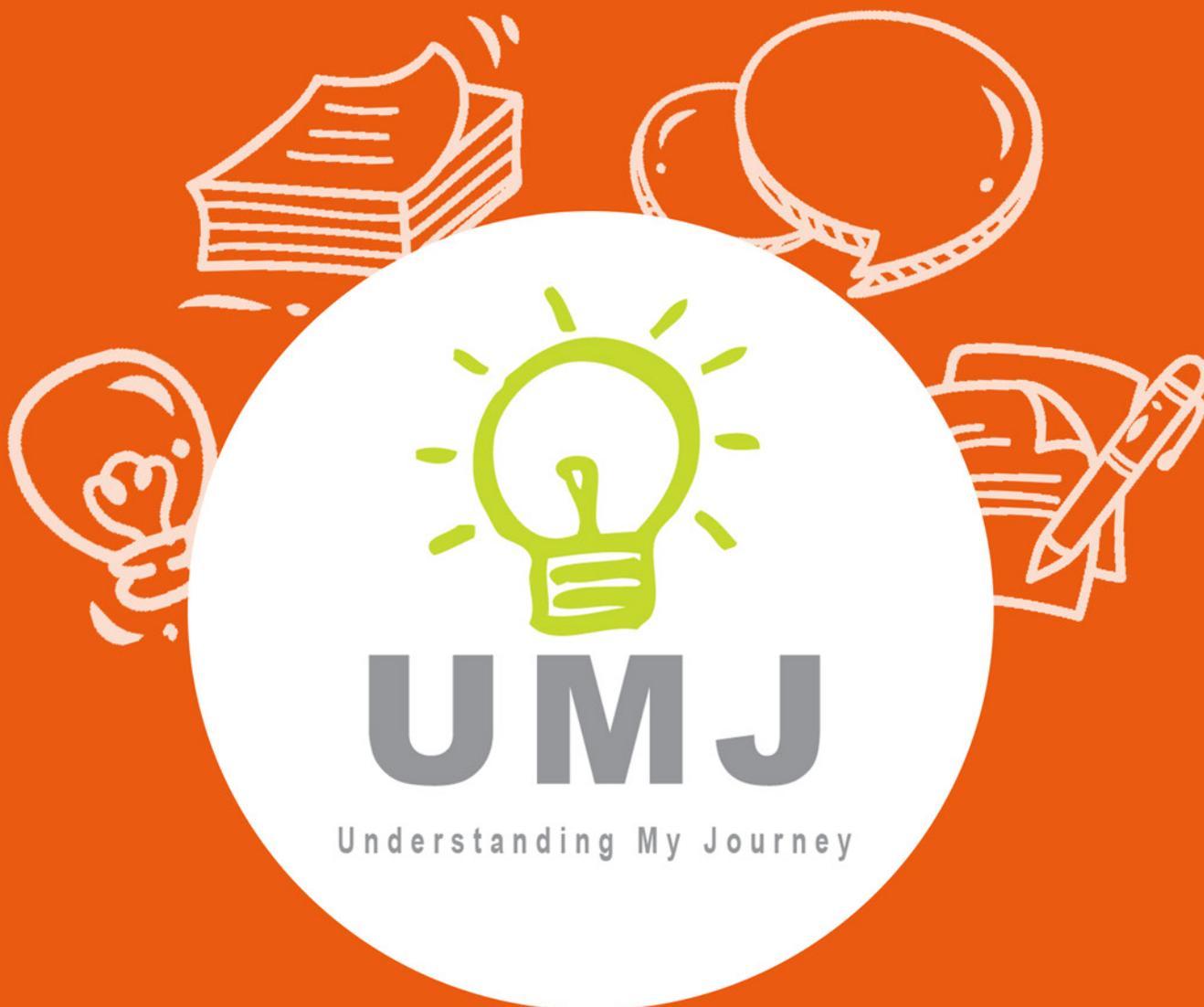
Problem Solving and Analytical Skills



Team Working Skills



Leadership Skills



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**POSITIVE ATTITUDE**

# POSITIVE ATTITUDE



## What it is and why it's important

- Are you an optimist or a pessimist?
- Do you feel that your life is heading in the right direction?

The environment and your life experience shape how you see the world. Nevertheless, whilst you can't always control what happens to you, you do have some control over how you react and respond to events.

It is easy to become cynical and pessimistic towards the world we live in, and every single one of us, rich or poor, will have our share of hardships and difficulties. If you become too negative in your attitude, this can stop you from living a fulfilling life, and it can also have an impact on your family, friends and colleagues. The energy you bring into situations can be picked up by the people you are in contact with, whilst a positive attitude can lift their spirits, allowing new and exciting things to happen.

Fortunately, scientists are discovering more and more about what keeps us emotionally well and happy. We all have our habits, routines and ingrained thinking styles, but by making changes to these habits and thoughts, it's possible to develop more positive thinking skills, and this, in turn, can help you become a happier and healthier person.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop positive thinking skills in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# POSITIVE ATTITUDE

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Think about how your attitude can affect the way other people relate to you.
- Think about what you can do to make your outlook on life more positive.
- Plot out your own assessment of your positive thinking skills, and decide how you might need to strengthen these skills.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to use positive thinking skills whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your positive thinking skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your positivity.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities, go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role.

### Look after yourself!

It's not usually possible to feel positive all of the time. It's only natural to feel sad, upset, angry, anxious or depressed at times, especially when faced with difficult circumstances. These could include seemingly small things like exams, finding a job or arguments with friends, as well as 'big' things like losing a parent, losing your home, or being a victim of crime.

However, if you feel anxious or depressed for more than a few weeks at a time, and your mood shows no sign of lifting or improving, you may need to seek medical help. This isn't a sign of weakness or failure. Help is out there if you need it, and many people will seek this help at some point in their lives.



You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:

Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

## Think about the following situation.

Has this ever happened to you? How did you immediately react?  
If this were to happen to you, how would you immediately react?



You're walking down the street, as you usually do at this time of day.

In the distance, on the other side of the road, you see someone who a friend introduced you to a few weeks ago. You only spoke for a few minutes, but despite this, you decide to wave at her.

She doesn't respond, but walks away and ignores you.

In this situation, which of the following best describes your immediate response?



*She's pretending not to notice me. I feel so stupid now! She obviously didn't like me. I must have made a real fool of myself a few weeks ago, and I've just done it again!*



*I think she saw me... But maybe she didn't. She was quite far away. We only spoke for a few minutes, so she might not recognise me. Or maybe she's just shy? Anyway, it's not a big deal.*

Which reaction is based on negative thinking, and which on positive thinking?  
Which reaction best corresponds to the reality of the situation?

**Now, complete the Skills Check.**

**Step 1:**

**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I regularly offer to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
1	I regularly offer to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
2	I value my friendships and find time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	I value my physical health, and I make sure that I eat healthy food, get enough sleep and exercise regularly	1	2	3	4	5
4	I enjoy taking time out for myself to stop, be still, and notice what's happening around me	1	2	3	4	5
5	I like trying new things and am always learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	I have realistic goals which I feel I am progressing towards	1	2	3	4	5
7	I deal with stressful situations and don't let them overwhelm me	1	2	3	4	5
8	I don't ignore the negative things I have to deal with, but can focus my attention on the positives	1	2	3	4	5
9	I don't compare myself unfavourably with others and am comfortable with who I am	1	2	3	4	5
10	I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall positive thinking skills level.

<b>Overall, my positive thinking skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Regularly offers to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
1	Regularly offers to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
2	Values friendships and finds time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	Values physical health, and makes sure to eat healthy food, get enough sleep and exercise regularly	1	2	3	4	5
4	Enjoys taking time out for themselves to stop, be still, and notice what's happening	1	2	3	4	5
5	Likes trying new things and is always learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	Has realistic goals and is progressing towards these	1	2	3	4	5
7	Deals with stressful situations and doesn't let them overwhelm them	1	2	3	4	5
8	Doesn't ignore the negative things, but can focus attention on the positives	1	2	3	4	5
9	Doesn't compare themselves unfavourably with others and is comfortable with who they are	1	2	3	4	5
10	Has a purpose in life and feels they are making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall positive thinking skills level.

<b>Overall, their positive thinking skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

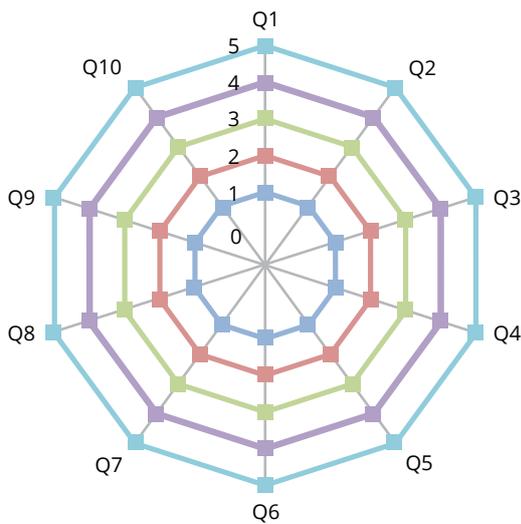
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

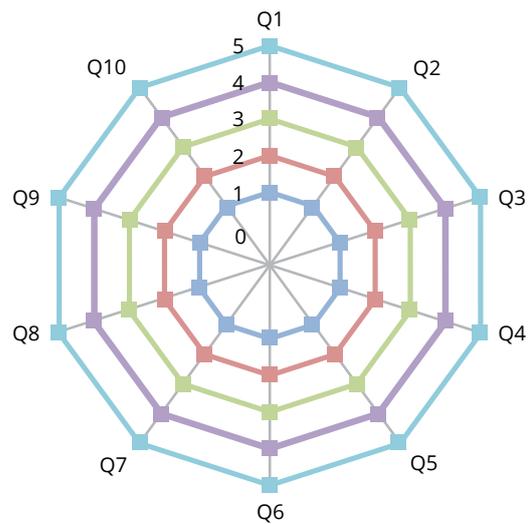
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be positive thinking skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

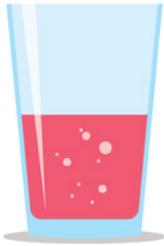
## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

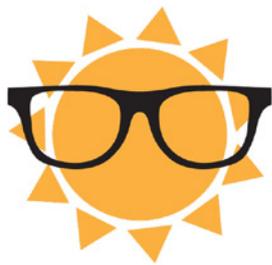
## Thinking about Positive Attitude

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you might have to look after your wellbeing and keep a positive outlook. You can now start to consider your own thinking habits, and identify some changes.



### Is the glass half empty? Or is the glass half full?

This isn't a philosophical question. The way we see the world is often coloured by the 'spectacles' we put on, and the lens through which we view things. The same situation can look very different depending on how you 'see' the world.



### Think about some situations which could arise during your work, study or home life.

What negative thoughts and feelings might you experience?

What positive thoughts could you use to challenge these negative thoughts?

What positive changes might result?



Situation	Negative thought	Positive thought
I'm starting a new work placement and I don't know anyone.	<i>I'm really nervous that nobody will like me! I won't know what to say, and people won't find me interesting.</i>	<i>I've got friends who like me for who I am. I'm just scared, and that's natural. It's not actually true.</i>
I applied for a training course and they rejected my application.		
It's started raining, I'm not wearing a coat, and I'm getting wet!		
Your choice:		

## Positive Attitude in Context – 10 Actions for a Positive Life



Adapted from Action for Happiness: <http://www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys>

Developing positive thinking skills doesn't mean you always have to be happy. Nevertheless, psychologists researching happiness are finding out that people who think more positively tend to be good at certain skills. Like all skills, they take time to practice. Why not try implementing some of the following actions in your own life?

**Action 1: Do things for other people.** Helping other people, in big or small ways, is good for other people and can be good for you, too. You can feel good by doing good! Offer help when it's needed, or just be kind and thoughtful. Everyone around you will appreciate it.

**Action 2: Build connections with others.** People feel happier and more secure when they feel part of a team or group which values them. Extroverts in particular need to be around people to thrive. Get to know your work colleagues and neighbours. Equally, spend time away from work and maintain relationships with your friends or family.

**Action 3: Look after your physical wellbeing.** Regular exercise is proven to release endorphins in the brain, which can boost positive thinking as well as making you physically fitter. Physical activity can be as simple as walking up the stairs rather than taking the lift, but if you join a sports club, you have the added bonus of building connections with others. Eating healthily, getting enough sleep, and cutting down on cigarettes and alcohol make you feel brighter and more alert, too.

**Action 4: Stop and be mindful!** Most of our waking lives is spent on autopilot, with our minds constantly jumping around and caught up with random thoughts. Take the time to stop for a few minutes, take a few steady breaths, and focus on what's around you – the colours, sounds, textures and sensations. The world is more varied and interesting than we realise, and it's right in front of you, here and now.

**Action 5: Keep on learning.** The brain stays elastic throughout life, making new connections with each set of new knowledge and skills. Learning things keeps us active, gives us a sense of achievement, and can boost confidence. This doesn't have to be 'formal' learning in a classroom. It could also mean volunteering at a local project or joining a new club or group. Try new things without judging them first, and be curious and open to new possibilities.

**Action 6: Give yourself some direction.** We all need things to look forward to, and whilst the future isn't always going to be bright all the time, you can still set some goals to get you where you want to be. Make sure the goals you set are realistic and achievable. Being ambitious is positive, but it's better to set modest goals and achieve them, than to set unrealistic goals which you're unlikely to achieve.

**Action 7: Develop your resilience.** We all have to deal with stress, trauma or loss at different times in our lives, but the key to developing resilience is to recognise that we have a degree of choice over how we react to situations. Our natural reaction is often to see every situation as a disaster, but what feels terrible at the time is often a mixture of good and bad. Every crisis can present an opportunity to develop. Use difficult situations to reflect on your inner strength and discuss alternative approaches with friends, family or colleagues.

**Action 8: Train your thoughts.** Every thought we think strengthens the tendency to think in similar ways again. This means that if you try and think positive thoughts – gratitude, kindness, satisfaction, etc. - you'll strengthen the tendency to think more positively in general. Think of your mind as a garden. Cultivating positive thoughts takes effort, but you'll see it flower over time. The weeds will still be there but they'll be easier to manage. Over a day, note down your state of mind as positive, neutral or negative, If you have many negative thoughts, consider what caused them and how you could move them to be more positive.

**Action 9: Be content with who you are.** Nobody is perfect. If you constantly compare yourself unfavourably to other people, you'll never be satisfied, and it'll be difficult to stay positive. Nobody is better or worse than anybody else, and everyone is worthy of respect. If you can't value yourself, how can you expect other people to value you, too? Make a list of your positive qualities and look for opportunities to practice these 10 actions

**Action 10: Find meaning in your life.** Most people who feel part of something bigger than themselves feel happier and more in control of their life. Some people find meaning in their family role, their football team, or their job. Others seek meaning in belonging to a religious faith or a campaigning organisation. What gives you meaning and purpose?



**Read '10 Actions for a Positive Life' again, and then do the exercise below.**

**Write down 1 action you do already.**

Blank space for writing down 1 action you do already.

**Write down 1 action you're going to find out more about.**

Blank space for writing down 1 action you're going to find out more about.

**Write down 2 actions you're going to start doing.**

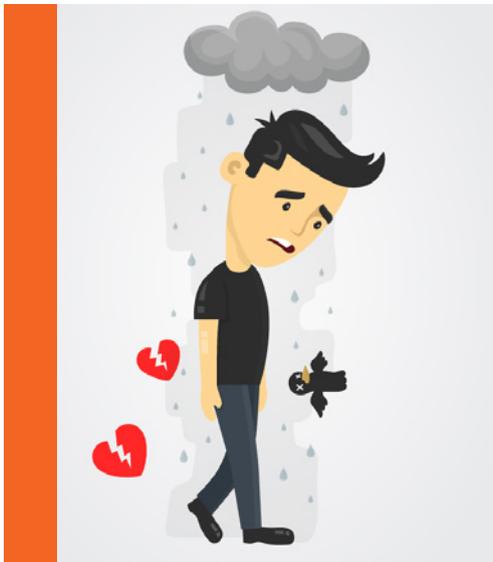
Blank space for writing down 2 actions you're going to start doing.



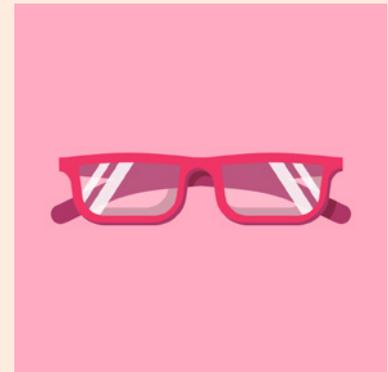
# ACTION PLANNING



The 'spectacles' you wear - the attitude you have - can determine how you see the world.



Your friend's spectacles are faulty, and he finds it difficult to see situations in their entirety. When he does, he focuses on the negatives and ignores the positives. How might his view look if he wears more positive 'spectacles'?



	How could he view things more positively?
<i>It'll be too difficult. I'm no good at anything. Why bother even trying?</i>	
<i>There's no point looking for a job, I'll never find a decent one.</i>	
<i>Why should I give up my seat for an older person? I was here first.</i>	
<i>Life's too short to worry about your health. Exercise!?! Forget it, I will go and get some more ice cream. Do you want some chips?</i>	
<i>People always let you down.</i>	

**Think about some key tasks or activities you're going to take part in.**

Once you've identified this, think about your schedule for one week. Write down some strategies in a weekly planner. You should choose 2 or 3 strategies for each day.



**Go and be positive!**

<p><b>Monday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Thursday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>
<p><b>Friday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Saturday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Sunday</b></p>       <p>Date:</p>	<p><b>Next week's plans:</b></p>       

- Offer to make someone a cup of tea or coffee
- Try to spot the positive in people, before thinking about the negative
- Count how many people you smile at today
- Find out about 3 new topics or subjects
- Write down 3 things which have gone well this week
- Choose a different route to a place you regularly go to
- Say 1 positive thing to every person you meet today
- Make a list of new things to try next week
- Speak to someone from an older generation
- Research a cause you care about, and donate your time or money
- Look for something positive in a difficult situation, and write it down
- Make a list of 5 things you're grateful for
- Set a realistic goal and achieve it by the end of the week
- Eat something you've never tried before
- Every hour, stop and take 3 mindful, calming breaths, and look around you
- Write down 3 things you like about yourself
- Think of a mistake you're glad you made, and remind yourself what you learnt from it
- Write down 5 things you're good at
- Give 3 people compliments today
- Buy someone a gift or send a card
- Instead of saying 'I can't', say 'I can't... yet'
- Reflect on what helped you get through a tough time
- Commemorate a special event from the past
- Look around you and find 3 things which you have never noticed before
- Do unpleasant tasks mindfully by focusing on each tiny action and sensation

At the end of each day, write down your experiences in a **Positive Attitude Diary**.

**Example:** *I wasn't feeling my best this morning, but I wrote down 5 things I'm grateful for on the journey to work. I realised that I spend all my time worrying about what I haven't got, and not appreciating the things I have got. I also made an effort to look for 1 good thing in a person every time they annoyed me or stressed me out. This was really difficult, but after a while I started to appreciate my colleagues more. When I told them what I liked about them, they also started to acknowledge me. Other people said that I seemed happier and more relaxed than last week, so it must be working!*



<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Positive aspects of the week:</b>

If you found this exercise useful, then use a diary or notebook and set yourself a challenge to use the technique for a month.

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



**What task/activity did you complete?**

A large, hollow arrow pointing to the right, outlined in black, intended for writing the answer to the first question.

**Did you follow your own positive attitude advice? How?**

A large, hollow arrow pointing to the right, outlined in black, intended for writing the answer to the second question.

**Is your outlook more positive now? How?**

A large, hollow arrow pointing to the right, outlined in black, intended for writing the answer to the third question.

**What new positive thinking skills will you take with you and develop further in the future?**

A large, hollow arrow pointing to the right, outlined in black, intended for writing the answer to the fourth question.

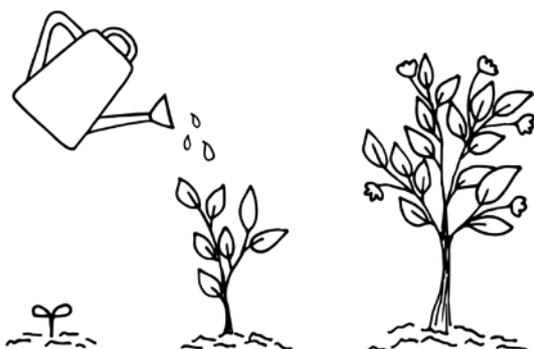
## AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your positive thinking skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your positive thinking skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> I regularly offer to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I regularly offer to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I value my friendships and find time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I value my physical health, and I make sure that I eat healthy food, get enough sleep and exercise regularly	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I enjoy taking time out for myself to stop, be still, and notice what's happening around me	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I like trying new things and am always learning	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I have realistic goals which I feel I am progressing towards	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I deal with stressful situations and don't let them overwhelm me	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I don't ignore the negative things I have to deal with, but can focus my attention on the positives	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I don't compare myself unfavourably with others and	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall positive thinking skills level now.

<b>Overall, my positive thinking skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

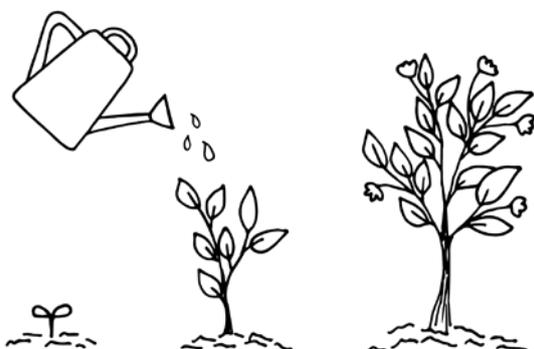
**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Regularly offers to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
1	Regularly offers to do things for other people without expecting anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
2	Values friendships and finds time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	Values physical health, and makes sure to eat healthy food, get enough sleep and exercise regularly	1	2	3	4	5
4	Enjoys taking time out for themselves to stop, be still, and notice what's happening	1	2	3	4	5
5	Likes trying new things and is always learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	Has realistic goals and is progressing towards these	1	2	3	4	5
7	Deals with stressful situations and doesn't let them overwhelm them	1	2	3	4	5
8	Doesn't ignore the negative things, but can focus attention on the positives	1	2	3	4	5
9	Doesn't compare themselves unfavourably with others and is happy with who they are	1	2	3	4	5
10	Has a purpose in life and feels they are making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates his or her overall positive thinking skills level now.

Overall, his or her positive thinking skills are:	Emerging	Consolidating	Established



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

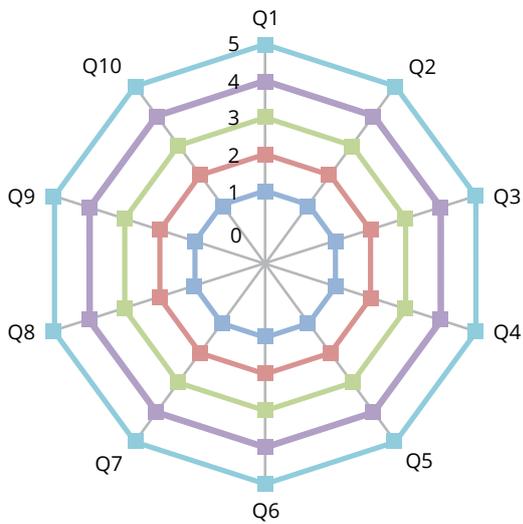
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

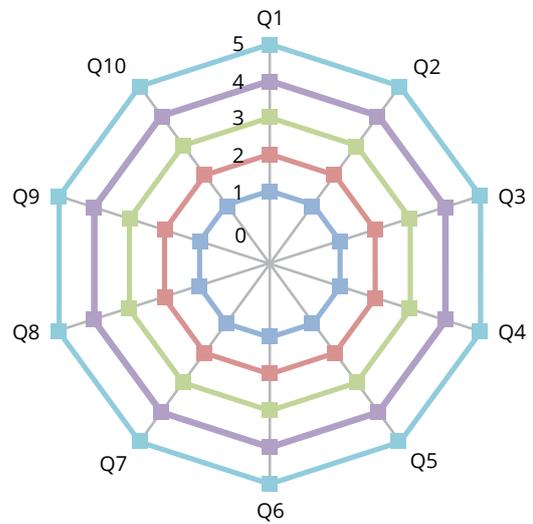
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

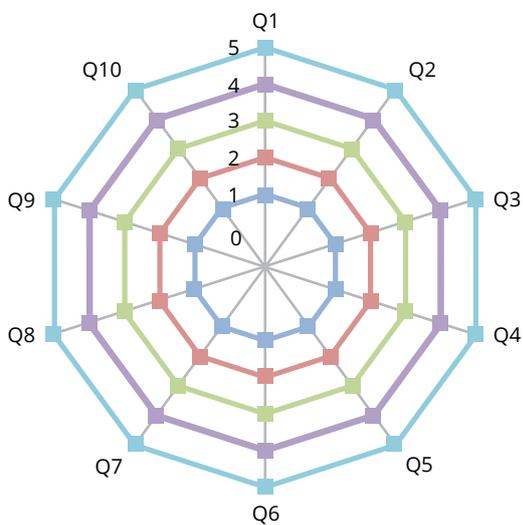


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

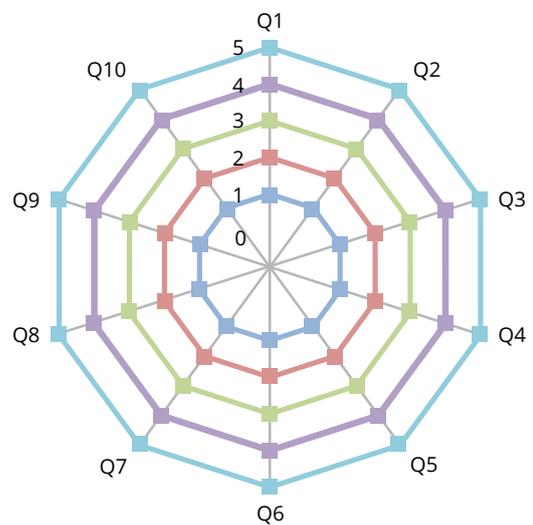
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your positive thinking skills?

*I am going to continue developing my positive thinking skills by:*

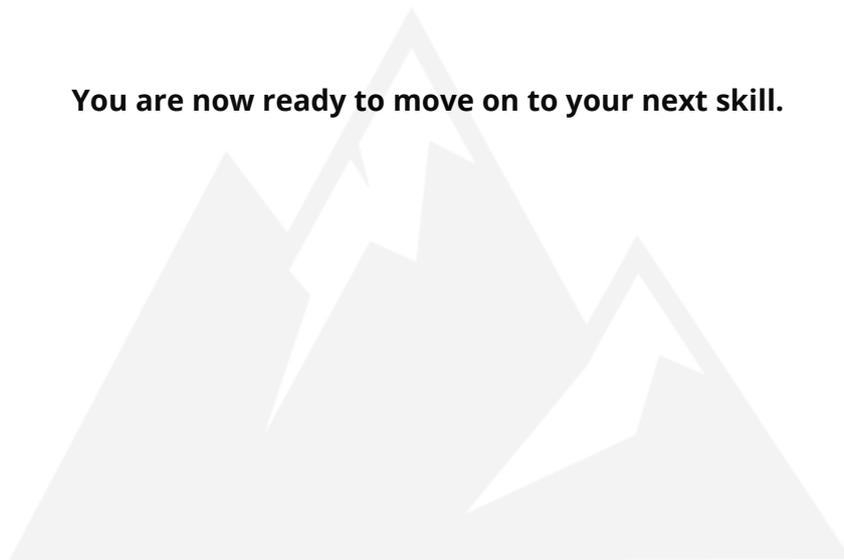
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know how you have approached a difficult situation positively and constructively.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

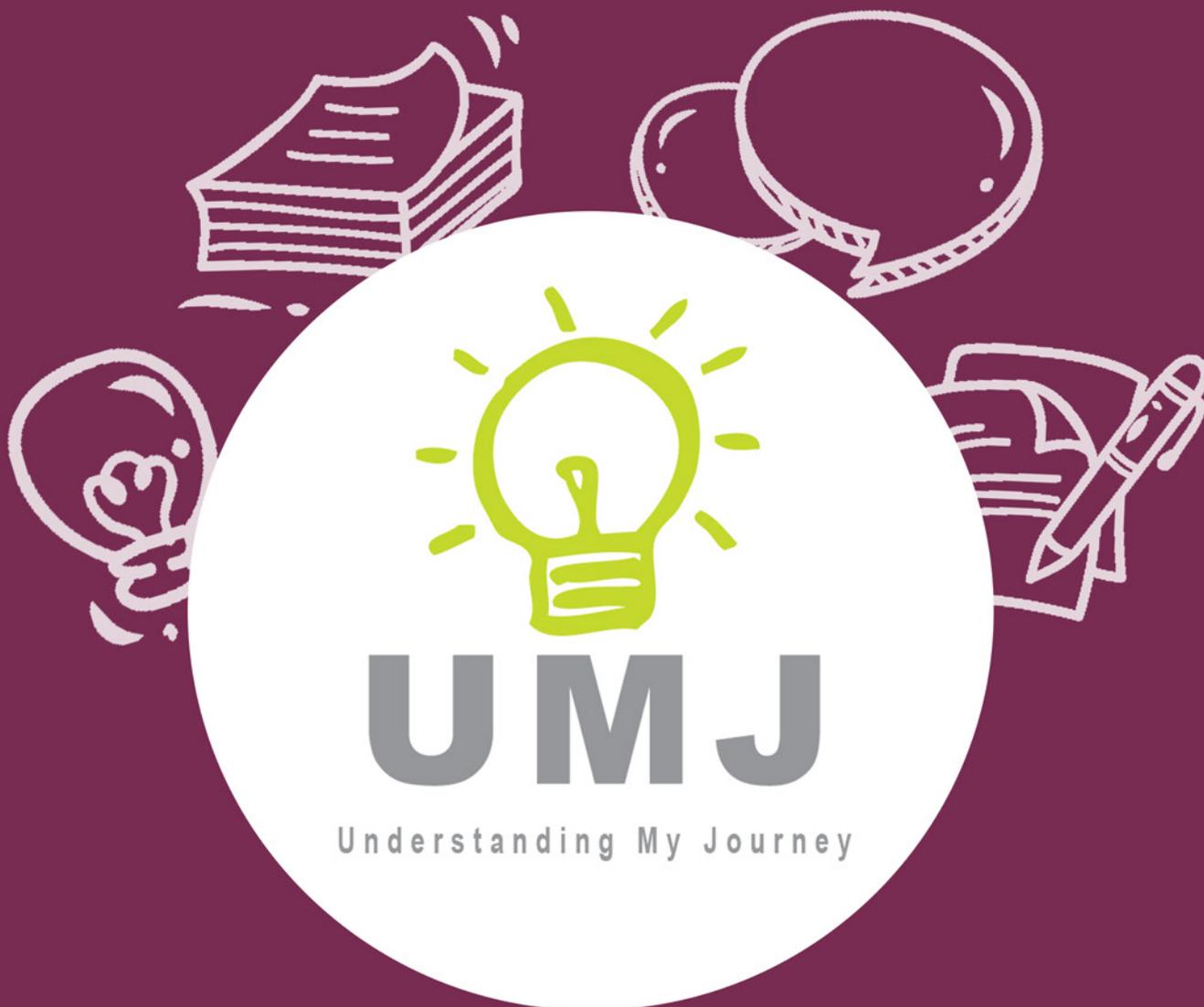
## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of positive thinking skills should you mention in your interview? How could you show them you have a positive attitude?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**







**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS



## What they are and why they're important

- Have you ever met someone and immediately decided you liked them?
- What was it that attracted them to you?
- Do you notice that some people have an easy time expressing their ideas?

It's likely that much of what attracted you was the way they communicated with you – how they spoke, the words they used, whether they smiled or not, and the way they looked at you. A person's ability to communicate well with others is seen by many people to be the most important soft skill. However, it's also one of the most difficult to get right.

We all learn how to communicate through our interactions with family, friends and relatives, but this way of communication is not always applicable in every situation. Everyone needs to change the way they communicate depending on the situation they are in. For some people, judging these situations can be difficult, but with the right skills, you can easily navigate these challenges.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Think about how you communicate, and how this influences the way other people see you.
- Think about some different communication skills, and how you might need to change the way you communicate depending on the situation.
- Plot out your own communication skills, and decide how you might need to improve these.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some good communication techniques whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your communication skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your communication skills.
- Evaluate how much you and other people feel understood and connected with each other after the conversation.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities. Go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role who knows you well.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop some communication skills in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:



Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK



**Have a look at these examples of poor communication.**

What is the problem with each of the situations? What would you do differently in these situations?

**When calling your boss to say you are sick:**

- *Yeah, I'm not coming in...*
- *What's the matter? How do you feel?*
- *Yeah, I'm not coming in...*

**When you're struggling with a new task:**

- *I don't know how to use this stupid machine. You have to do it for me. I can't do it.*
- *Why didn't you ask for help before?*
- *Dunno... This is just stupid.*

**When deciding what type of restaurant to eat in:**

- *I am very hungry. Let's eat something.*
- *Sure. Would you like Chinese or Italian?*
- *I don't care. You choose.*
- *Let's eat pasta then!*
- *I don't like it.*

**When a friend is telling you what is upsetting them at the moment:**

- *...It was really upsetting, how could he do this to me? I'm not sure I can cope anymore.*
- *Yeah, whatever... oh, hang on... Anyway, what do you want to do tomorrow? Shall we go shopping?*

**Look at these pictures.**

Are they communicating well or badly? How do you know?



Now, complete the Skills Check.

**Step 1:**

Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I think through ideas before I speak or communicate	1	2	3	4	5
1	I think through ideas before I speak or communicate them	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can communicate positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5
3	I know if what I say has been understood by the person I am speaking to	1	2	3	4	5
4	I know when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5
5	I listen openly and attentively to other people during conversations	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am aware of and respect the cultural values of the people that I am communicating with	1	2	3	4	5
7	I pay attention to my body language when in conversation with another person	1	2	3	4	5
8	I know when and how to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
9	I understand and follow instructions to carry out a specific task	1	2	3	4	5
10	I recognise situations when I need help and know who to ask	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall communication skills level.

<b>Overall, my communication skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

## Step 2:

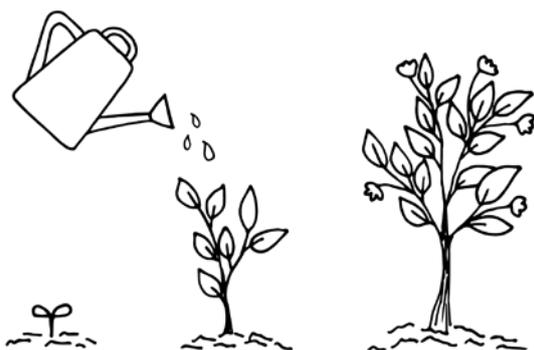
**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role who knows you well.

They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Thinks through ideas before they speak or communicate</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Thinks through ideas before they speak or communicate them	1	2	3	4	5
2	Communicates positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5
3	Knows if what they say has been understood by the person they are speaking to	1	2	3	4	5
4	Knows when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5
5	Listens openly and attentively to other people during conversations	1	2	3	4	5
6	Is aware of and respects the cultural values of the people that they are communicating with	1	2	3	4	5
7	Pays attention to their body language when in conversation with another person	1	2	3	4	5
8	Knows when and how to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
9	Understands and follows both instructions to carry out a specific task	1	2	3	4	5
10	Recognises situations when they need help and know who to ask	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall communications skills level.

Overall, their communication skills are:	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

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### Step 3:

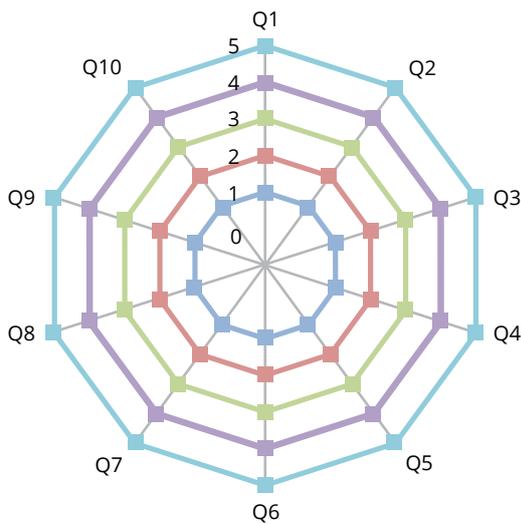
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

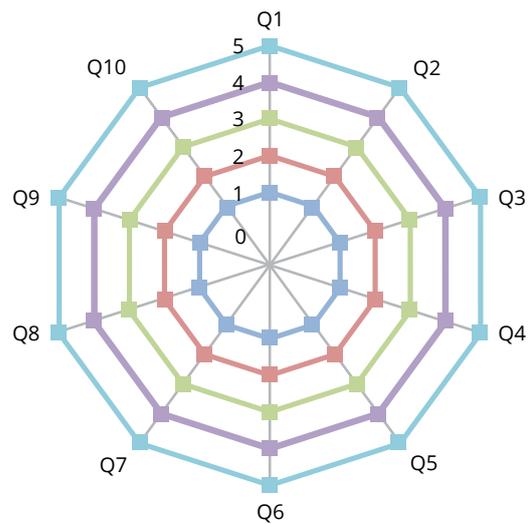
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be communication skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you have to communicate with other people.

## How do you come across?

Much communication is non-verbal, which means that how you position yourself, and how you use your face and body, communicates just as much – if not more than – the things you say.



Are the following people **confident and open**? Or are they **nervous or defensive**?



What about these people?





When would it be appropriate to sit like this?  
When would it be inappropriate?

Turn to last page of this section for suggested answers.

Prepare a presentation on any topic you like, for at least 2 minutes. Film yourself on your phone, and watch it back. Only you need to see this!

Think about your body language.

Was your body language:

- Confident, open and engaging?
- Nervous, defensive or uncomfortable?

How could you improve your body language next time? Make some notes here.

*Next time I could improve my body language by...*





When you meet people for the first time it is natural to be nervous. If the setting is an interview for a job or training place it can be really stressful. Here are some communication skills tips which might help.

**Action 1: Prepare yourself.** This might sound obvious, but it's often overlooked. Make sure you have something to say. For a job interview, research the company or the industry, and know the key facts. Even at a social event where you don't know many people, preparing a few things to say about yourself will mean that you can break the ice more easily.

**Action 2: Make a good first impression.** In formal situations like interviews, stay calm and introduce yourself with a smile, and a firm (but not excessive) handshake. Make sure that the palms of your hands are dry. Don't bring anything that could distract you, and very importantly, turn your phone off. If you're expected to dress smartly, then do so! Clean your shoes, make sure your hair is neat and that your clothes are appropriate and properly fitting. You can dress professionally and still express your own personal style.

**Action 3: Use appropriate body language.** When you sit down, sit with your back straight up against the chair or lean slightly forward, with your feet on the floor. This shows interest in the conversation. Keep your hands away from your face and hair, and avoid fidgeting. Keep your arms open, as folded arms can sometimes convey defensiveness. Display some animation with your hands and facial expressions to project a dynamic presence, but be aware that if you do this too much, it could appear unprofessional. Be aware of cultural values, such as the amount of personal space preferred by the other person.

**Action 4: Develop active listening skills.** Active listeners show that they are listening by using their body language, and they encourage and welcome the thoughts, opinions, and feelings of others. Pay attention to the conversation and avoid looking at the clock, your watch or phone, or showing other signs of disinterest. Smile and nod your head to indicate that you are engaged, but don't force a smile or a laugh. Keep your arms open, and maintain enough eye contact to demonstrate your interest. Active listening also helps the speaker in their thinking, and helps to organise their thoughts.

**Action 5: Maintain a two-way interaction.** Communication is a two-way process. We're all good at speaking, but how many of us really listen and then respond? In formal situations, allow the speaker to complete each question and statement before responding. Don't interrupt, and make sure that your responses genuinely answer the question. It's fine to pause if you need to think about the right response, because this shows that you have listened and are considering the best answer. Display your curiosity by asking questions – this helps to make a great impression. In more informal settings, take turns in your conversation. Adding in question tags such as 'isn't it?' or 'what do you think?' directly invites the other person to respond.

**Action 6: Be clear about what's being said.** If you ask questions, it shows that you're interested in finding out more. You could also ask questions to try and clarify anything you don't understand. If what's being said isn't clear, ask the other person to repeat, or ask them if they could rephrase it. Understanding correctly will save a lot of time and can build trust, so don't be afraid to seek clarification if you need to. This also applies to you. In particular, don't say 'yes' when you really mean 'no'. If you need to turn down an offer, do it politely, but firmly and directly.

**Action 7: Be concise.** As well as being clear on what's said, you should also aim to be concise, especially in formal situations. This is sometimes very difficult if you're nervous. However, long, elaborate sentences don't necessarily make you sound more intelligent. Keep it short and simple. Stick to the topic, and don't go off on a tangent.

**Action 8: Speak with confidence.** This really comes back to preparing well, but confidence is also about how you use your body language and voice, too. Understand your body language,

and plan in advance how you're going to sit and use your hands. Many people speak faster when they're nervous, so practice slowing your speech down, and pronounce words and sentences clearly. Check the meaning and pronunciation of words you're unsure about. Only speak at length on topics you know about and are comfortable to be questioned on.

**Action 9: Be your authentic self:** In situations where we don't feel comfortable or don't quite fit in, our response is often to project a personality which isn't how we really are. In formal situations, you can polish up your communication skills and appear professional, yet still allow your authentic self to shine through. How you do this will very much vary from person to person. How do you think you could do this?

**Action 10: Communicate appropriately.** If you go to a job interview and use the same informal slang you would use with friends, you're unlikely to create a good impression. There's nothing wrong with informal or slang speech, but it's not appropriate in formal situations. Similarly, don't be over-familiar – conversation about your family life or what you did at the weekend are misplaced here – and don't assume you already have the job. Keep a formal distance with your body language and speech. Finally, don't swear, use offensive words, or try and tell jokes. You'll probably be shown the door regardless of how well you communicate otherwise.

**Read '10 Actions for Effective Communication' and do the exercise below.**



**Which of these communication skills are you already good at?**

Blank space for writing answers to the first question.

**Which of these communication skills will you try for the first time?**

Blank space for writing answers to the second question.

**What other good communication skills tips can you think of?**

Blank space for writing answers to the third question.

**YOUR NOTES**

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

# ACTION PLANNING

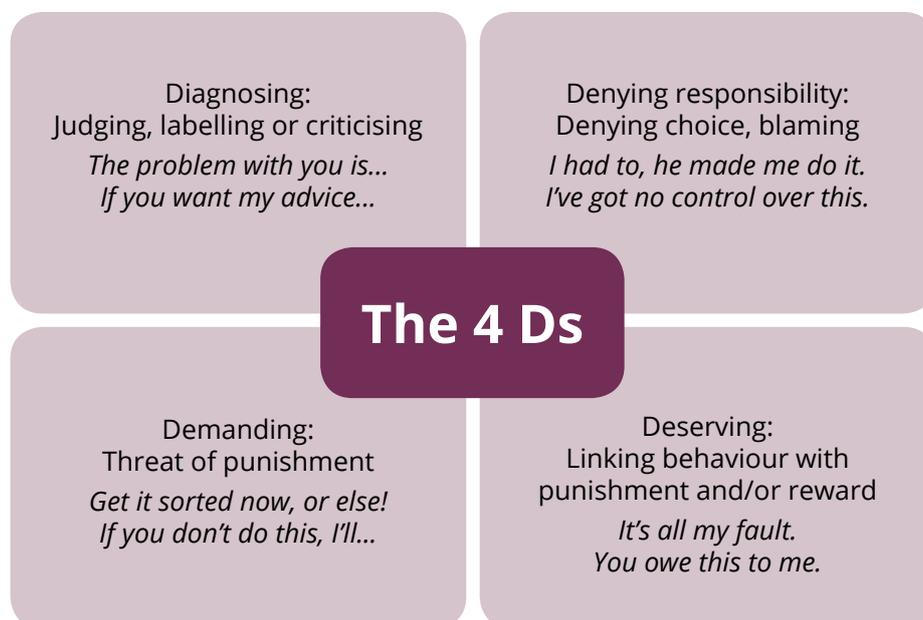
As we go through life, everyone finds themselves in situations which could escalate into a conflict. It's really easy to get into an argument, but much more difficult to get out of one. You have no control over how other people respond to conflict, but you can control how you respond, and how you communicate.

- When was the last time you had an argument with someone? Was it really worth it?
- How much was the result of poor communication on both sides?
- Could you have reacted differently to the situation? Would that have helped solve the problem?

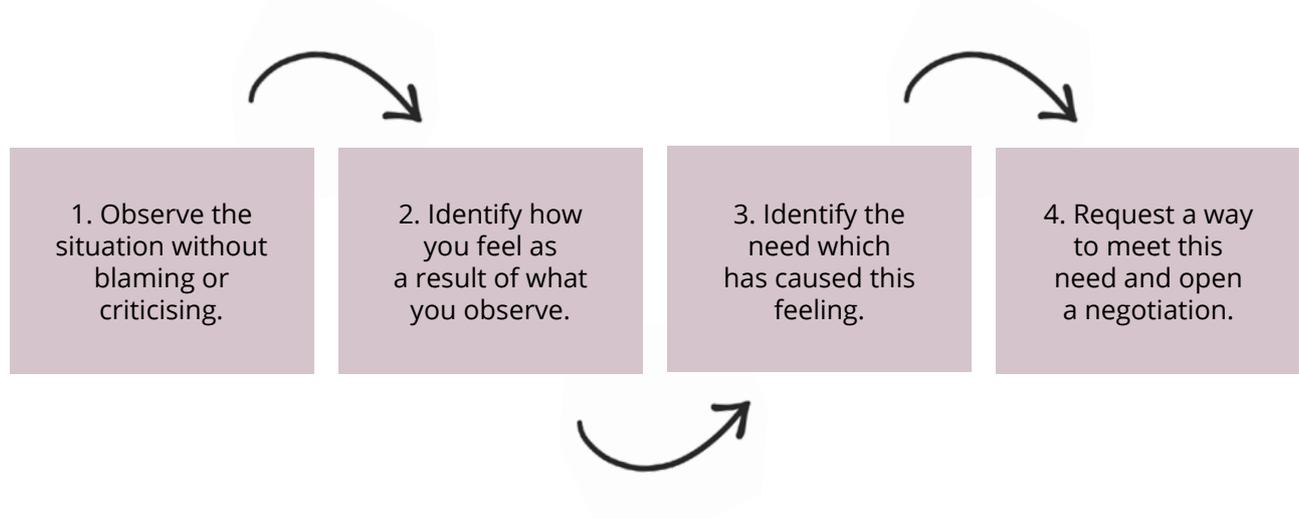
## Non-Violent Communication

The Non-Violent Communication (NVC) approach<sup>1</sup> argues that we end up getting into conflict with others because we fail to see that emotions like anger are the result of certain needs not being met, such as the need for acceptance, freedom, being valued, and feeling loved.

**The 4 Ds** give you some advice on what you should definitely avoid doing. These will escalate the conflict:

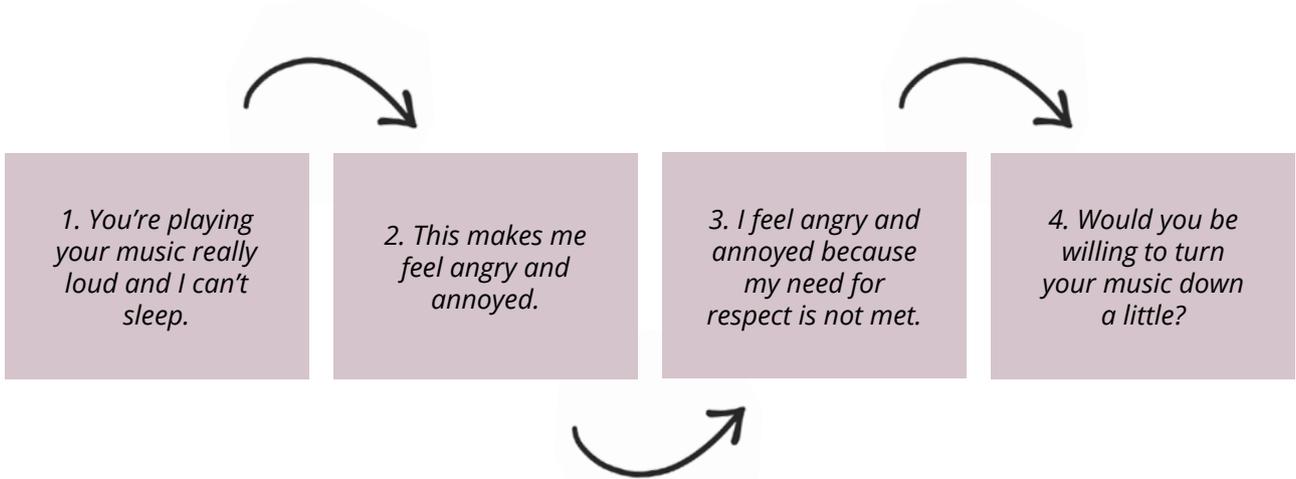


Instead of this model, we can try to resolve conflict situations using these 4 steps:



<sup>1</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent\\_Communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_Communication)

Look at the following example:



Non-violent communication uses the metaphors of the jackal and the giraffe to think about communication:



**The jackal** is a scavenger which attacks by instinct. The jackal uses criticism, punishment and reward, and induces guilt, shame and fear. The jackal sees things as 'either/or' and 'black or white', and sees other people as an enemy. When we hear with jackal ears we hear criticism and blame. We become a helpless victim who blames their own hurt feelings on the actions of others.

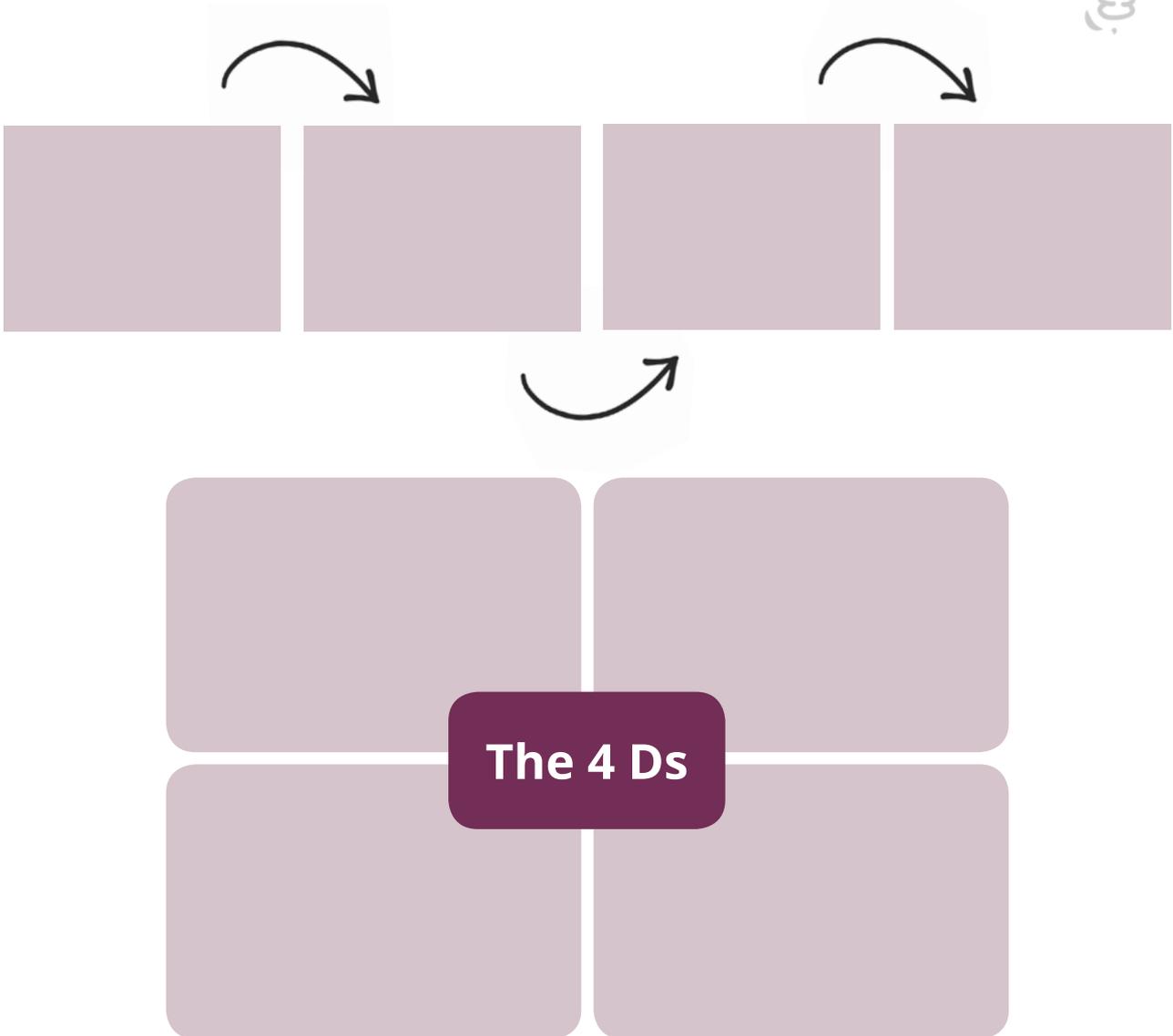


**The giraffe** has the biggest heart of all the land animals. Its long neck makes it vulnerable, but it can also look down on a situation and see it objectively, from above. It is a social animal which values connection, understanding and co-operation. The giraffe is concerned with understanding the needs and feelings of others, and knows that situations are rarely either/or. When we hear with giraffe ears we hear the hurt emotions of others, and our compassionate nature means we want to resolve this hurt. The giraffe takes responsibility for its own thoughts and actions.

Look at Step 3 of the 4 Steps process. Here are some more ways to strengthen your inner giraffe:

I feel	angry annoyed disappointed frustrated impatient lonely nervous overwhelmed sad uncomfortable	because my need for	acceptance appreciation autonomy community creativity love meaning peace respect rest	has not been met.
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Think about a challenging conversation or situation you might have to deal with over the next few days or weeks. Use the **4 Steps** and the **4 Ds** to plan what you **will do** and **won't do**. A worked example is shown on the next page.

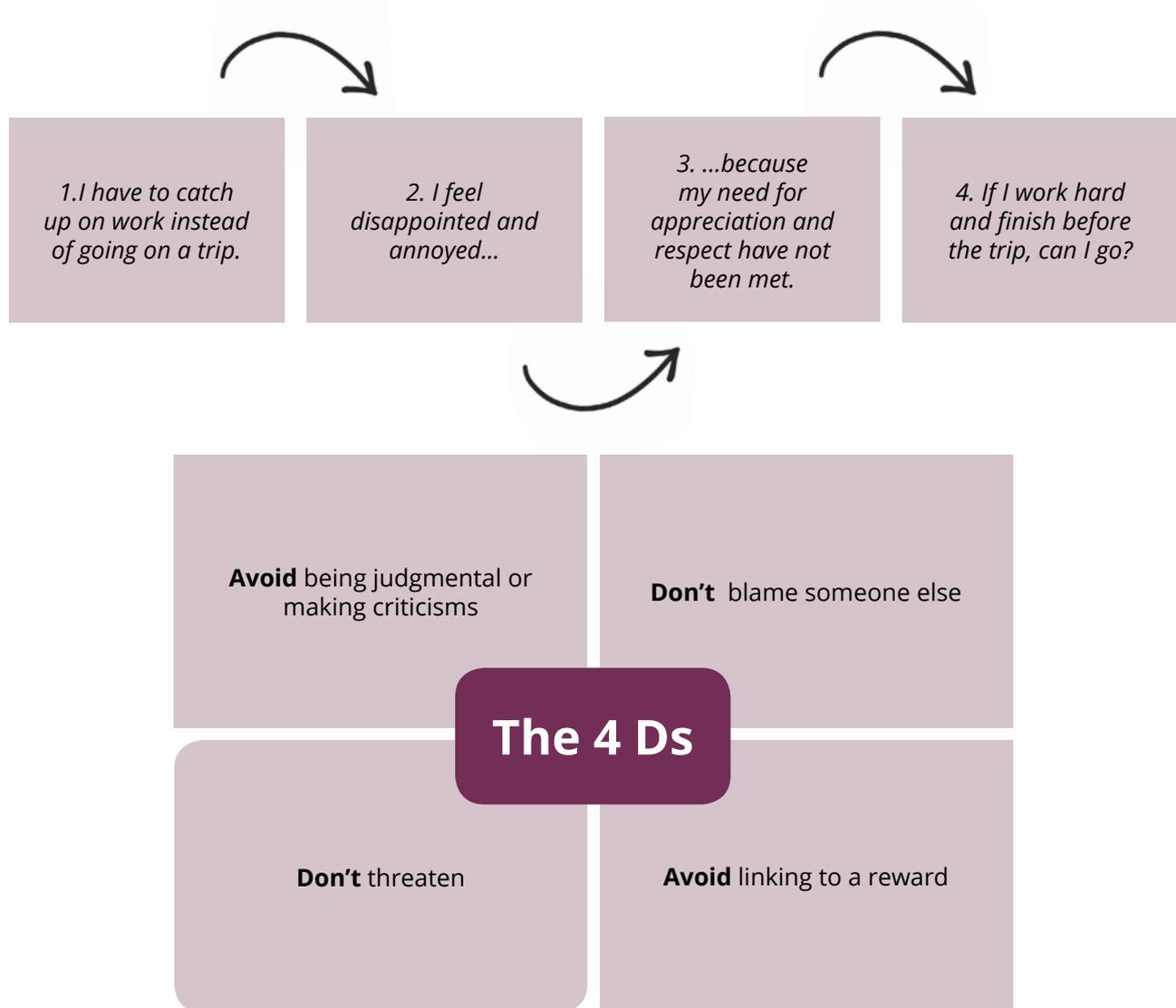


How did you handle the situation? Were you a jackal or a giraffe? Or a mixture of the two?



**Worked example:**

My tutor at college has said that I can't take part in a trip because I haven't handed in work on time, and I need to focus on catching up.



How did you handle the situation? Were you a jackal or a giraffe? Or a mixture of the two?



*The Jackal would have been a helpless victim, only hearing criticism, blame and disrespect. This would escalate the situation meaning that no compromise was possible.*



*The giraffe is trying to understand the other person's needs. By explaining the additional pressure and suggesting an alternative option, a negotiation process has begun.*

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your communication skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



**What task/activity did you complete?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for the user to write their response to the first question.

**Did you follow your own communication skills advice? How?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for the user to write their response to the second question.

**Can you now communicate better? How?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for the user to write their response to the third question.

**What new communication skills will you take with you and develop further in the future?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for the user to write their response to the fourth question.

# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your communication skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your communication skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I think through ideas before I speak or communicate	1	2	3	4	5
1	I think through ideas before I speak or communicate them	1	2	3	4	5
2	I communicate positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5
3	I know if what I said has been understood by the person I am speaking to	1	2	3	4	5
4	I know when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5
5	I listen openly and attentively to other people during conversations	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am aware of and respect the cultural values of the people that I am communicating with	1	2	3	4	5
7	I pay attention to my body language when in conversation with another person	1	2	3	4	5
8	I know when and how to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
9	I understand and follow instructions to carry out a specific task	1	2	3	4	5
10	I recognise situations when I need help and know who to ask	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall communication skills level.

<b>Overall, my communication skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represents where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Thinks through ideas before they speak or communicate</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Thinks through ideas before they speak or communicate	1	2	3	4	5
2	Communicates positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5
3	Knows if what they say has been understood by the person they are speaking to	1	2	3	4	5
4	Knows when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5
5	Listens openly and attentively to other people during conversations	1	2	3	4	5
6	Is aware of and respects the cultural values of the people that they are communicating with	1	2	3	4	5
7	Pays attention to their body language when in conversation with another person	1	2	3	4	5
8	Knows when and how to ask questions	1	2	3	4	5
9	Understands and follows instructions to carry out a specific task	1	2	3	4	5
10	Recognises situations when they need help and know who to ask	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates his or her overall communications skills level now.

<b>Overall, their communication skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

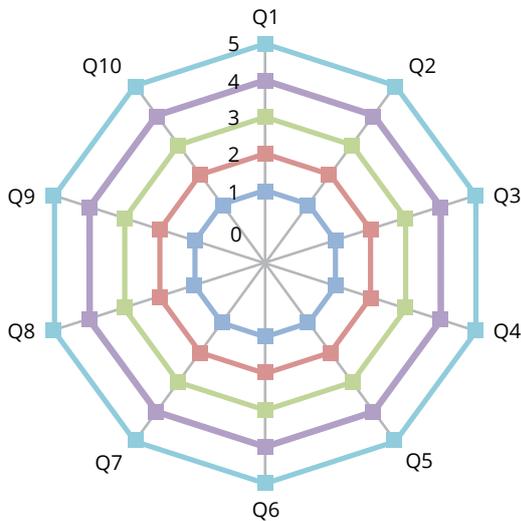
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

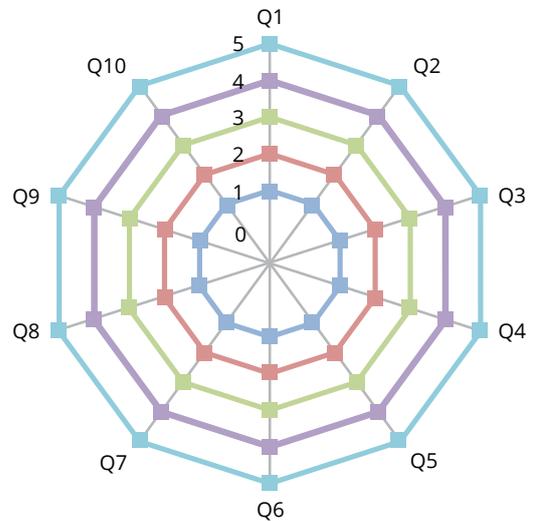
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

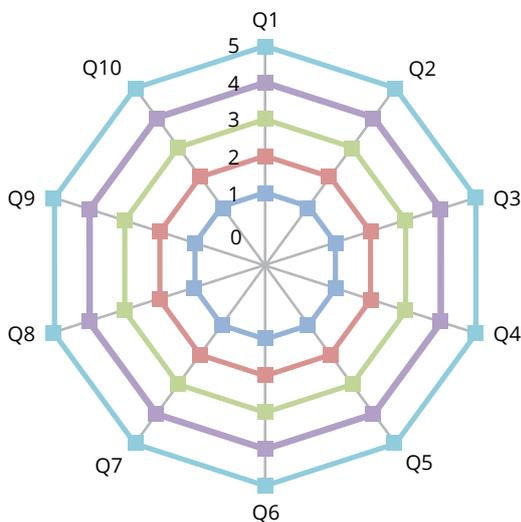


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

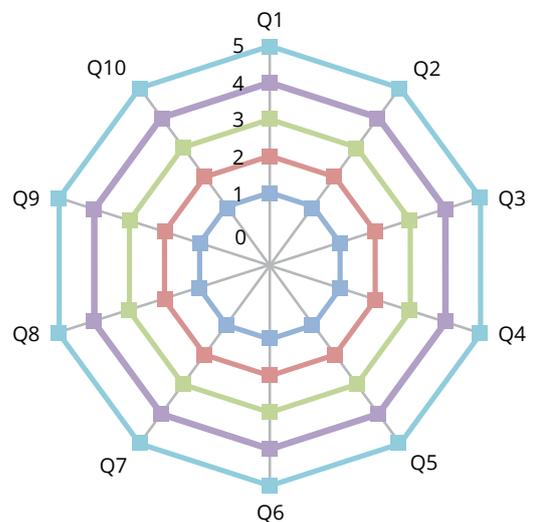
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams – your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your communication skills?

*I am going to continue developing my communication skills by:*

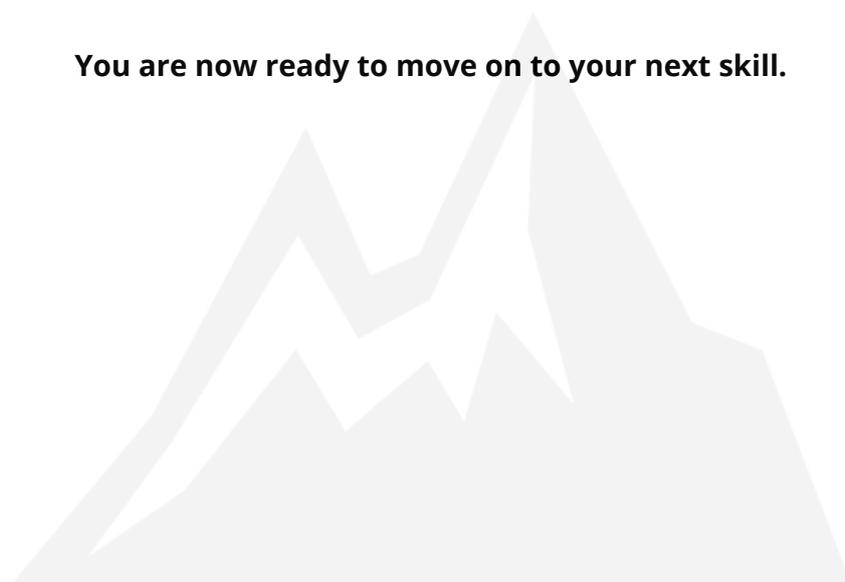
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in communicating effectively to a range of different people.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of good communication skills should you mention in your interview?  
How should you communicate during the interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**



# ANSWER SHEET

					
<p>Arms crossed over the chest and a direct stare indicates defensive and uneasy.</p>	<p>Interrupted eye contact and removing real or imaginary fluff, shows the person disagrees with what has been said.</p>	<p>Looking downwards at the hand and avoiding eye contact indicates insecurity.</p>	<p>Crossed legs and gripping the seat is indicative of insecurity, feeling nervous and lacking confidence.</p>	<p>Arms crossed over the chest and raised shoulders indicates nervous, defensive and un-confident.</p>	<p>Touching the nose indicates the person is uncertain and feels uncomfortable.</p>

					
<p>Open arms with rounded shoulders shows confident, trustworthy, and active listening.</p>	<p>Hand on hips is an aggressive defensive pose.</p>	<p>Paying full attention with direct eye contact shows confidence and interest.</p>	<p>Legs crossed closes up the body and indicates confident, defensive and liable to challenge.</p>	<p>Open and attentive, ready to take action.</p>	<p>Indicates that the person is listening closely in a professional manner.</p>



This is a very self-confident pose. It would be appropriate to sit like this in an informal setting such as with family or friends.

However it would be regarded as disrespectful in a formal or serious situation such as an interview or a work meeting.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**ADAPTABILITY SKILLS**

# ADAPTABILITY SKILLS



## What they are and why they're important

- Have you been in situations where you feel that the world around you is changing?
- Or have been surprised by an unexpected event that required an immediate reaction?
- How do you deal with these unexpected changes?

Life can seem like a rollercoaster ride, full of ups and downs. In all parts of our life we come across change – in personal relationships, in our school or college life, and in getting and sticking to a job.

Learning how to react to these changes is important in your relationships with other people and it takes time, thought and practice to become adaptable. Sometimes you need to realise that if a situation cannot change – you can! Even the smallest adjustments in your actions or attitude can result in higher satisfaction from your life and relationships.

In order to be adaptable, it requires a flexible attitude combined with the ability to change. To be adaptable also means to be creative.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# ADAPTABILITY SKILLS

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on one of the realities of modern life – dealing with changes.
- Think about how you can recognise situations where you need to react and be flexible.
- Plot out your own abilities to adapt to change, and decide how you might need to improve these.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some adaptability techniques whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your adaptability skills.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities. Go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role who knows you well.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop some adaptability skills in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:



Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK



## Look at these pictures.

What changes can you see between then and now?  
What has changed over the last 100 years?



**Think about changes over the last 100 years.** You could think about...

- The types of jobs people do
- Poverty and wealth
- Roles for men and women
- Transport and communications
- Leisure and entertainment
- Food and diet
- Clothes and fashion
- The education system
- Democracy and political participation

**Choose at least one of the aspects of life above, and make some notes below.**

Area of change:

What's changed over the last 100 years:



**Now, complete the Skills Check.**

**Step 1:**

**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> <i>I view change as an inevitable part of life</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I view change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I see changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I don't blame myself or other people when circumstances change	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I am open to new ways of seeing the world and viewing situations	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I pay attention to situations to recognise when a change may be needed	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I am prepared to change my approach if what I am doing is not working	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I try to overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I have respect for and consider the impact of changes on other people	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I am open to other people's suggestions about how I might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I support others when they are dealing with a change	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall adaptability skills level.

<b>Overall, my adaptability skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

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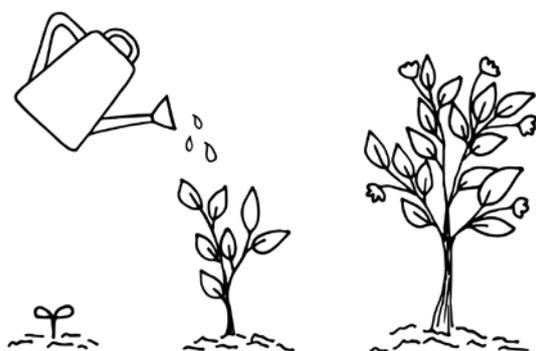
## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Views change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
1	Views change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
2	Sees changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5
3	Doesn't blame themselves or other people when circumstances change	1	2	3	4	5
4	Is open to new ways of seeing the world and viewing situations	1	2	3	4	5
5	Pays attention to situations to recognise when a change may be needed	1	2	3	4	5
6	Is prepared to change my approach if what they are doing is not working	1	2	3	4	5
7	Tries to overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5
8	Has respect for and considers the impact of changes on other people	1	2	3	4	5
9	Is open to other people's suggestions about how they might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5
10	Supports others when they are dealing with a change	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall adaptability skills level.

Overall, their adaptability skills are:	Emerging	Consolidating	Established



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

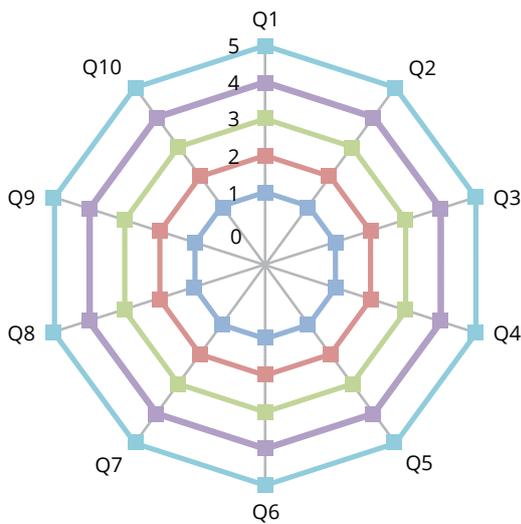
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

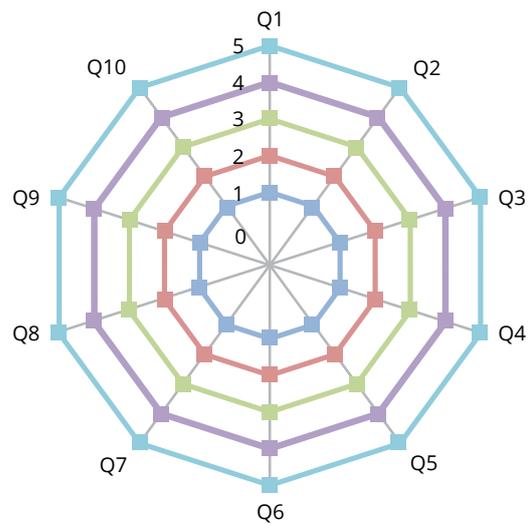
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be adaptability skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.



# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

## Thinking about Adaptability

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you will come across having to deal with changes. You can now start to identify the tasks and activities which can help you strengthen your adaptability skills.

Think about the following events. If they happened to you, how would you need to adapt?

**Read the suggestions below, and rate the different adaptability strategies by shading in the stars.**

<b>Challenge 1:</b> <b>Leaving your college course</b>	<b>Challenge 2:</b> <b>Moving to a new town, city or village</b>	<b>Challenge 3:</b> <b>Failing an important exam</b>
<p>How could you adapt to deal with this?</p>	<p>How could you adapt to deal with this?</p>	<p>How could you adapt to deal with this?</p>
<p><i>See the change as an opportunity to do something new</i></p>	<p><i>Make plans to discover new places and find out about the local area</i></p>	<p><i>Find out when I can resit the exam</i></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>
<p><i>Give myself time to plan my next steps</i></p>	<p><i>Plan a trip back to my old place - but not for a few months</i></p>	<p><i>Remind myself every day that everybody fails sometimes - it's natural</i></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>
<p><i>Make an effort to keep in contact with college friends in case things get tough</i></p>	<p><i>Join a new sports club or social group</i></p>	<p><i>Think about what I should do to improve my chances of passing next time</i></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>
<p><i>Keep looking forwards instead of backwards</i></p>	<p><i>Make a list of 5 things I like about your new place every evening</i></p>	<p><i>Get support from friends and family</i></p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>

Have you ever faced these situations? If so, how did you adapt? Write some notes below:





As we all journey through life we inevitably encounter change. Sometimes these changes can be welcome and exciting, whilst other changes can be scary or even terrifying. Learning to successfully adapt to change is important for living a full and happy life. It won't always be easy, but the following might help.

**Action 1: View change as a natural part of life.** However much we resist change, nothing stays the same forever. The seasons change, and humans are born, grow old and die. In fact, change is the only thing which is constant, and if we don't learn to adapt, we won't be able to 'go with the flow' of these changes, and we'll become stuck. The most important thing is to keep an open, curious mind about change. However, this doesn't mean blindly accepting every change enthusiastically, especially when we feel morally compromised. It's possible to be true to your beliefs and adaptable to situations at the same time – you don't have to question your integrity when you change.

**Action 2: Deal with setbacks.** People who are resistant to change often start moaning as soon as they find themselves in a difficult situation. This is understandable when the change is big, such as losing a job. However, it can make it even more difficult to deal with a setback, and at some point, the reality of change has to be confronted. Instead, focus on solving the problem. Learn from your mistakes, and move on as soon as possible. You'll develop the confidence to deal with setbacks, and your fear of change will subside.

**Action 3: Understand your 'behavioural script'.** We all carry 'scripts' around with us which we have learned previously, and which cause us to respond automatically to situations. The problem comes when we rigidly apply a script even though it doesn't quite fit the situation. As an example, when people protest that 'I've always done it this way!' they may be blocking out the signals which point to the need for change. Understand your reactions to change, and if they get in the way, change the script. Accept that script as important at one time, but let it go. You might need support to achieve this.

**Action 4: Look forward.** When things change, we often get nostalgic about how they used to be. This is natural, but we often forget what was bad about a past situation, and only focus on what was good. In any case, the past is gone, and can't be changed, so it's useless dwelling on it. When you're riding a bicycle, you don't keep looking behind you – you look ahead! Instead, think about what you can do now, and what changes you can make in the future. Think of alternative plans and scenarios, since your first approach may not always work. Set realistic goals and you will never feel like you have failed.

**Action 5: Build a balanced life.** Linked to this, trying to succeed in all aspects of life is great, but you risk ending up feeling miserable in case of failure. Create a balanced life instead. After all, it's impossible to adapt to all changes in all aspects of life, no matter how strong you are. Take each change one step at a time, and avoid blaming others for change. If you feel you might struggle with this, you should work especially on your time and energy management skills, and your positive thinking skills.

**Action 6: Create support networks.** Instead of dwelling on the unpleasant changes, take time out and spend time on things which help to relax and rejuvenate you. When you face significant changes, examine your life, and figure out which aspects you are either neglecting or paying too much attention to. Talk to friends, family and colleagues and see if they can offer a different perspective on the change. Learn from them, because they might have faced similar changes themselves.

**Action 7: Stretch yourself.** The most adaptable people welcome the opportunity to flex their 'adaptability muscles'. There are easy ways to do this, such as taking a different route to work each morning, or regularly trying new and unusual food. Challenge yourself to step outside of your comfort zone. Think 'why not?' instead of 'why?' Learn to break through any limitations you may

have set for yourself. If you do this, you'll learn to see every change as an opportunity for learning and growth.

**Action 8: Thrive rather than survive.** Some people don't just adapt to change, they function best when they face challenges, and they're learning something new. A good way to think about dealing with change is the **Thrive Cycle of Resilience: Survive, Adapt, Recover and Thrive**. Firstly, we survive a change by dealing with the immediate practical aspects. Secondly, we accept the change and adapt to it. Thirdly, we recover from the change, and start to see it as 'normal'. Fourthly, we thrive, and we wonder what on earth we did before! If you aim to work through all four stages you'll become extremely resilient and adaptable.

**Action 9: Grab opportunities.** Whilst you can't control those changes which are imposed on you, you do have control over how you respond to them. Not only that, you can also go out and find change, rather than wait for change to happen to you. Stop waiting for the right time, right place, right people... When it comes to adaptability, there's no 'right moment'. Grab opportunities when they arise, and say 'yes' more often than you say 'no'. You might never get the chance again.

**Action 10: Stick at things.** Being adaptable doesn't mean jumping from one thing to another. Some changes require time, effort and determination before you realise their importance. If you make a decision to respond in a certain way, and it's working, see it through to the end. A fruit tree will take years before it matures and grows its best fruit. If you can do this, then change, development and growth will feel as natural, as inevitable, and as welcome as the changes in the weather.

**Read '10 Actions for an Adaptable & Flexible Life' again, and do the exercise below.**



**Which of these 10 Actions are completely new to you?**

Blank space for writing answers to the first question.

**Choose 3 Actions to start implementing immediately.**

Blank space for writing answers to the second question.

**Think of a recent change you faced. Which of these strategies did you use?**

Blank space for writing answers to the third question.



**Think about the following quote.  
Is this a useful way to think about adaptability?**

*You must be shapeless, formless, like water.*

*When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup.*

*When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash.*

*Become like water, my friend.*

**Bruce Lee, Chinese/American actor**

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# ACTION PLANNING

## Who would you rather be?

Look at these two reactions to the same situation.

Your group are on a trip to another city. You've had a great time, and are ready to come home.

You were due to catch a train at 10am, but there is a train drivers' strike today. There won't be any trains until 10pm. You have 12 hours to kill and you've already checked out of your hostel.



*What a nightmare! Those were the worst 12 hours of my life. There was nothing to do and I was so bored. Those train drivers absolutely ruined our trip.*

*I got a really bad headache, and the situation made me argue with my girlfriend. Well, she was trying to help, but she said I was being an idiot, and then left me on my own.*

*The whole thing could have been avoided!*



*Yeah, it was a bit of a nightmare, but we got through it. These things happen, and you just have to deal with it. For all I know, the train drivers might have had a good reason to strike, anyway.*

*I started to get angry, but then I realised that would be pointless, so I called my flatmate to tell her I'd be arriving back in the early hours of the morning, then I went to find a nice café to finish some coursework.*

*I also asked a few others to go back to a place we really liked. We had great fun. In the end, we had extra time on the trip! My boyfriend was angry and frustrated, though. I tried to help him through it but he just wasn't adaptable.*

**Think about some key tasks or activities you're going to take part in.**



Once you've identified this, think about something that could go wrong. This is your chance to think about what strategies you can put in place to adapt. The unexpected often happens!

**Could these things go wrong for you?**

- You become ill and can't participate.
- You have a big argument with your best friend, colleague or collaborator.
- Other people aren't as committed as you think they should be – you're the only one who's serious.
- Things are taking far too long, and you'll be late or miss a deadline.
- You really disagree with someone else's approach.

**Choose one thing which could go wrong for you, and write it here:**

Write down two different approaches to this situation. Imagine that you are telling someone about how you dealt with this afterwards. One approach is rigid and unadaptable, the other is flexible and adaptable. You can use the examples on the previous page to help you.



Rigid and unadaptable:



Flexible and adaptable:

**Read your 'flexible and adaptable' text again.**

- |                      |   |                          |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Did you show that... | You view change as part of life?                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You see change as opportunities to learn and experience things?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You don't blame other people?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You're open to new ways of viewing a situation?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You recognise when you might need to change your reaction?        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You can overcome setbacks?  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You respect how change can affect other people?                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You listen to other people's suggestion about how you can change? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                      | You help and support others through change?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Write down your 'flexible and adaptable' approach in the space below.**

Cut it out, and keep it in your wallet or notebook, or you could also copy this.  
If what you imagined does go wrong, you'll be able to remind yourself how to adapt well to this situation!



***I am a very flexible and adaptable person!***





# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your adaptability skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



**What task/activity did you complete?**

**Did you follow your own advice on adapting to change? How?**

**Can you now adapt better to change? How?**

**What new skills in adapting to changes will you take with you and develop further in the future?**

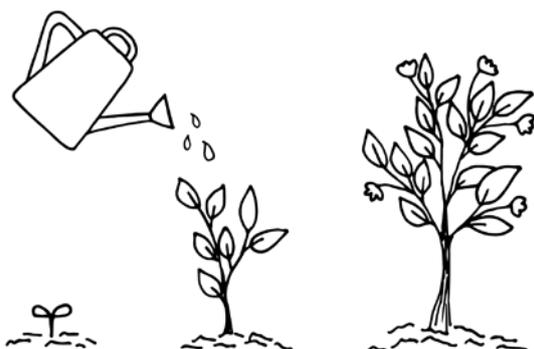
# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your adaptability skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your adaptability skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I view change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
1	I view change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
2	I see changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5
3	I don't blame myself or other people when circumstances change	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am open to new ways of seeing the world and viewing situations	1	2	3	4	5
5	I pay attention to situations to recognise when a change may be needed	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am prepared to change my approach if what I am doing is not working	1	2	3	4	5
7	I can overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5
8	I have respect for and consider the impact of changes on other people	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am open to other people's suggestions about how I might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5
10	I support others through a change	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall adaptability skills level.

<b>Overall, my adaptability skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

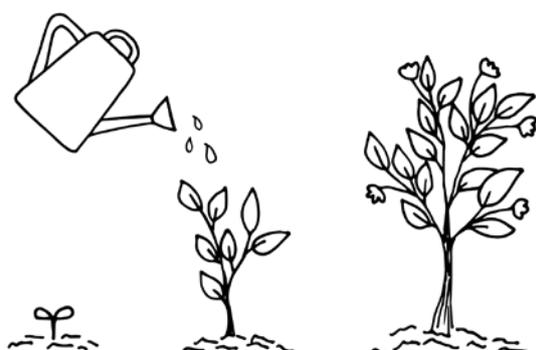
**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represents where you're at. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Views change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
1	Views change as an inevitable part of life	1	2	3	4	5
2	Sees changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5
3	Doesn't blame themselves or other people when circumstances change	1	2	3	4	5
4	Is open to new ways of seeing the world and viewing situations	1	2	3	4	5
5	Pays attention to situations to recognise when a change may be needed	1	2	3	4	5
6	Is prepared to change my approach if what they are doing is not working	1	2	3	4	5
7	Can overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5
8	Has respect for and considers the impact of changes on other people	1	2	3	4	5
9	Is open to other people's suggestions about how they might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5
10	Supports others through a change	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall adaptability skills level.

<b>Overall, their adaptability skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

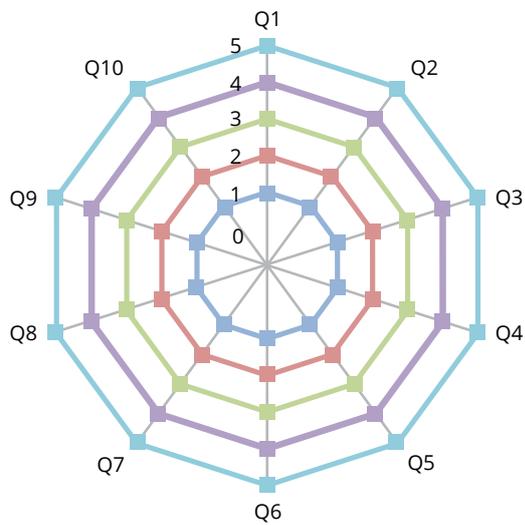
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

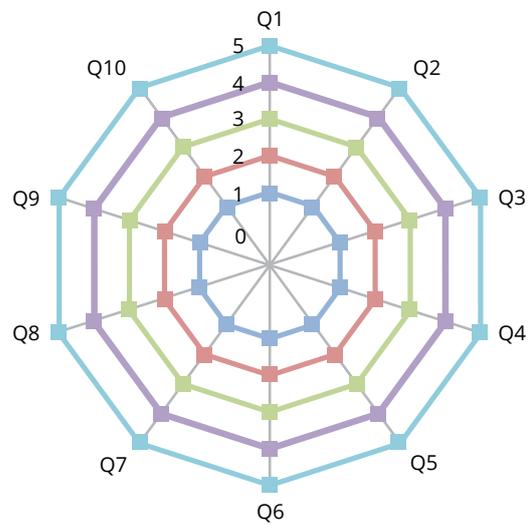
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

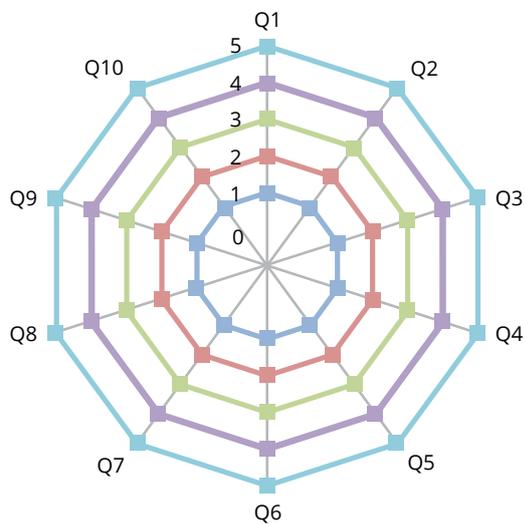


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

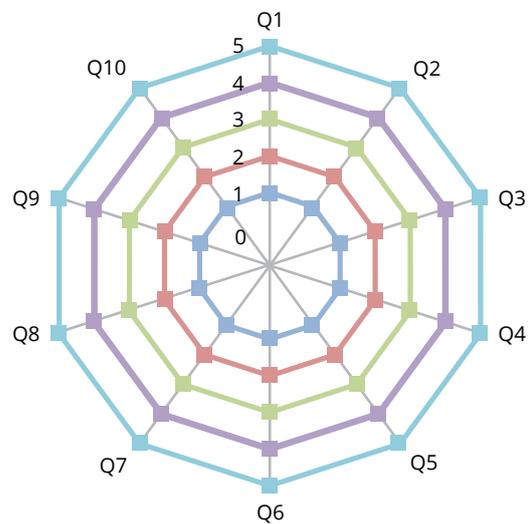
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams – your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your communication skills?

*I am going to continue developing my adaptability skills by:*

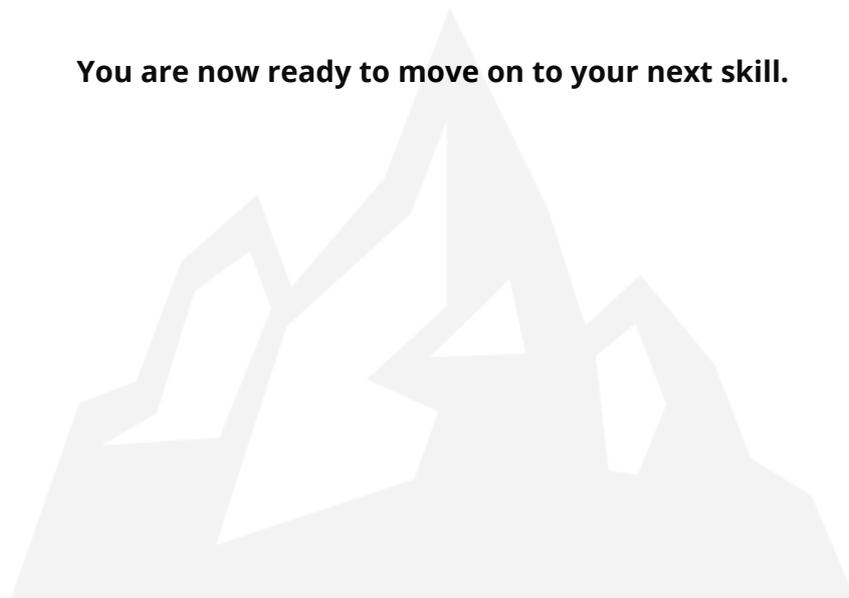
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in adapting to a range of different circumstances.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of good adaptability skills should you mention in your interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**



## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**TIME AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

# TIME AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT



## What it is and why it's important

- Do you ever feel like you never have enough time to do everything?
- Are you constantly running late, missing deadlines, or feeling tired and stressed?

If your answer to these questions is 'yes', then this section is most definitely for you. However, the opposite can also be true. Many of us go through periods of having too much time, with too little to focus on and nothing to energise us. Feeling like there's too much to do can make us feel tired and irritable; not having enough to do can make us feel tired and demotivated. In both cases, our energy can become depleted.

Striking the right balance is important for our own wellbeing, and for how other people see us. Whilst we can't control every single demand placed on us, how we spend our time, and how we manage our energy levels, is ultimately up to us.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# TIME AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on how you currently manage your time and energy.
- Think about some strategies to manage your time and energy effectively, and which of these could be applied in a range of scenarios.
- Plot out your own skills and abilities in time and energy management, and decide how you might need to improve these skills.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some time and energy management techniques whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your adaptability skills.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities. Go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role who knows you well.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop some time and energy management skills in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:



Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK



Look at the following pictures.

When do you feel most awake and able to concentrate?



Which time of year suits you best?



What's your favourite day of the week?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------	----------	--------

Which picture best describes how you feel now?



Or sketch your own picture:

**Now, complete the Skills Check.**

**Step 1:**

**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!
	<i><b>Example:</b> I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am aware of the limits to my time and energy and don't over commit myself	1	2	3	4	5
3	I stay calm and focused even when I have lots of things to do	1	2	3	4	5
4	When I feel tired, I know what to do to help myself feel calm and rejuvenated	1	2	3	4	5
5	I regularly write 'to do' lists and tick off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5
6	I don't try to do everything all at once, and am happy to leave less urgent tasks for another day	1	2	3	4	5
7	I understand how long it takes to get certain tasks done, and leave myself enough time to complete them	1	2	3	4	5
8	I think of time and energy as 'units' and understand how to spend these wisely	1	2	3	4	5
9	When I start doing something, I like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5
10	I don't procrastinate or put things off until later if I can do them now	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall time and energy management skills level.

<b>Overall, my time and energy management skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

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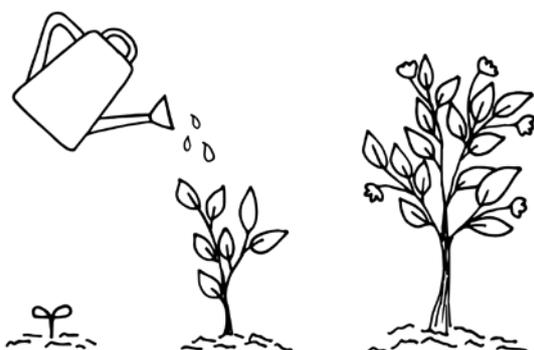
## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Is always on time for things and rarely misses deadlines</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Is always on time for things and rarely misses deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
2	Is aware of the limits to their time and energy and doesn't over commit themselves	1	2	3	4	5
3	Stays calm and focused even when they have lots of things to do	1	2	3	4	5
4	When they feel tired, they know what to do to help themselves feel calm and rejuvenated	1	2	3	4	5
5	Regularly writes 'to do' lists and ticks off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5
6	Doesn't try to do everything all at once, and is happy to leave less urgent tasks for another day	1	2	3	4	5
7	Understands how long it takes to get certain tasks done, and leaves themselves enough time to complete them	1	2	3	4	5
8	Thinks of time and energy as 'units' and understands how to spend these wisely	1	2	3	4	5
9	When they start doing something, they like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5
10	Doesn't procrastinate or put things off until later if they can do them now	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall time and energy management skills level.

<b>Overall, their time and energy management skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

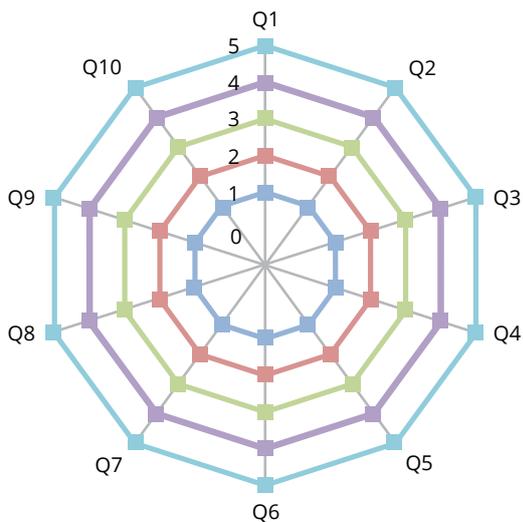
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

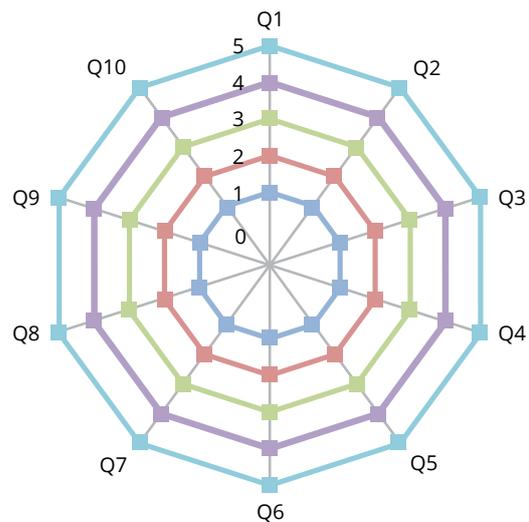
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be the time and energy management skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.



# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you will have to plan and prioritise how you spend both your time and your energy.

## Feeling overwhelmed? Prioritise!

When we have lots of things to do, it's easy to just try and do them all, without thinking which should be done first, and which left until later. Here is a way to help you to decide how to prioritise<sup>1</sup>:

<p><b>1 Important and urgent</b> - <b>DO NOW</b></p> <p>These are important things which can have an immediate impact on other people, and which have consequences if they are not done. Do these first.</p> <p><i>Crisis management</i> <i>Appointments and deadlines</i></p>	<p><b>2 Important but not urgent</b> - <b>PLAN &amp; DO NEXT</b></p> <p>Do these next, because these are the tasks which are important, but you have more time for. Plan to spend as much time as possible on these.</p> <p><i>Work planning and preparation</i> <i>Relationship building</i></p>
<p><b>3 Urgent but not important</b> - <b>DO LATER</b></p> <p>Some things might be urgent – especially for other people – but actually, they're not that important. Do them later, or ask someone else to do them.</p> <p><i>Other people's issues or problems which are not important (e.g. interruptions or unimportant emails)</i></p>	<p><b>4 Not important and not urgent</b> - <b>ELIMINATE</b></p> <p>These really are a waste of your time, and you should do them as little as possible.</p> <p><i>Browsing on social media at work</i> <i>Gossiping with colleagues</i></p>

Think about all the things you have to do over the next few days, and decide which boxes they should go into. Try to include at least two tasks in each box.



<p><b>Tasks for the next few days:</b></p>	<p><b>1 Important and urgent</b></p>	<p><b>2 Important but not urgent</b></p>
	<p><b>3 Urgent but not important</b></p>	<p><b>4 Not important and not urgent</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time\\_management#The\\_Eisenhower\\_Method](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_management#The_Eisenhower_Method)

## Time and energy management in context – 10 Actions for a Time-Effective Life



It can sometimes seem that the amount of energy we have, and our approach to time management, is fixed and can't be changed. However, we know that this isn't the case. Making some simple changes to your routine can really make a difference. Ironically, if you spend some time and effort in making these changes, you'll almost certainly find that you have more time, and more energy, to focus on what's important.

**Action 1: Know your energy levels.** Being busy doesn't necessarily mean that you're also going to be productive. The key to this is to schedule tasks around your own energy levels. Some people feel more energetic in the mornings, whilst others peak in the afternoons, and still others find concentrating at night time easier. It's not always possible to do your work when it suits you – that also depends on your working hours – but if you know when you're most productive, you can schedule some tasks around this.

**Action 2: Plan to make the most of every day.** Set aside 5 minutes at the end of each day to plan what you're going to do tomorrow. Think about how important each task is, and get the important and urgent tasks out of the way first. If you can make this part of your daily routine, you'll have more energy and focus, and over time, planning will become a habit.

**Action 3: Limit your time.** Have you ever found yourself really absorbed in doing something creative, and you lose all track of time? Whilst getting into the 'flow' is great for creativity, you also need to keep an eye on the time if you have lots to do. Set yourself a time limit to deal with tasks. You could use a stopwatch or countdown timer app on your phone.

**Action 4: Deal with distractions.** When we're in the middle of something, distractions can be annoying. It takes extra effort to refocus on what you're doing if you've been interrupted. If you need to concentrate, you could wear headphones for some tasks. Browsing on social media or the internet is the biggest distraction of all. Whilst you're concentrating, switch off your phone, pause your email inbox, or disconnect from wifi altogether. Plan short breaks to browse and surf when you choose to.

**Action 5: Do it now!** Instead of tackling the most urgent and important tasks now, we often put them off until later. One way of dealing with this is the '2 minute rule'. If it can be done in less than 2 minutes, do it now. If it takes more than 2 minutes, then start it, and only spend 2 minutes on it. For example, if you have a 1,000 word assignment to complete, just spend 2 minutes now writing 50 words. Getting started is sometimes the most difficult task of all. You'll break through the procrastination barrier.

**Action 6: Don't multi-task.** Many people take pride in the amount of tasks they can juggle all at once, but most of the evidence suggests that the more tasks you try to do at the same time, the less well they'll get done. If you can, plan to do one thing at a time, do it well, and then move on to the next thing. You'll be more productive and develop a much greater sense of achievement.

**Action 8: Say no, and mean it.** If other people ask you to do something and it interrupts what you're focusing on, it's fine to tell them 'no' (unless it's a real crisis). Good communication skills are important here. If people know that you'll drop everything to respond to their priorities, they'll expect it, and you'll never get your own work done! At the end of the day, people will respect you more if you're clear on what you can do, and what you can't. Don't be afraid to ask for help or to revise deadlines if they're proving to be unrealistic. With good communication, a solution can usually be found.

**Action 7: Break down tasks into smaller tasks.** If a task seems so big and complex that you don't know where to start, you'll be more tempted to procrastinate and it'll never get done. The way to deal with this is to implement the '2 minute rule'. You could also treat the task as a problem to solve, and implement some of the planning, problem solving and analytical thinking skills you've learnt. Break it down into smaller tasks so that it becomes more manageable, and estimate how

long you'll need for each small task. Another tendency to avoid is perfectionism. As you're working on the task, don't aim for it to be 'perfect'. Get it done, and improve it later. If you can't, let it go and move on to the next thing.

**Action 9: Make lists.** You've already thought about this with your daily planning. Once you have a plan, you can take your 'to do' list, and then as you do things, make a 'done' list. It feels good when we tick things off and can see the 'done' list growing. You could also think about making a 'to don't' list. For example, resolve that for the next week, you won't check your phone for 20 minutes over breakfast. Decide which habits you want to break and focus on breaking them.

**Action 10: Rest and recharge.** Last but not least, we all need regular time to rest and recharge our batteries. There's no point managing your time well and being productive if you're not enjoying life. Make sure you plan to do things which you enjoy, which relax you, and which excite you. Whilst alcohol or recreational drugs can be fun at first, they actually make your mind and body more tired, so minimise these activities, or stop them altogether. Plan to eat well, get enough sleep, take regular exercise, and make time for friends and family.



**Read '10 Actions for a Time-Effective Life' and do the exercise below.**

**The easiest action to implement:**

Blank space for writing the easiest action to implement.

**The most difficult action to implement:**

Blank space for writing the most difficult action to implement.

**The action which will have the biggest impact on me:**

Blank space for writing the action which will have the biggest impact on me.

**The action which will have the biggest impact on me:**

Blank space for writing the action which will have the biggest impact on me.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# ACTION PLANNING

The amount of time we spend on tasks is often very different to the amount of time we think we spend! Estimate how much time you spend on different tasks and activities. Then go and time yourself!



Task	I estimate this takes...	This actually takes...
1. <i>Brushing my teeth</i>		
2. <i>Going to work/school/college</i>		
3. <i>Preparing &amp; eating breakfast</i>		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Small amounts of time spent on little things can mount up, especially your screen time. Record your use over one day in the table below.

You could also download an app to track your screen time, such as Social Fever, Moment or RealizD.

	Using social media			Checking emails			Surfing the internet		
	From	To	Total	From	To	Total	From	To	Total
1	08:30	08:43	13 mins						
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
<b>Total</b>	Add up the 'total' column:			Add up the 'total' column:			Add up the 'total' column:		

Making sure you get enough sleep is absolutely crucial for managing your time and energy. Too little sleep, or too much sleep, can make you feel tired and irritable. Choose one week and keep a sleep diary.

	Time getting up	Time going to bed	Total hours sleep	Did I get enough sleep?
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				



Think of three actions you're going to experiment with. Cut them out and carry them with you. You could put them in your wallet or purse, or stick them to a diary or folder.



		
Time & Energy Action:	Time & Energy Action:	Time & Energy Action:

Make a plan for a task you need to carry out. This could be something fairly big, or it could be quite small. Whatever it is, write down how you're going to use the 3 actions you've identified above.



<b>What task are you going to carry out?</b>		
Is the task... (✓ tick)	Important & urgent?	Important but not urgent?
	Not important but urgent?	Not important and not urgent?
How long should the task take?	How are you going to start?	How are you going to finish?
Action:	<i>I will implement this action by...</i>	
Action:	<i>I will implement this action by...</i>	
Action:	<i>I will implement this action by...</i>	
As you do the task, make notes about how you manage your time and energy:		

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your time and energy management skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



**What task/activity did you complete?**

**Did you follow your own advice on time and energy management? How?**

**Can you now manage your time and energy better? How?**

**What new skills in time and energy management will you take with you and develop further in the future?**

# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your time and energy management skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your time and energy management skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am aware of the limits to my time and energy and don't over commit myself	1	2	3	4	5
3	I stay calm and focused even when I have lots of things to do	1	2	3	4	5
4	When I feel tired, I know what to do to help myself feel calm and rejuvenated	1	2	3	4	5
5	I regularly write 'to do' lists and tick off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5
6	I don't try to do everything all at once, and am happy to leave less urgent tasks for another day	1	2	3	4	5
7	I understand how long it takes to get certain tasks done, and leave myself enough time to complete them	1	2	3	4	5
8	I think of time and energy as 'units' and understand how to spend these wisely	1	2	3	4	5
9	When I start doing something, I like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5
10	I don't procrastinate or put things off until later if I can do them now	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall time and energy management skills level.

<b>Overall, my time and energy management skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Is always on time for things and rarely misses deadlines</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Is always on time for things and rarely misses deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
2	Is aware of the limits to their time and energy and doesn't over commit themselves	1	2	3	4	5
3	Stays calm and focused even when they have lots of things to do	1	2	3	4	5
4	When they feel tired, they know what to do to help themselves feel calm and rejuvenated	1	2	3	4	5
5	Regularly writes 'to do' lists and ticks off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5
6	Doesn't try to do everything all at once, and is happy to leave less urgent tasks for another day	1	2	3	4	5
7	Understands how long it takes to get certain tasks done, and leaves themselves enough time to complete them	1	2	3	4	5
8	Thinks of time and energy as 'units' and understands how to spend these wisely	1	2	3	4	5
9	When they start doing something, they like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5
10	Doesn't procrastinate or put things off until later if they can do them now	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall time and energy management skills level.

<b>Overall, their time and energy management skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

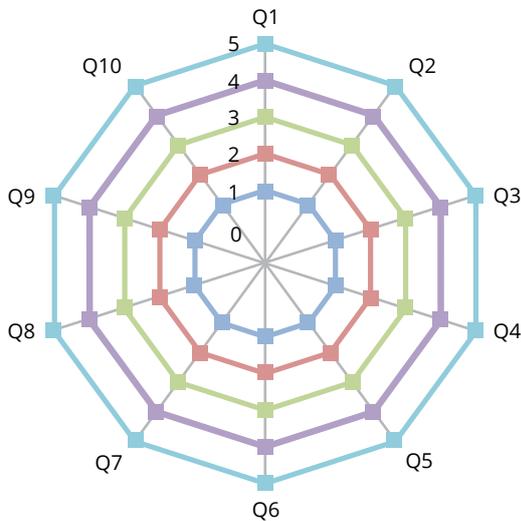
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

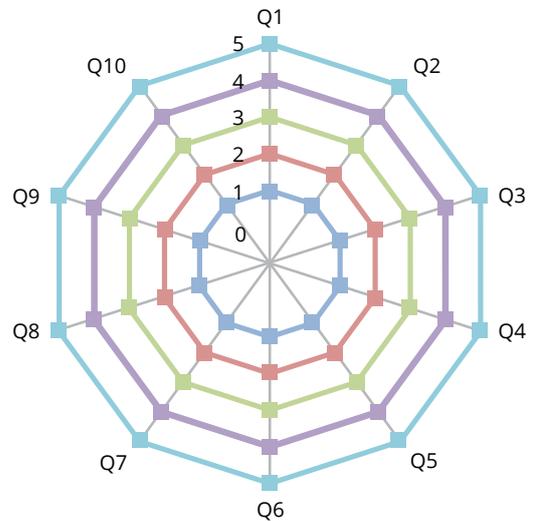
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

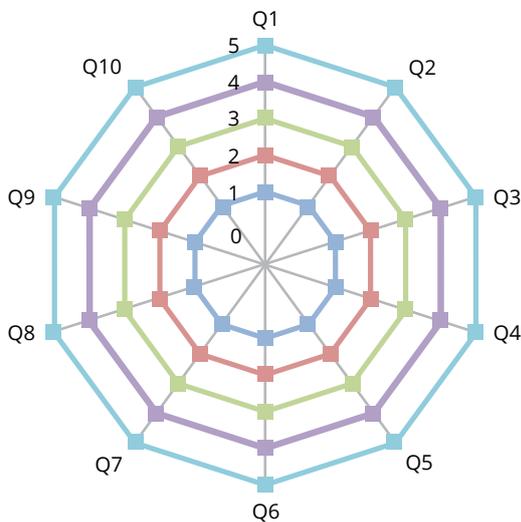


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

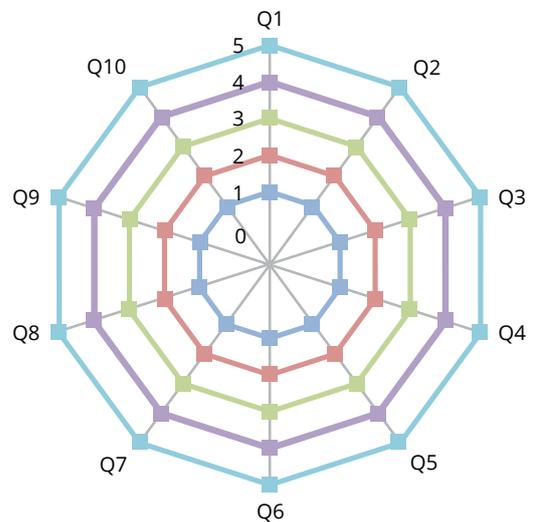
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## **1. How are you going to continue developing your time and energy management skills?**

*I am going to continue developing my time and energy management skills by:*

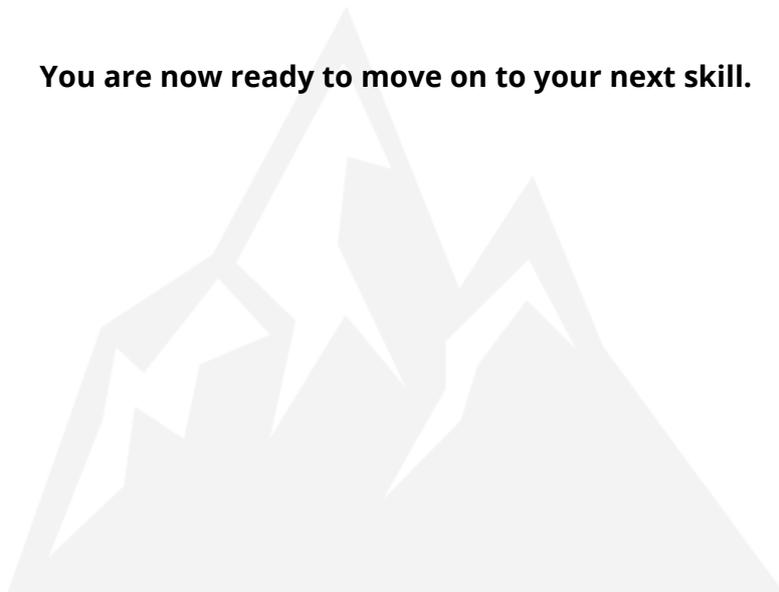
## **2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in managing your time and energy effectively.**

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## **3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.**

*What further examples of good time and energy management skills should you mention in your interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**







**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**WORK ETHIC**

# WORK ETHIC

## What it is and why it's important

- Is hard work more important than talent or ability?
- Or is success in life more about who you know, or the luck of the draw?



Employers will often say that they want to recruit someone with a strong work ethic, but it's not always obvious what they mean. It's almost as if we're all supposed to know what a good work ethic is without anyone ever needing to explain it. In the minds of many, some people are fortunate enough to have a 'good' work ethic, whilst others are intrinsically lazy or workshy.

However, it is possible to identify what makes up a positive work ethic, and how you can go about developing and strengthening this. Whatever you want out of life, working hard is certainly important, but there are lots of other things to consider, too.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# WORK ETHIC

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on your current work ethic, and your approach to work and study.
- Think about some strategies to develop and maintain a positive work ethic, and which of these could be applied in a range of scenarios.
- Plot out your own skills and abilities regarding your approach to work, and decide how you might need to improve these skills.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some techniques to develop your work ethic whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your work ethic has developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your work ethic.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities, go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role who knows you well.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop some approaches to work ethics in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.



You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:

Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK



**Complete the following lists.** Don't think too much, just write down the first things you can think of.

Write down 5 things you're good at:

Write down 5 things you enjoy doing:

Write down 5 things you're not good at:

Write down 5 things you hate doing:

Which of these workplace behaviours are healthy? Which are unhealthy? Why?  
Can you think of an example of when you acted in this way? Why did you do this?



**Now, complete the Skills Check.**

**Step 1:**

**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I am punctual, manage my time well, and am respectful of deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I own up to my mistakes and am happy to ask for help and advice when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I make sure I carry out tasks to a high standard all the time, even when I find something difficult or boring.	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I treat other people fairly, and am helpful and respectful at all times, regardless of other people's status or position.	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I maintain a good balance between work, study, leisure and home life.	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I take pride in my work, and I often 'go the extra mile' and do more than the minimum.	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I know what I need to do to be successful, and I am motivated and determined to achieve it.	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I am aware of the extent my talents and abilities and am realistic about what I can achieve.	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall positive work ethic level.

<b>Overall, my positive work ethic is:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Understands the importance of working hard to achieve their goals.	1	2	3	4	5
1	Understands the importance of working hard to achieve their goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Is punctual, manages their time well, and is respectful of deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Owens up to their mistakes and is happy to ask for help and advice when they need it.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Makes sure they carry out tasks to a high standard all the time, even when they find something difficult or boring.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Treats other people fairly, and is helpful and respectful at all times, regardless of other people's status or position.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Maintains a good balance between work, study, leisure and home life.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Takes pride in their work, and often 'goes the extra mile' and does more than the minimum.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Knows what they need to do to be successful, and is motivated and determined to achieve it.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Is aware of the extent their talents and abilities and is realistic about what they can achieve.	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall positive work ethic level.

<b>Overall, their positive work ethic is:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

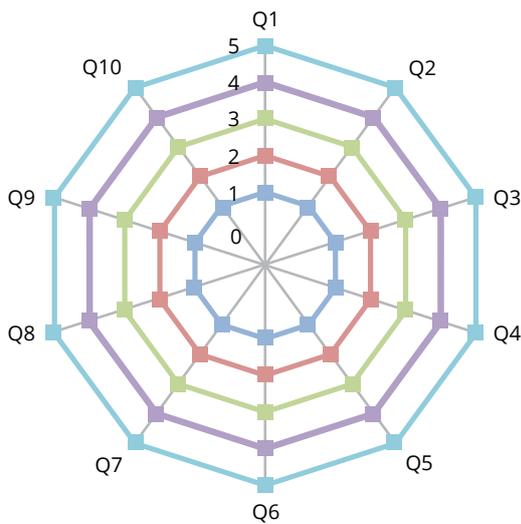
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

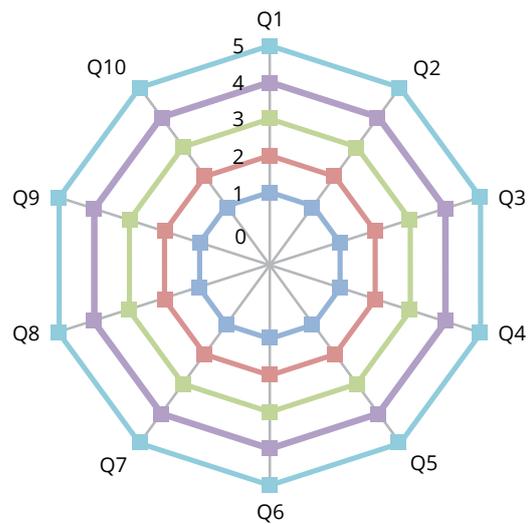
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be the approaches to work ethic you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that your attitude to work will have an impact on both yourself, and others around you.

## What motivates you?

Think about a job you have, or would like to have. Rank the following in order of importance:

- **1 = the most important;**
- **7 = the least important.**



		Ranking
	<b>Contracts.</b> Is the job permanent or temporary? Part-time or full-time? Secure or flexible?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Relationships.</b> Do people get on well? Do they support each other? Or is there conflict or gossip?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Money.</b> Are you paid enough for the job? Is the wage or salary enough to live on? Or are you being paid too little?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Wellbeing.</b> Is the workplace healthy and safe? Or is stress, or dangerous working practices, affecting your health?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Job design.</b> Do you have enough to do? Are you learning new things? Or is the workload too much for you?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Voice &amp; representation.</b> Can you raise issues with your managers? Or do they ignore employees' concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Work-life balance.</b> Do you have enough time for other things? Or is work taking over your life?	<input type="checkbox"/>

- What do you think is the most important consideration in a job?
- Would you be willing to compromise on this?
- How would this affect your motivation and work ethic?
- Is there such a thing as a 'perfect job'?
- How important is work, or having a job, to your overall life satisfaction and happiness?

## Work ethic in context – 10 Actions for a Positive Work Ethic



Your work ethic is not only important in the workplace, but can be seen in how you approach tasks in general. Fortunately, like any skill, your work ethic can be developed. Here's how.

**Action 1: Know your motivations.** It's not always possible to do work you enjoy. However, it's important to know what motivates you. Psychologists often think about motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation comes from you, and is about what you get out of the work. In terms of paid employment, ask yourself, is this something you would do even if you weren't getting paid? Extrinsic motivation comes from outside of you. So, if you don't enjoy the job, but you do it because you need the money, your motivation is purely extrinsic. Realistically, most jobs will involve a balance of the two. Think about what balance is right for you, and what you're prepared to compromise over.

**Action 2: Do it well, consistently.** Whatever the task, if you do a good job, you can be proud of this, and others will be proud of you, too. However, this needs to be consistent. You should aim to do your best all the time, not just in the things you enjoy doing. Tackle the tasks you least enjoy first, to a high standard, and reward yourself with the tasks you enjoy doing afterwards. Don't just do the minimum amount you can get away with. Can you grit your teeth and take pride in completing the unpleasant tasks, too?

**Action 3: Have integrity.** If you only tell people what they want to hear, or make promises you have no intention of keeping, you'll be found out, and people will find it hard to trust you. Always follow through, and do what you said you would do. Be honest, and if you make a mistake, own up to it. Integrity is also about behaving in the same way, regardless of who might be watching you. If you have integrity, it will shine through and you'll gain respect. People will have confidence that they can rely on you.

**Action 4: Be loyal.** In most paid employment, you'll need to work as part of a team and as part of an organisation. If you are loyal to the organisation, hopefully your team and your employer will return this to you, too. If you feel taken for granted, or you feel your work has no value, it might be better to find a company you can feel loyalty towards, rather than faking loyalty to an organisation you have no respect for.

**Action 5: Be respectful.** Even when the work becomes stressful or pressurised, don't let this affect how you treat others. Try to stay calm under pressure, and listen to other people's opinions. Avoid the temptation to engage in workplace gossip, or, even worse, workplace bullying. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. Try to maintain good relationships with your colleagues, but remember that work isn't about socialising or making friends, you're there to do a job. Try to keep your personal and work life separate, and don't let personal feelings cloud your professional judgement of others.

**Action 6: Manage your time well.** How well you manage your time (and energy) is directly related to your overall work ethic. It's difficult to demonstrate a positive work ethic if you're always late for appointments, miss deadlines, or allow yourself to become distracted. A person with a solid work ethic will easily get into the 'flow' of an activity, and will ensure that it gets done on time, and to a high standard.

**Action 7: Develop your inner drive.** It's very easy to recognise people who are driven and determined. They care about their work, and they derive meaning and value from this. They are tenacious and adaptable, and don't let setbacks throw them off course. They have a clear understanding of what they want to achieve, and how to achieve it. Most importantly, this inner drive and determination can be developed. Decide on your criteria for success, and focus on this single-mindedly. Keep on going, and don't give up until you get there.

**Action 8: Follow the rules.** Most workplaces have written rules which you should always be aware of and follow. In most cases, they're there to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Blatantly

disregarding the rules for no reason could cause resentment to build up from colleagues. Many workplaces also have 'unwritten' rules and assumptions, and it's worth asking about the workplace culture when you start. If you're in a job and there are rules you disagree with or which seem unfair, don't just ignore them, suggest ways they could be changed or improved. Speak to your manager, get the support of your colleagues, or get help from a trade union. If you're not prepared to follow the rules, and you can't change them, then move on and find a job that suits you better.

**Action 9: Take initiative.** In the workplace, and in life in general, those who do things without being asked are considered to have a stronger work ethic than those who sit back and wait for other people to tell them what to do. Similarly, having a strong work ethic means that you can take the initiative to solve problems yourself, rather than waiting for other people to solve them for you. Being able to think creatively and analytically will mean that you can solve problems in ways others haven't thought of. Think about what you can contribute, and freely volunteer this.

**Action 10: Know your talents and their limits.** Hard work will carry you a very long way, but you also need to be aware of what you're good at. You might want to be a famous singer, and work hard at pursuing your dreams, but this counts for nothing if you can't sing well. Very few people get where they want to be without hard work and talent. In many cases, a fair amount of luck is involved, too. The reverse is also true – you might see your ideal job, but you might lack the relevant experience, and you'll need to start on the bottom rung of the ladder. You can't expect to land your dream job immediately. However, a strong work ethic will increase your chances of getting there in the end.

Read '10 Actions for a Time-Effective Life' again and do the exercise below.



**Do you think other people see you as having a strong work ethic? Why? Why not?**

Blank space for writing the answer to the first question.

**Which of the 10 Actions are already part of your work ethic?**

Blank space for writing the answer to the second question.

**Which of the 10 Actions would you struggle with? What help might you need?**

Blank space for writing the answer to the third question.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# ACTION PLANNING



What advice could you give to these people? How could they show a stronger work ethic?

*I'm only doing this job for the money. It's not where I want to be in five years' time. There are so many pointless rules in this place, the managers even time us when we go to the toilet! I want to challenge this but I don't know how. It really demotivates me.*



*I love this job, but sometimes it gets a bit stressful. Luckily, the woman I sit next to is a really good friend, I got her the job. We probably take too many coffee breaks, but nobody has noticed yet. We love a good gossip, it makes the day go quicker.*



*As long as I turn up and do the work, nobody is bothered about whether I do a good job or not. Sometimes I do it well, sometimes I don't. Who cares? Nobody will really notice and I'll still get paid.*



*I had something go wrong with my computer. It turns out it was really easy to fix. Anyway, I waited all day for IT Support to come and have a look. I waited ages for them and they were quite angry with me. It's their job to fix computers, not mine!*



*I'm actually an actor, I'm only doing this until I can get a proper acting job. I try not to speak to people too much. They're not the sort of people I'd be friends with normally. I just do my own thing. Anyway, I've been here for years, and still no acting job, so...*





### Think of a situation when your own work ethic wasn't very good.

What advice can you give to yourself so you show a more positive work ethic in the future?

Situation:	How would you change your approach if this situation happened again? 
------------	---

### Think about some key tasks or activities you're going to take part in.

Write a brief explanation of the task below.

The task is to...	How long will the task take?  Who is involved? 
-------------------	---

### Think about your goal. What do you want to achieve?

<i>I want to achieve...</i>  <i>I know the task will be successful if...</i> 	
---	---

### Before you get there, what steps will you need to take?

Step 1:  Step 2:  Step 3:  Step 4:  Step 5: 	
--	---

But be careful! You'll need a pair of strong, sturdy shoes to make sure you don't slip and slide into the river. These 'shoes' are your work ethic. Choose 5 of the 10 Actions for a Positive Work Ethic you're going to put on your feet to make sure you're successful.



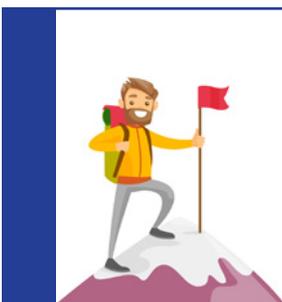
Action:  
Action:  
Action:  
Action:  
Action:

As you carry out the task, record your experiences in a journey log.

What I did:	How this demonstrated a positive work ethic:



Did you fall on the way? How did you get yourself back up? How did this help you develop a stronger work ethic?



Did you achieve success in your task? What aspects of your work ethic most helped to make you successful?

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your work ethic. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



**What task/activity did you complete?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for writing the answer to the first question.

**Did you follow your own advice on developing a positive work ethic? How?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for writing the answer to the second question.

**Do you now have a stronger work ethic? How?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for writing the answer to the third question.

**What new approaches to your work ethic will you take with you and develop further in the future?**

A large, hollow, black-outlined arrow pointing to the right, intended for writing the answer to the fourth question.

# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your work ethic. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your work ethic journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4	5
1	I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I am punctual, manage my time well, and am respectful of deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I own up to my mistakes and am happy to ask for help and advice when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I make sure I carry out tasks to a high standard all the time, even when I find something difficult or boring.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I treat other people fairly, and am helpful and respectful at all times, regardless of other people's status or position.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I maintain a good balance between work, study, leisure and home life.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I take pride in my work, and I often 'go the extra mile' and do more than the minimum.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I know what I need to do to be successful, and I am motivated and determined to achieve it.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am aware of the extent my talents and abilities and am realistic about what I can achieve.	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall positive work ethic level.

<b>Overall, my positive work ethic is:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Understands the importance of working hard to achieve their goals.	1	2	3	4	5
1	Understands the importance of working hard to achieve their goals.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Is punctual, manages their time well, and is respectful of deadlines.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Owens up to their mistakes and is happy to ask for help and advice when they need it.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Makes sure they carry out tasks to a high standard all the time, even when they find something difficult or boring.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Treats other people fairly, and is helpful and respectful at all times, regardless of other people's status or position.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Maintains a good balance between work, study, leisure and home life.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Takes pride in their work, and often 'goes the extra mile' and does more than the minimum.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Knows what they need to do to be successful, and is motivated and determined to achieve it.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Is aware of the extent their talents and abilities and is realistic about what they can achieve.	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall positive work ethic level.

<b>Overall, their positive work ethic is:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

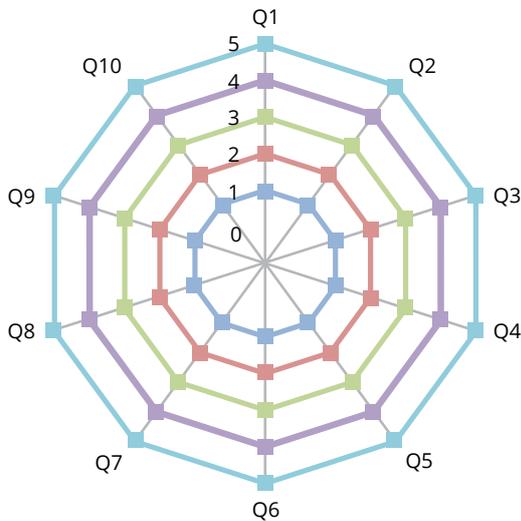
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

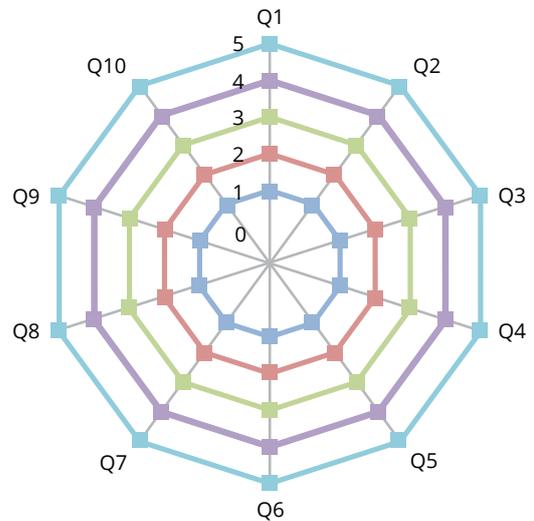
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

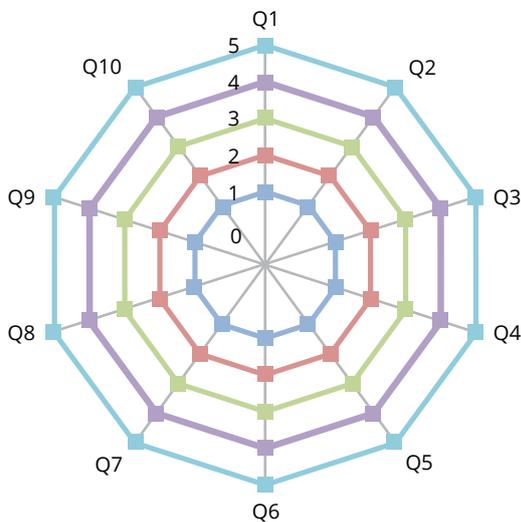


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

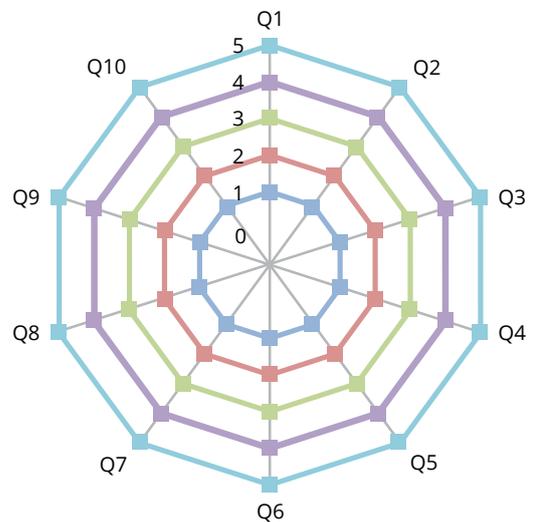
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your work ethic?

*I am going to continue developing my work ethic by:*

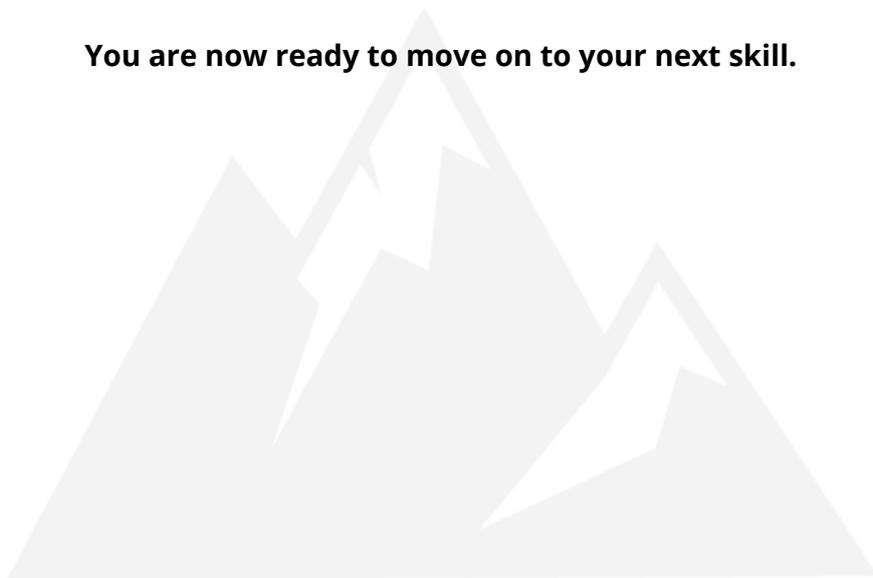
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what about your overall work ethic and approach.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

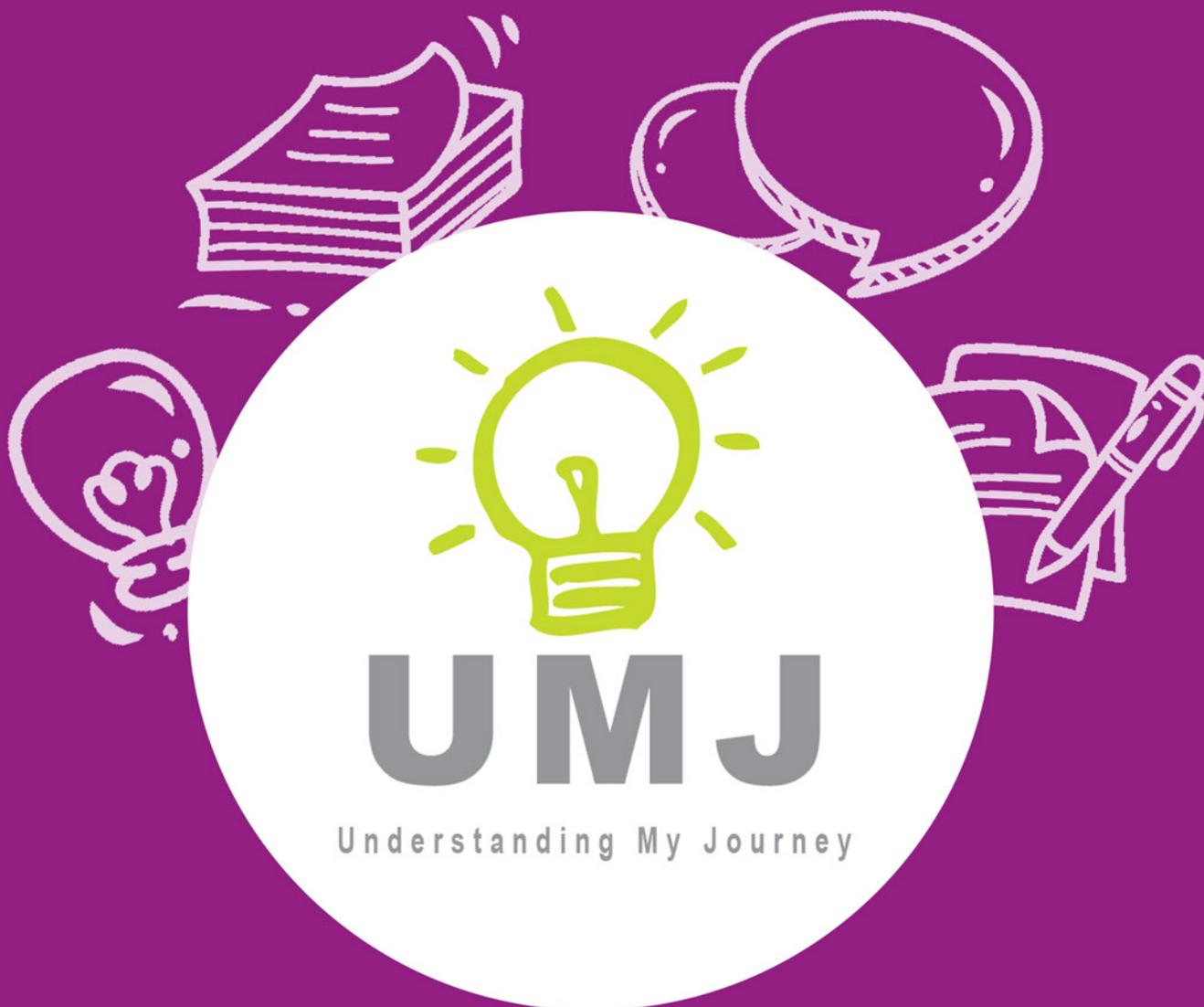
*What further examples of a positive work ethic should you mention in your interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**



## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**PROBLEM SOLVING AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS**

# PROBLEM SOLVING AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS



## What they are and why they're important

- Do you love the challenge of tackling a difficult problem?
- Are you able to spot connections which other people don't easily see?

Our lives are constantly throwing up problems and challenges. Sometimes we go out of our way to avoid dealing with these, but our problems rarely go away of their own accord, and eventually, we'll have to deal with them.

Thankfully, problem solving is a skill which can be learned along with all the others. Learning to apply these skills to the real problems which present themselves can make you stronger and more confident as a person. You'll be able to deal with life's challenges in more positive and proactive ways.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# PROBLEM SOLVING AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on how you currently solve problems and arrive at solutions.
- Think about some different aspects of problem solving and analytical skills, and which of these could be applied in a range of scenarios.
- Plot out your own abilities to solve problems and think analytically, and decide how you might need to improve these skills
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some problem solving and analytical techniques whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your adaptability skills.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities, go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role.

You're on a journey, and in this stage of the journey, you'll develop some problem solving and analytical skills in some situations you might find yourself in. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:



Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

## Do you enjoy solving puzzles and riddles?

Look at the following puzzles and see if you can ‘think outside the box’ to solve these. How long did it take you to find the solutions?



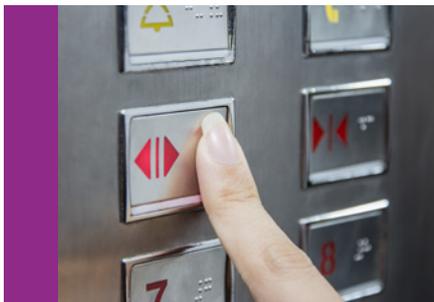
**A.** There are six eggs in the basket. Six people take one egg each. There is one egg remaining in the basket. How?

Your answer:



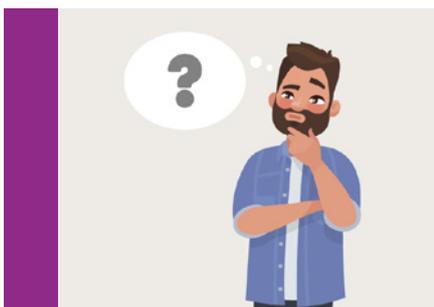
**B.** A man and his son are in a car accident. The man is killed and the child is rushed to hospital in an ambulance. When he arrives at the operating theatre, the surgeon says, ‘I can’t operate on this child, he’s my son.’ How can this be?

Your answer:



**C.** A woman lives on the top floor of an apartment building. Every morning she takes the lift to the ground floor. Upon her return, she can only travel half way up the floors and uses the stairs for the rest of the way, unless it’s raining. Why?

Your answer:



**D.** I am a man with no brothers or sisters, but this person’s father is my father’s son. Who is this person?

Your answer:

How were you feeling when trying to solve these puzzles?

Level	Challenged	Interested	Curious	Confused	Frustrated	Bored
High						
Medium						
Low						

For the answers turn to the back of this section.

Now, complete the Skills Check.

**Step 1:**

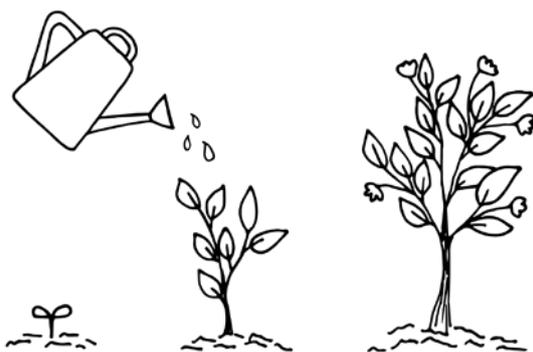
**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> I see problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I try to find the root causes of problems before launching into finding solutions	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I step back and look at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I enjoy doing word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles or solving riddles	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I set up and follow a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I see problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I think creatively and come up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I constantly ask why things are the way they are, and try to understand how the world works	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I make sense of lots of pieces of information and see the connections between ideas	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I am persistent and don't get distracted when trying to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I know my limitations when faced with problems and am happy to ask for help if I need it	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall problem solving skills level.

<b>Overall, my problem solving and analytical skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Sees problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5
1	Tries to find the root causes of problems before launching into finding solutions	1	2	3	4	5
2	Steps back and looks at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5
3	Enjoys doing word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles or solving riddles	1	2	3	4	5
4	Sets up and follows a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5
5	Sees problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	Thinks creatively and comes up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5
7	Constantly asks why things are the way they are, and tries to understand how the world works	1	2	3	4	5
8	Makes sense of lots of pieces of information and sees the connections between ideas	1	2	3	4	5
9	Is persistent and doesn't get distracted when trying to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
10	Knows their limitations when faced with problems and is happy to ask for help if they need it	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall problem solving skills level.

Overall, their problem solving and analytical skills are:	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

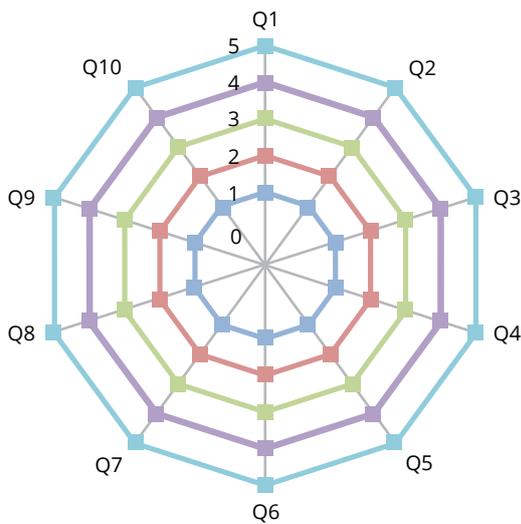
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

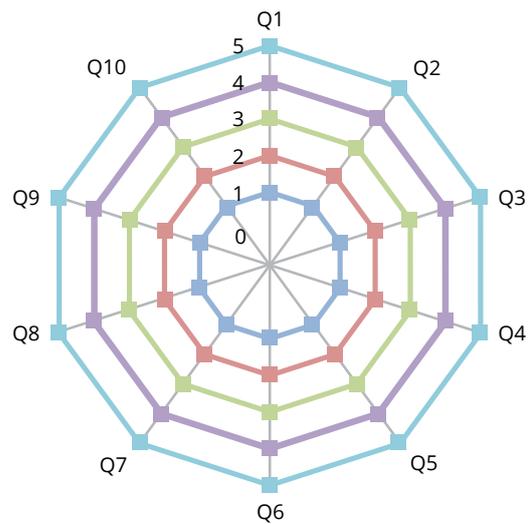
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be problem solving and analytical skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.



# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

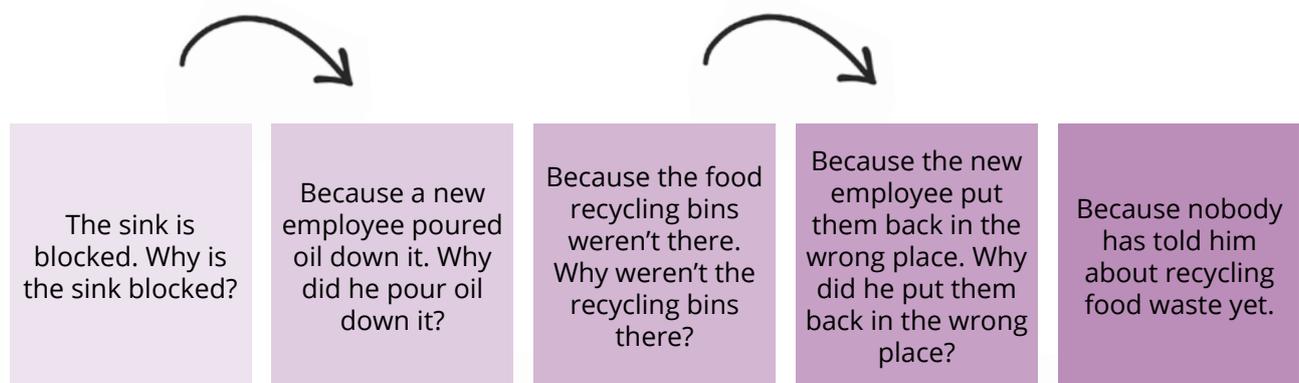
## Thinking about problem solving and analytical thinking

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you will have to solve problems and come up with solutions. This section is slightly different to the others. Instead of introducing 10 Actions, you'll look at three well-known methods to solve problems.

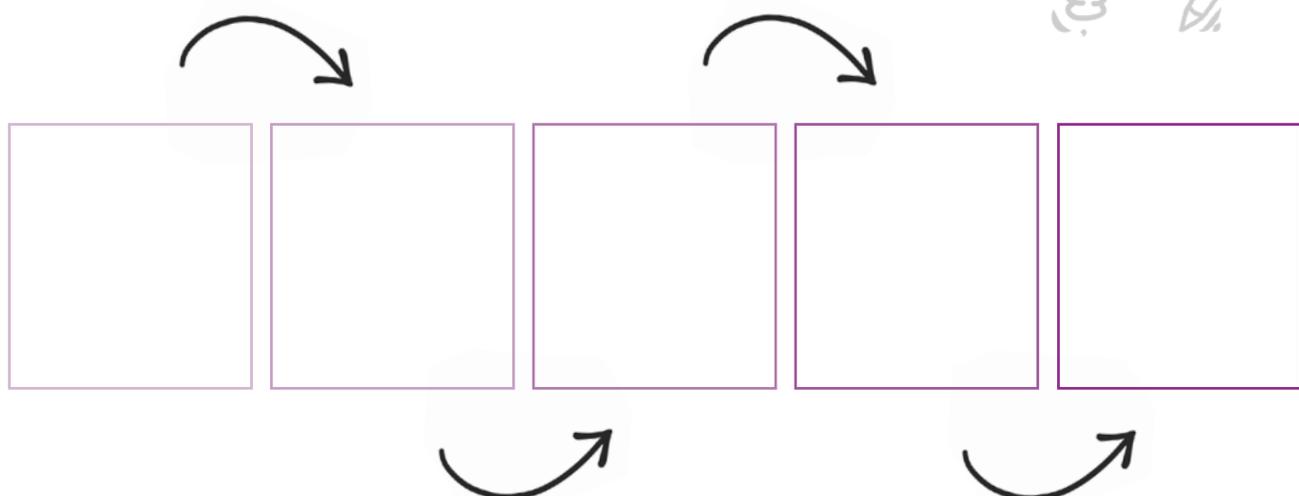
### The '5 Whys' Approach to identifying problems<sup>1</sup>

Finding out the root cause of a problem can often be useful before starting to think about possible solutions. In this approach, you simply ask 'why?' five times, to track the origins of the problem backwards.

The following problem occurred in a restaurant kitchen. At first it seems like it's the new employee's fault, but by asking 'why' five times, we can see that he's not completely to blame.



Think about a problem you recently experienced in your work, study or home life. Can you apply the '5 Whys' approach to this problem?



<sup>1</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5\\_Whys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/5_Whys)

## Skills in Context – Problem solving and analytical thinking

Being able to solve problems creatively and effectively is a skill which is highly valued in the workplace. It's also a valuable skill in all aspects of life. If you feel defeated by life's problems, you're unlikely to have the confidence to tackle new problems as they arise, and you may even go through life avoiding problems.

Fortunately, however, problem solving is a skill which can be learned, and there are various methods and techniques to help you with this.

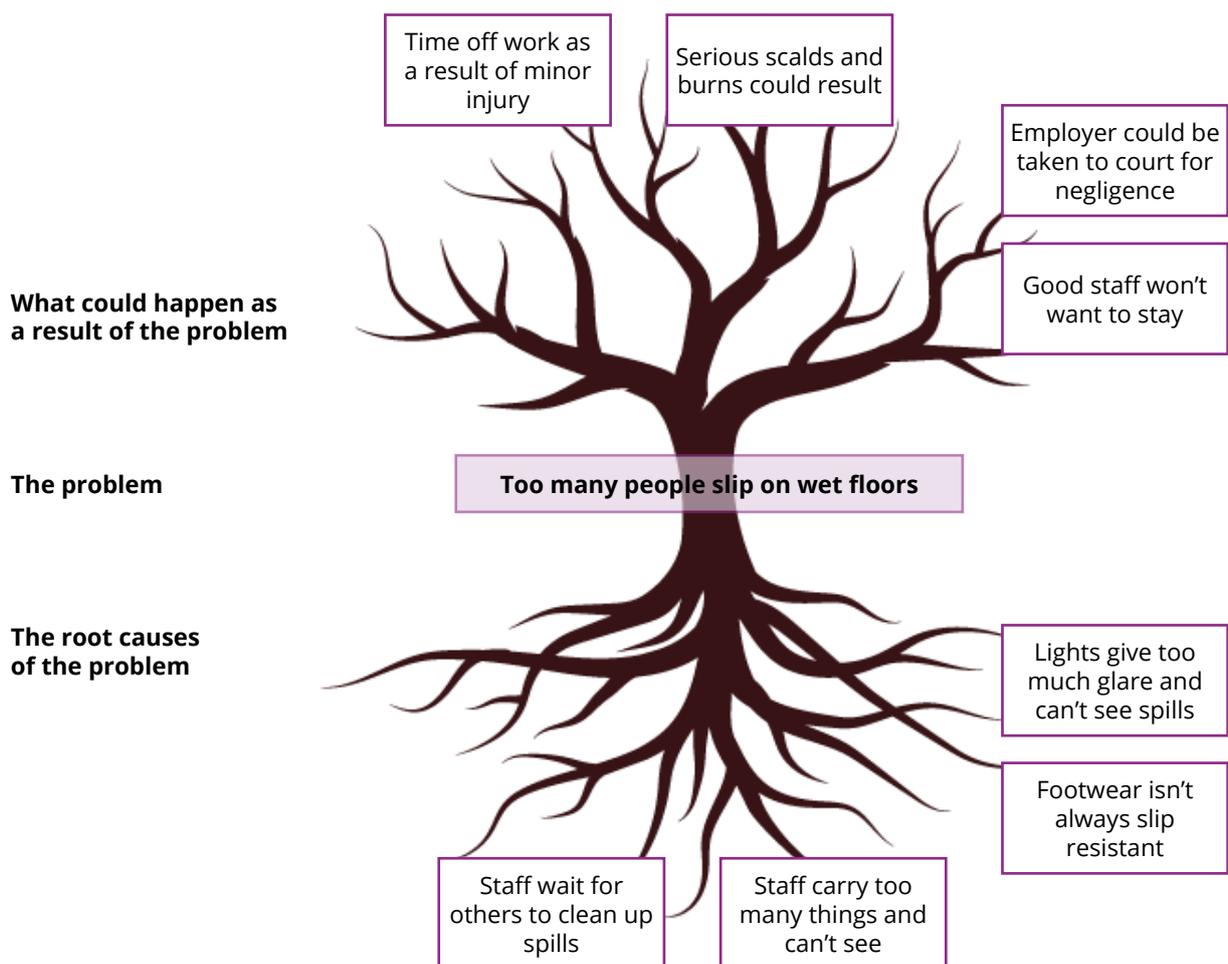
One way of thinking through problems is the Problem Tree & Solutions Tree<sup>2</sup>.



You've started work in a restaurant kitchen. It's only your first week, but you've noticed that three people have slipped on wet floors. Luckily, nobody was seriously injured, but you're worried.

You speak to your colleagues, and they all agree that they've got into some bad habits.

You're sure you can fix this without mentioning it to your boss. What solutions can you identify?



<sup>2</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Issue\\_tree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Issue_tree)

## The 6 Step Problem Solving Method<sup>3</sup>

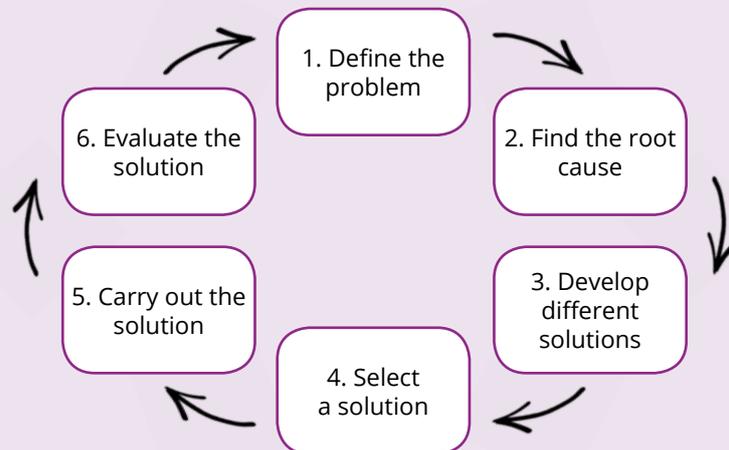
This is a problem solving technique which can be applied to almost any problem, big or small.

With the 5 Whys approach you started to look at the root causes of a problem, but in itself, this isn't enough. You also need to find the appropriate solution.



### 1. Define the problem.

Before you solve a problem, you need to first understand what the problem actually is. Think about what would happen if you did nothing, and whether the problem needs to be solved now or if it can wait until later. You could also think about who is the best person to solve this problem, and if the responsibility should lie with you or someone else. In thinking through this stage, it can help to write down the problem in simple, easy to understand language.



### 2. Find the root cause.

In the example on the previous page, we saw that the problem was that the kitchen sink was blocked. However, by using the 5 Why method, we saw that the root cause of the problem was something completely different. A problem, and what causes a problem, is not the same thing. Sometimes you might be able to find more than one root cause of a problem. Once you have identified one or more root causes, you can then test your ideas to see if there is any evidence to support them, or whether you've reached the wrong conclusion.

### 3. Develop different solutions.

In this stage you should try to think as creatively as possible. Ask other people, or do some research on how others have solved this problem in the past. Use mind-maps or make lists to get your ideas down on paper, or draw your imagined solutions if you're more artistic. You could also imagine the problem being solved, and then work backwards to imagine the different ways it could have been solved. Write down any ideas which come to you, and challenge yourself to think of the most unusual solution you can find. Think about 'what if...?' rather than simply 'what' or 'how'.

### 4. Select a solution.

Once you have a range of possible solutions, you can then think about the best one. Make two lists and write down the advantages and disadvantages of each solution. Think about what might happen if the problem isn't solved. If money is the most important consideration, then work out the cheapest solution. If time is more of an issue, decide on the quickest solution.

### 5. Carry out the solution

When you've made a decision on which solution to use, you should then plan each step before starting to solve the problem. Think about how long you might need, and who else needs to be involved. Decide what you need to do, what other people need to do, and make sure that other people understand this, too. Give yourself a time limit, and remind yourself what solving the problem might look like. Decide how you'll know when the problem is solved.

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140530154920-39527870-6-effective-problem-solving-steps-for-business-and-life-in-general>

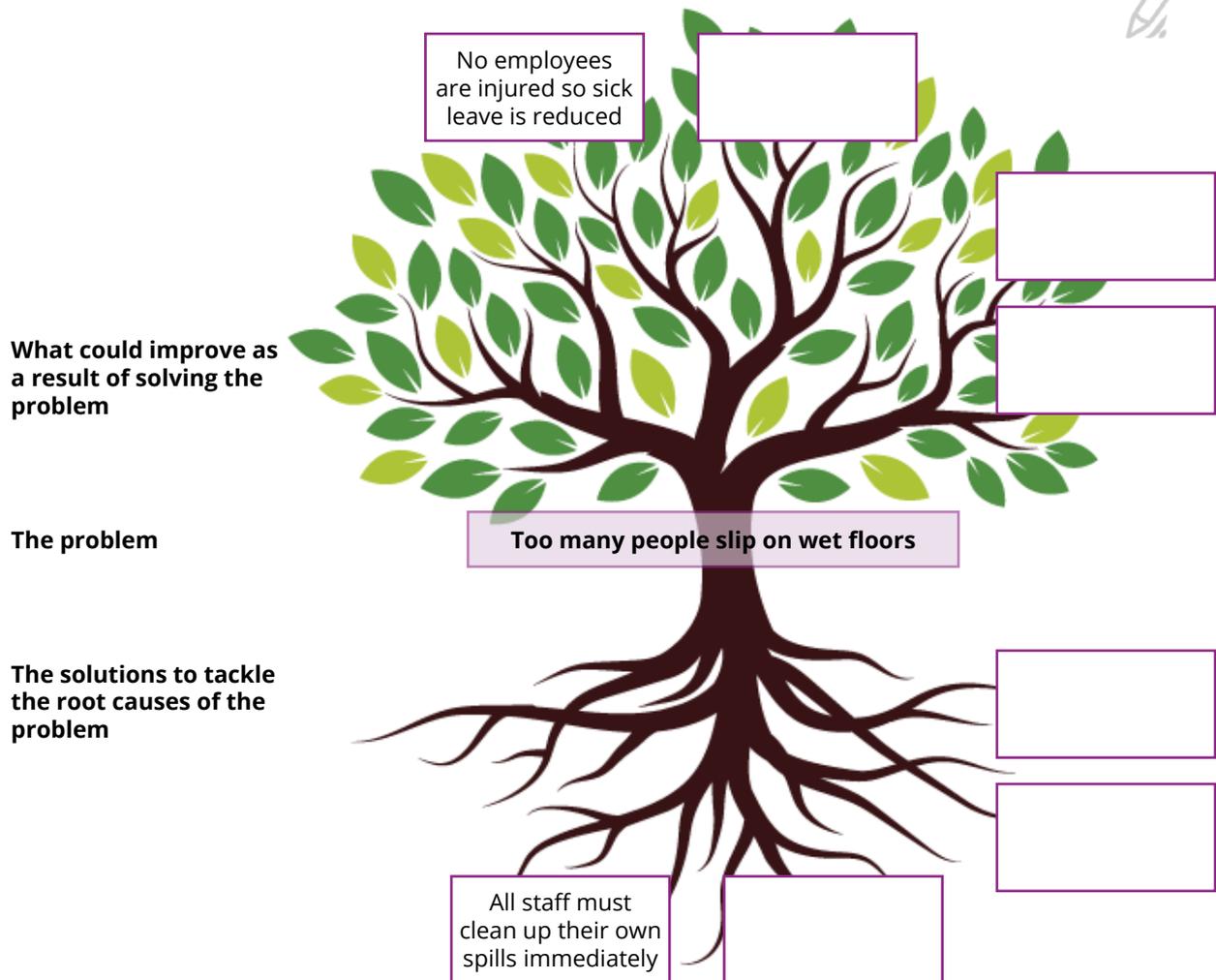


# ACTION PLANNING

## The Solutions Tree

The problem tree is dying because the roots are unhealthy. By contrast, the solution tree has solutions at its root, and by tackling the problem, its branches and leaves can thrive.

Write down some solutions to replace the root causes, and say what could improve as a result of solving the problem.



**Think about some key tasks or activities you're going to take part in.**

Once you've identified this, identify three problems which could occur at some point.



Problem 1:	Problem 2:	Problem 3:
------------	------------	------------

Choose **one** problem to focus on, if and when it occurs. Use the 6 Step Method to solve the problem. You could also draw your own Problem and Solutions Trees to help you.



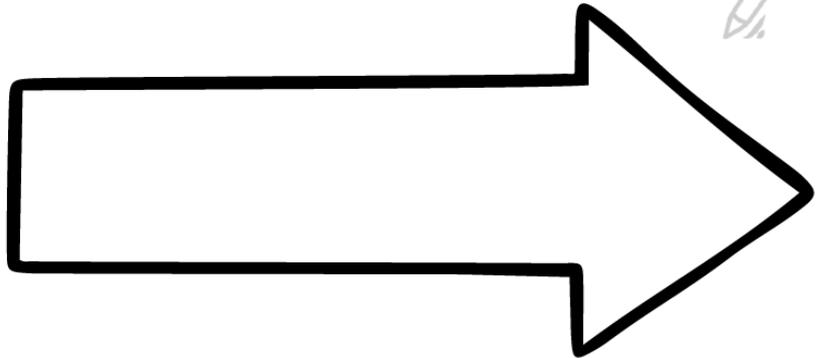
1. Define the problem	
2. Find the root cause	
3. Develop different solutions	
4. Select a solution	
5. Carry out the solution	
6. Evaluate the solution	

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

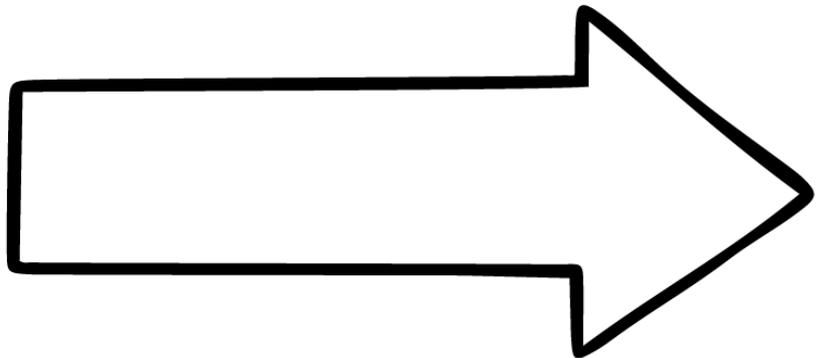
How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your problem solving and analytical skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



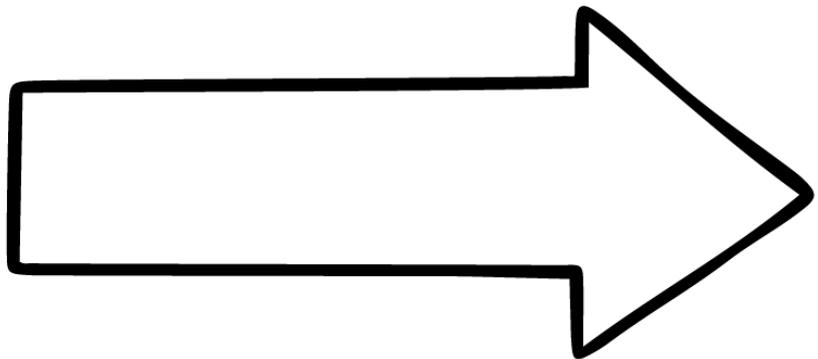
**What task/activity did you complete?**



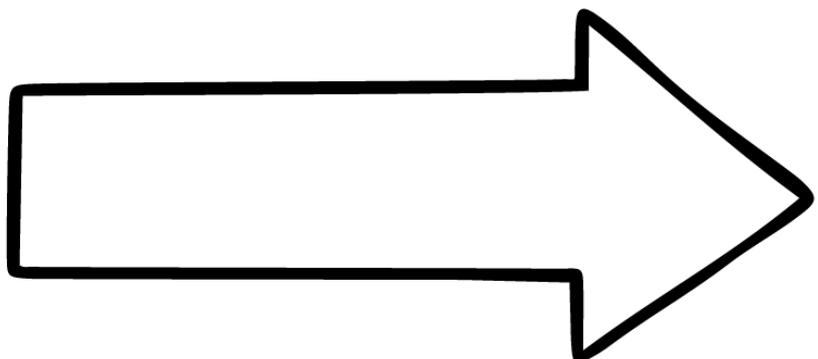
**Did you follow your own advice on problem solving? How?**



**Can you now solve problems better? How?**



**What new skills in problem solving and analytical thinking will you take with you and develop further in the future?**



## AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your problem solving and analytical skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your problem solving and analytical skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> I see problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I try to find the root causes of problems before launching into finding solutions	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I step back and look at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I enjoy doing word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles or solving riddles	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I set up and follow a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I see problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I think creatively and come up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I constantly ask why things are the way they are, and try to understand how the world works	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I make sense of lots of pieces of information and see the connections between ideas	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I am persistent and don't get distracted when trying to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I know my limitations when faced with problems and am happy to ask for help if I need it	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall problem solving skills level.

<b>Overall, my problem solving and analytical skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

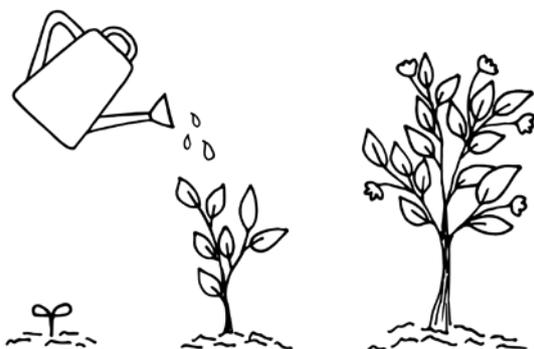
**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> Sees problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5
1	Tries to find the root causes of problems before launching into finding solutions	1	2	3	4	5
2	Steps back and looks at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5
3	Enjoys doing word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles or solving riddles	1	2	3	4	5
4	Sets up and follow a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5
5	Sees problems as opportunities for development and learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	Thinks creatively and come up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5
7	Constantly asks why things are the way they are, and tries to understand how the world works	1	2	3	4	5
8	Makes sense of lots of pieces of information and sees the connections between ideas	1	2	3	4	5
9	Is persistent and doesn't get distracted when trying to solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
10	Knows their limitations when faced with problems and is happy to ask for help if they need it	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall problem solving skills level.

<b>Overall, their problem solving and analytical skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

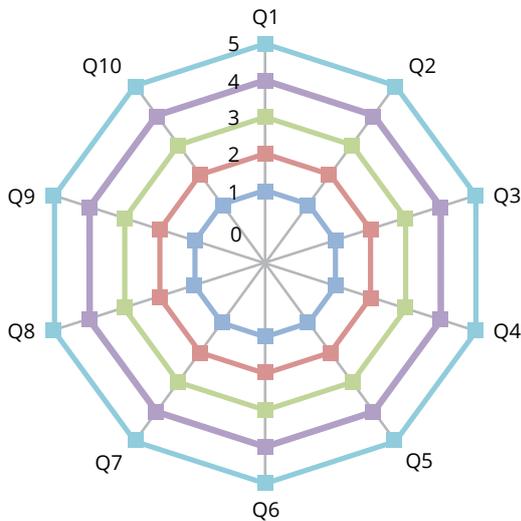
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

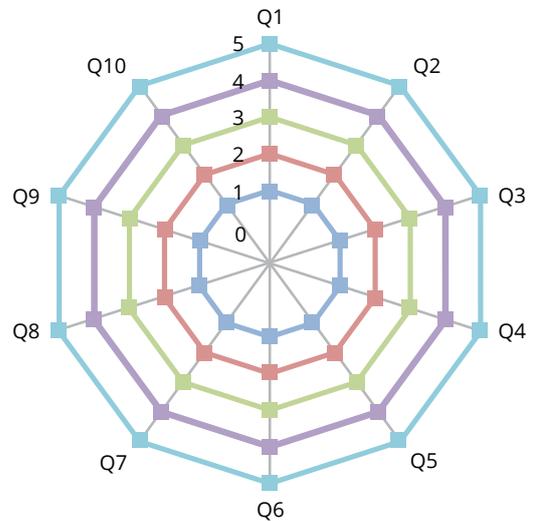
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

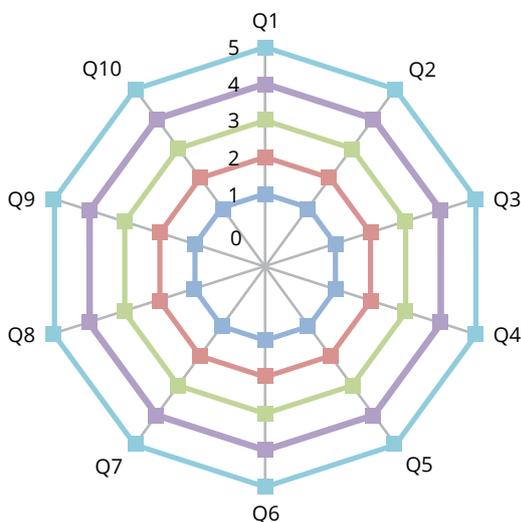


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

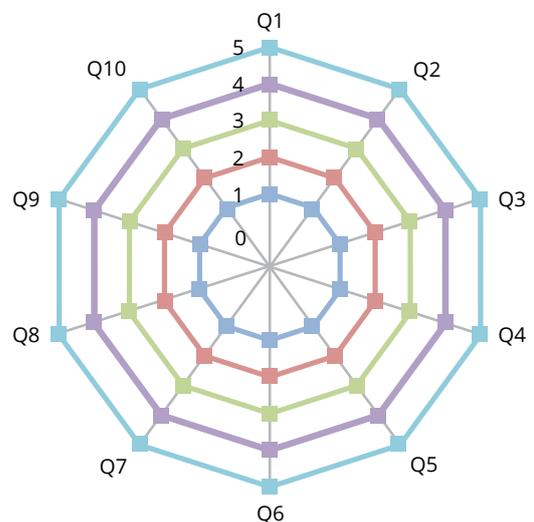
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# MOVING ON

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your problem solving and analytical skills?

*I am going to continue developing my problem solving and analytical skills by:*

## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in solving problems and thinking analytically.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of good problem solving and analytical thinking skills should you mention in your interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**

### ANSWERS:

**A.**

The last person doesn't take an egg out of the basket, but takes the basket with the egg still in it.

**B.**

The surgeon is female and is the mother of the injured child.

**C.**

The woman is much shorter than average and can't reach the buttons to the upper floors. When it's raining, she carries an umbrella and she uses this to press them.

**D.**

The person is my son!

I don't have any brothers or sisters, so I am my father's son, and I am the father of my son.

My Father - Me - My Son





**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**TEAM WORKING SKILLS**

# TEAM WORKING SKILLS

## What they are and why they're important

- Do you get a real buzz out of working and collaborating with others?
- Or do you prefer to go it alone?



At various stages of your life, you'll have been a member of a team or a group. You might have played team sports, or been involved in local neighbourhood projects, and you'll certainly have been part of school class group from early childhood onwards. Some people are natural team players, whilst for others, getting along in a group can take patience and effort. If you start to think about it, you'll probably be able to identify times when being in a group or team has brought out the best in you, as well as the worst.

The ability to work well in a team is a soft skill which is crucial for your employment prospects, but it's probably best to think of it as a cluster of several related skills, rather than a skill in its own right. Teams and groups often fall down because one of these other skills is missing. It's not possible to have an effective team in which communication skills and time management skills, for example, are absent.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# TEAM WORKING SKILLS

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on the different roles within a team and how you work with other people.
- Think about some strategies to become a more effective team member.
- Plot out your own skills and abilities in team working, and decide how you might need to improve these skills.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some team working techniques whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your team working skills.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities, go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role.

This stage of the journey is slightly different from the other stages, and will draw on each soft skill included so far in order to develop your teamwork skills. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.



You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:

Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

Think about when you have been in a team before, from childhood until now.

What worked well in these teams?

Was there anything that could have been improved to make the team more effective?



Write some notes in the table below.

The team I was part of:	
What worked well:	What could have been improved:

Think or discuss, why is good team working important in these teams? What could go wrong if they don't work together? You don't have to write anything.



Now, complete the Skills Check.

**Step 1:**

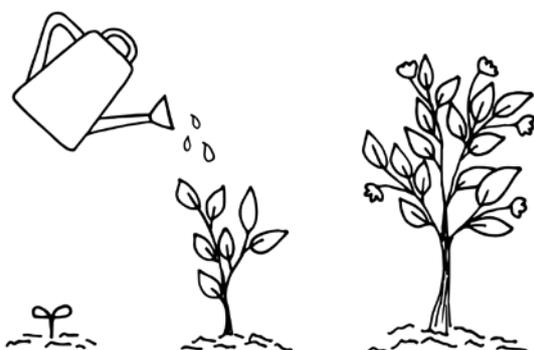
Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I enjoy working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
1	I enjoy working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am self-motivated and get on with things, but know when to ask for help from other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	I trust other people and make allowances for other ways of getting things done	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am a good listener and take on board new ways of working	1	2	3	4	5
5	I understand the importance of body language in effective communication	1	2	3	4	5
6	I respect other people's ideas and cultural values and manage conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
7	I understand how my role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5
8	I devise creative solutions to help sort out problems	1	2	3	4	5
9	I set goals and plan actions in order to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
10	I keep other people informed of progress, letting them know if a task will take longer than planned	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall team working skills level.

<b>Overall, my team working skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
---	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
Relationship:						
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Enjoys working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Enjoys working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
2	Is self-motivated and gets on with things, but knows when to ask for help from other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	Trusts other people and makes allowances for other ways of getting things done	1	2	3	4	5
4	Is a good listener and takes on board new ways of working	1	2	3	4	5
5	Understands the importance of body language in effective communication	1	2	3	4	5
6	Respects other people's ideas and cultural values and manages conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
7	Understands how their role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5
8	Devises creative solutions to help sort out problems	1	2	3	4	5
9	Sets goals and plan actions in order to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
10	Keep other people informed of progress, and lets them know if a task will take longer than planned	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall team working skills level.

<b>Overall, their team working skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
--	----------	---------------	-------------



**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

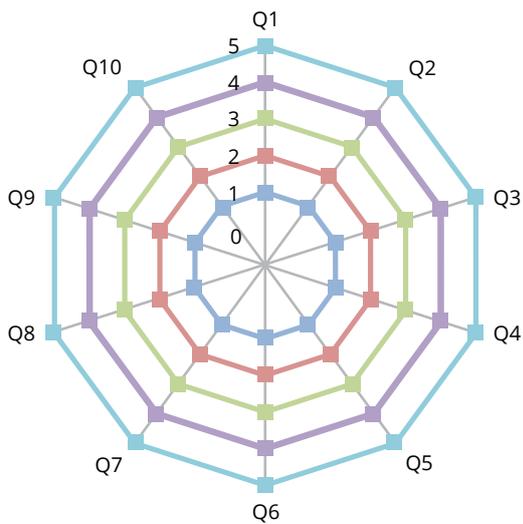
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

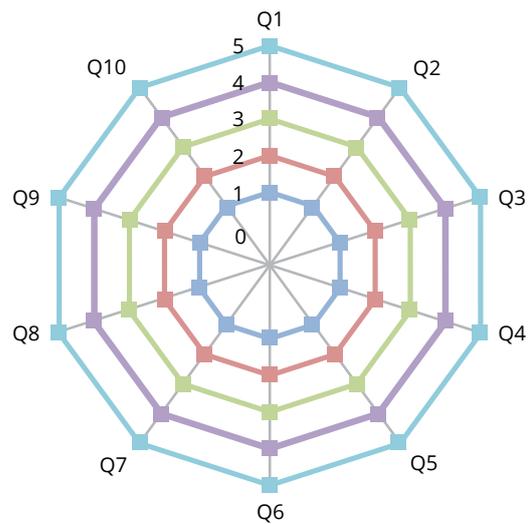
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be the team working skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

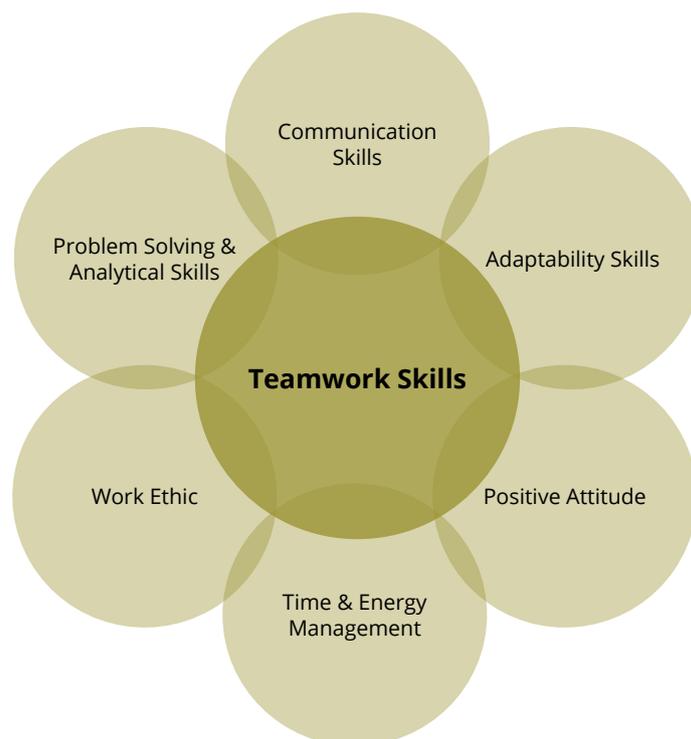


# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you have to work together with other people.

## Teamwork as a combination of skills

If you've worked through some of the other sections, you'll have probably noticed that teamwork is made up of lots of different skills. In many ways, it's best to think of teamwork as a 'cluster' or combination of skills.



<b>Communication Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communicate with confidence.</b> You put forward your ideas confidently, in a constructive manner, whilst being respectful of the rest of the team.</li> <li>• <b>Develop active listening skills.</b> You listen before you speak, and willingly take on board new ideas. You are able to accept criticism without being defensive and don't argue every point.</li> <li>• <b>Manage conflicts.</b> Where a difference of opinion arises or a failure occurs, disagreements can occur. You use your conflict resolution skills to bring about a solution.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overcome setbacks.</b> A team often comes across challenging situations which require a change of approach or direction. You are able to adapt to these situations and support other team members who might need help.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Keep on learning.</b> You can reflect on what's worked well, and you can continue to learn, develop and improve based on your experience.</li> <li>• <b>Focus on the positives.</b> You don't ignore the bad things, but you keep yourself focused on what's working well. You are comfortable praising other team members when they deserve it.</li> </ul>

<b>Time &amp; Energy Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be consistently reliable.</b> You show up on time and can be relied upon to do your fair share of the work. You see things through to completion all the time.</li> </ul>
<b>Work Ethic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be prepared to go the extra mile.</b> If unexpected issues arise, you cooperate with the others and are happy to put in additional effort to get things back on track.</li> <li>• <b>Share your knowledge and experience.</b> You know that every member of a team has special talents. You share your own knowledge and experience freely with the rest of the team.</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving &amp; Analytical Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work together to solve problems.</b> Whenever the team comes across a problem, you work together without conflict to share your ideas and come up with solutions.</li> </ul>

Look back at each stage of your soft skills journey so far.

- What are your strongest soft skills?
- Which do you think you need to develop further?
- What skills can you contribute to a team?
- Can you think of any other skills needed in a team which are not listed in the table above?



Make some notes in the table below.

<b>My strongest soft skills:</b>	<b>Skills I need to develop further:</b>	<b>Skills I can contribute to a team:</b>	<b>Other skills needed in a team:</b>

## Team working networks

Teamwork and co-operation is fundamental to what makes us human. If we hadn't learnt how to co-operate and work together, society would never have evolved to the rich complexity we see around us today.

**Everything we use and consume is the result of a network of co-operation.** Most of this is hidden from view, and we simply don't think about it. However, when we start thinking about it, we realise that we're connected to other people - past, present and future - in ways we were probably never aware of.



### When did you last drink a cup of coffee?

If you drank it in a café, somebody was employed in a team to make it for you. But it doesn't stop there. Another team made the cup you drank out of. Another built the coffee machine, and provided the water and electricity. Coffee growers thousands of kilometres away grew the coffee beans. A team dried and roasted these, then transport workers shipped them to Europe. If you added milk, a dairy farmer milked the cows, which was then pasteurised, put into cartons, and transported to a wholesaler. And so it goes on...

**Think of at least 10 links in the network of co-operation for one of the following items:**

- The chair you're sitting on
- The t-shirt, shirt or vest you're wearing
- A laptop, tablet or smart phone you regularly use



How many links in the network of co-operation can you find?

How many teams were involved?

What might the impact of these items be for people in the future?

Turn to the final page of this section for some suggestions if you get stuck.





# ACTION PLANNING

Because teams are so important to our daily lives, it's important that they function well. Understanding the roles in a team can help team members to work more effectively together.



According to one approach, there are five basic roles possible within a team<sup>1</sup>:



**The Leader** ensures that everyone knows what needs to be done, and that everyone is clear on the team's objectives. If people lose focus, it's the leader's job to make sure they get back on track.



**The Challenger** constantly asks questions about the effectiveness of the team, but they do this in order to make the team work better. They sometimes play 'devil's advocate' to get the best solution.



**The Doer** is more concerned with rolling their sleeves up and getting on with the job. They are willing to work hard for the team, but they don't like people who coast along.



**The Thinker** likes to take a step back to analyse the situation more clearly. They might look carefully at things in detail, or they might focus on the bigger picture. They will often come up with original solutions.



**The Supporter** sees their role as keeping the team happy, smoothing over disagreements, and supporting those in difficulty. They might also use humour as a way of distracting from conflict.

It's important to recognise that we can sometimes change roles depending on the team we're in, and we might take on more than one role within a team. Which one best describes you? Complete this sentence.

*I think I am ..... because .....*  
.....  
.....  
.....



<sup>1</sup> See: <https://cdkleadership.weebly.com/teamwork.html>

**Unfortunately, teams can go wrong.** A strong team will have a mix of different types of team worker, rather than one type of team worker dominating.

What went wrong? What advice can you give to the people in the following teams? Think about this or discuss with another person. You don't have to write anything.



The team was given a basic brief of what the client wanted, and they got on with the job quickly and efficiently. However, there wasn't any clear guidance from the client as the job progressed, and nobody questioned this. Unfortunately the client isn't happy with the finished results. Everyone was so busy finishing the job that they didn't stop to think about the quality of their work.



These office workers are not getting on. They have a lot of work to do, but keep arguing about the best way of getting it done. A few people are trying to manoeuvre so they can take on the role of leader, but most people think they know best. Everybody has their own opinion and sticks to it. They just go round in circles – and the deadline is very rapidly approaching.

**Think about, or discuss, a team or group you have been involved in before.** You don't have to write anything.

- Was each of Honey's team roles represented by at least one person?
- Were any of these not represented? Or were there too many people in one type of role?
- Who was the most effective member of the team? Why?
- Who was the least effective member of the team? Why?
- Was the team successful or not? Why?

**Think about your 'dream team'. Write some notes in the box below.**

Out of all your friends, family and colleagues, who would be part of this, and why?



Leader	Challenger	Doer	Thinker	Supporter

**Now, identify a team or group you're currently involved in, or will soon be involved in.** This should be related to the task, activity or project you're part of now.



*The aim of the team is to:*



*The team roles we need are:*

You're ready to start! As you begin your teamwork, make some notes about the following points.



What's your role in the team?	Can you identify which role each person is performing?	Who is the best team player? Why?
How are you helping the team along? What's <i>your</i> unique contribution to the team?		
<b>How are you using your skills in the following areas?</b>		
Communication skills	Adaptability skills	Positive attitude
Time & energy management	Work ethic	Problem solving & analytical skills
<b>Think of one problem which the team has faced, and how this was resolved.</b>	What was <i>your</i> role in resolving this?	What role did other team members play in resolving this?

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your team working skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



What task/activity did you complete?

Did you follow your own advice on team working? How?

Can you now manage your membership of a team better? How?

What new skills in team working will you take with you and develop further in the future?

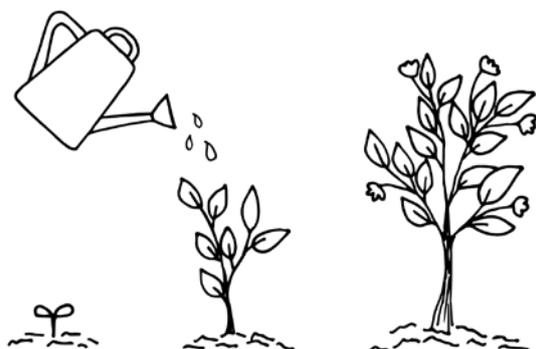
# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your teamwork skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your teamwork skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I enjoy working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
1	I enjoy working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
2	I am self-motivated and get on with things, but know when to ask for help from other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	I trust other people and make allowances for other ways of getting things done	1	2	3	4	5
4	I am a good listener and take on board new ways of working	1	2	3	4	5
5	I understand the importance of body language in effective communication	1	2	3	4	5
6	I respect other people's ideas and cultural values and manage conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
7	I understand how my role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5
8	I devise creative solutions to help sort out problems	1	2	3	4	5
9	I set goals and plan actions in order to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
10	I keep other people informed of progress, letting them know if a task will take longer than planned	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall team working skills level.

<b>Overall, my team working skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Enjoys working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Enjoys working with other people, sharing ideas and tasks to achieve a common aim	1	2	3	4	5
2	Is self-motivated and gets on with things, but knows when to ask for help from other people	1	2	3	4	5
3	Trusts other people and makes allowances for other ways of getting things done	1	2	3	4	5
4	Is a good listener and takes on board new ways of working	1	2	3	4	5
5	Understands the importance of body language in effective communication	1	2	3	4	5
6	Respects other people's ideas and cultural values and manages conflicts	1	2	3	4	5
7	Understands how their role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5
8	Devises creative solutions to help sort out problems	1	2	3	4	5
9	Sets goals and plan actions in order to achieve them	1	2	3	4	5
10	Keep other people informed of progress, and lets them know if a task will take longer than planned	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall team working skills level.

<b>Overall, their team working skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

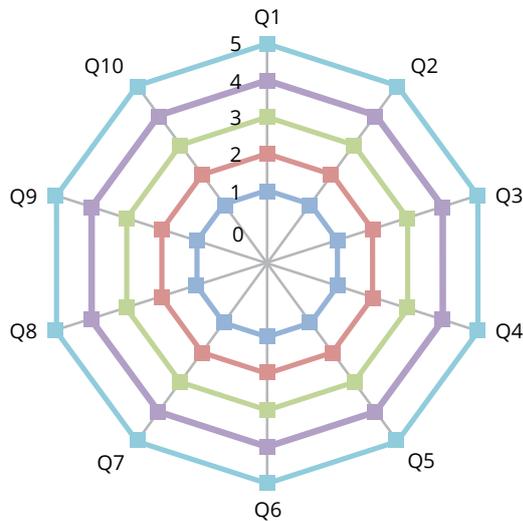
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

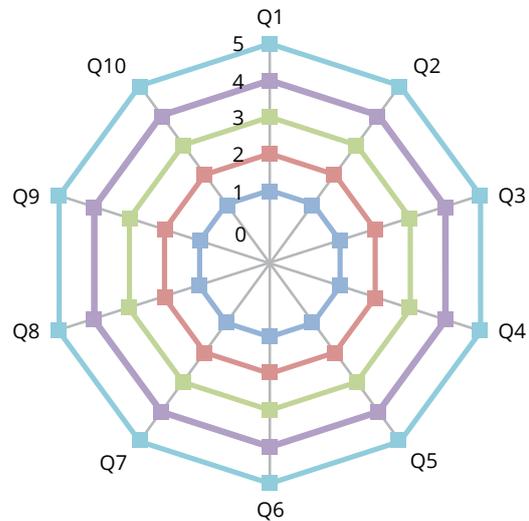
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

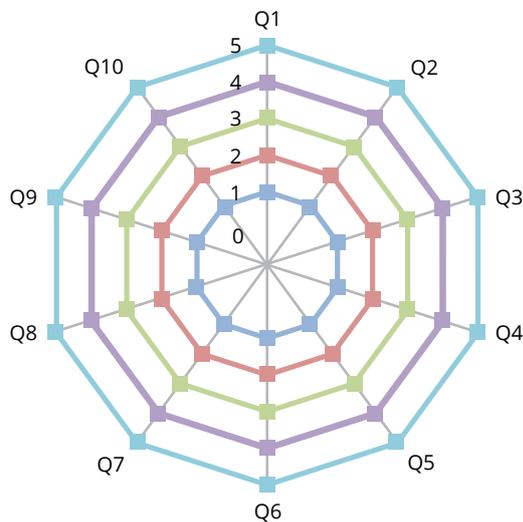


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

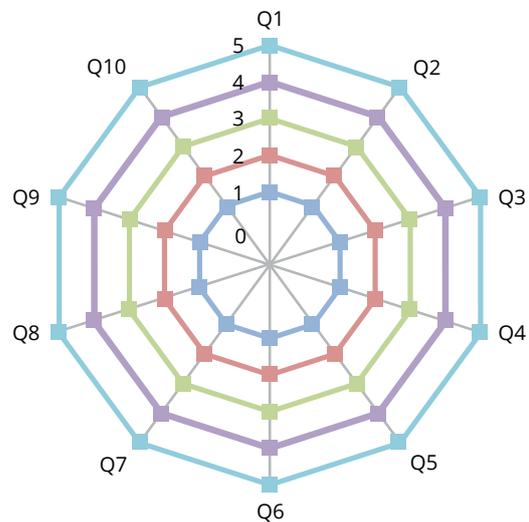
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your team working skills?

*I am going to continue developing my team working skills by:*

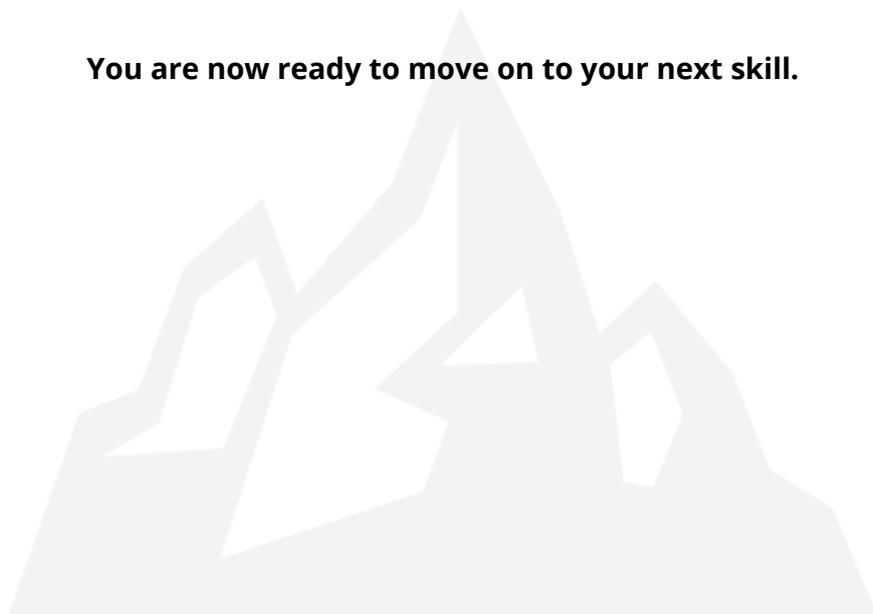
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in being an effective member of a team.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of good team working skills should you mention in your interview?*

**You are now ready to move on to your next skill.**



## Answer Sheet

Here are some suggested answers for the team working networks activity. The more connections you make, the more links you can find – for each one, there are an infinite number of links.

### A chair

1. A team managed a forest which the wood came from.
2. A team cut down the tree.
3. A team sawed the tree into shape to be used in furniture.
4. A team made the upholstery in a factory.
5. A team wove the fabric covering in a factory.
6. A team of designers produced the design for the chair.
7. A team in a factory assembled all the parts to produce the chair.
8. A team transported the chair to a warehouse, then to a shop, probably by ship and lorry.
9. A team of designers produced the marketing and advertising which tried to sell the chair.
10. A team working in the shop sold the chair.

### A t-shirt

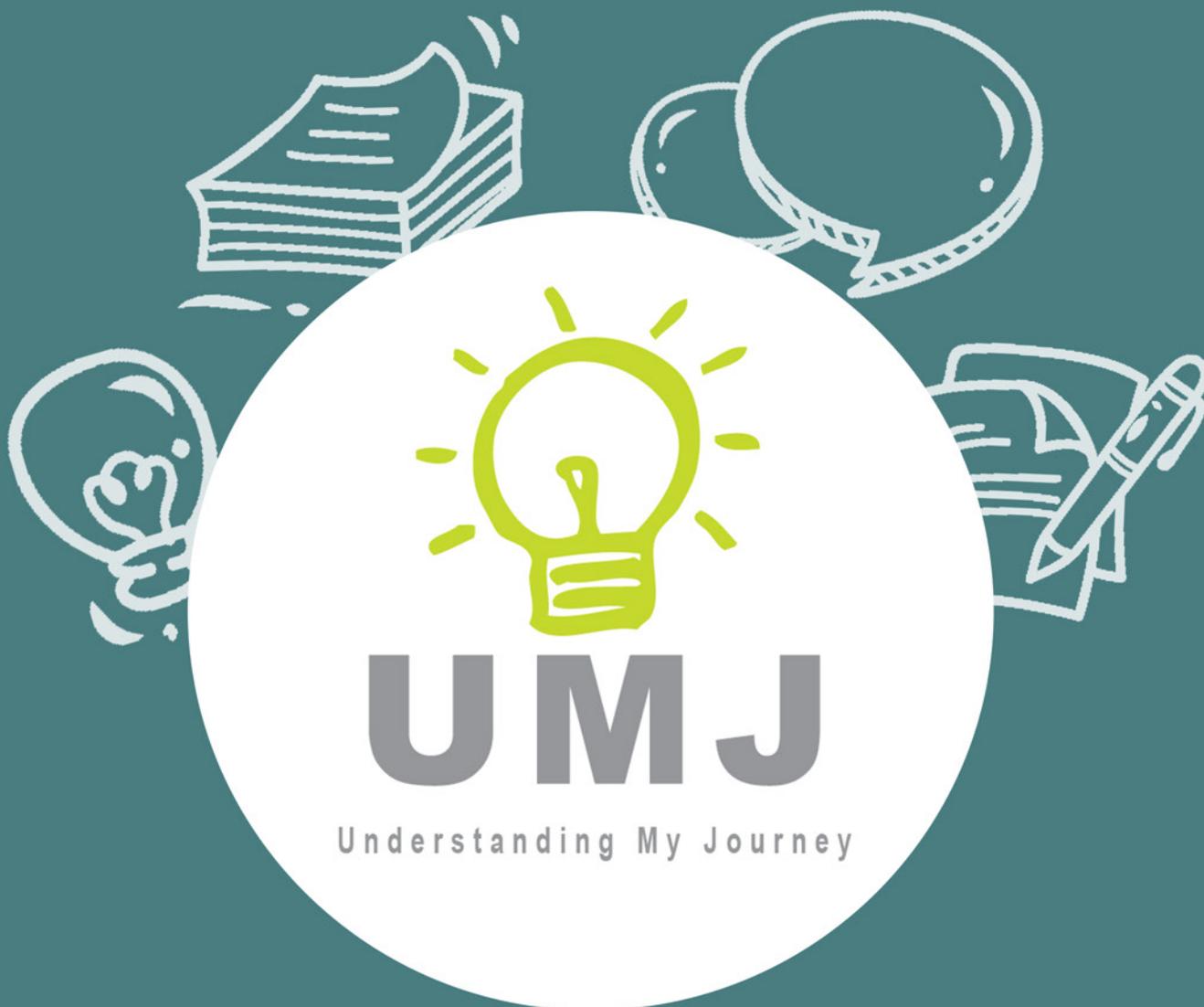
1. A team worked in a cotton field to grow the cotton.
2. A team produced the dye which ensured that the t-shirt would be white (or any other colour).
3. A team refined the cotton so that it could be spun into a t-shirt.
4. A team produced the pattern and design for the t-shirt.
5. A team of machinists in a factory cut the fabric and sewed the t-shirt together.
6. A team designed the sewing machines the machinists used.
7. A team transported the t-shirt to a warehouse.
8. A team transported the t-shirt to a shop to be sold.
9. A team designed the advertising campaign for the shop.
10. A team working in the shop sold the t-shirt.

### A laptop

1. A team worked in a mine to extract the rare earth metals.
2. A team soldered the microchips together.
3. A team designed and produced all the additional components, e.g. webcam, keys, screen, etc.
4. A team assembled all the components for the laptop together.
5. A team produced the physical design for the laptop.
6. A team designed the operating system for the laptop (e.g. Windows OS).
7. A team designed and produced the software to make the laptop work (e.g. Microsoft applications).
8. A team designed the marketing and advertising for the laptop.
9. A team transported the laptop to a warehouse, and then to a shop.
10. A team working in the shop sold the laptop.

All of these items might affect people in the future in various ways. They might be sold or given to new owners second-hand. They could all be recycled and made into new products. Or they could end up in landfill, where they will take many years to biodegrade. In the case of the laptop, sending this to landfill would likely cause toxic leaks into the surrounding soil from the rare earth metals and plastics used. This would stay in the environment for many years, posing a health hazard for future generations. In the case of the chair, the upholstery might be synthetic, and it might also take many years to biodegrade, with a similar toxic effect if sent to landfill.





**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

# LEADERSHIP SKILLS



## What they are and why they're important

- Are some people natural born leaders, whilst others are destined to follow?
- Are you generally obedient towards authority, or do you think of yourself as a rebel?

In many aspects of life, some people stand out more than others. However, we rarely think about why. It's easy to criticise people we think are 'bad' leaders, and no doubt we can all think of teachers we didn't like at school, or of politicians who regularly abuse their power.

Leadership is not just restricted to those in positions of power and authority, but is evident in all aspects of life, starting with your family and friends, and ultimately with you! Life throws up all sorts of situations where leadership is called for. The need for these skills is not just restricted to those we call leaders.

In this part of the toolkit you will gain an understanding of the skills and attributes which make someone an effective leader, and how you can develop these. Leadership is not a single skill but rather is made up of a cluster of other skills such as communication skills, adaptability and teamwork.

## How to use this toolkit

You can either use the sections of the toolkit on your own or as part of a group. Your tutor/mentor/support worker will help decide which approach is better suited to meet your individual needs.

If you have not done so already, then read the 'Introduction and Guidance' section which gives an overview of how to get the best out of your use of the UMJ toolkit.

If you need more space to write down your thoughts or actions then use additional sheets of paper.

# LEADERSHIP SKILLS

## Learning Outcomes

In this section, you will:

- Reflect on the skills and attributes needed for effective leadership.
- Think about some different approaches to leadership, and which of these could be applied in a range of scenarios.
- Plot out your own leadership abilities, and decide how you might need to improve these skills.
- Identify a situation or task you are involved in, and plan to apply some leadership skills whilst involved in this.
- Evaluate how your skills have developed as a result of this activity, and how you plan to keep on developing your leadership skills.

Remember! Your skills won't develop overnight. You will need to give some time to work through these activities, go away and try out your skills, then come back and see how much your skills have improved.

If you need help, ask someone to work through this section with you. This could be a teacher, youth worker, coach, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role.

This stage of the journey is slightly different from the other stages, and will draw on each soft skill included so far in order to develop your leadership skills. But first, let's see where you're at before you start this stage of the journey. It's time to take a skills check.

You may find this chart helps you to plan and track your progress through your journey:



Aspect	Date started	Date finished	Your notes
Initial skills check			
Development activities			
Action planning			
Developmental activities			
Reflection, evaluation and 2nd skills check			
Moving on			

# BEFORE THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK



## Who has the power?

Think about the following situations.

Who holds the power in these situations? How do they use this power?



Write down your thoughts about the following. Don't think too long - just write down the first thoughts which come to you!



A famous person you admire:

A person from school, college, work or other group who you respect:

A time you trusted someone to take charge of a situation:

A time when you had to take charge of a situation:

**Now, complete the Skills Check.**

**Step 1:**

**Indicate the places on the chart which best represents where your skills are at.**

You can shade or colour in the grid, or mark with a X and then draw a line to plot out your skills. You can do this by yourself if you want to. If you're not sure how to complete this, ask for help.

		Emerging		Consolidating		Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!	
	<b>Example:</b> <i>I am an active listener and work well in a team with other people</i>	1	2	3	4	5	
1	I am an active listener and work well in a team with other people	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Other people listen to my views, and I am persuasive and convincing	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I recognise who can best get the job done and can get them on board	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I respect the other members of my team and give praise and reward when it's deserved	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I do as I say, and people trust me to act in accordance with my values	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I can analyse and solve problems efficiently and creatively	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I learn from my mistakes and encourage others to do the same	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I am accountable for my actions and am happy to be challenged by others	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I focus on a task and make sure it is completed well and on time	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I am adaptable, and decisive enough to change my approach when I need to	1	2	3	4	5	

Shade in the box which indicates your overall leadership skills level.

<b>Overall, my leadership skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

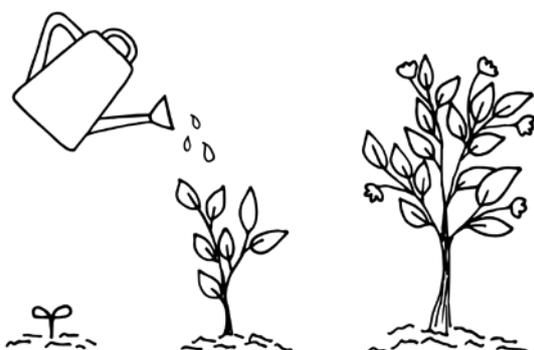
## Step 2:

**Ask someone who knows you well** to shade or mark the spaces which best represents where you're at. This could be a teacher, youth worker, mentor or employment advisor, or someone in a similar role. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Relationship:</b>					
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Is an active listener and can work well in a team with other people</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Is an active listener and can work well in a team with other people	1	2	3	4	5
2	Other people listen to their views, and is persuasive and convincing	1	2	3	4	5
3	Recognises who can best get the job done and can get them on board	1	2	3	4	5
4	Respects the other members of their team and gives praise and reward when it's deserved	1	2	3	4	5
5	Does as they say, and people trust them to act in accordance with their values	1	2	3	4	5
6	Analyses and solves problems efficiently and creatively	1	2	3	4	5
7	Learns from their mistakes and encourages others to do the same	1	2	3	4	5
8	Is accountable for their actions and is happy to be challenged by others	1	2	3	4	5
9	Focuses on a task and make sure it is completed well and on time	1	2	3	4	5
10	Is adaptable, and decisive enough to change their approach when they need to	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall leadership skills level.

<b>Overall, their leadership skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

### Step 3:

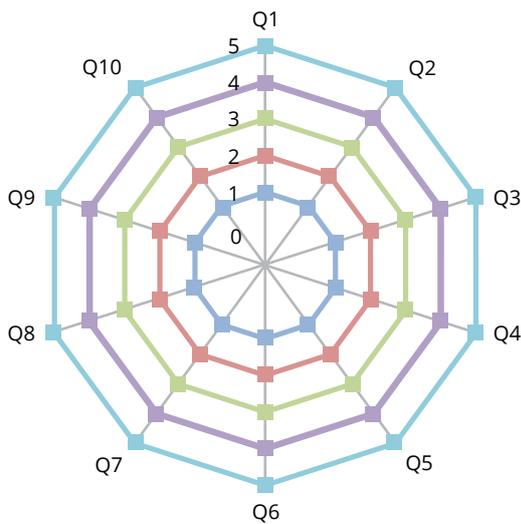
Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.

Q1 - Q10 represents the questions. On each question, if you answered 5, circle the blue cross. If you answered 4, circle the purple cross. If you answered 3, circle green; 2 circle red; 1 circle dark blue.

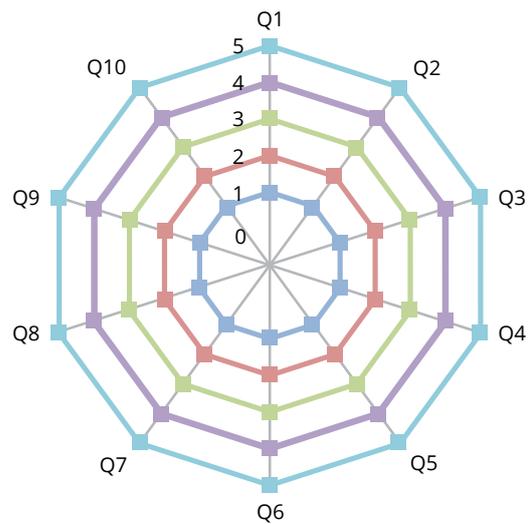
When you have circled all the crosses, right around the web, you should join each cross with a black line. The final diagram should look something like a spider's web and can be lots of different shapes depending on your answers.

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**



### Discuss your different grids.

- Are your finished diagrams the same or different?
- Do other people see you the same way you see yourself?



Decide together what your strong and weak areas are, and make sure you both agree.

**List your strengths and weaknesses below.**

What are your three **weakest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

What are your three **strongest** areas?

Area 1:

Area 2:

Area 3:

Your strongest areas might be aspects leadership skills you're good at, but you can always improve. Your weakest areas are definitely areas you should think about improving.

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY – DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

You're already on a journey, because you're already involved in some kind of activity or project which means that you have to work together with other people.

## Leadership as a combination of skills

If you've worked through some of the other sections and looked at teamwork, you'll have noticed that leadership is made up of lots of different skills. As with teamwork, it's best to think of leadership as a 'cluster' or combination of skills.



<b>Communication Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Listen and empathise.</b> As well as being an active listener, you care about the people in your team, and you are able to put yourself in their shoes. You can resolve conflict objectively and diplomatically.</li> <li>• <b>Persuade and convince.</b> You can give a full explanation of your ideas and your reasoning. Other people can easily see your logic.</li> <li>• <b>Communicate with clarity.</b> Other members of the team know exactly what to expect because you explain things in full, using clear and easily understandable language. You can do this in speech and in writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Adaptability Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Take on feedback.</b> You are able to accept critical feedback from other people without feeling that this is an attack on your leadership. You are able to change your approach on the basis of this feedback.</li> <li>• <b>Make difficult decisions.</b> You can judge the pros and cons of a situation quickly, and are ready to make decisions based on the evidence, even if they're not easy or popular.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>See the best in people.</b> You respect the other members of your team and you give praise and reward when it's deserved.</li> <li>• <b>Demonstrate expertise.</b> You are knowledgeable and skilled at what you do, and you are passionate about this, too. You are confident in your abilities without being arrogant.</li> </ul>

<b>Time &amp; Energy Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Be reliable and consistent.</b> You show up on time, and do more than your fair share of the work. You are consistent in meeting deadlines.</li> <li>• <b>Delegate wisely.</b> You don't take on too much work, and don't promise to do things you know you can't achieve. Instead, you are confident in giving tasks to others. You help and support team members to manage their time and energy well.</li> </ul>
<b>Work Ethic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lead with integrity.</b> You are honest and trustworthy, and you lead by example. Your actions are consistent with your values, and you take responsibility for both successes and failures.</li> <li>• <b>Motivate your team.</b> You are driven and determined, and this example serves to motivate your team, too. You inspire others to take initiative.</li> </ul>
<b>Problem Solving &amp; Analytical Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Have a clear vision.</b> You can think strategically, with an ability to foresee the consequences of a particular action. You can see the 'bigger picture' as well as being able to focus in on the details.</li> <li>• <b>Take measured risks.</b> You welcome the opportunity to experiment with new solutions. However, you are balanced and considered in your decisions, rather than overly negative or reckless.</li> </ul>
<b>Team working skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build and sustain a team.</b> You can see which person is the best for each role in the team, and you can get everyone motivated and working well together. You actively build relationships and a sense of purpose across the team.</li> </ul>

**Think about the following questions** (you don't have to make notes).



- Are any of these leadership skills surprising? Why? Which ones?
- Are there any which you think are missing?
- Do you think that most leaders in politics and business exhibit these leadership skills? Why? Why not?
- Can you think of people you know who exhibit these leadership skills? Are they in a leadership role?
- How many of these leadership skills do you think you exhibit?

## The 6 Forms of Power

Power is held and exercised in hundreds of ways in our daily lives. It can help groups and societies to harness their ability to get things done, but it can also be used to manipulate, to abuse or to exploit.



Over 60 years ago, the social psychologists French and Raven identified 6 forms of power<sup>1</sup> which people in authority and leadership positions can wield. Noticing which type of power is being used can help you to recognise a good leader.



**Legitimate power** is given to people who occupy a respected position of authority with some degree of popular support. This includes political, business or religious leaders, for example. However, this support – and therefore legitimacy - can change very quickly, so it is not usually enough on its own.



**Reward power** depends on those in power controlling a system of 'rewards'. Rewards such as pay rises, bonuses and desirable tasks can provide motivation and encouragement. However, the danger is that rewards can be used inconsistently, and there may be little legitimacy left once all the rewards have been given out.



**Expert power** occurs when a powerful person is able to gain respect because of their unusually high knowledge of their field. It means that their decisions usually carry weight, and people can therefore trust them to lead. You don't have to occupy a powerful position in a hierarchy to lead through the use of expert power.



**Referent power** happens when people wield power because other people like them. A good example of this is the power and influence wielded by celebrities. This type of power can easily be misused. For example, someone might get a promotion because they are liked, rather than because they are good at the job or have integrity.



**Coercive power** depends upon punishment and threats to keep control. Whilst this type of power might be needed to get through a short-term crisis, it is usually seen as one of the most unstable. In the workplace it can lead to bullying, resentment and demotivation, and it can trigger mental and physical health issues, too.



**Informational power** depends on the person in power controlling the flow of information available to you so you don't have the full picture. For example, a politician or journalist might manipulate statistics, or a football referee might 'throw' a match. This type of power has grown in importance in the last few decades.

### Read about the 6 Forms of Power again, and think about the following questions

(you don't have to make notes).

- Have you ever felt powerless? Why was this? Which type of power was being used against you?
- Which of these forms of power have you experienced recently? How?
- Which of these forms of power have you used? Why? What happened?
- If you were in a leadership position, which forms of power would you use first?
- Which forms of power would you avoid?



<sup>1</sup> See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_and\\_Raven%27s\\_bases\\_of\\_power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_and_Raven%27s_bases_of_power)

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

# ACTION PLANNING

Different leaders can use their power in very different ways. Whilst it is possible to learn and practice leadership skills, you also need to think about what sort of leader you'd like to become.

One of the most recent approaches is Goleman's 6 Leadership Styles<sup>2</sup>.

Style	Approach	When to use this
<b>Autocratic</b>	The <b>autocratic leader</b> makes all the decisions without any input from the team, and expects others to do what they're told.	When urgent and important tasks need to be done, and team members are new or inexperienced.
<b>Pace-setting</b>	The <b>pace-setting leader</b> has high expectations of the team, and leads by example, rather than by command.	When urgent and important tasks need to be done, and team members are both motivated and knowledgeable.
<b>Authoritative</b>	The <b>authoritative leader</b> has a clear vision of what to achieve, and can inspire people to work with them.	When long-term strategic changes are needed.
<b>Affiliative</b>	The <b>affiliative leader</b> prioritises good relationships within the team, sometimes at the expense of getting the job done.	When a team has been through a difficult period and needs to rebuild trust.
<b>Democratic</b>	The <b>democratic leader</b> values teamwork, and builds consensus through participation. Everyone must contribute.	When creative solutions are needed, with a strong team to implement them.
<b>Coaching</b>	The <b>coaching leader</b> gives constant feedback as a way of ensuring that team members learn and develop.	When tasks are important but not urgent, and skills need to be nurtured.

What type of leadership style is being used in these examples? Write the leadership style in the box under each speech bubble.



*No excuses, I'm telling you to do it now!*

*That didn't go so well. How can you avoid this next time?*

*We need to change society, and I know how we're going to do it.*

*Let's all think about this, and decide what our next steps are.*

*That didn't go so well. How did that make you feel?*

*I won't stop until the job is done, and I expect the same from all of you.*

Turn to the back of this section to check your answers.

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://online.seu.edu/6-leadership-styles-in-business/>

What type of leadership style would motivate you to do well? What type would demotivate you?

### How would you lead?

It's very easy to criticise leaders, but it's much more difficult to provide good leadership. Imagine you are a co-worker and a manager in a workplace you know. What would your leadership style be?

You are a colleague. Two people in your team had a huge argument, and they now refuse to speak to each other. It's really starting to impact on relationships and people are starting to take sides.



In this example, a few approaches are possible.

- Autocratic:** Get everyone together and tell them to behave, or else you'll involve a senior manager – no questions, no discussions.
- Pace-setting:** Point out a time when you had a disagreement with someone, and it didn't affect your relationship with them. Expect everyone to follow this example.
- Authoritative:** Get everyone together and point out the importance of getting over arguments quickly. Make it clear that this is what you expect to happen.
- Affiliative:** Meet with each person individually to find out what the disagreement is all about, and then try to mediate between the two colleagues, paying attention to hurt feelings.
- Democratic:** Speak to everyone in the team, and find out how the argument is affecting people. Ask them how they would solve the situation and try to get an agreement.
- Coaching:** Accept that it will take time for relationships to heal. Meet with each person regularly, and over time, make helpful suggestions to help bring the team back together.



What would your leadership style be? Write your ideas in the boxes below.

**You are a colleague.** You suspect that someone has been stealing from the till. You aren't sure, but you think you know who it is.

**You are a manager.** A team member says they're thinking of leaving because their ideas are never taken seriously. You value them and you don't want them to leave.

**Think about the following questions** (you don't have to make notes):

- What's your preferred leadership style?
- What leadership style would you try to avoid using?



**Now, identify a team or group you're currently involved in, or will soon be involved in.** This should be related to the task, activity or project you're part of now.



*The aim of the team is to:*



*My role in the team is:*



As you begin your teamwork, make some notes about the following points.

Who is leading the team?	What types of power are they using?	What's their leadership style?
<b>Identify 2 situations where you might be able to provide leadership.</b>	Situation 1:	Situation 2:
<b>How are you going to use the following soft skills to provide leadership?</b>		
Communication skills	Adaptability skills	Positive attitude
Time & energy management	Work ethic	Problem solving & analytical skills
Teamwork skills	What types of power will you use?	What leadership styles will you use?

Afterwards, make some notes on how you applied your leadership skills.

What happened? Did you become a leader? Situation 1:
What happened? Did you become a leader? Situation 2:

# REFLECTING AND EVALUATING

How did it go? Here's your chance to reflect on how you've improved your leadership skills. Fill in each arrow below with your results and thoughts.



What task/activity did you complete?

Did you follow your own advice on leadership? How?

Can you now use your leadership skills better? How?

What new skills in leadership will you take with you and develop further in the future?

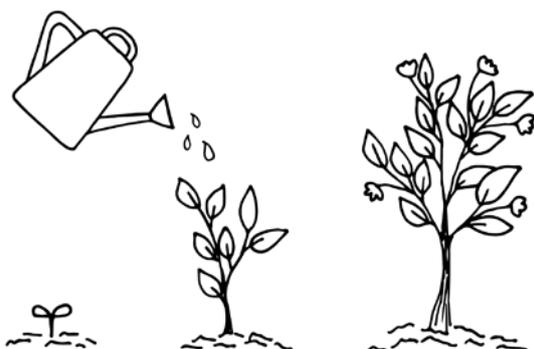
# AFTER THE JOURNEY – SKILLS CHECK

You've almost completed this stage of your soft skills journey. You've used this part of the journey to think about your leadership skills. Now it's time to see how much distance you have travelled in your leadership skills journey. Indicate in the spaces which best represents your skills now.

		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> I am an active listener and work well in a team with other people	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am an active listener and work well in a team with other people	1	2	3	4	5
2	Other people listen to my views, and I am persuasive and convincing	1	2	3	4	5
3	I recognise who can best get the job done and can get them on board	1	2	3	4	5
4	I respect the other members of my team and give praise and reward when it's deserved	1	2	3	4	5
5	I do as I say, and people trust me to act in accordance with my values	1	2	3	4	5
6	I can analyse and solve problems efficiently and creatively	1	2	3	4	5
7	I learn from my mistakes and encourage others to do the same	1	2	3	4	5
8	I am accountable for my actions and am happy to be challenged by others	1	2	3	4	5
9	I focus on a task and make sure it is completed well and on time	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am adaptable, and decisive enough to change my approach when I need to	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates your overall leadership skills level.

<b>Overall, my leadership skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

Again, ask the same person who knows you well to indicate on the chart the spaces which best represent where you're at now. They must not look at your answers!

Peer reflection carried out by:  Relationship:		Emerging		Consolidating	Established	
		Never - I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always - no problem!
	<b>Example:</b> <i>Is an active listener and can work well in a team with other people</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1	Is an active listener and can work well in a team with other people	1	2	3	4	5
2	Other people listen to their views, and is persuasive and convincing	1	2	3	4	5
3	Recognises who can best get the job done and can get them on board	1	2	3	4	5
4	Respects the other members of their team and gives praise and reward when it's deserved	1	2	3	4	5
5	Does as they say, and people trust them to act in accordance with their values	1	2	3	4	5
6	Analyses and solves problems efficiently and creatively	1	2	3	4	5
7	Learns from their mistakes and encourages others to do the same	1	2	3	4	5
8	Is accountable for their actions and is happy to be challenged by others	1	2	3	4	5
9	Focuses on a task and make sure it is completed well and on time	1	2	3	4	5
10	Is adaptable, and decisive enough to change their approach when they need to	1	2	3	4	5

Shade in the box which indicates their overall leadership skills level.

<b>Overall, their leadership skills are:</b>	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
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**Emerging** = your skills are starting to develop.

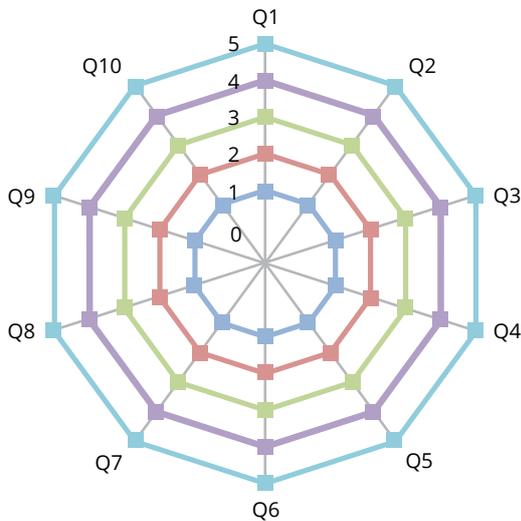
**Consolidating** = you're practicing and developing your skills, but you're not quite there yet.

**Established** = your skills are well developed, and have become part of how you naturally do things.

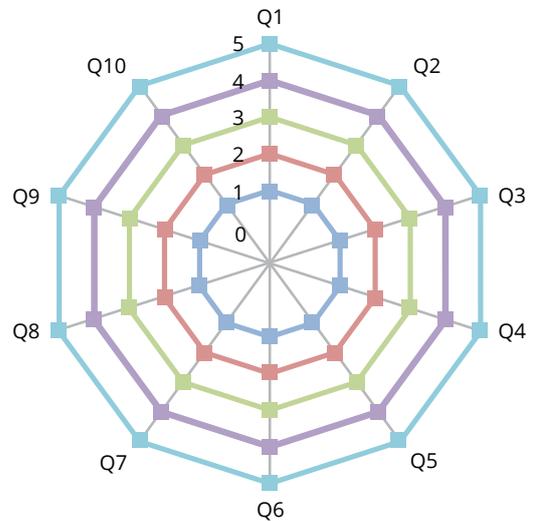
**Next, plot your answers on the spider web diagrams below.**

If you need more help, look in the **Instructions and Guidance** section for how to do this.

**My responses:**



**The other person's responses:**

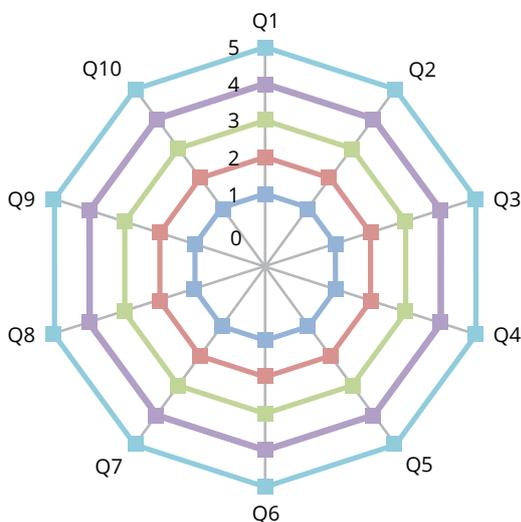


If your spider's webs look the same, that's fine. Go to the next stage.

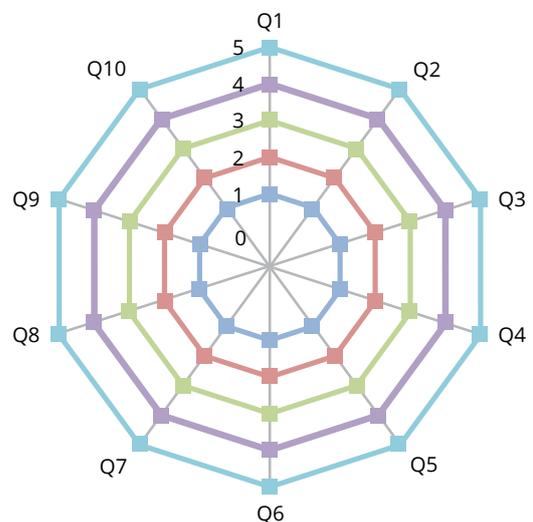
If they're different, work together to produce a single spider's web you can both agree on.

**Plot out two diagrams - your skills before, and your skills now.**

**My skills before:**



**My skills now:**



Are your 'before' and 'after' diagrams different? How much progress have you made?

If they're the same, don't be disheartened. Sometimes we slip backwards, or we need more time to develop our skills. This is part of the journey!

Remember that the levels are personal to you and reflect your habits, knowledge and experience and cannot be compared with other people who will have different backgrounds.

# CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

This part of the journey is almost over. It's time to prepare for the next stage.



## 1. How are you going to continue developing your leadership skills?

*I am going to continue developing my leadership skills by:*

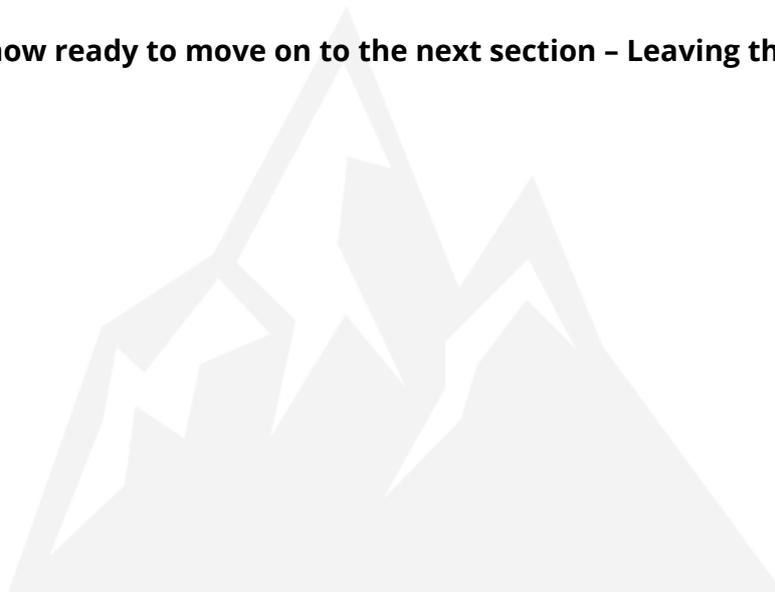
## 2. You've applied for a job or training course, and they want to know what experience you have in leadership.

*What examples can you now give in your written application?*

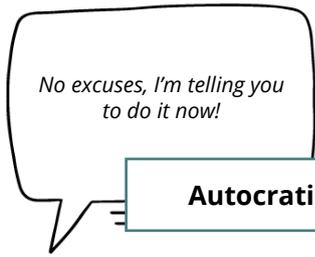
## 3. They liked your application, and they want to invite you for an interview.

*What further examples of good leadership skills should you mention in your interview?*

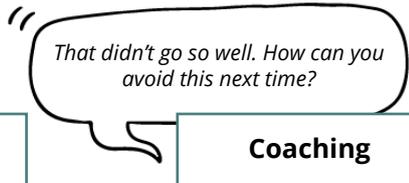
**You are now ready to move on to the next section - Leaving the Journey.**



## Answer Sheet



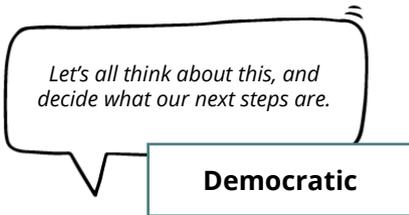
**Autocratic**



**Coaching**



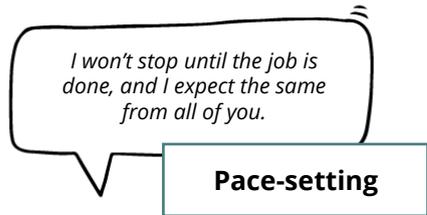
**Authoritative**



**Democratic**



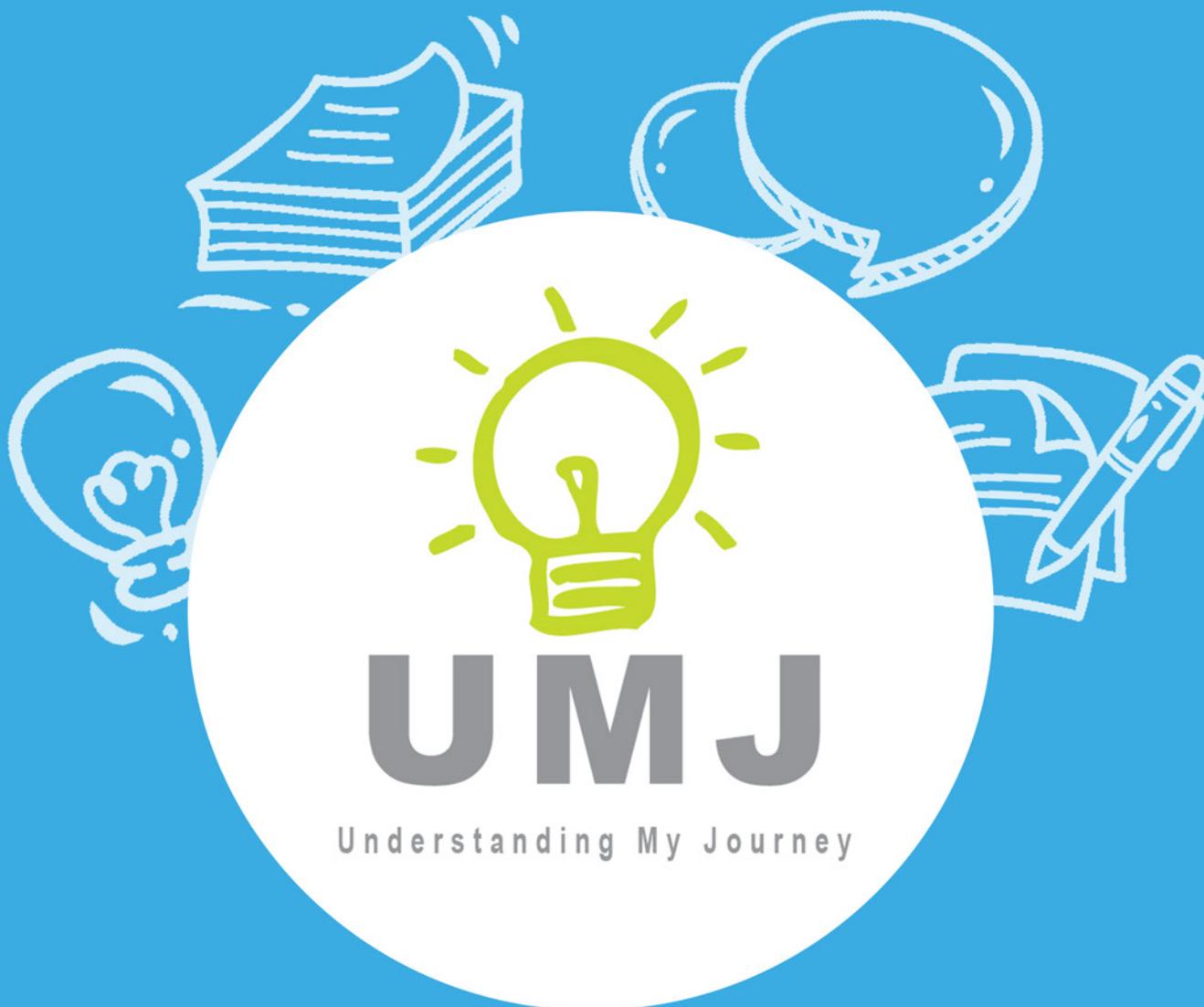
**Affiliative**



**Pace-setting**

## YOUR NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



**A TOOLKIT**  
**for Soft Skills Development for Young People**

**LEAVING THE JOURNEY**

# LEAVING THE JOURNEY



## Congratulations!

You've arrived at the end of the journey. It's time for you to reflect on how your skills have developed, and how far you've travelled, by making notes in the boxes.



What was your favourite activity in the Toolkit?  
Why?

Which skills did you enjoy developing the most? Why?

Name 3 things you can do now which you couldn't do before:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What was your proudest moment when working through the Toolkit?

What was your biggest learning curve?

*(i.e. something you really struggled with at first, but which you learnt to succeed in the most)*

**Now you've had time to reflect, take the Final Skills Check.** There's no need to plot this out on a spider's web, but you should have a look at the First Skills Check you took before.

# FINAL SKILLS CHECK

Date of Skills Check		Emerging		Consolidating		Established		
		Never – I struggle with this	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Usually, but not always	Always – no problem!		
	<b>Example:</b> I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5		
1	I have a purpose in my life and feel I am making a contribution	1	2	3	4	5	Positive Attitude	
2	I have realistic goals which I feel I am progressing towards	1	2	3	4	5		
3	I value my friendships and find time to connect with other people	1	2	3	4	5		
4	I think through ideas before I speak or communicate them	1	2	3	4	5	Communication Skills	
5	I can communicate positively in difficult or challenging situations	1	2	3	4	5		
6	I know when to use informal or more formal language	1	2	3	4	5		
7	I see changes as opportunities to learn and experience new things	1	2	3	4	5	Adaptability Skills	
8	I try to overcome setbacks and barriers to progress	1	2	3	4	5		
9	I am open to other people's suggestions about how I might do things differently	1	2	3	4	5		
10	I am always on time for things and rarely miss deadlines	1	2	3	4	5	Time and Energy Management	
11	I regularly write 'to do' lists and tick off things when they're done	1	2	3	4	5		
12	When I start doing something, I like to try and finish it without getting distracted	1	2	3	4	5		
13	I can be relied upon to be there when the work needs to be done	1	2	3	4	5	Work Ethic	
14	I own up to my mistakes and am happy to ask for help and advice when I need it	1	2	3	4	5		
15	I understand the importance of working hard to achieve my goals	1	2	3	4	5		
16	I step back and look at the bigger picture before trying to analyse a problem	1	2	3	4	5	Problem Solving and Analytical Skills	
17	I set up and follow a logical sequence of stages in order to problem solve	1	2	3	4	5		
18	I think creatively and come up with solutions which other people haven't thought of	1	2	3	4	5		
19	I understand how my role fits within a larger team	1	2	3	4	5	Teamwork Leadership Skills	
20	I do as I say, and people trust me to act in accordance with my values	1	2	3	4	5		

## How does the Final Skills Check compare with your First Skills Check?

### What new or improved skills are you going to take back with you?

Think about how you can evidence your soft skills in any applications for jobs or training in the future. Make notes in the table below about how you can **explain and describe specific examples** of when you've used or developed these skills.



Skill	How did you improve this skill? What did you do?	Examples you can use to explain or describe
Positive Attitude		
Communication Skills		
Adaptability Skills		
Time and Energy Management		
Work Ethic		
Problem Solving and Analytical Skills		
Team Working Skills		
Leadership Skills		

# YOU'RE AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY



However, you've now realised that there are still more mountains to climb in the distance. And beyond those mountains, even more mountains will rise.

Your soft skills will keep on developing and improving throughout life, so there are always going to be new mountains to climb. In fact, the journey never ends.

But you're not in the least bit daunted by this, because you've come this far.

The next time you climb a soft skills mountain, you'll be stronger, fitter, and more up for the challenge than ever before. And the view from the top will be even more amazing.



# UMJ

Understanding My Journey

For more information and resources please visit our website  
[www.understandingmyjourney.eu](http://www.understandingmyjourney.eu)

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