



INSPIRING
MORE SUSTAINABILITY

GUIDANCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

8 essential life skills to help young people adapt

This project is supported by:



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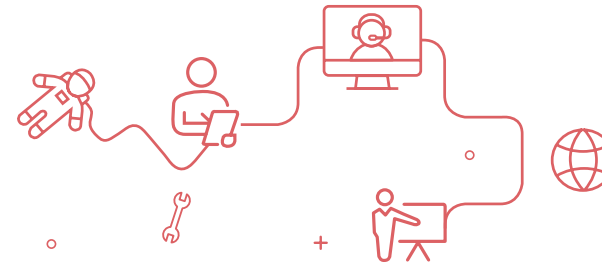
1. Introduction

Welcome to this toolkit!

Its purpose is to share knowledge and observations made on the ground during the "Guidance in times of crisis" project carried out with different classes in secondary schools in Luxembourg.

The project is run by IMS Luxembourg and funded by the Maison de l'Orientation, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, and the European Social Fund.

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■ The link between education and crises

Since the health crisis that hit Europe and the world in 2020, a number of other crises have been shaking up our society: climate, social, energy, food, geopolitical, economic, and so on. The world is facing major challenges, and it's impossible to predict accurately what tomorrow will bring.

These crises affect the whole of society, and young people and children are no exception. As there are no more recent studies available for Luxembourg, we'll look at the second Baromètre de confiance dans l'avenir de l'Étudiant (France, 2022). 78% of young people say that the succession of crises since 2020 are affecting their confidence in the future. 66% feel that they have a "real impact" on their morale and psychological state. These upheavals are affecting their social relationships (39%), their career and study choices (37%) and their experience when looking for work/internships (34%).

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To make the best career choices, it's important to understand this constantly changing socio-economic environment, to have a good understanding of yourself and to explore your possibilities in terms of your interests and needs: these are the traditional objectives of educational career guidance.

But it doesn't stop there. Society should give young people the opportunity to develop their cognitive and socio-emotional skills to express their full potential. Today's young people live in a fast-changing society, where the digital revolution, ecological transition and successive crises are redefining professions and the skills required.

Faced with these challenges, they must not only adapt to an ever-changing workplace, but also assume an active civic role in building a more resilient and responsible society. To achieve these objectives, all the social and educational stakeholders must come together to provide guidance.

■ The concept of resilience in brief

The word *resilience* comes from the Latin *resilientia*, composed of *re-salire* (literally "to jump again"). In psychology, it refers to the ability to rebuild oneself after a trauma or difficult ordeal. Boris Cyrulnik, a neuropsychiatrist and psychoanalyst, explains that resilience refers to the ability to succeed, to live and to develop, despite adversity. Resilience is therefore the ability to overcome crises and solve problems in such a way that the individual does not emerge broken, but strengthened.

Resilience is not an innate quality. It can be developed and/or reinforced throughout life, in particular by:

- Social support (family, friends, community)
- Learning to manage emotions and stress
- Adopting a positive, flexible view of the challenges
- Developing the ability to make sense of events
- Understanding your strengths, assets and skills

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Resilience is therefore a rich, cross-disciplinary concept that touches on many areas. Rather than dwell at length on its definition, here are a few resources to help you explore the subject further:

- In **psychology**, the work of **Boris Cyrulnik**, in particular *Les Vilains Petits Canards* and *Un merveilleux malheur*, offer an accessible approach to individual resilience.
- In **sociology**, **Edgar Morin** and **Emmy Werner** analyse how societies and individuals adapt to crises.
- For an **ecological** perspective, the research of **Carl Folke** and the **Stockholm Resilience Centre** are essential references.
- Finally, in **management and business**, **Erica Seville** 's book *Resilient Organizations* explores strategies for adapting to change.

These resources explore the various facets of resilience in greater depth and provide food for thought on its practical applications.

■ Resilience in education and in the workplace

To go a step further and understand the link between resilience, education and the workplace, Suniya S. Luthar, a psychology professor, highlights the fact that resilience is essentially based on relationships. In most cases, a young person's first contacts are their parents or close family circle. However, research also highlights the importance of **so-called compensatory reference people**, who might be distant relatives, **teaching staff in schools and other childhood institutions**.

■ Adaptability: a key skill for a changing world

In a **changing** environment, it's essential to prepare young people to navigate uncertainty and seize opportunities as they arise. Adaptability is therefore a fundamental skill: it enables us to adjust to change, develop new strategies and turn challenges into levers for progress.

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Unlike resilience, which emerges after a shock or ordeal, adaptability is based on a **proactive approach**. It's not just a question of reacting to change, but of **anticipating it, understanding it and responding with flexibility and agility**. Encouraging adaptability in young people means giving them the means to:

- **Manage change with confidence**, by learning to adjust to new situations.
- **Develop their creativity and critical thinking** to find innovative solutions to challenges.
- **Learn from their mistakes**, understanding that failure is part of the learning process.
- **Interact with diverse environments**, open up to other cultures, ways of thinking and ways of operating.

Neuroscientists now claim that the **development of the prefrontal cortex** (an area of the brain located in the frontal lobe) is **not complete until around the age of 25**. Specifically, this area is responsible for cognitive control and inhibition,

helping us to carry out complex tasks in a new, unfamiliar environment that require learning, concentration, reflection and memory. This will be developed throughout life, but it's crucial to understand the importance of fostering agility from an early age, through the development of various cognitive and socio-emotional skills.

Training young people to be adaptable means giving them a toolbox to move confidently through a complex world. More than just a reaction to the unexpected, it's a skill for the future, one that will enable them to be agents of change and to flourish in their personal and professional lives.

This toolkit could be your toolbox: we have identified eight useful interpersonal soft skills that you can develop to be more adaptable. We'll be looking at them in more detail in a series of practical sheets: self-awareness, self-regulation, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, the right to make mistakes, problem solving, project-based learning and cultivating hope and positivity.

At an individual level, these skills for dealing with difficult and critical situations are essential and useful in crisis situations, but they are also of interest in all educational situations and in the workplace.



2. Who is this publication for?

Developing young people's soft skills is essential for improving their adaptability to the increasing challenges of the modern world. Staff in educational career guidance and integration units, parents and businesses have a crucial role to play in this process. By working together to help young people acquire skills - both cross-disciplinary and interpersonal - as well as problem-solving abilities, we can give them the tools they need to adapt better to new or difficult situations.

This publication is therefore aimed at any organisation or individual working with young people.

■ **Secondary schools**

Headteachers can incorporate the development of these skills into their school projects and organise activities along these lines, educational career guidance and integration units in secondary schools can help young people identify their strengths and aspirations, and teachers can incorporate the development of specific skills into their lessons.

■ **Parents/legal guardians**

Parents, meanwhile, can complement and reinforce these efforts by offering their children a secure and caring environment, daily emotional support tailored to each child's needs, and advice.

■ **Businesses**

Businesses provide practical experience through work placements, work/study courses, open days and mentoring.

This collaboration enables young people to gain confidence and autonomy, qualities that will help them overcome obstacles and succeed in a constantly changing professional environment.

Ultimately, this approach not only contributes to the personal success of young people, but also to the creation of a more resilient and adaptable society.

3. How do I use this toolkit?

The aim of this toolkit is to **provide benchmarks, food for thought and a selection of educational sheets and activities** for tackling the topic of adaptability, while taking into account the diversity of approaches and target audiences. The skills identified and the list of activities proposed in this kit are by no means exhaustive.

The aim is to create a benevolent convergence of interests to better equip teenagers to deal with the crises and difficulties they may encounter, whether in education, their careers or their everyday lives. This approach encourages dialogue and collaboration between those involved in education and careers guidance, with a view to bringing them closer together.

In other words, this kit does not claim to offer any 'truth' about resilience or ways of developing it. Rather, the aim is to provide some - inevitably subjective - food for thought and action concerning specific concepts and life skills that will help young people to become more adaptable.

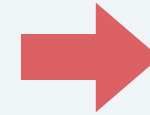
We therefore invite you to explore this tool with a critical mind and to use it as a source of inspiration in your classes, company immersion days, induction and support for "new-joiners" or other activities, with a view to encouraging dialogue and fostering the personal development of each teenager and young adult, at their own pace.

4. Eight practical action sheets



8 PRACTICAL ACTION SHEETS

8 essential life skills for greater adaptability



Educational Sheet #1

Getting to know yourself and developing your self-efficacy



People skills: self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience



Aim of the sheet: to encourage the development of self-knowledge and self-efficacy in teenagers aged 11 to 16. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the aim is to develop individuals **who are independent, confident and effective**, capable of fulfilling their respective roles and making a positive contribution to their environment.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Self-awareness is a deep understanding of our identity, personal characteristics, reactions and aspirations, enabling us to manage ourselves and our relationships with others better.

Self-efficacy (or a feeling of personal effectiveness) is a concept developed by Albert Bandura, a doctor of psychology, which refers to the belief that a person has the capacity to accomplish specific tasks or goals. It means confidence in your ability to manage a situation or overcome a challenge.

Links with adaptability:

Having a good understanding of ourselves enables us to develop effective strategies for overcoming challenges and adapting to difficult situations. For example, self-knowledge helps you to identify your strengths, which you can draw on to cope with challenges. It also helps you to recognise your past successes, be aware of them and identify the resources that produced these successes.

In addition, a strong sense of self-efficacy encourages perseverance in the face of obstacles, boosts initiative and increases the chances of success. By contrast, low self-efficacy can lead to avoiding challenges, becoming easily discouraged and giving up quickly in the face of failure.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #1

Getting to know yourself and developing your self-efficacy

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. Analyse your passions and interests

- In a table, list your interests under 3 headings:
 - what I like to do (activities)
 - what I like to experience
 - things I'm passionate about (things I like learning about/finding out about new things)
- Look for the intrinsic reasons that explain why you have these passions.

For example: if you like travelling, ask yourself what it is that you like about it. What are the reasons? (culture, discovery, sharing with people, wandering around or seeing as many places as possible, adventure, or planning your time well).

Intrinsic reasons/motivations are sources of joy and energy, when an individual does something for the pleasure of doing it, regardless of the outcome. Extrinsic reasons/motivations, on the other hand, assume that an individual does it for the result (grades, qualification, status, reward, money, parental congratulations, etc.). If the result is positive, the individual will be motivated, but if it isn't satisfactory, the individual will quickly feel discouraged.

B. Discovering your qualities using role models

- On a sheet of paper, ask the young people to write down a person/character (real or fictional) that they admire.
- Then ask them why they admire this person. What qualities do they think this person has (list 3).

Following these two steps, explain to the young people that what we see/admire in this person are qualities that we have in ourselves or that we would like to strive towards.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #1

Getting to know yourself and developing your self-efficacy

In a work context:

A. Carrying out skills assessments:

These are regular sessions where employees identify their strengths, weaknesses and aspirations.

These skills assessments are important, but at the same time they don't necessarily reveal links to intrinsic motivations. For example, a person may be able to keep track of files, but that doesn't mean they enjoy doing it. So if you only carry out skills assessments and the assignments revolve solely around these, there is a risk that some people will no longer feel motivated by their job.

B. In addition, use psychometric tests:

Tools such as MBTI or DISC are used to identify work and communication styles, preferences and sources of intrinsic motivation.

C. Set gradual, achievable objectives:

Achieve small victories that boost confidence.

D. Support them in their challenges:

This is the support needed (training, mentoring) to ensure that employees feel capable of meeting complex challenges.

To sum up

The main aim of promoting self-awareness and self-efficacy in the classroom is to help students understand their own abilities, emotions and behaviour better, to develop their confidence, autonomy and motivation to learn.

These skills are essential for their success at school, personal development and future career development. Self-knowledge and

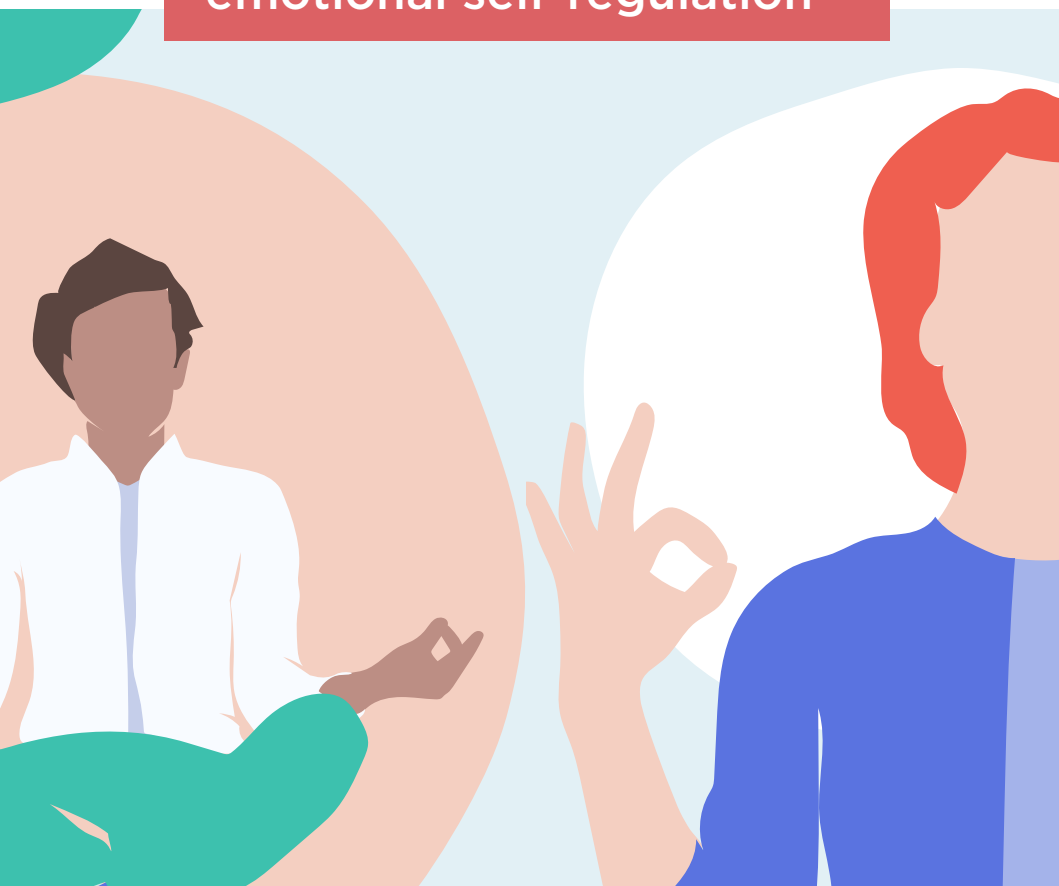
self-efficacy are built through reflection tools, practical experience, positive feedback and a learning culture.

In the workplace, the aim is to create a caring environment in which every employee feels understood, supported and able to meet their professional challenges with confidence. The aim is also to enable each employee to get to know and understand themselves, so that they can flourish in their work environment.

It means creating a caring environment where every employee feels understood, supported and able to meet their professional challenges with confidence.

Educational Sheet #2

Managing stress through emotional self-regulation



People skills: stress management, emotional agility, resilience



Aim of the sheet: to understand what an emotion is, what stress is and identify its triggers, for teenagers aged 12 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary objective is to contribute to the development of emotionally healthy individuals who can identify their needs and react appropriately to stressful situations.

1. In brief

Definitions:

A need: everything that appears to be "necessary" for physical, psychological and emotional well-being.

An emotion: a psychological and physiological reaction triggered by an event or a thought, expressing a subjective experience such as joy, fear or anger.

Stress management: a set of techniques and strategies designed to identify, understand and reduce the harmful effects of stress on the body and mind.

Emotional agility: the ability to recognise, accept and regulate emotions in a flexible way so as to adapt constructively to situations.

A (stress) trigger: an internal or external stimulus, perceived as a threat or challenge, which activates a stress response.

Links with adaptability:

Stress management and emotional self-regulation are key skills that enable young people to adapt better to personal, academic and social challenges. By learning to recognise and manage their emotions, they develop greater resilience, improved concentration and more harmonious relationships. These skills encourage flexible adaptation to change, more considered decision-making and a proactive attitude to complex or unexpected situations.

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Educational Sheet #2

Managing stress through emotional self-regulation

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. Guided conscious breathing exercise

- Take a moment for yourself and feel the (un)pleasant emotions. Identify where an emotion is felt in the body. This step is important because we tend to mentalise our emotions a lot.
- Try breathing from the diaphragm. Breathe in by inflating your stomach (like a big balloon) and then deflate as if you were trying to touch your spine. By breathing in this way (and not just inflating the lungs), the diaphragm is activated and so is the anti-stress system.
- The aim is to breathe consciously, adding an increasing pause of 1, 2, 3, 4 and then 5 seconds between each breath, as follows:
 - a. Inhale, exhale, pause for 1 second
 - b. Inhale, exhale, pause for 2 seconds
 - c. And so on until you hold for 5 seconds if possible, then decrease again to 4, 3, 2 then 1 second.

Diaphragmatic breathing helps to reduce stress by promoting deep relaxation. It also improves oxygenation of the body and respiratory control.

B. Guided visualisation

- Suggest times when participants can imagine positive or calming scenarios to relieve pressure.
- For example, to relax our bodies and boost our energy and strength, we can imagine an element or place in nature that makes us feel good (a waterfall, an animal, a tree, etc.).

Visualisation helps to reduce the intensity of negative emotions and reprogram the mind.

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Educational Sheet #2

Managing stress through emotional self-regulation

In a work context:

A. Active breaks or yoga in the workplace:

Incorporate gentle physical activities, such as yoga or guided stretching, during breaks. This releases physical tension linked to stress and encourages better circulation of energy.

B. Digital disconnection days or moments:

Encourage times without email or notifications to promote mental disconnection, reduce cognitive overload and help maintain work-life balance.

C. Exchange forums and support groups:

Create spaces where employees can share their feelings in a caring environment, guided by a facilitator or coach. This helps to reduce feelings of isolation and puts emotional challenges into perspective.

To sum up

Working on emotional self-regulation and stress management is essential for preserving well-being, fostering harmonious relationships and maintaining long-lasting well-being and learning, both at school and in your personal and professional life. By learning to identify, understand and manage your emotions, each person can respond better to challenges, reduce unnecessary tension, and act with clarity and resilience. These skills are not just individual assets, but also powerful levers for strengthening cohesion and collective success.

These skills are not just individual assets, but also powerful levers for strengthening cohesion and collective success.

Educational Sheet #3

Cultivating emotional intelligence and empathy



People skills: emotional intelligence, empathy

Aim of the sheet: to recognise and understand your emotions and other people's so that you can communicate and act appropriately, for teenagers aged 11 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary objective is to further the development of young people's socio-emotional skills, so that they can identify their emotions and other people's in a variety of situations and act appropriately.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Emotional intelligence: the ability to identify, understand and regulate your emotions, while perceiving and taking account of other people's emotions in a constructive way.

Empathy: the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes to understand their emotions, needs and perspectives, without judgement.

Links with adaptability:

Emotional intelligence and adaptability are deeply interconnected, as they are both based on managing emotions in the face of challenges. A person with well developed emotional intelligence is able to recognise and understand their emotions, enabling them to regulate their reactions better when faced with stress or adversity. This ability to manage their internal states encourages a reflective rather than impulsive response, which is the key to resilience. In addition, emotional intelligence involves empathy and relationship management, which strengthen social support, an essential element in overcoming challenges. Together, these skills enable us to maintain emotional balance, adapt to change and bounce back from difficulties with confidence and serenity.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #3

Cultivating emotional intelligence and empathy

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. Photolanguage

- Photolanguage is a discussion method that uses photographs or images to explore a theme, in this case emotional intelligence. The images help to verbalise emotions or abstract ideas that may be difficult to explain.
 - a. Selection of images: prepare a series of varied photos representing emotions, human interactions or symbolic situations (e.g. joy, sadness, conflict, helping others).
 - b. Participants choose one or more images and explain why and what they evoke (emotions, feelings, how the characters seem to be feeling).
 - c. Group discussion: these discussions provide an opportunity to explore concepts such as self-awareness, empathy, emotional management and interpersonal relationships in greater depth.

Photolanguage is particularly effective for tackling complex issues like emotional intelligence, as it combines intuition, creativity and analysis. Empathy is stimulated as participants discover how others perceive and feel about situations.

In a work context:

A. Active communication exercises:

Simulations in which participants practise active listening, ask open-ended questions and rephrase what the other person has said.

B. Role-play:

Role-plays in which employees take on the perspectives of their colleagues to understand their points of view and emotions better.

C. Practising feedback:

Organise discussion sessions where employees give and receive constructive feedback, focusing on feelings and solutions.

D. Collaborative activities outside the workplace:

Team games or challenges that focus on cooperation, communication and respect for differences.

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Educational Sheet #3

Cultivating emotional intelligence and empathy



To sum up

Working on empathy and emotional intelligence, both in educational settings and in the workplace, is essential for building harmonious relationships, fostering collaboration and managing human and professional challenges better. By developing these skills, people learn to understand and respect the emotions and needs of others, while building their own resilience. Empathy and emotional intelligence create more caring, inclusive and effective environments, where everyone can flourish and contribute fully.



Empathy and emotional intelligence create caring, inclusive and high-performance environments where everyone can flourish and contribute fully.



Educational Sheet #4

Sharpening your critical mind



People skills: critical thinking, analytical thinking

Aim of the sheet: to understand the importance of developing a critical mind and learn how to analyse and check sources, for teenagers aged 14 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary objective is to be able to analyse, question and evaluate this information objectively, whatever the field or context.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Critical thinking: the attitude of questioning, doubting and examining ideas or statements, seeking to avoid prejudice and hasty judgements.

Opinion: a personal judgement or point of view on an issue, often influenced by beliefs, experiences or emotions.

Cognitive bias: distortion in the way we perceive, judge or remember information, often influenced by unconscious beliefs or emotions.

Belief: conviction or certainty that an idea, fact or principle is true, often based on personal experience, values or cultural influences, without necessarily being based on objective evidence.

Links with adaptability:

Critical thinking and resilience are linked by their role in managing challenges and uncertainties. Developing a critical mind enables you to analyse situations objectively, evaluate options and make informed decisions, even under pressure. This ability to reflect and question our perceptions helps us to understand our challenges better, put their impact into perspective and envisage constructive solutions. By combining reflection and adaptability, critical thinking strengthens resilience, enabling obstacles to be transformed into opportunities for learning and growth.

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Educational Sheet #4

Sharpening your critical mind

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. For or against

- Participants are divided into two groups (one for - one against) to debate a controversial topic (e.g.: "Should children under 16 be banned from using social media?")

They have to research arguments, source their ideas, present them and respond constructively to counter-arguments.

This enables young people to develop analytical and argumentative skills, while forming opinions on current debates and issues.

B. Analysis of press articles

- Provide participants with several articles on the same subject from different sources and ask them to compare the tone, the facts reported and any biases identified. This enables participants to check sources and authors and identify bias.

C. Decoding advertising

- Watch advertisements and discuss their objectives, the emotions they seek to provoke and the underlying messages. This enables participants to understand and analyse persuasive techniques and take a critical look at the messages put out by third parties.

In a work context:

A. Ethical dilemma game:

Present work dilemmas (e.g.: "Should we prioritise a major customer over small customers?") and ask participants to discuss and justify their position.

This enables participants to develop and share critical thinking about values and choices.

B. The fake news game:

Present participants with headlines from articles, images or graphs, and ask them to work out whether they are true or false. Then discuss the clues for identifying dubious information (e.g. sources, inconsistent figures, manipulated emotions).

This helps develop a critical approach to information. You can adapt it to your market/sector of activity/strategic area of your organisation.

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Educational Sheet #4

Sharpening your critical mind



To sum up

Developing a critical mind, both in educational settings and in the workplace, is essential if we are to navigate a complex world where information is abundant, particularly given the rise of artificial intelligence. AI gives us immediate access to a massive amount of data, but it's crucial to know how to analyse, question and evaluate this information objectively.

Critical thinking enables us to distinguish reliable sources from potential bias and make informed decisions. This skill reinforces autonomy, innovation and responsibility, and is becoming an essential asset in an increasingly automated work environment. **Critical thinking is key to training citizens and professionals capable of acting with discernment and impact.**

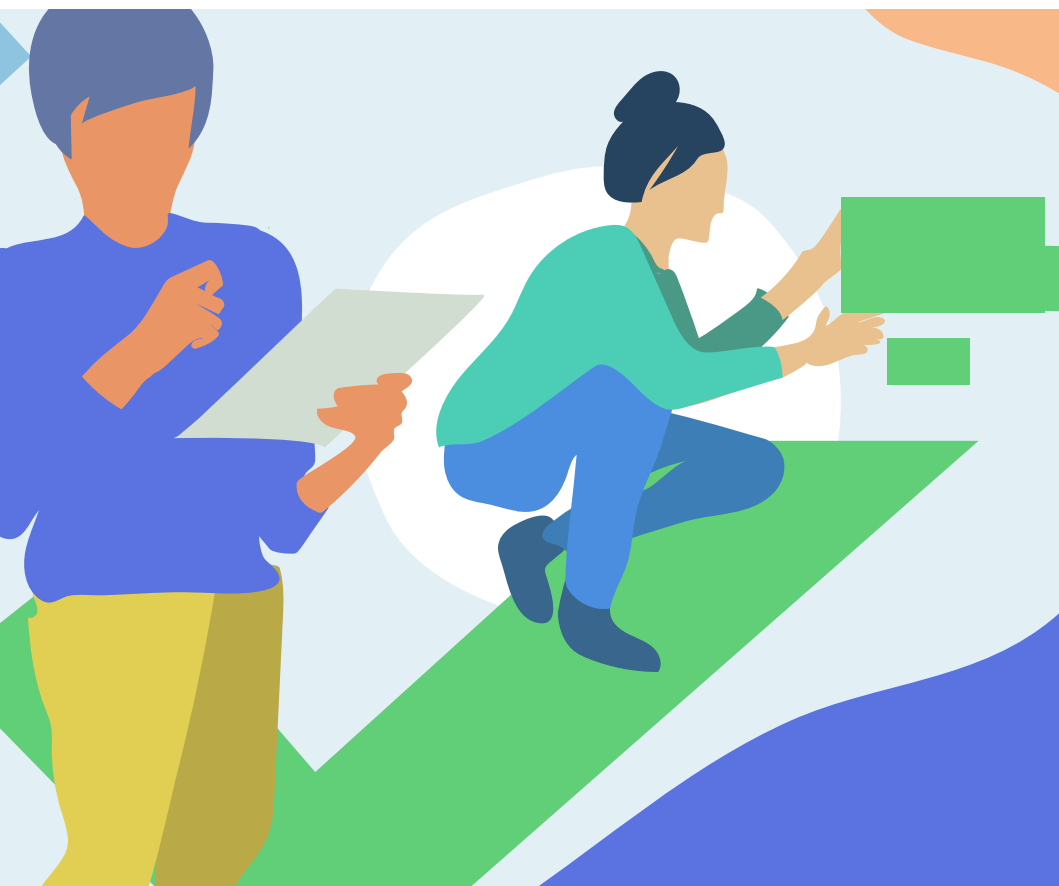


Critical thinking is key to training citizens and professionals capable of acting with discernment and impact.



Educational Sheet #5

Learning from your mistakes



Skills developed: the right to make mistakes, logical reasoning



Aim of the sheet: to understand the importance of mistakes in the learning process, for teenagers aged 11 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary objective is to transform a difficult experience into a positive one, enabling us to grow and learn about ourselves so that we can avoid making the same mistake in the future.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Mistake: an action, judgement or result that deviates from what is correct or expected.

Failure: inability to achieve an objective or obtain the desired result.

Right to make mistakes: recognising that people can make mistakes without being blamed or penalised, with a view to learning and improving.

Links with adaptability:

Young people can learn to turn mistakes into learning opportunities. When people are encouraged to admit their mistakes without fear of being judged or punished, they can analyse what went wrong, adjust their approach and move forward. For example, a student who fails an exam but receives constructive feedback and time to prepare again will develop the skills and confidence to succeed. Similarly, in a professional context, an employee who comes up with a new idea, even if it fails, gains valuable experience about how to adapt their strategies in the future. This approach nurtures resilience by learning to manage setbacks, maintain a proactive attitude and persevere in the face of challenges, rather than fearing or avoiding them. By valuing the right to make mistakes, we create an environment where failures become springboards for growth, fostering inner strength and the ability to bounce back.

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Educational Sheet #5

Learning from your mistakes

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

On a sheet of paper, answer the following questions:

- W** = What do I **WANT** (or did I want)?
What was my objective?
- A** = What **ACTIONS** have I decided to take to achieve my objective?
(What did I actually do?)
- S** = Are the results **SATISFACTORY** (for me, for others, etc.)?
What didn't work out? What could I do better next time?
- I** = Do I have any other **IDEAS** (better ways of doing things)
to help me achieve my goal?

The acronym is easy to remember, and the method allows you to take a step back and analyse your mistake, so you can bounce back more effectively.

B. Collective problem solving

- Present a common mistake (such as a calculation error) and invite the students to work together to find a method of avoiding it in future.

In this way, students can explore different ways of correcting a mistake, and work together on a subject that is often dealt with individually.

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Educational Sheet #5

Learning from your mistakes

In a work context:

A. Inspiring stories of failure:

Organise group discussion sessions where participants share personal or professional failures and explain what they have learned and how they have bounced back.

B. “Blunder awards”

Organise a ceremony to reward the best mistakes made by employees. This helps to reinforce a culture of mistakes, where no one is blamed but where collectively we know how to talk about them and learn from our mistakes.

To sum up

Working on the right to make mistakes with young people, whether at school or in the workplace, is essential to cultivating their capacity to learn, innovate and excel. When we normalise the idea that mistakes are a natural part of progress, we free people from the fear of failure and encourage their creativity, initiative and resilience. A caring environment where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities transforms failures into levers for growth, forging confident, adaptable individuals capable of meeting the challenges of a constantly changing world. Learning to make mistakes is learning to grow.

“ Learning to make mistakes
is learning to grow. ”

Educational Sheet #6

Solve problems of varying complexity



Skills developed: problem-solving, decision-making



Aim of the sheet: to understand what a problem is and how to solve problems, for teenagers aged 11 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary objective is to make problem-solving less complex by focusing on solutions and the positive, using a constructive method.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Problem: a situation or setback that prevents the achievement of an objective and requires a solution.

Problem solving: the process of analysing and finding solutions to overcome a problem.

Links with adaptability:

Working on problem solving helps young people to adapt better to the difficulties and challenges they encounter, in particular by developing:

Adaptability: by practising problem-solving, you learn to analyse situations and find solutions, even in the face of uncertainty or stress. This helps you respond appropriately to unforeseen events.

Stress management: mastering problem-solving strategies reduces anxiety in the face of obstacles, enabling you to stay calm and focus on solutions.

Boosting confidence: every problem you solve increases your confidence in your abilities, a key factor in bouncing back after a setback.

A positive outlook: the individual develops a proactive, solution-oriented attitude, which is essential for overcoming setbacks or crises.

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Educational Sheet #6

Solve problems of varying complexity

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. Creative challenges: the marshmallow challenge

- Give the participants a recycled object or materials and ask them to come up with a solution to create something new.
- A more specific example: "How to build the tallest possible free-standing tower with 1 marshmallow, 20 spaghetti strands, sellotape and a piece of string, in 20 minutes".

Variation No. 1: after 10 minutes, ask the participants to give you 8 spaghetti strands. Observe how they react to the new rule.

Variation no. 2: announce after 10 minutes that the timer has changed and that there are only 5 minutes left to finish.

The two variants can be combined.

This challenge enables young people to work together and demonstrate their creativity in solving a practical problem, by managing the difficulties imposed as the game progresses. It's worth organising a discussion at the end to find out how they organised themselves, how they managed the difficulties and how they felt.

B. Multiple-choice real-life stories

Read or invent a story in which the young person has to choose from several options to solve a problem in the story.

In this way, students can explore different ways of correcting a mistake, and work together on a subject that is often dealt with individually.

In a work context:

A. Role-play:

Put participants in different roles (manager, employee, customer) to solve a problem and help them understand different perspectives.

This enables different roles and perspectives to be identified for better problem-solving later on.

B. Limited-time challenges

Suggest a challenge that has to be solved within a set time limit, for example: "How do you organise an event on a limited budget?"

This challenges participants to solve accessible and fun problems.

→ Guidance in times of crisis

8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #6

Solve problems of varying complexity



To sum up

Working on problem solving with young people is essential to prepare them for the challenges of everyday life and work. It develops their critical thinking, creativity and adaptability, while building their self-confidence and resilience. By helping them to analyse situations, envisage solutions and make informed decisions, we give them the tools they need to overcome obstacles, collaborate effectively and transform difficulties into learning opportunities.



Turning difficulties into learning opportunities.



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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #7

Adopting a project mentality



Skills developed: project management, planning, strategic vision

Aim of the sheet: to understand the benefits of project management, for teenagers aged 11 to 19. Whether in the classroom, at home or in a work environment, the cross-disciplinary objective is to learn to think more in project mode, in order to structure thinking and tasks more effectively.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Project: a temporary approach aimed at achieving a specific objective by mobilising defined resources and means.

Project-based learning: an educational method in which learners carry out practical projects to develop practical, cross-disciplinary skills.

Project management: all the processes, tools and skills needed to plan, execute and finalise a project within the constraints of time, budget and quality.

Feedback: in project management, constructive feedback is given or received throughout the process, by team members, stakeholders or end-users.

Links with adaptability:

Project management helps young people to structure their ideas, plan their actions and manage the unexpected better. By working on practical projects, they learn to meet challenges, overcome setbacks and adapt to change. These experiences enable them to build their confidence, autonomy and ability to persevere in the face of difficulties.

In this way, project management becomes a practical tool, preparing them to navigate a complex and unpredictable world, while developing transferable skills for their future.

→ Guidance in times of crisis

8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #7

Adopting a project mentality

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. Organising a family or school event

- For example, at home: give your child(ren) responsibility for planning a birthday party or dinner (budget, guests, tasks to be allocated).
- At school: give the class an event to organise, such as an open day, a conference or a workshop on a topic covered in class.
- Guide young people on technical aspects such as: setting an objective, breaking down tasks into their component parts, planning and allocating tasks over time, managing a budget, communicating, etc.

This enables them to see the bigger picture, divide events into sub-tasks, and work on planning, communication, collaboration, time and resource management.

B. Creation of an awareness campaign

- Give young people the opportunity to explore a social issue of their choice (ecology, cyberbullying, health) and then organise a presentation or action to raise awareness of the issue.
- It's important, if necessary, to guide the young people in defining a clear objective, the resources to be deployed, the sub-tasks and the means of communication to be used. This enables them to work on their creativity and communication skills, while learning how to manage this kind of project.



It might be a good idea to **organise one or more feedback sessions** during and at the end of the two activities, to provide further input. This helps to identify what's working well and what needs to be adjusted, thereby promoting continuous improvement. Feedback is essential for maintaining clear communication, avoiding repeated mistakes and aligning efforts with the project objectives. Used properly, it strengthens collaboration, motivates young people and increases the chances of success by adapting strategies to real needs and unforeseen circumstances.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #7

Adopting a project mentality

In a work context:

A. Planning and leading a meeting:

Entrusting a young person with the task of preparing and moderating a meeting on a given subject can be a good exercise in improving organisational skills, summarising, learning to moderate and communicating.

Depending on their previous experience, it's useful to guide them through the preparation and the tasks to be carried out (before/during/after), let them discover the steps and prepare independently.

B. Creating a collaborative micro-project

Examples of collaborative micro-projects include designing a poster for an event, improving an internal process or organising a team-building exercise. Participants learn skills such as coordination, problem-solving and resource management.

This type of small-scale project helps young employees to become more autonomous while giving them a stimulating objective.

To sum up

Working on project management with young people, in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, is a powerful opportunity to reinforce their adaptability. This skill teaches them to turn ideas into practical action, to plan effectively, and to manage the unexpected calmly and methodically. By offering them real or simulated projects, they are exposed to challenges that develop their ability to overcome obstacles, collaborate with others and make informed decisions. Faced with a constantly changing world, these experiences give them the tools they need to adapt, bounce back from setbacks and build a future where they are actors of change, rather than spectators. **In this way, project management becomes much more than a skill: it is a springboard to confidence, autonomy and success.**

Project management becomes much more than a skill: it is a springboard to confidence, autonomy and success.

Educational Sheet #8

Cultivate hope and positivity to take action



Skills developed: a positive frame of mind, cultivating hope



Aim of the sheet: to raise awareness among teenagers aged 13 to 19 of the importance of cultivating hope and positivity to take the "first small steps". Whether in the classroom, at home or in the workplace, the cross-disciplinary aim is to convey the importance and benefits of moving forward.

1. In brief

Definitions:

Hope: a feeling of confident expectation of a better future or the possibility of overcoming difficulties.

Positive state of mind: a mental attitude focused on recognition of the positive aspects of each situation, fostering optimism, resilience and well-being.

First small steps: simple, accessible and immediate actions taken to initiate change or progress towards a more ambitious goal. These steps help to overcome inertia and build self-confidence by achieving tangible results from the outset.

Take action: implementing behaviours or decisions to put ideas into practice, solve a problem or achieve a goal.

Cultivate hope: maintain confidence in a better future by adopting actions, thoughts and behaviours aligned with realistic, motivating objectives.

Links with adaptability:

Cultivating hope and a positive attitude is an essential lever. Hope motivates us to believe in solutions in the face of adversity, while positivity allows us to find opportunities in challenges. Together, they create a state of mind that is conducive to overcoming fear or paralysis, thereby encouraging action. By taking action, you regain a sense of control over the situation, which reinforces your ability to bounce back and persevere in the face of obstacles. The dynamic between hope, positivity and action supports sustainable adaptability.

→ Guidance in times of crisis

8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #8

Cultivate hope and positivity to take action

2. Tools and exercises

In class or at home

A. The 24-hour challenge

- Young people choose a simple action that they can carry out in a day to achieve a goal (for example: help a friend, read 5 pages of a book).

It shows that every little action can have an impact. Doing small things builds self-confidence, motivation and perseverance.

B. Creating a "hope box" or "hope wall"

- The young people write down their dreams or goals on paper and put them in a box, then think together about the first small steps they need to take to achieve them.
- Using post-it notes or drawings, everyone writes or draws their hopes for the future and posts their ideas on a dedicated wall.

This helps you visualise a future full of hope and motivates you to take action. It also encourages a positive collective vision.

C. Variant: small steps plan

- Discuss a joint project (for example, as a family: rearranging a room, organising a picnic / as a class: decorating a room on a given theme, organising a group activity) and define together the first small tasks to get started.

This enables you to learn how to work together and value each other's contributions.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 4. Eight practical action sheets

Educational Sheet #8

Cultivate hope and positivity to take action

In a work context:

A. The everyday progress challenge:

Each participant chooses a skill or task to improve and defines a simple action to carry out each day.

This helps to establish the habit of taking small, steady steps forward.

B. “Forgotten successes” workshop

Carry out a group exercise in which everyone shares a small recent or past success that they tend to play down.

This reinforces hope in their abilities and recognises the progress they have already made.

To sum up

Teaching young people to cultivate hope and positivity does not mean living under the illusion that “everything is fine”, but rather becoming aware of everything that is going well and developing a constructive attitude that enables them to believe in their ability to overcome obstacles and build a better future. This state of mind boosts their confidence, well-being and ability to act, even in the face of adversity.



To be aware of everything that is going well and develop a constructive attitude that enables them to believe in their abilities.



5. Advice & best practice

A safe or, better still, secure environment is one in which everyone feels free to express themselves, emotionally speaking, without being criticised or judged, either directly or later on, for what they say and feel.

Running workshops on life skills requires the creation of a safe space and a collective, participative atmosphere, where participants can explore the themes with curiosity, security and enthusiasm, at their own pace. The adult must guarantee that this attitude is adopted.

Here are a few best practices we've used to ensure the success of an activity with young people:

■ Preparation

- Define clear objectives: what do you want participants to learn or achieve?
- Know your audience: take into account the age, experience and needs of participants
- Structure the session according to objectives and audience

■ Create an atmosphere of security and trust

- Start with an icebreaker: an activity to "break the ice" between participants and ease into the theme. For example, on the theme of emotions, stress or emotional intelligence: ask young people to share their "weather forecast" or their "emotion of the moment" to find out what mood they're in and how they're feeling.
- Establish rules and values as a group (validate them with the participants at the start of the workshop): for example, being welcoming, confidentiality and active listening to create a space where everyone feels free to express themselves without fear of judgement.

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 5. Advice and best practice

■ Tips for leading the session

- Encourage introspection by asking open-ended questions.
- Vary the formats: mix individual time, discussions in small groups and whole group discussion.
- Use different visual aids to clarify concepts: whiteboards, topic sheets or presentations.
- Practise active listening (i.e. listen fully with respect, interest and empathy, without trying to respond) by rephrasing the young people's contributions, to show that you understand their point of view.

■ Welcoming emotions and resistance

- Reassure them and make them feel safe: if a participant seems uncomfortable, offer to let them take part at their own pace.
- Guide discussions by letting everyone speak: using a talking ball might be appropriate, depending on the age and size of the group.

- Acknowledge emotions: if (strong) emotions emerge, welcome these without minimising or denying them (even if they don't always feel at ease).
- By adopting an inclusive and dynamic approach, you will help participants understand each other better, while offering them a caring environment to stimulate their creativity, learning and personal development.

6. Summary: findings and observations

As part of the project, almost 200 young people from 7 secondary schools in Luxembourg took part in 9 workshops led by IMS Luxembourg, as well as 8 actions set up by the pupils following the workshops. The aim of these activities was to expand on the concepts covered in the workshops or share them with a wider audience (other pupils/classes within the school, for example). The workshops covered the skills detailed in the sheets in this toolkit. The initiatives carried out with secondary schools included: creation of a poster on problem-solving, organisation of meditation and breathing sessions to help manage stress and regulate emotions, and organisation of an information session on the right to make mistakes, led by the students themselves.

At the end of each workshop and action, the students were invited to complete a feedback questionnaire. This feedback was measured using Likert scales with measurements ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with different statements. The aim was to ask the students how they felt at the end of the session, and what impact the workshop might have on their ability to cope with future difficulties, and therefore on their resilience.

The results show an overall positive assessment of the workshops. On average, the students indicated that they felt slightly better after the workshop than at the beginning (average score of 2.7). The discussions and testimonials were considered interesting, with an average score of 2.9, reflecting a general appreciation of the interactions between participants. Lastly, students felt slightly calmer about the idea of facing a difficulty (average of 2.8).

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8 essential life skills for greater adaptability / 6. Summary: findings and observations

There were variations from workshop to workshop. Some of them, such as the one on problem solving and the one on cultivating hope to take action, seem to have been particularly well received, with high average scores. These workshops scored 3.1 and 3 out of 5 respectively for the statement "I feel calmer about facing a difficulty in the future" (higher than average scores).

However, others, such as critical thinking and self-knowledge, were perceived as having less impact on their resilience and ability to adapt (lower than average scores). These workshops scored 2.6 and 2.7 out of 5 respectively on the same statement quoted above. This might suggest differences in the receptiveness of content and activities, but also in the dynamics of the classes themselves. It may also be explained by a weaker perceived link between the soft skills being worked on and the idea of facing up to a difficulty.

At each workshop, IMS invited a professional to speak for around 20 minutes, to share with the young people how the life skills covered in the workshop could be useful in their career path. It's essential to have testimonials from professionals from different sectors to illustrate the diversity of career

paths and the adaptability needed in education and at work. These inspiring stories give young people a better understanding of the challenges, opportunities and key skills needed to adapt and evolve in a constantly changing environment. The link with businesses is just as crucial, as it helps young people to find their bearings, develop their skills and find employment. At a national level, IMS plays a central role in bringing people together, facilitating exchanges between businesses and young talents, to improve their employability and engagement in society.

These results come from a pilot phase conducted on the ground over more than one year. They provide an interesting initial analysis, but are not universal and cannot be extrapolated to all establishments or target audiences. The aim of this experimental phase is to test approaches and collect feedback to feed into a wider reflection on the effectiveness and relevance of the life skills being taught and developed.

This data provides a valuable basis for adjusting content, refining objectives and meeting students' needs better, as part of a wider implementation.

7. Conclusion

In a constantly changing world, marked by successive crises and growing uncertainty, **guidance for young people is becoming a major issue**. In the face of these challenges, it is no longer enough to acquire technical skills: it is essential to cultivate interpersonal skills that enable us to demonstrate resilience and adaptability.

Through these practical educational sheets, we have explored eight fundamental life skills that are key to helping young people make the right career choices. Whether in the workplace, at school or within families, these tools offer practical guidelines to help young people overcome obstacles, make informed choices and build a future in line with their aspirations and the realities of the workplace.

Guidance in times of crisis should not be seen as an insurmountable challenge, but an opportunity for learning and transformation. **In a world where individualism is on the increase, the role of the group is more essential than ever.**

Mutual support, solidarity and sharing experiences enable young people to project themselves with greater confidence and find meaning in their career path.

Close collaboration between schools and businesses is essential for creating this dynamic. By joining forces, these key players in careers guidance can offer young people a more practical view of the workplace, help them understand better the skills they need and prepare them for the challenges of the future. It's essential to strengthen these links so that guidance is not compartmentalised, but rather enriched by the diversity of viewpoints and experiences.

Commitment by everyone - businesses, schools, parents - is essential if we are to offer young people caring, informed support. **Together, we have the power to help them face their future with greater resilience, optimism and serenity.**



GUIDANCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

8 essential life skills to help young people adapt

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