



NON-FORMAL CAREER COUNSELLING TOOLKIT NO. 5

Career Implementation

FROM PLANNING TO ACTION: MANAGING TRANSITIONS, WORK, AND
LIFELONG GROWTH



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Career development is often presented as a logical sequence: self-exploration leads to decisions, decisions lead to planning, and planning leads naturally to action. In reality, the step from planning to action is one of the most complex and demanding phases for young people. Many well-thought-out career plans fail not because they are unrealistic, but because young people lack the skills, support, and confidence needed to implement them in real-life conditions.

Career implementation refers to everything that happens after a decision has been made—or when a decision is being tested in practice. It includes entering education or work, managing transitions, adapting to workplace cultures, handling financial responsibilities, maintaining wellbeing, and adjusting plans when reality does not match expectations. For many young people, this phase is emotionally intense and practically challenging, especially when they encounter uncertainty, rejection, or instability for the first time.

Importantly, implementation is not a single moment of "arrival." It is a process that unfolds over time through experimentation, feedback, setbacks, and adjustment. Youth workers and career counsellors therefore play a crucial role not only in helping young people plan, but in accompanying them as they act, adapt, and persist. Implementation support helps transform intentions into sustainable action and supports young people in seeing career development as a learnable process rather than a test they must pass.

Key concepts and definitions

Career implementation is the ongoing process through which individuals put career intentions into practice. It involves managing learning pathways, entering and adapting to work environments, handling financial and practical responsibilities, building professional identity, and maintaining wellbeing. Implementation is dynamic and iterative, not linear or final.

Employability refers to a person's capacity to obtain, maintain, and adapt work over time. It goes beyond qualifications or technical skills and includes transferable competencies such as communication, adaptability, problem-solving, self-management, and continuous learning. From a career development perspective, employability is about long-term sustainability, not only first entry into work.

Self-directed learning is the ability to identify learning needs, set goals, choose strategies, and evaluate outcomes independently or with minimal support. In modern careers, learning increasingly happens informally—through work tasks, online resources, short courses, or peer learning—making this competence central to successful implementation.

Financial literacy includes understanding income, expenses, budgeting, saving, debt, contracts, and financial decision-making. For young people entering work or managing transitions, financial literacy directly affects stability, stress, and independence, and strongly influences career-related choices.

Onboarding is the social, practical, and learning process through which a new worker becomes integrated into an organisation. For young people, effective onboarding supports confidence, motivation, retention, and the formation of a worker identity. Poor onboarding often leads to early disengagement or dropout.

Career transitions include both planned changes (graduation, job change, moving into higher responsibility) and unplanned disruptions (job loss, burnout, health-related breaks). Research shows that transitions are psychological processes as much as structural ones, involving identity shifts, emotional regulation, and uncertainty.

Work–life balance refers to the ability to manage work, learning, personal relationships, rest, and health sustainably. For young people, this balance is often underdeveloped due to limited experience, financial pressure, or unrealistic expectations about productivity and availability.

Insights from research: barriers and motivators

Research and practice consistently show that young people face a combination of practical, emotional, and structural barriers during career implementation. These challenges rarely appear in isolation; instead, they tend to accumulate and reinforce one another. This pattern is clearly documented in the Study report on the need for non-formal career counselling services for youth (Staliūnas & Stasiukynas, 2024–2025), conducted within the project Open Yourself for Career Skills, as well as in broader European research on youth transitions.

The study highlights that many difficulties young people encounter during implementation do not stem from poor planning or lack of ambition, but from insufficient support at the moment when plans meet real-life conditions. Transitions from education to work, from one role to another, or from dependence to partial independence often expose gaps in practical skills, emotional preparedness, and structural guidance.

Common barriers

Across contexts, young people frequently experience:

- **Limited financial literacy**, which leads to stress, short-term decision-making, or continued dependence on family support. The study shows that uncertainty about income, contracts, or basic budgeting often shapes career choices more strongly than interests or long-term goals.
- **Anxiety related to transitions and identity change**, especially fear of failure and fear of “not managing adulthood.” Young people report that entering work or new learning environments often triggers doubts about competence and belonging.
- **Unstable motivation**, particularly when expectations of work do not match reality. Early work experiences that feel repetitive, poorly structured, or unsupported can quickly undermine initial enthusiasm.
- **Low confidence in practical and social skills**, such as professional communication, time management, asking for clarification, or negotiating boundaries at work. These skills are rarely taught explicitly, yet are crucial for successful onboarding and retention.
- **Lack of onboarding and guidance in early work experiences**, resulting in confusion, disengagement, or early exit. The study indicates that young people often interpret poor onboarding as personal failure rather than as an organisational issue.
- **A perceived mismatch between education and labour market realities**, which increases frustration and self-doubt. When young people cannot see how their learning connects to real work contexts, implementation feels pointless or discouraging.

Importantly, these barriers tend to interact. For example, financial stress can intensify anxiety, which in turn undermines motivation and resilience, making adaptation more difficult. Without supportive intervention, young people may withdraw not because they are incapable, but because the cumulative pressure becomes overwhelming.

Key motivators supporting implementation

At the same time, both the study and wider research identify factors that significantly strengthen young people's capacity to persist during implementation:

- **Feeling seen, recognised, and supported** by adults or peers. Relational support consistently emerges as a key protective factor during transitions.
- **Opportunities to experiment without irreversible consequences**, such as short-term placements, volunteering, trial periods, or project-based roles. These experiences reduce fear and support learning through action.
- **Clear short-term goals and feedback loops**, which help young people experience progress and regain a sense of control when long-term outcomes feel uncertain.
- **Positive early work or volunteering experiences**, especially when accompanied by guidance and reflection. Early success, even on a small scale, strengthens self-efficacy and willingness to continue.
- **A sense of purpose and contribution**, rather than motivation driven solely by external rewards such as salary or status. Young people are more resilient when they can see meaning in what they do.

Taken together, these findings underline that career implementation is not only a matter of individual competence. It is deeply shaped by **context, relationships, and emotional safety**. Effective support therefore focuses not just on “preparing” young people, but on shaping environments that allow them to learn, adapt, and persist during real-life transitions.

Differences between age groups

Young people under 16

Younger adolescents are typically at an early stage of contact with the world of work. Their understanding of careers is still largely indirect and shaped by school, family, media, and limited short-term experiences rather than by sustained participation in real work environments.

Younger adolescents usually:

- have limited or no direct exposure to real work settings, relying instead on simulations, stories, and short-term activities;
- depend strongly on external structure, clear rules, and adult guidance to organise tasks and sustain engagement;
- are motivated primarily by curiosity, social belonging, enjoyment, and immediate feedback rather than long-term outcomes;
- develop implementation-related skills mainly through experiential, playful, or simulated activities such as projects, volunteering tasks, role-play, or group challenges.

For this age group, career implementation does not mean entering the labour market. Instead, it focuses on building **foundational competencies** that prepare young people for future transitions. These include taking responsibility for tasks, developing basic self-regulation and cooperation skills, becoming aware of time and effort, gaining initial financial awareness, and learning to reflect on experience. The emphasis is on learning how to engage, persist, and learn from action, rather than on performance or outcomes.

Young people aged 16 and above

Older youth are closer to, or already inside, real transitions related to work, training, and independence. Implementation therefore becomes more concrete, more demanding, and often more emotionally charged.

Older youth are more likely to:

- face real financial responsibilities, income expectations, and contractual obligations;
- experience strong pressure to make "correct" or socially acceptable choices with long-term consequences;
- encounter rejection, instability, or early burnout during first work or study experiences;
- struggle with identity shifts linked to becoming "a worker," "a professional," or "an adult," often accompanied by self-doubt or fear of failure.

At this stage, young people benefit most from **coaching-oriented support** rather than directive instruction. Support is most effective when it strengthens autonomy, reflective capacity, coping strategies, and adaptive decision-making. Instead of being told what to do, older youth need spaces to process experience, reassess plans, and learn how to respond constructively to setbacks and uncertainty.

How non-formal learning, mentoring, and peer reflection support implementation

Career implementation is not a linear step from planning to success. It is an ongoing process in which young people move repeatedly between action, reflection, and adjustment. What makes this phase particularly demanding is that intentions are tested in real life, where uncertainty, emotional responses, and practical constraints become visible. Non-formal learning, mentoring, and peer reflection are especially effective at this stage because together they support young people through the full cycle of experience-based learning.

Non-formal learning provides concrete experience

Through volunteering, project work, internships, simulations, part-time jobs, or community-based activities, young people are able to test their plans in real or realistic settings. These experiences translate abstract intentions into action and expose young people to the everyday realities of work, learning, responsibility, and cooperation. Importantly, non-formal environments tolerate mistakes. Young people are allowed to try, fail, adjust, and try again without irreversible consequences. This reduces fear of failure, supports persistence, and encourages learning through doing—an essential condition for successful implementation.

Mentoring supports reflection and meaning-making

Experience alone is rarely enough. Mentors help young people interpret what happened, understand why certain situations felt difficult or successful, and connect experience to longer-term goals. Through dialogue, feedback, and emotional support, mentors assist young people in naming challenges, processing disappointment, and developing realistic expectations about work and learning pathways. This relational support is particularly crucial during early setbacks, first job experiences, or periods of uncertainty, when confidence is fragile and withdrawal becomes a risk.

Peer reflection adds social learning and normalisation

In peer groups, young people discover that struggles during implementation are not personal failures, but shared transition experiences. Hearing others describe similar doubts, frustrations, or adaptations reduces isolation and shame. Peer exchange strengthens motivation, supports problem-solving, and generates practical strategies that feel relatable and achievable. Group reflection also helps young people learn from different approaches, reinforcing adaptability and collective learning.

Together, non-formal learning, mentoring, and peer reflection create a continuous learning loop: **experience → reflection → understanding → renewed action**. This loop allows young people not only to implement career decisions, but to revise and adapt them over time. By supporting repeated cycles of action and adjustment, these approaches strengthen sustainable career implementation, wellbeing, and long-term adaptability in a changing world.

Core competencies developed through career implementation

Career implementation strengthens a set of transversal competencies that are essential not only for entering work or education, but for sustaining participation, wellbeing, and growth across the life course. Unlike competencies developed through abstract learning or information-based guidance, implementation competencies emerge primarily through action, experience, and reflection in real-life contexts.

Self-regulation is one of the most central competencies developed during career implementation. As young people begin to manage work, learning, and personal life simultaneously, they learn to regulate time, energy, and emotions. This includes meeting deadlines, coping with fatigue, handling stress, and maintaining motivation in less structured environments. For many young people, this is the first period in which external structures decrease and personal responsibility increases, making self-regulation a key determinant of stability and persistence.

Adaptability is strengthened as young people respond to changing conditions, unexpected challenges, and evolving expectations. Career implementation rarely unfolds exactly as planned. Schedules change, tasks differ from expectations, and roles evolve. Through experience, young people learn to adjust goals, revise strategies, and remain open to alternative pathways. Adaptability becomes a practical skill rather than an abstract concept, grounded in everyday problem-solving and adjustment.

Resilience develops through exposure to setbacks such as rejection, mistakes, slow progress, or unmet expectations. Implementation inevitably involves moments of disappointment—an unsuccessful application, a difficult first job experience, or the realisation that a chosen path does not fit. With appropriate support, these experiences help young people learn how to recover, reflect, and continue rather than withdraw. Resilience in this context is not about endurance alone, but about learning to respond constructively to difficulty and uncertainty.

Social and professional communication skills are sharpened as young people navigate workplace relationships, expectations, and norms. Implementation requires communicating with supervisors, colleagues, clients, or peers in new and often unfamiliar ways. Young people learn how to ask for clarification, express boundaries, receive feedback, and collaborate in professional contexts. These skills are rarely transferable from school environments without adaptation and are therefore developed most effectively through real interaction and guided reflection.

Financial self-management becomes increasingly relevant during implementation, particularly for older youth. Managing income, expenses, contracts, and financial obligations introduces new forms of responsibility that directly affect wellbeing and decision-making. Through experience, young people learn to budget, plan, prioritise, and understand the consequences of financial choices. Financial self-management strongly influences stability, stress levels, and the capacity to make sustainable career decisions.

Learning-to-learn competence is reinforced as young people recognise that implementation is inseparable from ongoing learning. New roles require new skills, and transitions often demand rapid upskilling or adjustment. Young people learn how to identify learning needs, seek resources, ask for support, and evaluate progress. This competence supports long-term employability by enabling continuous development beyond formal education.

Across all these areas, a common pattern emerges: competencies develop most effectively through guided experience and structured reflection, rather than instruction alone. Youth workers, mentors, and counsellors play a crucial role in helping young people make sense of experience, connect learning across contexts, and recognise competence growth that might otherwise remain invisible. Career implementation, in this sense, is not only about acting on plans, but about building the capacities needed to navigate future transitions with confidence and agency.

Inclusion, wellbeing and support systems

Periods of career transition are among the most demanding phases in a young person's development. Moving from education into work, changing roles, managing first contracts, or facing early setbacks places significant cognitive, emotional, and social demands on young people. These moments carry an increased risk of exclusion, disengagement, or burnout—particularly when transitions occur without sufficient support.

Young people with fewer opportunities are especially vulnerable during career implementation. Limited financial resources, unstable housing, weaker family support, health challenges, disability, migration background, or negative prior educational experiences can significantly reduce the margin for error. For these young people, even small setbacks—such as a failed application, a difficult onboarding experience, or temporary job loss—may have disproportionate consequences. At the same time, they often experience stronger pressure to "succeed quickly," leaving little space for exploration, adjustment, or recovery.

In this context, youth work plays a critical inclusion and prevention role. Career implementation support is not only about employment outcomes; it is also about safeguarding wellbeing and maintaining connection during vulnerable periods. Youth work contributes to inclusion by creating relational, emotional, and practical safety nets that help young people remain engaged even when progress is uneven.

Youth work supports inclusion and wellbeing by:

01

Offering trusted relationships

Stable, non-judgemental relationships with youth workers or mentors provide continuity during change. For many young people, having at least one adult who listens, remembers their story, and follows their progress reduces anxiety and strengthens persistence. Trust enables young people to speak openly about doubts, mistakes, or difficulties that they might otherwise hide.

02

Reducing isolation during transitions

Transitions often involve loss of familiar structures, peer groups, or routines. Youth work helps counteract isolation by maintaining contact, facilitating peer connections, and creating spaces where young people can share experiences. Knowing that others face similar struggles helps normalise difficulty and reduces self-blame.

03

Identifying early signs of overload or withdrawal

Because youth workers often engage with young people over time, they are well positioned to notice early indicators of stress, exhaustion, disengagement, or emotional withdrawal. Early recognition allows for timely support—adjusting expectations, slowing pace, or connecting young people to additional resources—before problems escalate into burnout or dropout.

04

Supporting re-entry after breaks, failures, or pauses

Career implementation rarely follows a smooth, uninterrupted path. Breaks due to health, caregiving, unsuccessful attempts, or changing circumstances are common. Youth work plays a key role in legitimising these pauses and supporting re-entry. Rather than framing interruptions as failure, youth workers help young people reflect on what was learned and how to move forward with renewed clarity.

From this perspective, career implementation support is inseparable from wellbeing and prevention work. Helping young people act on plans while protecting their mental health, sense of belonging, and self-worth is essential for sustainable participation in work and learning. Inclusive career implementation recognises that progress may be non-linear and that maintaining engagement is often more important than accelerating outcomes.

By combining practical guidance with relational support, youth work ensures that career implementation does not become a point of exclusion, but a process through which young people—especially those with fewer opportunities—can build stability, confidence, and long-term capacity to navigate change.

Practical guidance for youth workers and counsellors

Supporting career implementation requires a shift in emphasis from speed and outcomes to sustainability and learning. At this stage, young people are not only acting on plans; they are testing themselves in real contexts where uncertainty, pressure, and emotional responses are unavoidable. Effective support therefore focuses on helping young people stay engaged, reflect constructively, and continue moving forward—even when progress is uneven.

1. What to emphasise

Action as learning, not proof of success Implementation should be framed as an experiment rather than a test. Every action—starting a job, applying for a course, trying a role, or taking on responsibility—produces information. Youth workers should consistently reinforce that the purpose of action is to learn what fits, what is difficult, and what support is needed. When action is treated as evidence-gathering instead of performance, young people are more willing to try and less afraid of making mistakes.

Small steps over perfect execution Young people often believe they must act confidently and competently from the start. This belief can delay action or increase anxiety. Emphasising small, achievable steps helps reduce overwhelm and builds momentum. Taking one concrete step—sending one email, asking one question, completing one task—often does more to strengthen confidence than waiting for a “fully ready” moment.

Adjustment as competence, not failure Changing direction, slowing down, or revising plans should be explicitly normalised. Youth workers can model this by naming adjustment as a skill: noticing what is not working, reflecting on why, and adapting accordingly. This reframes flexibility as strength and supports resilience during transitions.

2. Helpful questions

Reflective questions help young people turn experience into insight and maintain agency:

- **“What did this experience teach you about yourself?”** Supports self-awareness and meaning-making rather than judgement.
- **“What support would make the next step easier?”** Shifts focus from individual pressure to environmental and relational resources.
- **“What would you do differently next time?”** Encourages learning and adaptation instead of rumination on mistakes.

These questions keep the focus on process, learning, and forward movement rather than on evaluating success or failure.

3. What to avoid

Overloading young people with responsibility

While autonomy is important, expecting young people to manage complex transitions alone can increase stress and disengagement. Implementation support should balance responsibility with scaffolding, especially during first work experiences or high-pressure transitions.

Framing setbacks as personal failure

Setbacks are common during implementation. Interpreting them as individual shortcomings undermines confidence and motivation. Youth workers should consistently contextualise difficulties within learning processes, workplace dynamics, or structural conditions.

Assuming motivation problems instead of structural barriers

What appears as low motivation may reflect financial pressure, lack of onboarding, unclear expectations, mental health strain, or unstable conditions. Effective support looks beyond behaviour and explores what is making action difficult.

4. Formats and facilitation choices

Small-group formats

Small groups are particularly effective for normalising challenges, sharing strategies, and building peer-based learning. Hearing others describe similar struggles reduces isolation and helps young people recognise that difficulty is part of implementation, not a sign of personal inadequacy.

One-to-one support

Individual sessions are essential when implementation is blocked by fear, shame, financial stress, or strong external pressure. One-to-one spaces allow for honest discussion of sensitive issues and tailored support that respects a young person's pace and circumstances.

Conclusion

Career implementation is the stage where career development moves from intention to lived experience. It is the point at which plans encounter real-world complexity, emotional pressure, and everyday constraints. Without adequate support, this phase can quickly become overwhelming and lead to disengagement or self-doubt. With the right guidance, however, it becomes a meaningful learning process that strengthens confidence, resilience, and agency.

When non-formal learning, mentoring, and reflective support are combined, young people are better equipped not only to enter work or education, but to understand how to act, adjust, and persist over time. In this way, career implementation is not simply about "starting a career," but about developing the capacity to navigate careers as evolving, human processes across the life course.

References

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2. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
3. Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42–70). John Wiley & Sons.
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2. Practical activities

This section presents a set of practical activities and methods that can be used when working with small groups of young people to explore questions related to career development, career opportunities, and personal future pathways. The activities are designed to support conversations about careers in a structured yet accessible way, helping young people better understand themselves, their abilities, and the possible directions they may explore.

The methods included in this section focus on reflection, experimentation, and gradual career exploration rather than early or rigid decision-making. They encourage young people to think about their interests, recognise their skills, understand real-life constraints, and learn how to navigate uncertainty during career development. These activities are particularly suitable for small-group work in youth work, education, counselling, or non-formal learning settings, where participants can share experiences, reflect together, and build confidence in exploring their career possibilities.



ACTIVITY NO. 1

From Career Idea to First Action

Target group: ☒ Under 16 & ☒ 16+

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help participants translate a career idea, interest, or question into concrete action.
- To reduce paralysis caused by pressure to make "big" or permanent career decisions.
- To encourage experimentation and learning through action.

Competences developed

- Self-regulation; Initiative and responsibility.
- Learning-to-learn.
- Decision-making under uncertainty.

Materials

- Paper
- Pens
- Optional: sticky notes or action-step template

Step-by-step instructions

01

Naming the career idea

The facilitator invites participants to name one career idea, interest, or question they are currently thinking about. Emphasise that uncertainty is normal and that ideas do not need to be clear or final.

02

Reframing decisions as experiments

The facilitator explains that career implementation is not about choosing once and for all, but about testing ideas through experience. This helps reduce fear of making a "wrong" choice.

03

Exploring inner barriers

Participants reflect on what makes acting on this idea difficult (e.g. fear of failure, lack of confidence, external pressure, lack of information). These barriers are acknowledged without judgement.

04

Identifying the smallest possible action

Together, define the smallest realistic real-life action related to the idea (e.g. observing, asking questions, researching, trying a short activity).

05

Breaking the action into micro-steps

The action is broken down into 3–5 very small, concrete steps to ensure it feels achievable.

06

Choosing commitment with flexibility

Each participant selects one step they are willing to try and defines when and how it will be attempted, emphasising flexibility and learning rather than success.

07

Preparing emotionally for action

Briefly discuss emotions that may arise before taking the step (nervousness, doubt, excitement) and how to respond to them.

Facilitator notes

- Reduce pressure and perfectionism
- Keep actions realistic and accessible
- Validate emotions and normalize hesitation

Expected outcomes

- Participants leave with one concrete, low-risk action connected to their career idea
- Increased sense of agency and readiness to act
- Reduced fear of "making the wrong decision"

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Avoid assumptions about access to money, transport, networks, or digital tools.
- Offer low-barrier options such as online exploration, short conversations, observation, or community-based activities.
- Never interpret hesitation or slow pace as lack of motivation.

Reflection questions for participants

- What made this step feel possible rather than overwhelming?
- What emotion do I notice when I imagine doing it?
- What support could make this step easier?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Is fear or shame blocking action?
- Are structural or contextual barriers influencing the participant's pace?
- Would additional reassurance or follow-up increase safety and engagement?



ACTIVITY NO. 2

Mapping the Career Implementation Cycle

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 30 minutes

Learning objectives

- Understand career development as a cyclical and ongoing process, not a one-time decision.
- Recognize that nonlinear, interrupted, or changing career paths are normal and valid.
- Identify their current position within the career cycle.
- Increase self-compassion and realism regarding career progress.

Competences developed

- Career management and self-navigation skills
- Reflection and self-awareness
- Adaptability and tolerance for uncertainty
- Decision-making readiness
- Emotional regulation related to career pressures

Materials

- Flipchart, whiteboard, or printed Career Implementation Cycle diagram
- Markers or sticky notes (optional)
- Individual reflection sheets (optional)

Step-by-step instructions

The facilitator introduces the Career Implementation Cycle visually.

01

Explain that careers often move through repeating stages such as:

- Exploration
- Decision-making
- Preparation
- Action/implementation
- Reflection and reassessment

02

Emphasize that:

- People may enter the cycle at different points
- Stages can be revisited multiple times
- Progress is rarely linear

Avoid presenting the cycle as a rigid model; frame it as a navigation tool, not a checklist

Facilitator notes

- Emphasize that all stages are equally valid and necessary.
- Avoid language that implies urgency, competition, or "falling behind".
- Be attentive to participants who express shame, frustration, or self-judgment.
- Encourage reflection, not comparison between participants.

Expected outcomes

- Increased clarity about personal career position.
- Reduced pressure to "have everything figured out".
- Greater acceptance of uncertainty and change.
- Improved ability to name needs and next steps.

Points of attention: youth with fewer opportunities

- Some participants may feel stuck, excluded, or repeatedly pushed back into earlier stages.
- Validate structural barriers (economic, social, educational).
- Avoid framing lack of progress as a personal deficit.
- Highlight that pauses, regressions, and rest can also be meaningful parts of the cycle.

Reflection questions for participants

Understanding the current stage:

- Where do I feel I am in the cycle right now, and why?
- What tells me that I am in this stage (feelings, experiences, circumstances)?

Needs and resources:

- What does my current stage need most from me right now?
- What kind of support would help me most at this stage (information, encouragement, skills, time)?

Self-perception:

- How do I usually talk to myself about my career situation?
- Am I being fair and realistic with myself?

Movement and flexibility:

- What would be a small, manageable next step—not a perfect one?
- What would it mean to allow myself to stay in this stage a bit longer if needed?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Are participants judging themselves harshly or using deficit-based language?
- Are external barriers being acknowledged, or are challenges framed only as personal responsibility?
- Do participants feel permission to slow down, pause, or revisit earlier stages?
- Which stages seem to trigger the most anxiety or shame among participants?
- How can facilitation language reduce pressure and reinforce agency?



ACTIVITY NO. 3

First Weeks at Work – Onboarding Simulation

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Learning objectives

- To prepare participants emotionally and practically for entering a new job, training, or learning environment.
- To reduce anxiety related to onboarding and first performance expectations.
- To strengthen confidence in navigating unfamiliar work situations.

Competences developed

- Social competence
- Emotional regulation
- Learning-to-learn

Materials needed

- Paper
- Markers

Step-by-step instructions

01

Normalising the beginner phase

The facilitator introduces onboarding as a learning phase, not a test. Emphasise that confusion, mistakes, and questions are normal in the first weeks at work or training.

02

Imagining the first weeks

Participants are asked to imagine their first one to two weeks in a new job, internship, or course. They note down what they expect, worry about, or feel unsure of.

03

Expectation mapping

Together, identify expectations participants place on themselves (e.g. "I should already know," "I shouldn't make mistakes"). Discuss which expectations are realistic.

04

What is normal not to know

The facilitator helps participants distinguish between what is reasonable to know before starting and what is learned through experience.

05

Mapping learning and support points

Participants identify moments when they could ask questions, seek feedback, or observe others. Emphasise informal learning opportunities.

06

Practising help-seeking language

Participants practice simple, respectful sentences for asking for clarification, instructions, or feedback.

07

Preparing for emotions

Briefly discuss emotions commonly experienced during onboarding (nervousness, insecurity, excitement) and how to cope with them.

Facilitator notes

- Actively normalise uncertainty and learning curves.
- Reduce perfectionism and fear of judgment.
- Encourage realistic expectations rather than performance pressure.

Expected outcomes

- Increased confidence about starting something new.
- More realistic expectations of onboarding processes.
- Greater willingness to ask for help and learn actively.

Points of attention: youth with fewer opportunities

- Some participants may lack role models who can explain workplace norms.
- Be explicit that asking questions is appropriate and valued.
- Be attentive to fear of authority figures or negative past experiences with institutions.

Reflection questions for participants

- What am I most worried about in my first weeks, and why?
- What would help me feel safer asking for help?
- What expectations can I soften or let go of?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Is fear of judgment blocking engagement?
- Does the participant need role-play or follow-up support?
- Are there cultural or structural barriers affecting onboarding confidence?



ACTIVITY NO. 4

Managing Setbacks and Rejections

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help participants understand setbacks as a normal part of career implementation.
- To strengthen emotional resilience and adaptive decision-making.
- To reduce self-blame after rejections or failures.

Competences developed

- Emotional regulation
- Resilience and adaptability
- Critical reflection and problem-solving
- Learning to learn

Materials needed

- Scenario cards or printed examples of setbacks
- Paper
- Pens

Step-by-step instructions

01

Naming the setback

Ask participants to think of a recent or imagined situation where something did not go as planned (e.g. rejection, conflict at work, lack of motivation, quitting too early). They write one situation down privately.

02

Emotional mapping

Participants name the emotions connected to the situation (e.g. disappointment, anger, shame, fear). Emphasize that emotions come before solutions.

03

Story vs. facts

Ask participants to separate:

- What actually happened (facts)?
- What I told myself about what happened (interpretation)?

This helps reduce self-blame and catastrophic thinking.

04

Exploring responses

Together, identify three possible responses:

- automatic reaction (e.g. avoiding, giving up)
- unhelpful response
- growth-supporting response. Discuss likely outcomes of each.

05

Learning extraction

Participants answer:

- What did this situation teach me?
- What skill or insight did I gain?

06

Reconnecting with action

Each participant defines one small follow-up action that keeps them in the Career Implementation Cycle (adjusting, seeking support, trying again).

Facilitator notes

- Hold emotional safety.
- Normalize struggle without minimizing real difficulties.
- Slow the process to allow reflection before solutions.

Expected outcomes

- Participants learn to see setbacks in a more positive and realistic way.
- Participants build confidence to keep trying even when things are difficult.
- Participants understand that external factors can also affect results.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Be attentive to experiences of repeated rejection or systemic barriers.
- Avoid framing resilience as "just trying harder".
- Validate structural factors impacting outcomes.

Reflection questions for participants

- What do I usually tell myself when something goes wrong?
- What helps me continue instead of withdrawing?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Do participants blame themselves for failures?
- Do participants need more emotional or practical support?



ACTIVITY NO. 5

Skill Backpack: Seeing What I Carry With Me

Target group: ☒ Under 16 & ☒ 16+

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help participants identify and recognize skills gained through formal, non-formal, and informal experiences.
- To strengthen self-confidence during career transitions.
- To support realistic self-assessment in career implementation.

Competences developed

- Self-awareness
- Employability skills
- Learning-to-learn
- Confidence building

Materials needed

- Paper
- Pens or markers
- Optional: printed backpack template

Step-by-step instructions

01

Introducing the backpack metaphor

The facilitator explains that each person carries a "backpack" filled with skills gathered through life experiences, not only through education or work. Emphasise that skills are often acquired unnoticed.

02

Drawing the backpack

Participants draw a backpack on a blank sheet of paper. This represents the skills and strengths they already carry into any new career or learning situation.

03

Filling the backpack

Participants fill the backpack with skills gained through different areas of life, such as school, volunteering, paid or unpaid work, family responsibilities, hobbies, problem-solving in daily life, or overcoming challenges.

04

Naming and clarifying skills

Together with the facilitator (or peers), participants clarify what each skill means in practice (e.g. "responsibility," "adaptability," "communication," "organisation").

05

Connecting skills to career implementation

Participants discuss how these skills can be used in work, learning, or transitional situations such as onboarding, job searching, or collaboration with others.

06

Growth focus

Each participant chooses one skill they would like to strengthen further during the next phase of their career implementation

Facilitator notes

- Help participants translate experiences into skills.
- Actively validate informal and non-academic competencies.
- Challenge narrow definitions of "valuable" skills.

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of existing competencies.
- Improved self-confidence and sense of readiness for new experiences.
- Stronger ability to link past experience with future action.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Young people may underestimate skills gained through care work, survival strategies, or informal responsibilities.
- Avoid focusing only on school or job-related competencies.
- Be attentive to low self-esteem caused by repeated negative feedback or comparison.

Reflection questions for participants

- Which skill was I most surprised to find in my backpack?
- Which skill helps me most in difficult situations?
- How could I use these skills more actively in my next steps?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Is the participant minimizing their abilities? Why?
- Which skills need further naming or validation?
- How can these strengths be linked to concrete career actions?



ACTIVITY NO. 6

Financial Reality Without Judgment

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Learning objectives

- To increase awareness of financial realities that influence career choices and transitions.
- To reduce money-related anxiety through realistic and shame-free discussion.
- To support more informed and sustainable career decision-making.

Competences developed

- Financial literacy.
- Planning and responsibility.
- Self-regulation.

Materials needed

- Paper.
- Pens.
- Optional: simple budget or planning template.

Step-by-step instructions

01

Normalising money as an emotional topic

The facilitator introduces finances as an area strongly connected to emotions such as anxiety, shame, pressure, or fear. Emphasise that there is no "right way" to talk about money.

03

Connecting money and career decisions

Participants reflect on how financial needs or fears influence their career choices (e.g. choosing stability over interest, delaying learning, accepting unsuitable work).

05

Exploring realistic options and trade-offs

The facilitator helps participants consider possible adjustments, supportive measures, or temporary strategies without judgment or pressure.

07

Reframing financial decisions as part of career implementation

Emphasise that financially motivated decisions are not failures but part of adapting and surviving during transitions.

02

Mapping current financial reality

Participants outline basic sources of income and typical monthly expenses (housing, food, transport, communication). Estimates are sufficient; precision is not required.

04

Identifying pressure points

Together, identify which financial factors cause the most stress and where participants feel the least control.

06

Finding a small control point

Each participant identifies one small, realistic financial action they can take (e.g. tracking expenses, seeking advice, planning expenses for the next month).

Facilitator notes

- Create a shame-free and respectful atmosphere.
- Avoid moralising spending or income choices.
- Be attentive to emotional reactions connected to money.

Expected outcomes

- Reduced anxiety related to finances.
- Increased clarity about financial influences on career decisions.
- Greater sense of control within existing constraints.

Points of attention: youth with fewer opportunities

- Be highly sensitive to poverty, debt, housing insecurity, or family financial pressure.
- Avoid suggesting unrealistic "budgeting solutions".
- Focus on agency within constraints and access to support (social services, counselling, benefits).

Reflection questions for participants

- Which financial pressure affects my career decisions the most?
- What feels most difficult to talk about when it comes to money?
- What small step could reduce my stress in the short term?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Is financial shame blocking honest discussion?
- Are there structural issues requiring referral or additional support?
- How can financial reality be integrated into sustainable career planning?



ACTIVITY NO. 7

Energy and Work–Life Balance Mapping

Target group: ☒ Under 16 & ☒ 16+

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help participants understand how work, learning, and daily responsibilities affect their energy and wellbeing.
- To prevent early burnout during career implementation.
- To support sustainable pacing rather than short-term overperformance.

Competences developed

- Self-regulation
- Wellbeing awareness
- Planning and balance
- Emotional regulation

Material needed

- Paper
- Pens
- Coloured markers
- Optional: printable balance template

Step-by-step instructions

01

Introducing energy as a resource

The facilitator explains that energy (mental, emotional, physical) is a limited resource and that career implementation requires managing energy, not just time.

02

Mapping a typical day or week

Participants draw a simple timeline of a typical working or study day (or week, if more relevant). They include work, learning, commuting, responsibilities, rest, and social time.

03

Identifying energy drain and gain

Using colours or symbols, participants mark which activities give energy, drain energy, or feel neutral.

04

Recognising patterns

Together, identify patterns such as long days, lack of recovery, emotional overload, or constant availability.

05

Discussing warning signs

The facilitator introduces common early signs of overload or burnout (e.g. irritability, exhaustion, loss of motivation), connecting them to the mapped patterns.

06

Choosing one realistic adjustment

Each participant identifies one small, achievable change that could improve balance (e.g. boundaries, breaks, recovery time, asking for flexibility).

07

Linking balance to career sustainability

Conclude by highlighting that sustainable engagement matters more than short-term “pushing through.”

Facilitator notes

- Avoid framing imbalance as a personal failure.
- Encourage realistic expectations rather than ideal routines.
- Be attentive to emotional or physical exhaustion signals.

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of personal energy patterns.
- Greater ability to recognise early burnout signals.
- One realistic adjustment identified to support sustainability.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Acknowledge that imbalance may be structural (multiple jobs, care duties, financial pressure).
- Avoid suggesting lifestyle changes that are unrealistic.
- Focus on what can be adjusted within existing constraints.

Reflection questions for participants

- Which activities drain my energy the most, and why?
- What helps me recover when I feel overloaded?
- What small change could make my days more sustainable?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Are there signs of burnout or chronic overload?
- Are external pressures limiting the participant's ability to rest or recover?
- Would additional wellbeing or support services be helpful?



ACTIVITY NO. 8

Mapping My Support Network

Target group: ☒ Under 16 & ☒ 16+

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help participants recognize that career implementation is not an individual process but supported by relationships and systems.
- To strengthen help-seeking behaviour during career transitions.
- To reduce feelings of isolation, pressure, or self-reliance.

Competences developed

- Social competence
- Emotional resilience
- Self-advocacy
- Inclusion awareness

Materials needed

- Paper
- Pens
- Optional: printed template with circles

Step-by-step instructions

01

Introducing the idea of support

The facilitator starts by explaining that career decisions, transitions, and implementation are rarely successful without support. Emphasise that needing help is normal, not a weakness.

02

Drawing the support map

The participants draw three concentric circles:

- Inner circle: People I trust and rely on most.
- Middle circle: People or places I can sometimes turn to.
- Outer circle: Institutions, services, or community resources.

03

Filling in the map

Participants write names or roles into each circle. This may include friends, family members, teachers, youth workers, employers, mentors, counsellors, NGOs, or online support.

04

Types of support

For each person or resource, participants identify what kind of support they offer: emotional, practical, informational, financial, or motivational.

05

Recognising gaps and unused support

Together, identify areas where support is missing or underused (e.g. "I never ask for help at work" or "I don't know which services exist").

06

Activating support

Each participant chooses one realistic action to strengthen or activate support (e.g. asking a question, booking an appointment, talking to someone).

Facilitator notes

- Normalize reliance on others and challenge myths of total independence.
- Encourage recognition of both informal and formal support.
- Be attentive to emotional reactions, especially feelings of loneliness or mistrust.

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of available support systems.
- Reduced sense of isolation during career transitions.
- Greater confidence in asking for help and using resources.

Points of attention: youth with fewer opportunities

- Some participants may have limited or unstable family support — avoid assumptions.
- Actively include professionals, institutions, and community services as valid support.
- Be mindful of distrust toward systems due to past negative experiences.
- Never frame limited networks as a personal failure.

Reflection questions for participants

- Who supports me more than I usually allow?
- What kind of help is hardest for me to ask for?
- Which support could make my next career step easier?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Does the participant rely only on themselves? Why?
- Are there unspoken barriers (shame, past rejection, mistrust)?
- Which community or institutional connections could be strengthened?



ACTIVITY NO. 9

Trying Without Choosing: Safe Career Experiments

Target group: ☒ Under 16

Duration: 30–45 minutes

Learning objectives

- To help younger participants understand that career development does not require early or final decisions.
- To introduce career implementation as trying, exploring, and learning, rather than choosing.
- To reduce fear and pressure associated with "future career choices".

Competences developed

- Curiosity.
- Learning-to-learn.
- Self-awareness.
- Emotional regulation.
- Initiative.

Materials needed

- Paper
- Pens
- Coloured markers
- Optional: experiment cards or worksheet

Step-by-step instructions

01

Normalising uncertainty at a young age

The facilitator explains that at this age, nobody is expected to know what they want to "be." Career implementation is introduced as trying things out and seeing what feels interesting or difficult.

02

Identifying interests, not professions

Participants are invited to name activities they enjoy or are curious about (e.g. helping others, fixing things, being creative, organising, playing, caring, explaining).

03

From interest to experiment

Together, each interest is translated into a small, safe experiment (e.g. helping at an event, observing a job for an hour, creating something, assisting a teacher or family member).

04

Checking emotional safety

Participants reflect on how they would like to feel doing the experiment (safe, supported, not judged). Adjust experiments accordingly.

05

Choosing one experiment

Each participant chooses one small experiment they would be willing to try in the near future, without pressure to like it or continue.

06

Preparing for first emotions

Discuss emotions that might appear (nervousness, excitement, boredom) and reassure participants that all reactions are valid information.

07

Closing the loop: learning comes first

The facilitator explains that the goal is not success, but learning something new about oneself.

Facilitator notes

- Protect participants from pressure to decide early.
- Encourage curiosity and playfulness.
- Keep experiments short, safe, and reversible.

Expected outcomes

- Reduced anxiety about future career choices.
- Increased curiosity and willingness to try new activities.
- Understanding that careers develop over time through experience.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Be aware that access to activities may be limited by family resources or environment.
- Suggest school-based, community-based, or home-based experiments.
- Avoid language that compares participants to peers or expectations.

Reflection questions for participants

- What did I notice about myself while trying something new?
- What felt interesting, boring, or harder than expected?
- What would I like to try next (or avoid)?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Is the participant experiencing pressure from adults or systems to decide too early?
- Were emotions (fear, excitement) expressed safely?
- How can exploration remain playful and voluntary?

3. Digital tips

In this section, several digital tips are presented to support young people in thinking about their career development with the help of artificial intelligence tools. These activities demonstrate how AI can be used as a practical reflection and planning assistant that helps young people explore career possibilities, analyse options, and gradually translate ideas into concrete actions. Rather than providing ready-made answers, AI is used as a structured thinking aid that encourages exploration, questioning, and informed decision-making.

The digital tips included in this section focus on three key aspects of career development: turning career ideas into realistic action steps, navigating career transitions and decisions, and reflecting on experiences for long-term career growth. Through guided prompts and short structured exercises, young people can use AI tools to clarify their interests, compare different pathways, recognise learning from experience, and plan possible next steps. The aim is to strengthen young people's ability to actively shape their career journey while recognising that career development is an evolving process that involves experimentation, reflection, and adaptation over time.



DIGITAL TIP NO. 1

From Career Goal to Action Plan with AI

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Learning objectives

- To translate a career idea into realistic and achievable short-term actions.
- To understand that career development happens gradually through exploration and small steps.
- To increase confidence in taking the first practical actions toward a potential career direction.
- To recognise that multiple pathways can lead to similar professional outcomes.

Competences developed

- Career management skills.
- Planning and prioritisation.
- Problem-solving and adaptive thinking.
- Self-efficacy and initiative.
- Digital literacy in using AI as a support tool.

Materials needed

- Digital device (phone, tablet, or computer).
- AI text-based tool (e.g., chatbot or AI assistant).
- Optional: printed or digital action plan worksheet for recording steps.

Step-by-step instructions

01

Participants individually identify one career-related goal or professional interest they would like to explore (for example, becoming a graphic designer, starting a small business, working in healthcare, or studying a specific field).

02

The facilitator briefly introduces AI as a support tool for generating ideas and structuring thinking, emphasizing that it does not replace personal decision-making.

03

Participants enter their goal into the AI tool using the provided prompt and request suggestions for small, realistic steps.

04

Participants review the suggested steps and select 3–5 actions that feel achievable within the next 1–3 months.

05

Participants identify one immediate next step that they could realistically take in the near future.

06

Participants briefly reflect on whether the step feels realistic and what kind of support, information, or resources might help them complete it.

07

Optional: participants write their selected step in the action plan worksheet.

AI prompt examples

❶ "I am a young person exploring the goal: [insert goal]. I have limited time and resources. Break this goal into 3–5 small, realistic actions I could take in the next 1–3 months, without assuming I already have experience or money."

❷ "Suggest two alternative pathways toward this goal if the direct or traditional route is not available to me right now."

❸ "From these actions, help me identify one low-risk first step that would help me test this interest rather than commit to it."

❹ "What skills, knowledge, or experience would I gain from taking this first step?"

Facilitator notes

- Emphasise that career development is a process of exploration, not immediate decision-making.
- Encourage participants to focus on small and realistic steps, rather than ambitious long-term plans.
- Remind participants that AI suggestions should be adapted to their personal circumstances.
- Avoid creating pressure for participants to commit to a single career path.

Expected outcomes

- Participants gain a clearer understanding of how to approach a career idea through practical steps.
- Participants experience reduced overwhelm when thinking about career planning.
- Participants develop a stronger sense of agency and confidence in taking action.
- Participants understand that career exploration can begin with small, low-risk actions.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Recognise that some participants may have limited financial resources, access to networks, or educational opportunities.
- Encourage AI prompts that explicitly mention limited resources or constraints.
- Highlight alternative, indirect, or community-based pathways toward career exploration.
- Avoid framing career development within strict or normative timelines.

Reflection questions for participants

- Which step feels realistic and achievable for me right now?
- What skills or knowledge could I gain from trying this step?
- What support, information, or resources might help me take this action?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Are the suggested steps adapted to participants' real situations and capacities?
- Does the use of AI increase clarity and confidence, rather than pressure or confusion?
- Are participants encouraged to experiment and explore, rather than feel forced to decide immediately?



DIGITAL TIP NO. 2

Using AI to Navigate Career Transitions and Decisions

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Learning objectives

- To support decision-making during career transitions.
- To reduce anxiety related to career choices.
- To strengthen reflective thinking and evaluation of alternatives.

Competences developed

- Decision-making
- Critical thinking
- Emotional awareness
- Reflective thinking

Materials needed

- Digital device (phone, tablet, or computer)
- AI text-based tool
- Flipchart, paper, or digital notes

Step-by-step instructions

01

Participants identify a current or upcoming transition or decision related to their career or education (for example: choosing between study programmes, internships, jobs, or training opportunities).

02

The facilitator introduces AI as a reflection partner that helps structure thinking and compare options, not as a tool that makes decisions.

03

Participants enter their options into the AI tool and use structured prompts to compare possible outcomes.

04

Participants review the AI responses and identify their personal priorities, such as learning opportunities, flexibility, stress level, or alignment with personal values.

05

The group briefly reflects on the idea that career paths are rarely linear, and that decisions can be revisited and adjusted over time.

AI prompt examples

 "I am choosing between the following options: [option A] and [option B]. Compare them based on learning opportunities, stress level, flexibility, and alignment with personal values, not prestige or income."

 "List the main questions I should reflect on before making this decision, considering uncertainty and the possibility of changing my mind later."

 "What are realistic short-term outcomes (6–12 months) of each option, including possible challenges?"

 "What would make either option a 'good enough' decision rather than a perfect one?"

Facilitator notes

- Normalise doubt, hesitation, and uncertainty during decision-making.
- Avoid framing career choices as permanent or irreversible.
- Encourage participants to pause, reflect, and reassess options when needed.

Expected outcomes

- Increased clarity about personal priorities and decision criteria.
- Reduced fear of making mistakes.
- Improved ability to articulate and justify choices.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Recognise potential structural constraints such as financial limitations, limited access to education, or geographic barriers.
- Avoid promoting options that may be inaccessible to participants.
- Emphasise adaptive and flexible decision-making strategies.

Reflection questions for participants

- What matters most to me in this decision right now?
- What would be a "good enough" choice that allows me to move forward?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Are external barriers and constraints being acknowledged during discussion?
- Are participants given sufficient time and space to reflect without pressure?



DIGITAL TIP NO. 3

Supporting lifelong career growth and reflection with AI

Target group: ☒ 16+

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Learning objectives

- To support reflective learning from work, learning, or volunteering experiences.
- To normalise career change, reassessment, and adaptation over time.
- To strengthen long-term adaptability and sustainable career thinking.

Competences developed

- Reflection and self-awareness.
- Adaptability and resilience.
- Learning-to-learn competence.
- Career self-management.

Materials

- Digital device (phone, tablet, or computer).
- AI text-based tool.
- Optional: reflection journal or notebook.

Step-by-step instructions

01

Participants individually select a recent experience related to work, volunteering, study, or personal development.

02

The facilitator introduces AI as a reflection and learning support tool, explaining that it can help structure thoughts and identify learning that might otherwise remain unnoticed.

03

Participants describe their experience to the AI tool and use prompts to identify skills, knowledge, and personal strengths they may have developed.

04

Participants review the AI responses and reflect on what the experience revealed about their needs, preferences, and limits, not only about performance.

05

Participants identify whether the experience suggests they should continue in a similar direction, adjust their approach, pause, or explore alternative paths.

06

The activity concludes with a short reflection on sustainability and wellbeing, emphasising that healthy career development includes learning, pauses, and adaptation.

AI prompt examples



"I recently had this experience: [describe job, internship, volunteering, studies]. Help me identify skills, knowledge, and personal strengths I may have developed, including informal or non-obvious ones."



"Help me reflect on what this experience taught me about my needs, limits, and preferences, not just my performance."



"What signals from this experience suggest that I should continue, adjust, pause, or change direction?"



"How could this experience still be useful for my future, even if it did not go as planned?"

Facilitator notes

- Emphasise that learning can emerge from both positive and challenging experiences.
- Be attentive to signs of self-blame, frustration, or burnout during reflection.
- Highlight the importance of rest, pauses, and balance in sustainable career development.

Expected outcomes

- Increased recognition of transferable and informal skills.
- Reduced shame or anxiety related to career changes or adjustments.
- Stronger understanding of career development as an adaptive and evolving process.

Points of attention for youth with fewer opportunities

- Recognise that valuable learning can occur in informal, short-term, or unstable experiences.
- Avoid deficit-based interpretations that frame experiences only as gaps or failures.
- Reinforce participants' dignity, agency, and capacity for development.

Reflection questions for participants

- What did I learn about myself from this experience?
- What do I need more of or less of in my next step?

Reflection questions for facilitators / youth workers

- Are reflection and wellbeing balanced during the discussion?
- Are participants able to reframe experiences constructively rather than focusing only on difficulties?

Disclaimer:

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About the project „Open Yourself for Career Skills“

The project „Open Yourself for Career Skills“ aims to strengthen non-formal career counselling for young people by integrating digital tools and innovative non-formal education methods. It focuses on making career guidance more accessible, relevant, and tailored to the needs of youth. The project also seeks to improve digital literacy, equip youth workers with modern tools, and increase the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, thereby supporting young people's employability and active participation in society.

Objectives:

1. **Strengthen non-formal career counselling for youth.** Improve the quality and innovation of career services by applying non-formal methods adapted to the digital era and accessible to young people.
2. **Enhance digital inclusion.** Expand access to career counselling through a multilingual mobile application and online platform, increasing digital literacy and supporting inclusion and diversity.
3. **Promote innovation in youth work.** Introduce new career guidance approaches, including a methodological tool and training for youth workers, while strengthening the recognition of non-formal learning outcomes.
4. **Build youth worker capacity.** Deliver targeted training to improve competences in non-formal education and digital tools, enhancing the quality and recognition of youth work.
5. **Promote inclusion in career guidance.** Apply universal design principles to ensure accessibility of all project resources, supporting inclusion and diversity across learning contexts.
6. **Strengthen youth employability.** Improve understanding of skills and labour market dynamics, and develop soft skills through tailored career guidance, facilitating transition into employment.

Duration: 24 months (October 2024 – September 2026)

Partners and countries involved:

- Society and Enterprise Development Institute (Lithuania)
- Youth association “Time for Youth” (Latvia)
- Secondary school Haaleitisskoli, Reykjanesbaer (Iceland)
- Regional youth association “Amigos de Europa” (Spain)