

Return to education workbook

Gathering young people's views



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Guidance

This workbook was developed as part of a diversity placement project with the Willow Team during Hannah Forde's second-year placement as a Trainee Educational Psychologist with the Hampshire Educational Psychology Service.

The workbook offers a variety of tools and resources for professionals to gather young people's views on returning to an educational setting or planning for future aspirations. It is most effective when used by individuals who have established a trusting relationship with the young person, ensuring they feel comfortable and honest in sharing their thoughts and feelings.

It is important to remember that the views gathered using these tools reflect the young person's feelings at that specific moment and may vary if asked on a different day.

The workbook is designed to provide tailored support, allowing young people to express their views without relying solely on verbal communication. It also aims to empower young people by giving them a sense of control over their educational journey. A key feature of the workbook is identifying the young person's strengths and how these can be built upon when considering their educational and employment journey. It can also help offer clarity on future goals, breaking them down into manageable steps.

Name:

School:

Your time at home

How have you been feeling at home?



What **do** you like about staying at home
and not going to school?

What do you **not** like about staying at
home and not going to school?

--	--

How are you feeling about returning to school?



You might be feeling a mixture of emotions about returning to school. This is completely normal. Some of the emotions you might be feeling are below, please circle any that you feel, or you can write some others that are not listed.

Sad

Happy

Unsure

Frustrated

Unmotivated

Angry

Worried

Excited

Motivated

Out of control

Unwell

Bad

Low in mood

Unconfident

There might be things in school that are making you feel this way:

- Problems with friendships
- Having to change school and go somewhere new
- Bullying
- Feeling different to other people who go to school
- Relationships with school staff
- Being shouted at or told off
- Accessing the learning
- The environment at school

Can you think of anything else?

There might be things outside of school that are making you feel this way:

- Birth of a new brother or sister
- Parents or carers not understanding your feelings
- A parent or carer who is ill
- Parents or carers arguing or splitting up
- Death of somebody important to you
- Members of your family feeling worried, depressed or sad

1. What will happen if I go to school more often or if I was confident to participate more whilst I'm there?

Reflect...

Impact on friendships
and school work

Days missed from
school

Thoughts and feelings
about school

Thoughts and feelings
about the future

2. Ideal school (Williams & Hanke, 2007)

Think about the type of school you would want to go to. What would it be like? What would be there?

Instructions

Part 1: Drawing the kind of school, you would **NOT** like to go to. Help the young person to make a sketch or talk to you about the type of school they would want to go to by reading out these questions.

1. The school

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of this paper. Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

2. The classroom

Think about the sort of classroom you would not like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in the school. Draw some of the things in this classroom.

3. The pupils

Think about some of the children at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children.

4. The adults

Think about some of the adults at the school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of the adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

5. Me

Think about the kind of school you would not like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

Part 2: Drawing the kind of school you **would** like to go to

6. The school

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. This is not a real school. Make a quick drawing of this school in the middle of the middle of this paper. Tell me three things about this school. What kind of school is this?

7. The classroom

Think about the sort of classroom you would like to be in. Make a quick drawing of this classroom in this school. Draw some of the things in this classroom.

8. The pupils

Think about some of the children at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these children. What are the children doing? Tell me three things about these children

9. The adults

Think about some of the adults at the school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of some of these adults. What are the adults doing? Tell me three things about these adults.

10. Me

Think about the kind of school you would like to go to. Make a quick drawing of what you would be doing at this school. Tell me three things about the way you feel at this school.

A school I would not like to go to:



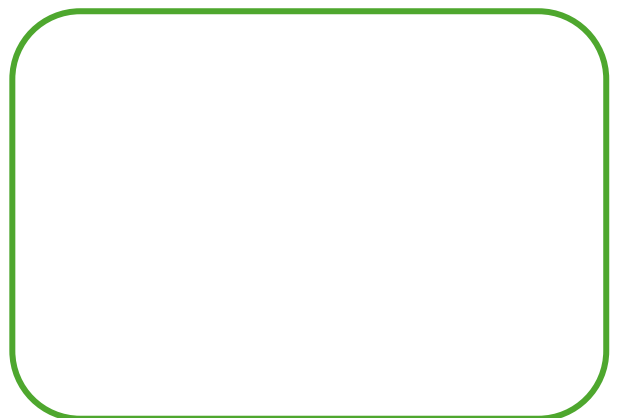
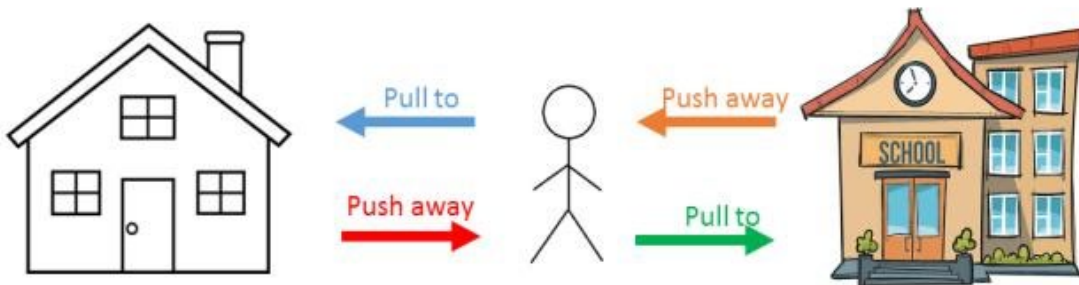
A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a blue border, intended for writing a response to the question 'A school I would not like to go to:'.

A school I would like to go to:



A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a green border, intended for writing a response to the question 'A school I would like to go to:'.

Research shows that non-attendance is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience, when negative emotions about school exceed support available, and when the factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the factors that encourage school attendance (Thambirajah et al, 2008: p. 33). By mapping out what is going on for a young person, you can identify where there are imbalances which would tell you how to intervene to support a young person.



School factors	Family factors	Child factors	Community factors
• Bullying • Difficulties in specific subject • Transition to secondary school • Key stage or change of school • Structure of school day • Academic demands/high levels of pressure • Exams • Difficulty forming and maintaining relationships with friends or staff • Being excluded from mainstream education	• Change in family dynamic – separation, divorce • Parent physical or mental health • Health challenges • Relationship with parent/caregiver • Stress in the family • Safeguarding concerns • Loss or bereavement • Young carer • Finance • Sibling challenges • Moving house	• Anxiety • Low mood • Fixed mindset • Low self-confidence • Physical illness/injury • Transition ages (5-6, 11-12 & 13-14) • Difficulties accessing learning • Trauma experiences • Addiction • Uncertainty about the future • Additional needs such as neurodiversity or disability • Connections with people in gangs or crime	• Racism • Social media • Gang membership • Transport or journey to and from school • Community safety or crime rates

4. When thinking about school, which of these statements are true for you? (Please circle all the pictures that you agree with)

I feel pressure 	School is too busy or noisy 	I have friends at school 	I don't understand what the teacher is saying 
I have to look after people at home 	I don't feel in control when I am at school. 	I feel worried 	I would rather be at home 
I feel helpless 	I want to go to school 	People listen to me at school 	I don't know how to make friends 
I know what I want to do when I leave school/college 	I feel sad 	I don't like some lessons 	I am a good learner 
I feel like I don't belong 	I feel confused 	I need help with my learning 	People don't listen or believe me 
I believe people care about me at school 	I think things will get better 	I am being bullied 	I feel calm when I am at school 
I feel safe when I am at school 	I worry about schoolwork 	I can do things if I really try 	I don't like some teachers 

What others/school can do to help me

(Please circle all the pictures that you agree with)

Make me laugh. 	Remind me that I have a choice. 	Lead me from the room. 	Remind me of my strengths. 
Remove the audience. 	Give me time out. 	Let me go to a safe place. 	Let me talk to an adult I trust. 
Distract me by 	Give me an excuse to leave the room. 	Help me with my work. 	Ask me if I would like space. 
Not having to read out loud. 	Help with making friends. 	Not being given too much to do in one go. 	Not so much writing. 
More hands-on learning. 	Instructions being repeated for you. 	More help in some lessons (which?). 	The way people talk to you. 

5. Preparing for adulthood resources (National Development Team for Inclusion)



Preparing for Adulthood: All Tools & Resources - NDTi

This link provides a wealth of resources regarding preparing for adulthood, however a few key resources that might be helpful are here:



Good day



Bad day

What does this say about what matters to me?	What does this say about the support I need?

Employment	Friends, relationships and community
Independent living	Good health and wellbeing

My outcomes



NAME
DATE

WHAT PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT ME

IF I COULD... I WOULD...

WHAT I WANT IN THE FUTURE

WHAT I'M GOOD AT

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

WHAT MATTERS ISLAND

PEOPLE

THINGS TO DO

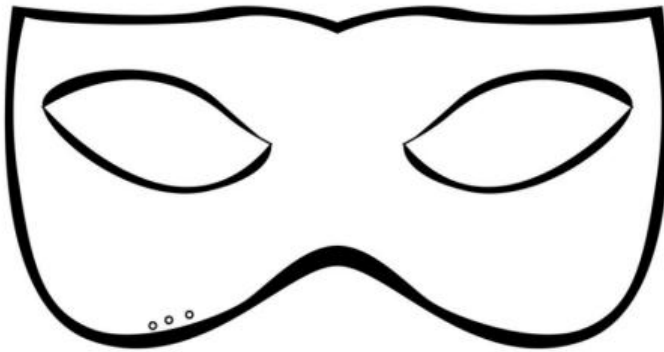
THINGS TO HAVE

NDTi
National Development Team for Inclusion

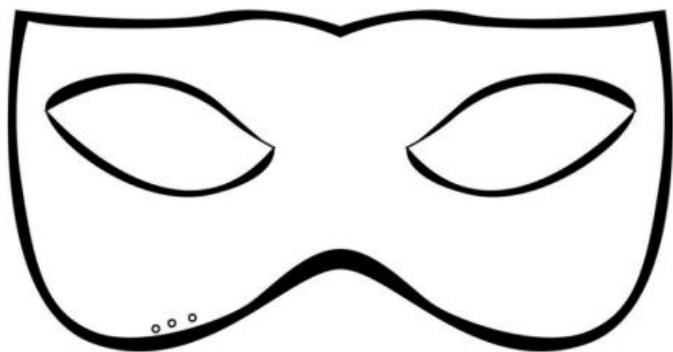
6. Masks you wear

What are the different 'masks' you wear in different situations and what might be hiding behind them?

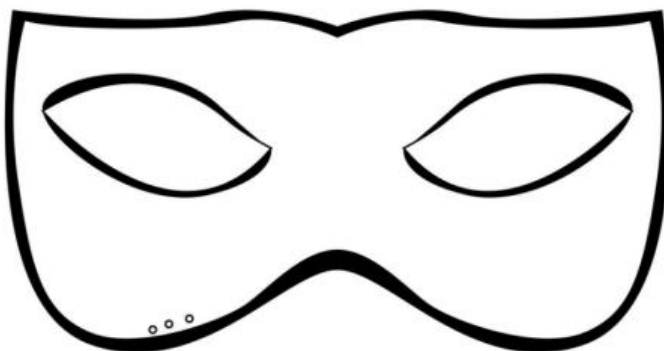
With friends:



At home:

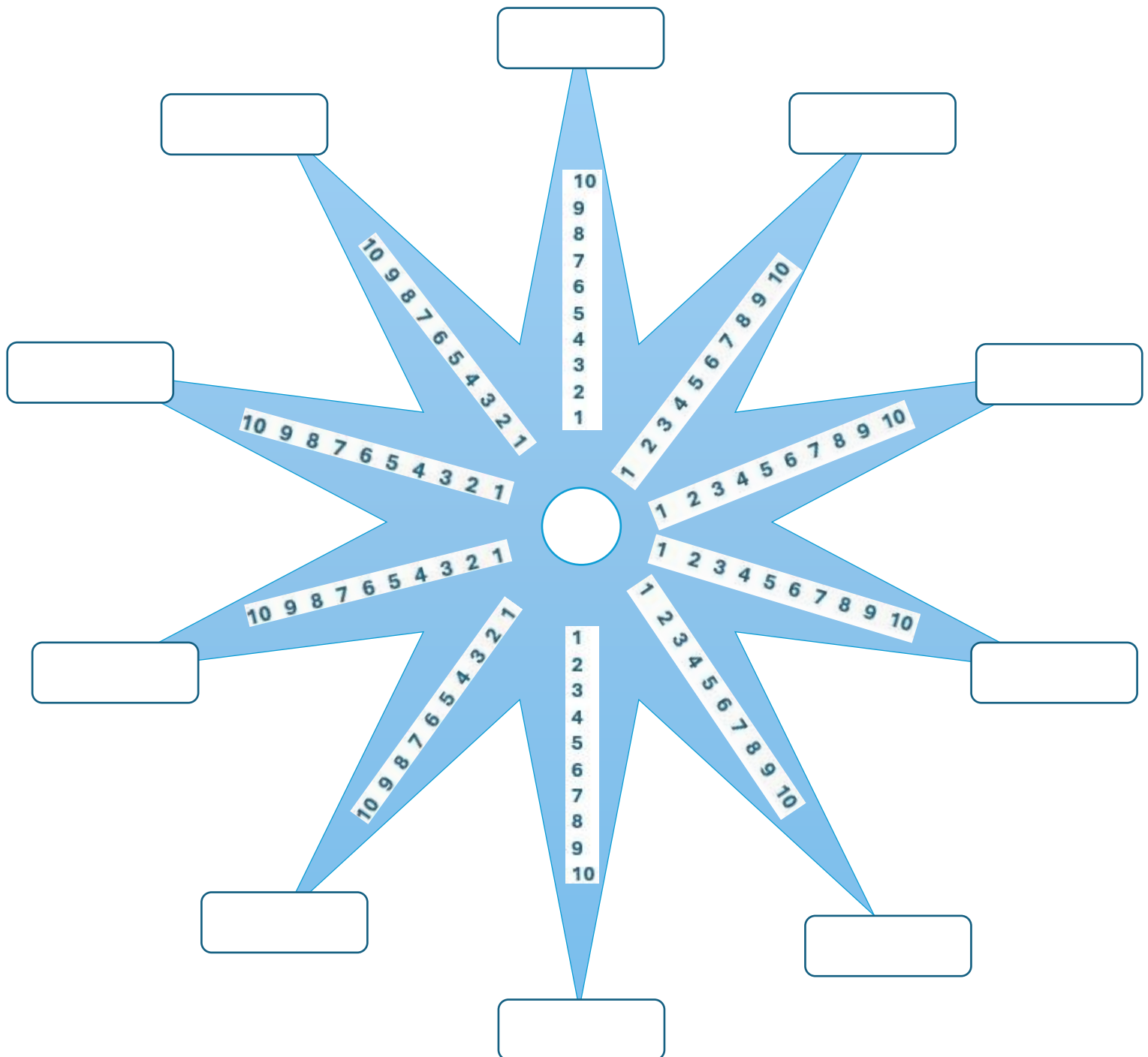


At school:



7. Outcome stars

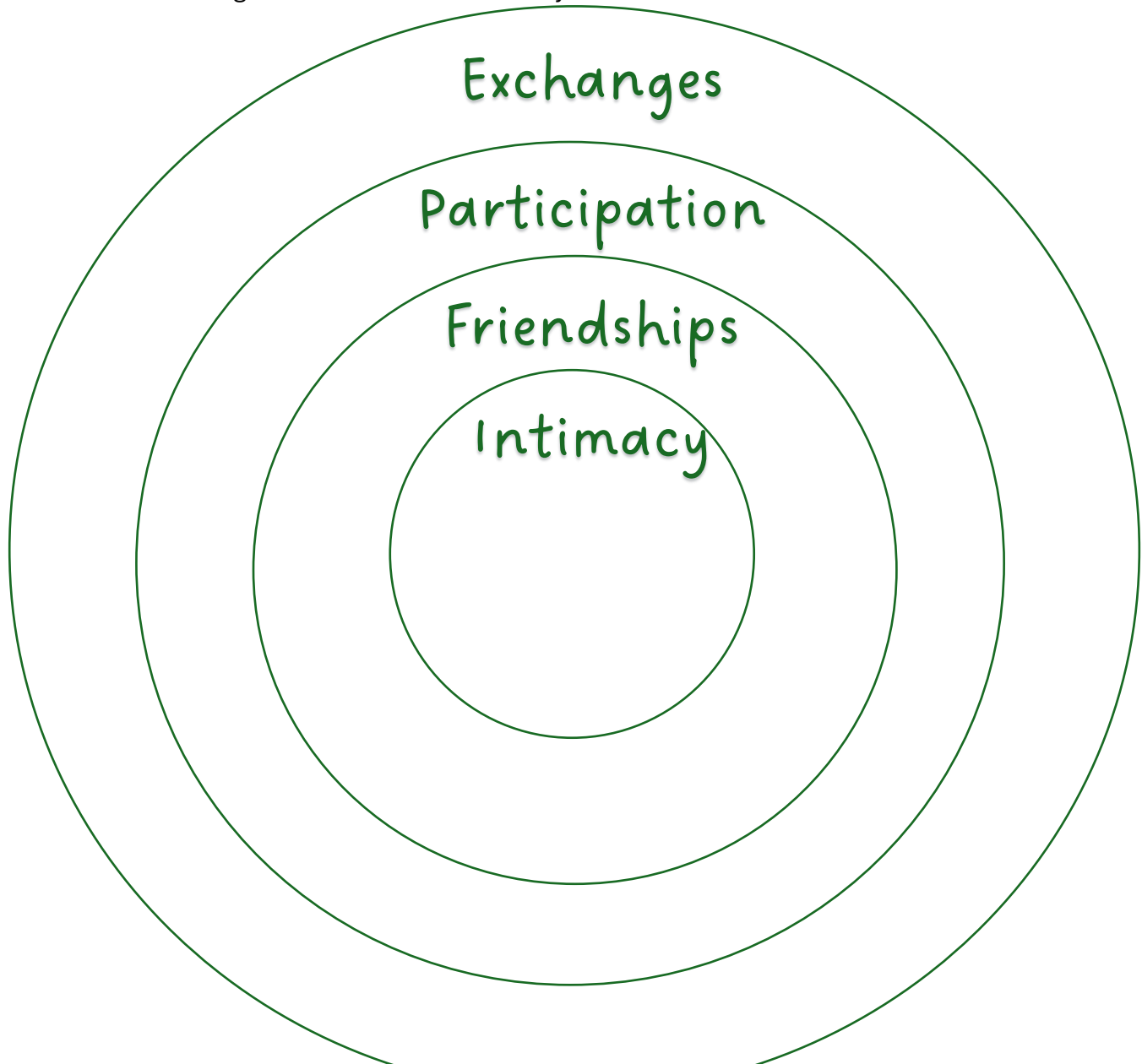
The Outcomes Star is a tool that helps measure and support change. Here on this star, you can input different headings to measure feelings about different areas, or it can be used to measure progress towards change in an area. You might start by measuring how you feel about different subjects/tasks you do at school.



The Outcome Star is a blue eight-pointed star with a central white circle. Each of the eight points has a white rectangular box at its tip for a heading. Inside each point is a white scale with numbers 1 to 10, arranged from the center outwards. The scales are oriented as follows: the top point is vertical (1 at bottom, 10 at top); the top-right point is diagonal (1 at bottom-left, 10 at top-right); the right point is horizontal (1 at left, 10 at right); the bottom-right point is diagonal (1 at top-left, 10 at bottom-right); the bottom point is vertical (1 at top, 10 at bottom); the bottom-left point is diagonal (1 at top-right, 10 at bottom-left); the left point is horizontal (1 at right, 10 at left); and the top-left point is diagonal (1 at bottom-right, 10 at top-left).

8. Circles of support (Snow, 1998)

This activity aims to look at important people in our lives, within our family, friendships, school settings and within the community.



Circle of Intimacy - Think about the people most intimate in your life - those you cannot imagine living without
Circle of Friendship - Think about good friends - those who almost made the first circle.
Circle of Participation - Recall people, organizations, and networks you are involved with (work colleagues, the choir, places of worship, the square dance club, your softball team, etc. People or groups where you participate and encounter other people.
Circle of Exchange - List people you pay to provide services in your life (medical professionals, tax accountants, mechanics, hairdressers, barbers, teachers, etc.)
Note: People can be in more than one circle. For example, your doctor or teacher could also be a close friend; a deceased parent, friend or even a pet, might be an intimate personal supporter.
Reflection: Are there people you would like to bring more towards the middle, are there people you would like to move further away? Think about what makes people in the middle circles great in your life. Why do they deserve that spot?

9. Circle of control (Covey, 2013)

The circle of control is a tool that helps to identify what you can and cannot control in your life. Fill in the circles based on what you feel currently in your life.

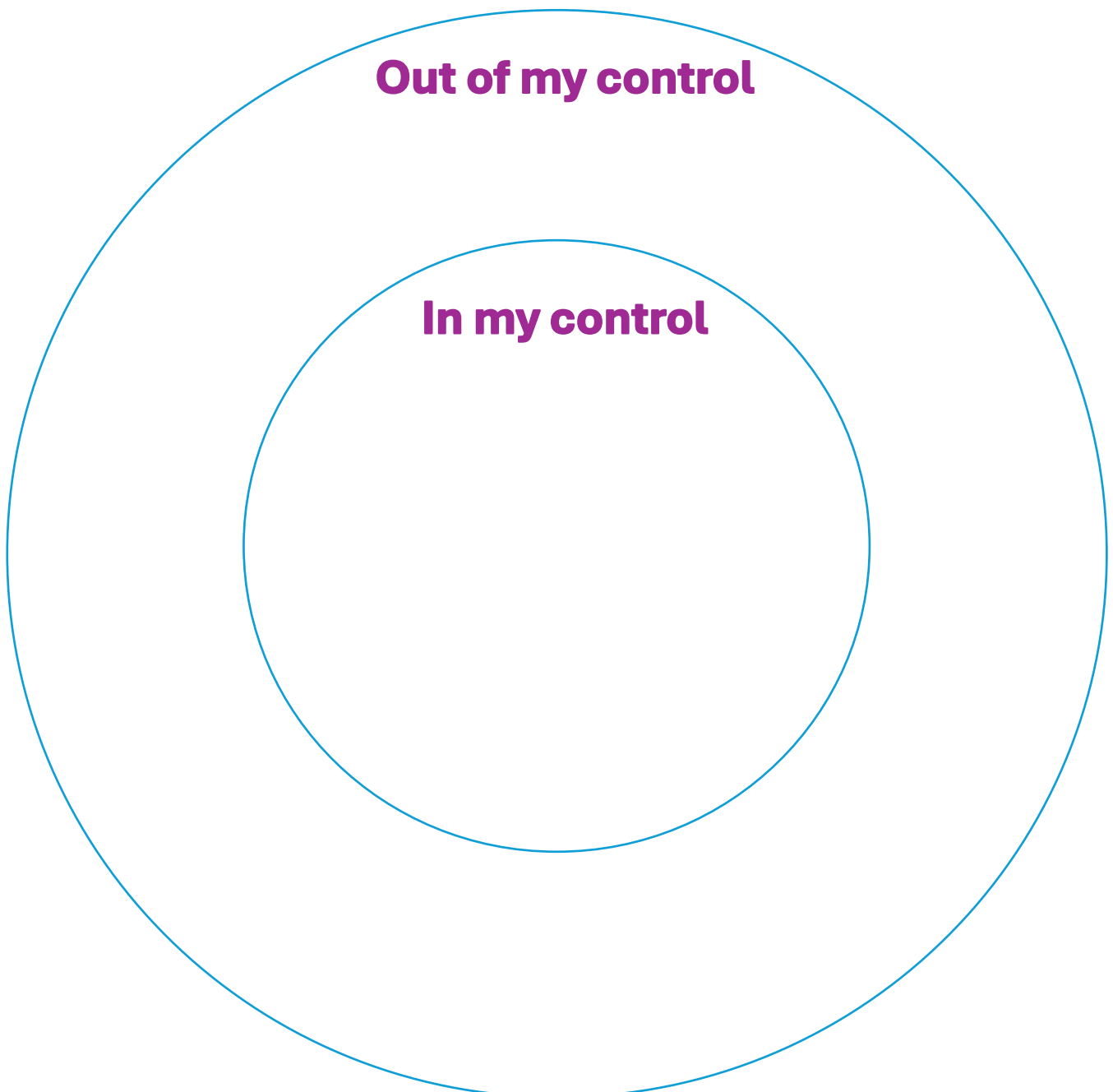
In my control

This is the innermost circle, which consists of all the things that we can directly impact. It's where we have full control, regardless of the events that transpire under the circles of concern and influence. Some circle of control examples include your attitude, what you read and watch, how you respond to others, and where you put your energy.

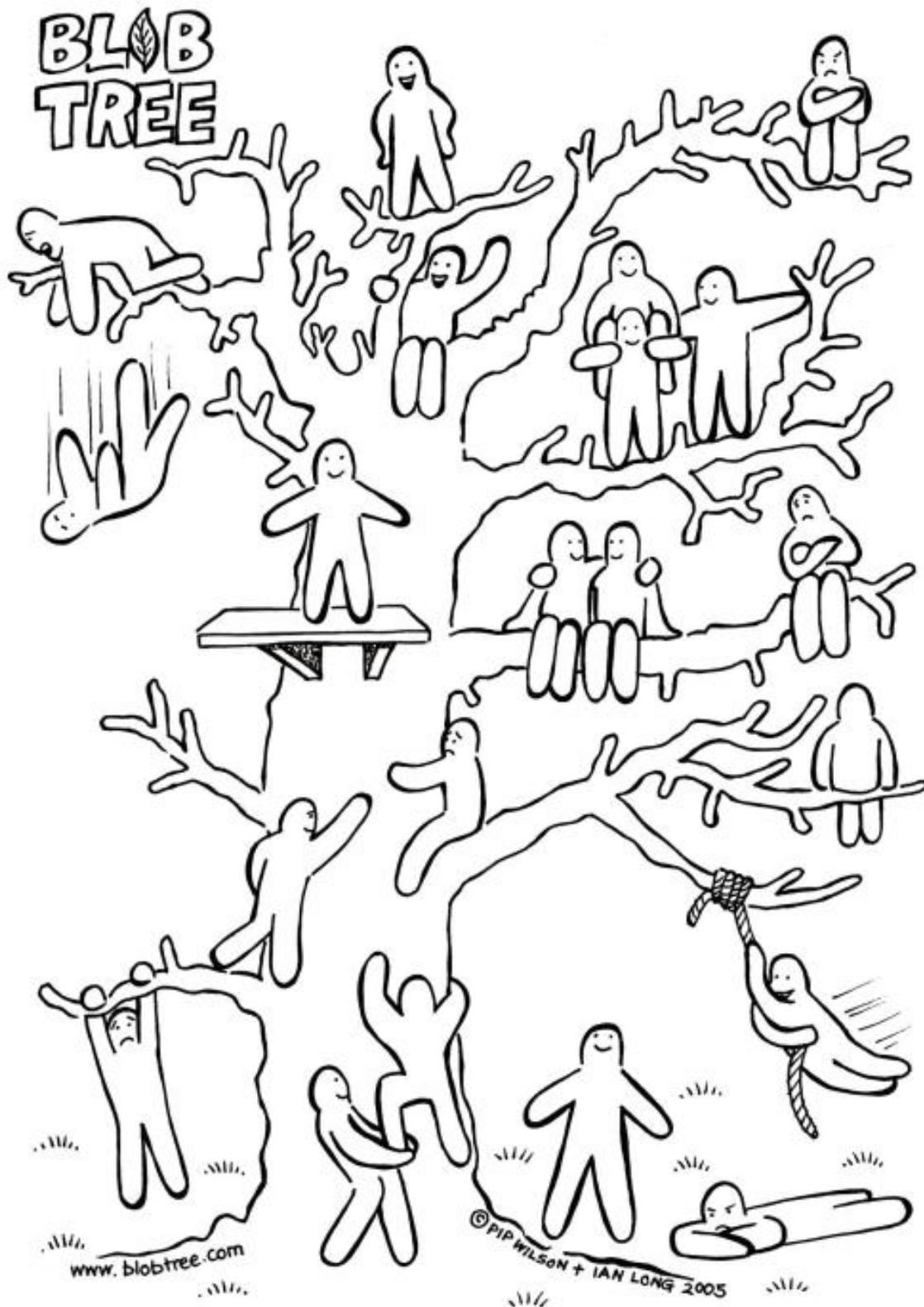
Out of my control

Here you can highlight things in your life that concern you, but you cannot control or have influence over. Examples may include how other people treat you, climate change, war, politics and many more.

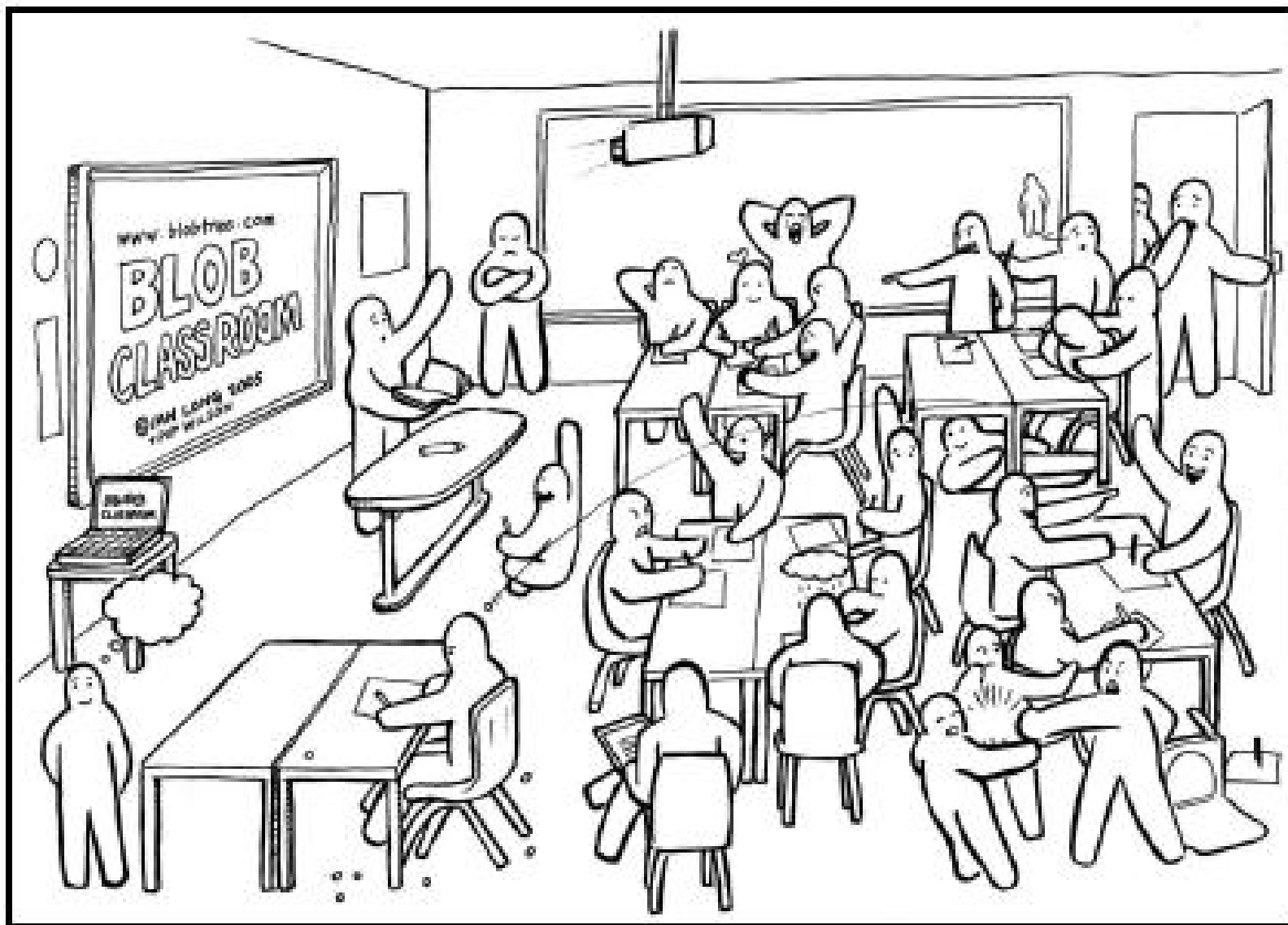
Reflect: Where do you spend most your time thinking about elements in your life? How does that make you feel? What could you do to change that?



10. Blob tree and classroom (Wilson and Long, 2018)



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Questions you could ask:

1. What blob would you use to describe how you feel on a bad day?
2. Which blob would you use to best describe your life at the moment?
3. Which blob would you like to be in the future?
4. Which blob:
 - ...do you feel least like?
 - ...is how you feel when you walk to school/walk home from school?
 - ...is how you feel at school?
 - ...is how you feel when you wake up in the morning?
 - ...is how you feel when you go to sleep at night?
 - ...is how your parent/caregiver would describe you?
 - ...is how a teacher would describe you?
 - ...is how you feel when you are with...?
 - ...would you like to sit with?
 - ...is how you felt when you were bullied?
 - ...is most like (name of friend/family member)?
 - ...is how you feel with adults?
 - ...is how you feel when you are confronted by violence?
 - ...is how you feel with animals?
 - ...is how you feel when someone tells you off?
 - ...is when you get angry?
 - ...is when you tell a lie?
 - ...is when someone points out your mistakes?
 - ...is how you feel under pressure?
 - ...is how you feel when you are under pressure to change?
 - ...is how you feel in a new group of people?
 - ...is how you feel about getting older?
 - ...is how you feel being with people who break the law?
 - ...do you feel like when people ask you to help them?
 - ...do you feel like today?
 - ...is the Blob you've never been?

11. Life graph

This is a life path. The start of the path represents the day you were born, and the end of the path represents today. I would like you to illustrate on the path when you started to find it difficult to attend school and any other significant events that made attending school easier or more difficult.



10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0



12. Solution focused work – The Miracle Question (deShazer and Berg, 1984)

Suppose you woke up one morning and by some miracle everything you ever wanted, everything good you could ever imagine for yourself, had actually happened - your life had turned out exactly the way you wanted it

- What will you notice around you that let you know that the miracle had happened?
- What will you see?
- What will you hear?
- How would you be different?
- How would you be acting?
- How would you feel differently?
- What would others notice about you that is different?
- What would you notice about the way people respond around you?
- How would this influence your key relationships?
- How would this influence your family and friends?
- How would this influence your performance at school or work?
- If things were going well at school/college or work what would be different?



13. Understanding my strengths

My strengths...

What people appreciate about me...

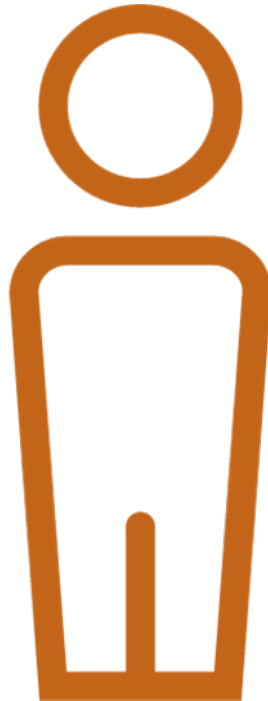
Things I am proud of...

My passions and interests...

Experiences I have enjoyed...

What I do for others...

What makes me smile...



A competency profile enables people to explore specific strengths, traits and values based on activities they enjoy doing. Start by identifying something you enjoy doing in your spare time or at school and think about the types of behaviour other people would see you doing within this activity. Next it is time to consider what this tells me about you and some of the things you value. Lastly, identify who currently knows about this skill you possess, and who else you might like to share this with.

What do you like to do?

1. What activities do you spend your time doing?
2. What subjects do you enjoy at school?
3. What skills do you like practicing?
4. How do you spend your free time? With friends? Hobbies?

What would I see you doing?

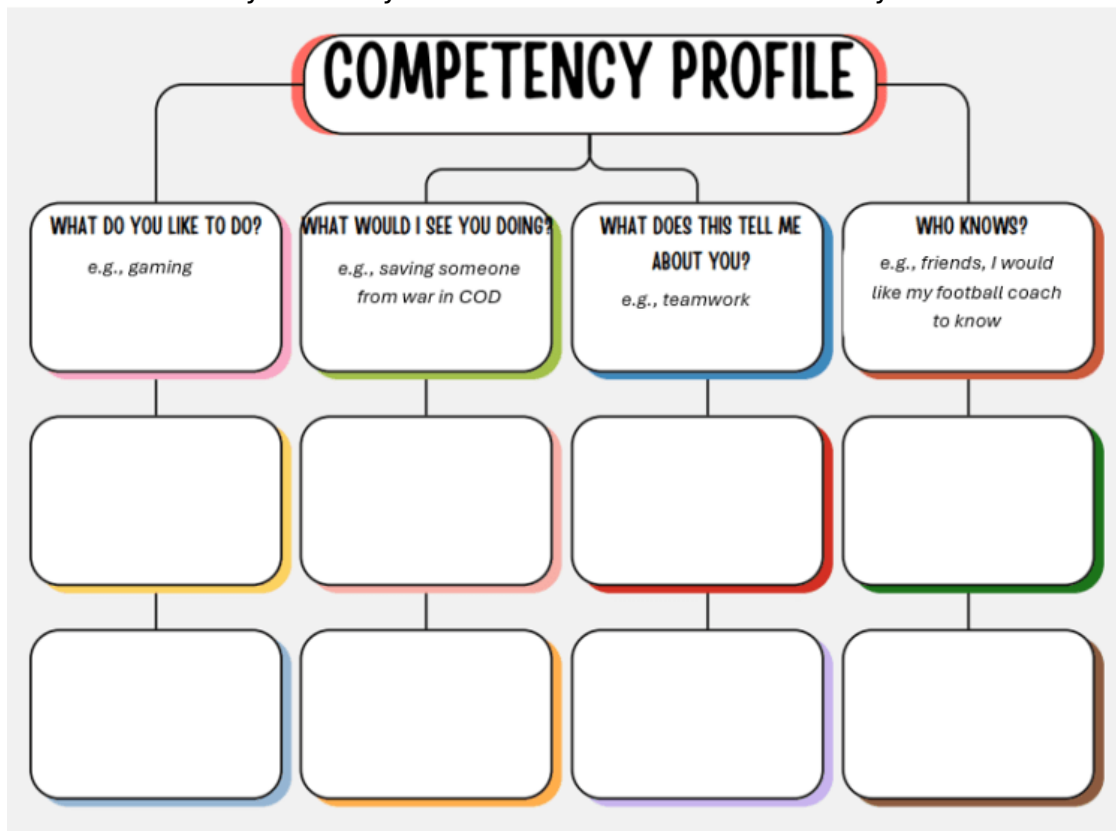
1. What behaviours would I see you doing whilst completing this activity?
2. How would your friends describe you whilst you are doing this activity?
3. What do you like doing in this activity?

What does this tell me about you?

1. What skills do you demonstrate?
2. What qualities or values does this highlight about you?

Who knows?

1. Who currently knows about these skills you hold?
2. Who watches you take part in this activity?
3. Is there anyone else you would like to tell about this skill you have?



The diagram is a flowchart titled "COMPETENCY PROFILE". It branches into four main categories, each with a box for a question and example, and two empty boxes for answers below it.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO? <i>e.g., gaming</i>	WHAT WOULD I SEE YOU DOING? <i>e.g., saving someone from war in COD</i>	WHAT DOES THIS TELL ME ABOUT YOU? <i>e.g., teamwork</i>	WHO KNOWS? <i>e.g., friends, I would like my football coach to know</i>

Other solution focused tools can be found here: [Solution-focused practice toolkit: helping professionals use the approach when working with children and young people](#)

14. My support plan to return to school

Date my views have been gathered:
At school these things are working well:
When I don't want to go to school/be at school, I notice these things about me:
When I don't want to go to school/be at school, others may notice these things about me:
My short-term targets to help me attend school are:
<i>Identify manageable and achievable steps towards successful school attendance, such as being in school for a half a day, attending my favourite lesson or meeting a member of staff</i>
At school my key adult(s) that support me is/are:
When I can speak to my key adult(s):
Where I can speak to my key adult(s):
The things that could be even better and adapted to support my attendance are:
<i>Identify any timetable changes to days and/or times and what should happen, where they should go etc. Identify any other changes to routines, (break, lunch times, changes between lessons etc.), classroom expectations (not expected to read aloud, changes to uniform.), or homework etc.</i>

Things that other people (staff and friends) can do to help me feel better when I'm at school:

--

Places in the school I can go to where I feel safe and supported:

--

Things that everyone at home can do to support me to attend school:

--

Things that other key adults outside of school (i.e. grandparent, family friend) can do to support me to attend school:

--

My views are important, and this plan is designed to support my return to school. The next step is to try out the plan and review it regularly so that it remains helpful.

Review date:

--

I give my consent to share this plan with other professionals who may want to help me.

--

My signature

Key adult's signature

Parent/carer signature

--

--

--

Other people who have access to the plan are:

--

