

Edition

1

Life Skills Boot camps

Participant's Workbook

(103)

LEVEL UP

Setting the ground for a multi-level approach on developing soft skills in Higher Education

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Level UP

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Table of Contents

Disclaimer..... i

AUTHORS i

CONTRIBUTORS i

About this workbook..... 1

 Group guidelines..... 2

THEMATIC AREA 1: EMOTION REGULATION 4

A few words about Emotion Regulation training..... 5

Emotional awareness 6

 Activity 1: My emotions..... 6

 Activity 2: The components of emotional experience 7

 Activity 3: RAIN. Emotional awareness and acceptance of emotions 8

 Homework..... 9

 What are your 3 key takeaways from this session? 10

Relaxation 11

 Activity 1: Blowing up like a balloon 11

 Activity 2: With All Our Might..... 12

 Homework..... 13

 What are your 3 key takeaways from this session? 14

Thinking Traps..... 15

 Activity 1: Don't fall into the thinking trap 15

 Activity 2: Dealing with thinking traps 15

 Activity 3: The pink elephant..... 16

 Activity 4: One Door Closes, Another Door Opens 16

 Homework..... 17

 What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?..... 18

Opposite Actions..... 19

 Activity 1: Opposite Action 19

 Homework..... 20

 What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?..... 21

THEMATIC AREA 2: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS 22

A few words about Interpersonal Skills training..... 23

Verbal and non-verbal communication..... 24

 Activity 2: What you don't say counts! 24

 Activity 3: I am listening! 24

 Homework..... 25

 What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?..... 26

Assertiveness 27

 Activity 2: Recognizing communication styles 27

 Activity 3: The I statement 28

Homework.....	29
Situation	29
What behaviors am I using?.....	29
(e.g., passive, aggressive).....	29
[Be specific]	29
Why am I reacting that way?.....	29
How do I feel about it?.....	29
What do I need/want to change from the situation?.....	29
Examples of Assertive behaviors I could use.	29
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	30
Teamwork.....	31
Activity 2: The best possible team.....	31
Homework.....	32
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	33
Influencing Others	34
Activity 2: Internship negotiation (Adapted from Wesner, & Smith, 2019) ..	34
Activity 3: The Win-Win Waltz	37
Homework.....	38
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	39
THEMATIC AREA 3: RESILIENCE AND FLEXIBILITY	40
A few words about Resilience and Flexibility Skills training.....	41
Signature Values and Strengths	42
Activity 1: Identifying values: A first glance	42
Activity 2: Identifying values: Digging a bit deeper	43
Activity 3: Living your strengths.....	45
Homework.....	46
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	47
Positive Emotions	48
Activity 1: Choose a photo (adapted by Kurtz, & Lyubomirsky, 2013 and 5 pictures: good things this vacation).....	48
Activity 2: WOW moments (adapted by Passmore, & Holder, 2017 and Rudd, Vohs, & Aaker, 2012)	50
Activity 3: All I want to say is... (retrieved from Greater Good in Action):	52
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	56
Self-Compassion.....	57
Activity 2: Compassionate worksheet.....	57
Activity 3: Soften perfectionism plan.....	58
Homework.....	60
What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?.....	61

About this workbook

The bootcamps program aims to help you develop a set of skills useful for enriching your academic success, employability and generally quality of life. This workbook is designed to accompany you as you participate in bootcamp trainings to improve your soft skills. It includes research-informed information designed to reinforce what is presented in the training sessions. Practical suggestions, user-friendly worksheets, and forms to be used in-session activities, as well as at home assignments, are included in the workbook.

This workbook has been prepared to provide information material to participants for participating in trainings in three soft skills areas: a) *Emotion Regulation*, b) *Interpersonal Skills* and c) *Adaptability*.

**The resources available on these training bootcamps do not replace therapy and are intended to be used only for educational purposes.

Group guidelines

Participation in group trainings can be beneficial for participants, as they are expected to have the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge, exchange opinions and give feedback, as well as to cultivate interpersonal skills. To achieve this, it is necessary to create a safe environment for all members, which will be based on some commonly accepted ground rules such as the following:

- **Be respectful:** Despite different perspectives or opinions try to respect each other's ideas. Try not to interrupt others while they talk, and practice good listening skills. Be honest with each other, while you show respect and do not humiliate, haze, or abuse others in any way. Deal with issues constructively.
- **Treat shared information confidentially:** Try to keep discussions that occur in group or personal experiences shared by others confidential.
- **Attendance and Promptness:** Weekly attendance is expected. Notify your instructor in advance (when possible) if you must miss a class or need assistance with an assignment. Come on time for every class and try to be prepared (do homework assignments).
- **Active participation and privacy:** Use class time wisely. Participating in group discussions or activities is beneficial not only for you (personal development) but for the group as well (contribute to group work). However, if you are asked questions or asked to participate in an activity which makes you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to refuse participation.

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THEMATIC AREA 1: EMOTION REGULATION

A few words about Emotion Regulation training

This training aims to help participants enhance their ability to effectively manage and respond to emotional experiences. The training includes modules for learning to identify, label and describe emotions, using relaxation techniques to modulate emotion experience, reducing cognitive vulnerability linked to negative emotions, and acting in an opposite manner to motivational tendency associated with negative emotions.



Emotional awareness

Activity 1: My emotions

Scenarios	Name Emotion	Reason for experiencing emotion	Manifestation of emotion	Behavior as a response to emotion
Scenario 1				
Scenario 2				
Scenario 3				
Scenario 4				

Activity 2: The components of emotional experience

You come home from work and see that you had left the garage door open all day.

<i>Situation/Trigger</i>	<i>Thoughts</i>	<i>Name Emotion</i>	<i>Manifestation of emotion</i>	<i>Response</i>

Activity 3: RAIN. Emotional awareness and acceptance of emotions

RAIN principles (coined by mindfulness teacher Michele McDonald):

Recognize what is happening: Name it

Allow the experience to be there, just as it is. Don't try to change it or avoid it.

Investigate your experience without judging it: what sensations, what thoughts, what urges do you have?

Not-identify with the experience.

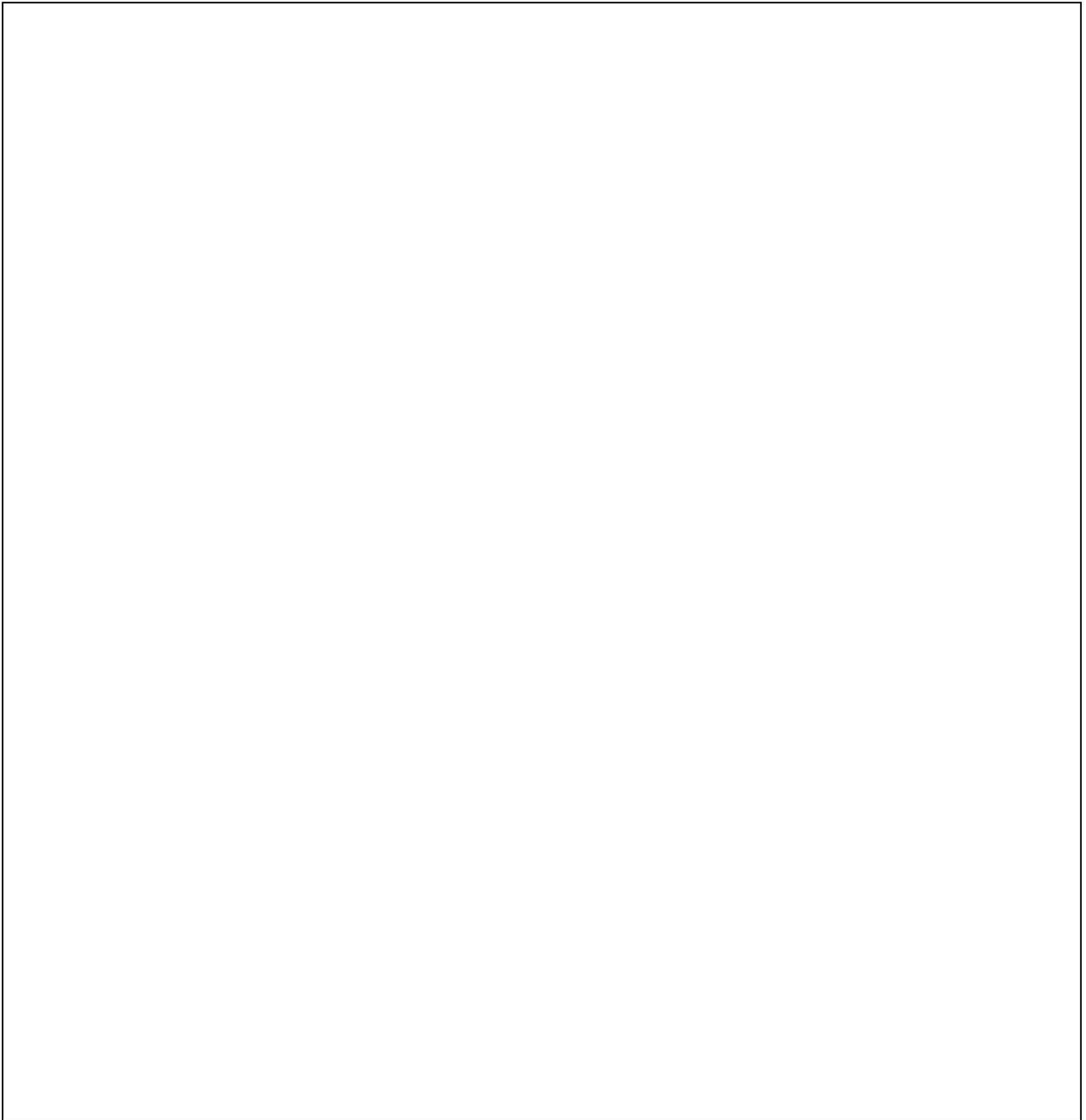
Homework

Monitor your emotional states using at 3 different situations during the week (choose daily, non-significant events). Identify the situation, label the emotion, the thoughts you had in your mind, your physical responses, and behaviors. Use the RAIN principles to facilitate moment-to-moment non-judgmental awareness.

Use the homework worksheet below to take notes.

<i>Situation/Trigger</i>	<i>Thoughts</i>	<i>Name Emotion</i>	<i>Manifestation of emotion</i>	<i>Response</i>

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their three key takeaways from the session.

Relaxation

Activity 1: Blowing up like a balloon

Handout: [Belly Breathing from Alberta Health Services](#)



Video: [Diaphragmatic Breathing Demonstration from Michigan Medicine](#)

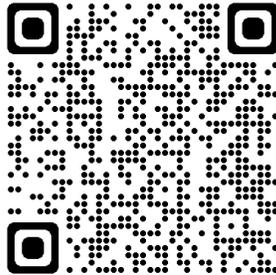


Video: [Breathe2Relax demo](#)

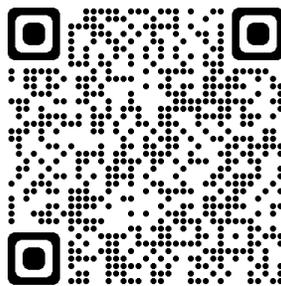


Activity 2: With All Our Might

Handout: [HOW TO DO PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION from Anxiety Canada](#)



Video: [Reduce Stress through Progressive Muscle Relaxation from Johns Hopkins Rheumatology](#)



Homework

For this week we recommend you spend 20’ each day to practice your relaxation exercises at least twice a day. Keep a record of your practice sessions so you can chart your progress and difficulties occurred (use the worksheet below).

Day and Time	Before exercise How tense do you feel on a scale from 0 – 10? Heart Rate (if you wear a smartwatch)	After exercise How tense do you feel on a scale from 0 – 10? Heart Rate (if you wear a smartwatch)	Challenges Occurred

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



Thinking Traps

Activity 1: Don't fall into the thinking trap

Handout: [TESTING YOUR THOUGHTS: SIDE ONE WORKSHEET](#)

adapted from J. Beck (2020). Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond.



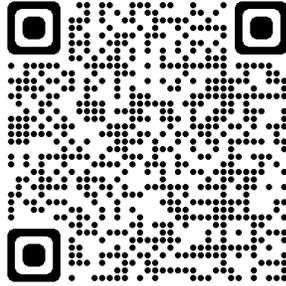
Activity 2: Dealing with thinking traps

Handout: [Escape the thought tornado](#) from University of Maine.



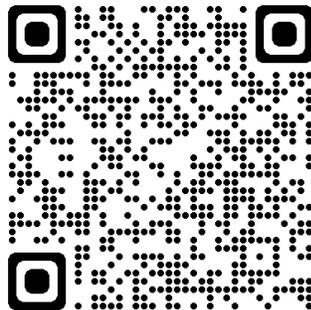
Activity 3: The pink elephant

Handout: [Defusing Techniques](#) (Vivyan 2009, Adapted from Ciarrochi & Bailey, 2008, from getselfhelp.co.uk)



Activity 4: One Door Closes, Another Door Opens

Handout: [One Door Closes, Another Door Opens worksheet](#) (Rashid, 2008)

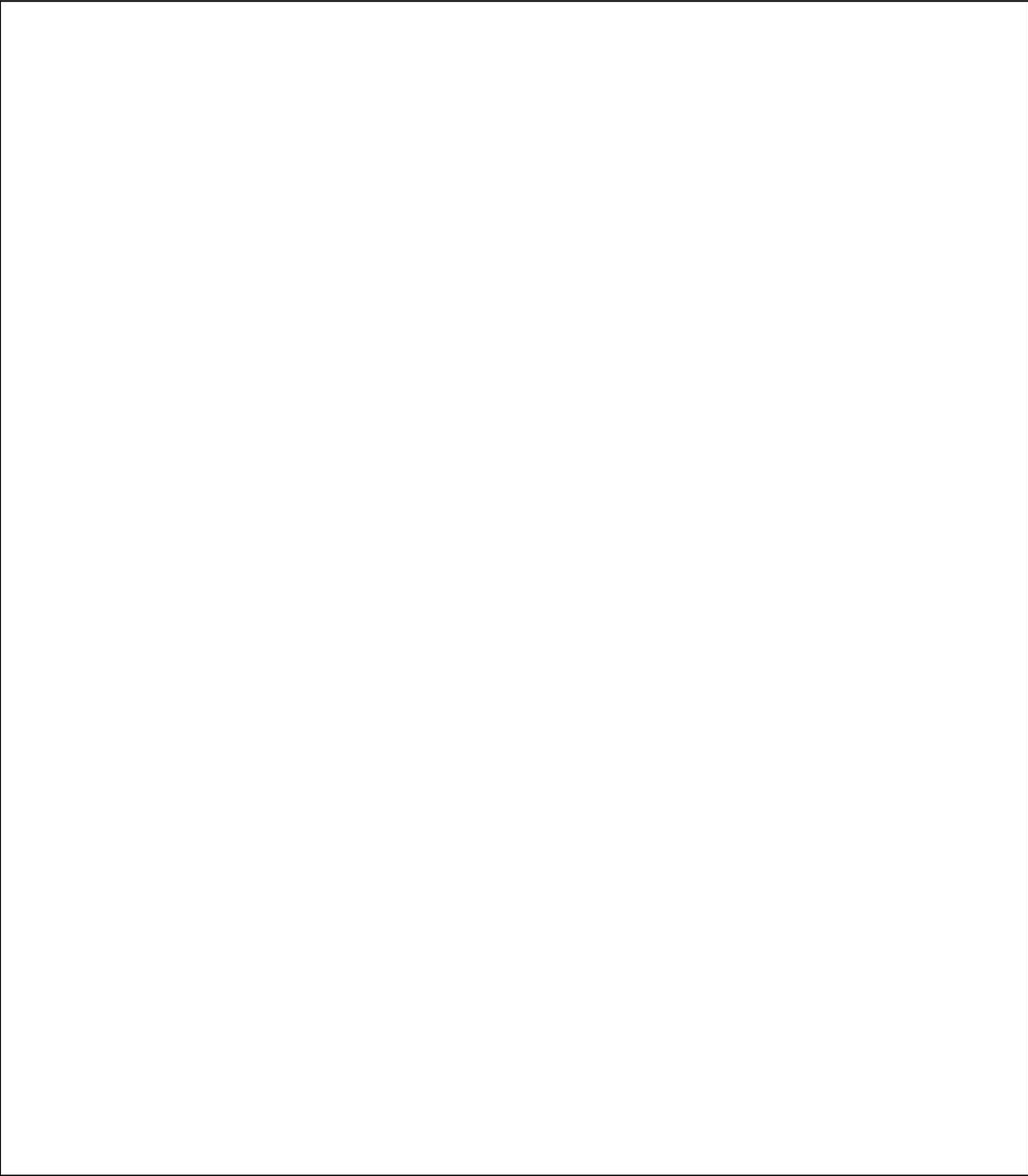


Homework

For this week, keep a record of incidences spotting dysfunctional thinking patterns or worrisome thoughts and techniques you used to deal with them so you can chart your progress and difficulties occurred.

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Emotion</i>	<i>Thinking traps</i>	<i>Techniques used to cope</i>	<i>Rate emotion now (1: low to 10: high)</i>

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



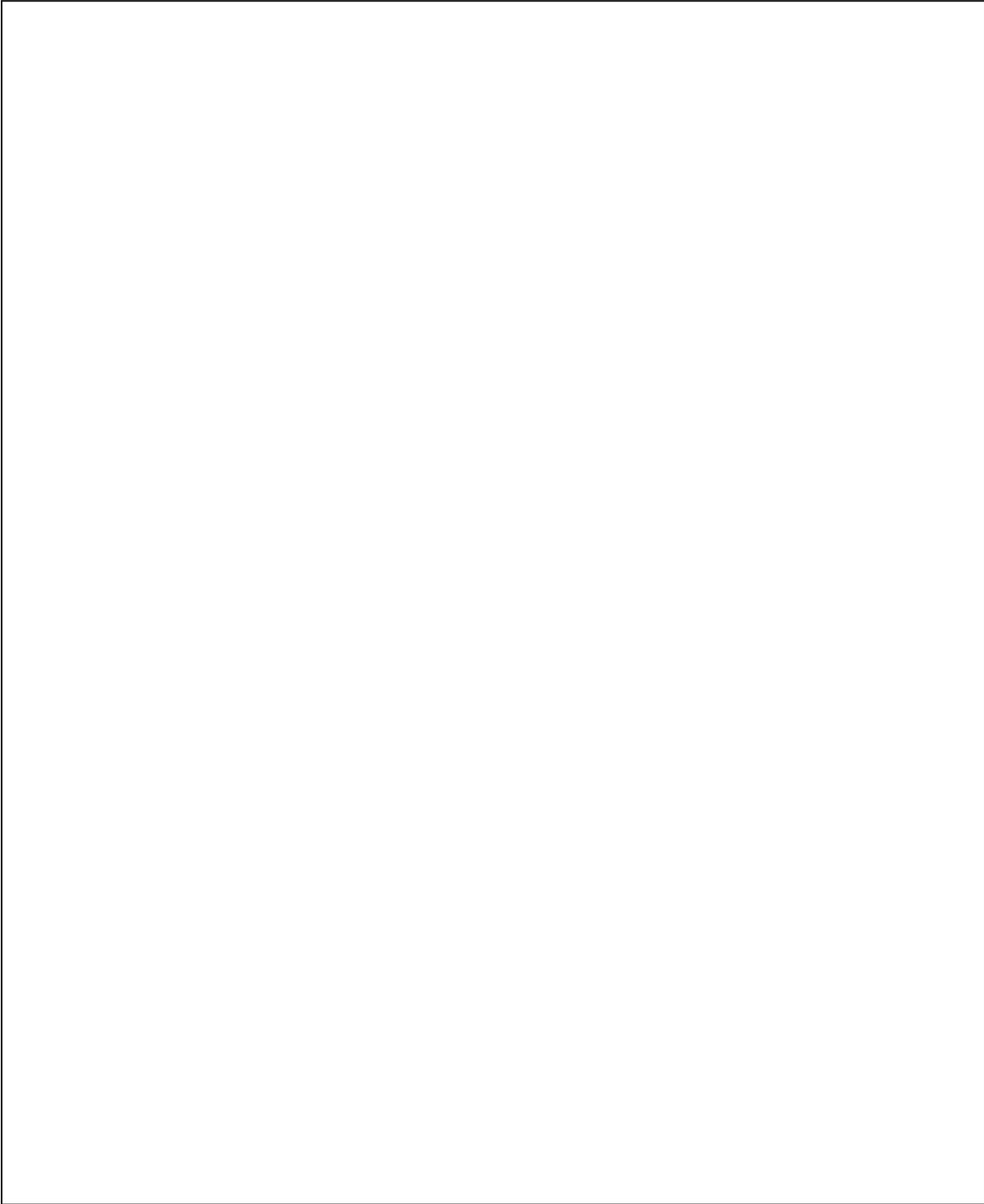
Opposite Actions

Activity 1: Opposite Action

Fill the last column, with opposite actions:

Emotion	Emotional Urge	Opposite Action
Feel extremely angry at a friend for cancelling dinner plans.	Yelling at them	
Feeling extremely anxious to make a public presentation	Avoid making the presentation/ try to find excuses	
Feeling extremely sad after breaking up with your partner	Social withdrawal/ alcohol Use	

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



THEMATIC AREA 2: INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

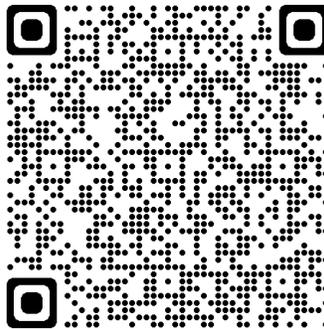
A few words about Interpersonal Skills training

Social skills are essential for building and maintaining good relationships, collaborating with colleagues, assessing situations well. Undoubtedly, you already master a lot of important social skills. The goal of the social skills bootcamp is to train more advanced interpersonal skills, such as blending non-verbal with verbal communication, assertiveness skills, teamwork, and negotiation/conflict management skills.

Verbal and non-verbal communication

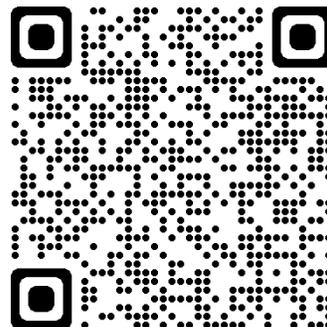
Activity 2: What you don't say counts!

[Types of nonverbal cues](#) (Communication for Business Professionals by eCampusOntario)



Activity 3: I am listening!

[Key elements of active listening](#) (from Boston University Office of the Ombuds)



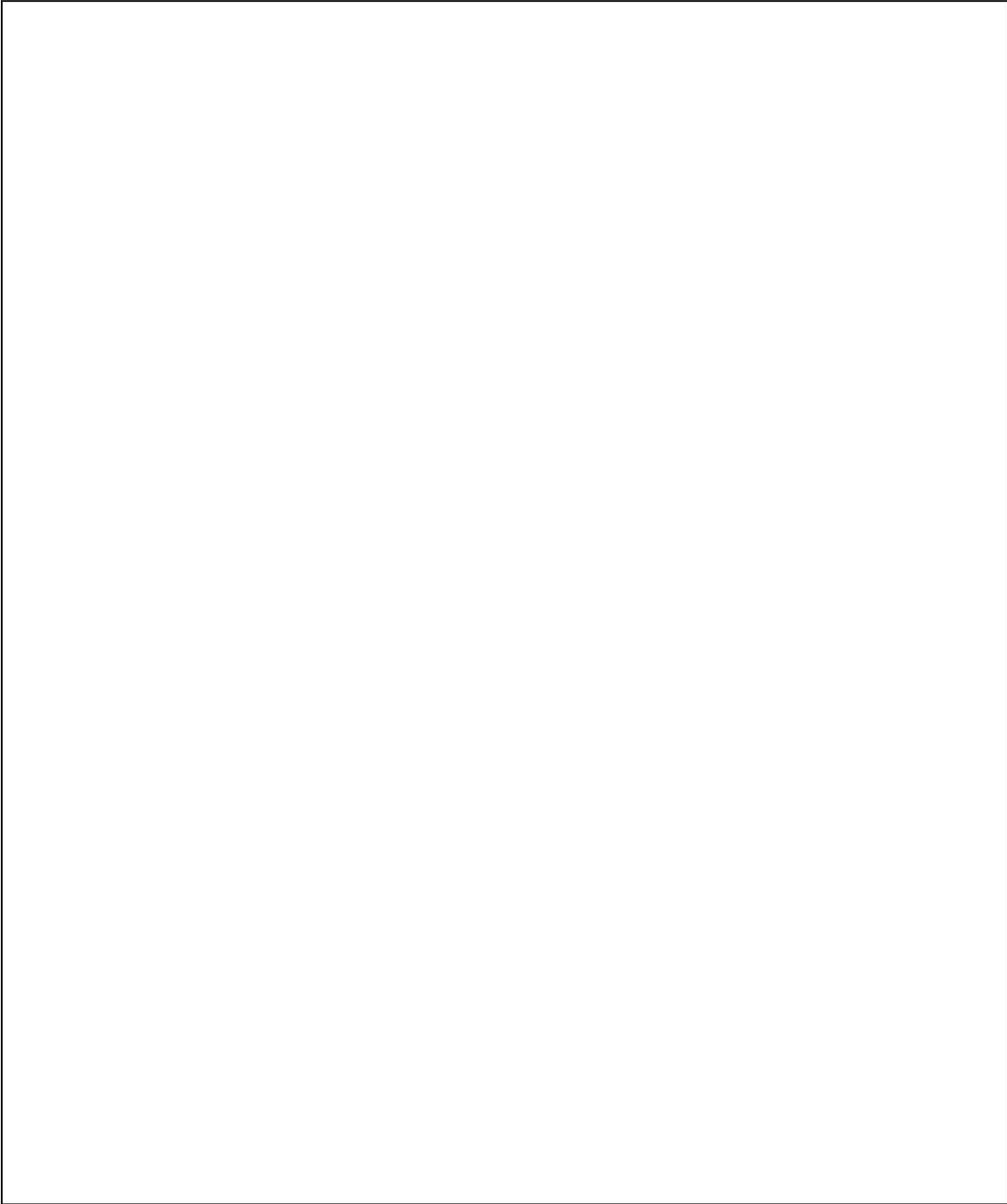
Homework

For this week, we want you to practice non-verbal cues. In the next week, look for opportunities to incorporate non-verbal cues during your daily interactions. It can be with your friends, classmates, family, co-workers, strangers, etc. Observe what happens both internally (thoughts, emotions), and externally (degree of social engagement/ interaction)

Describe what happened after you incorporated non-verbal cues. Use the worksheet below, so you can chart your progress and difficulties occurred.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Describe situation</i>	<i>Which non-verbal cues did you use?</i>	<i>What happened internally?</i>	<i>What happened externally?</i>	<i>What happened next?</i>

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



Assertiveness

Activity 2: Recognizing communication styles

Rate your communication style in different situations using the following scale



Disagreeing *Giving your opinion* *Stating your rights and needs...* *Receiving feedback...*

<i>At home</i>				
<i>At work</i>				
<i>At school</i>				
<i>With friends</i>				
<i>With strangers</i>				

Handout: [The Four Basic Styles of Communication](#) (the resource is provided by the UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Center).



Activity 3: The I statement

1. “When you _____”
- 2 “I feel or I think _____”
3. “Because _____”
4. “I would prefer that _____”

Rephrase the following [statements](#) (resource provided by Boston University) using the “I” statement” steps:

“I hate when you yell at the kids.”

“It’s rude of you to be late all the time. You screw up everyone’s schedule.”

“The salaries in this department are totally inequitable and discriminatory.”

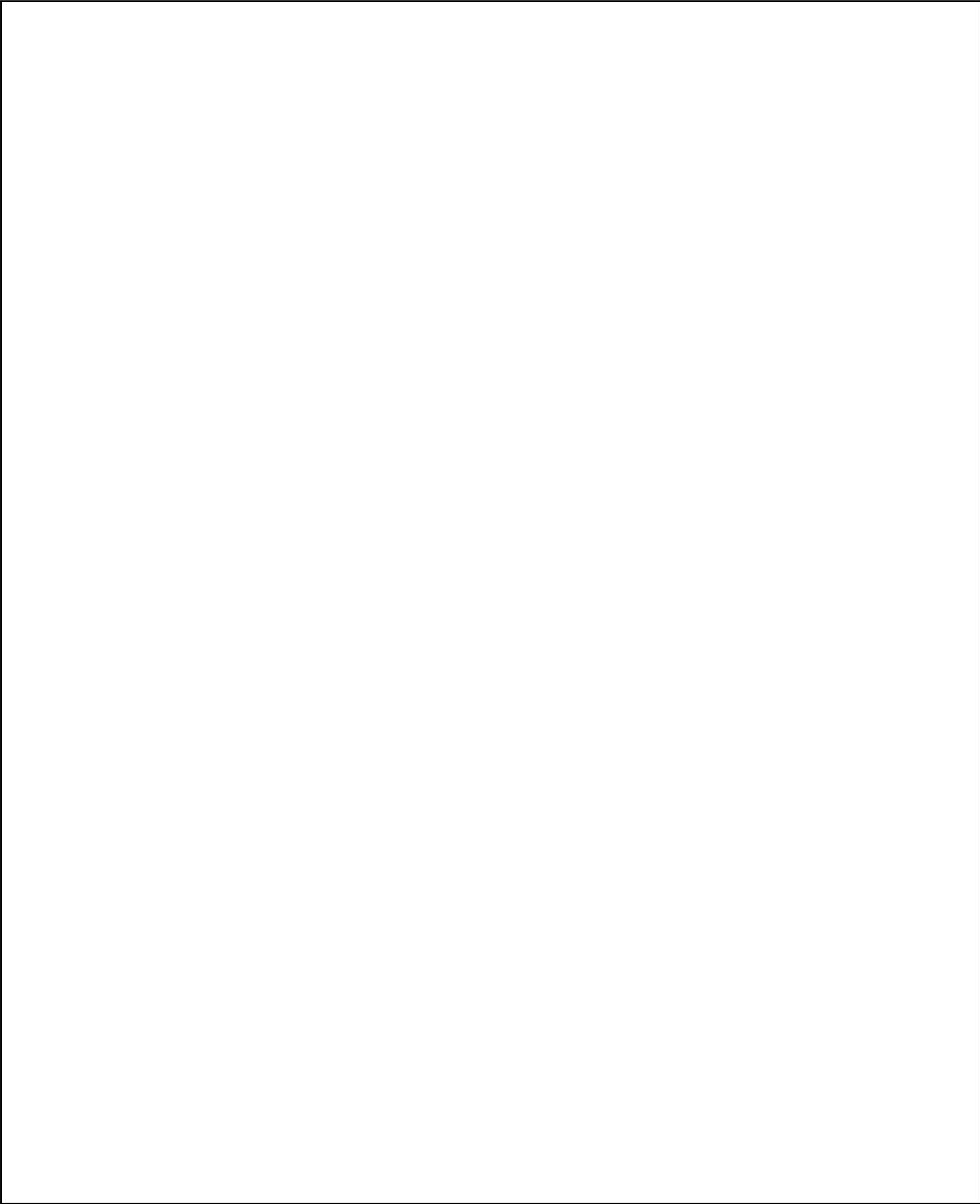
“You never listen to anyone. In fact, you are not listening to me now and you don’t actually care.”

Homework

For this week, keep a record of incidences that you would like to be more assertive. Use the worksheet below:

Situation	What behaviors am I using? (e.g, passive, aggressive) [Be specific]	Why am I reacting that way?	How do I feel about it?	What do I need/want to change from the situation?	Examples of Assertive behaviors I could use.

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



Teamwork

Activity 2: The best possible team

Guidelines for Creating Effective Groups ([Johnson & Johnson, 2000](#)):

- Establish clear, operational, relevant group goals that create positive interdependence and commitment
- Establish effective two-way communication
- Ensure that leadership and participation are distributed among all members
- Ensure use of power is distributed among members
- Match method of decision making with availability of time & resources, size & seriousness of decision and amount of commitment needed
- Encourage structured controversies to allow views & disagreements...to create quality and creative decisions.
- Ensure members face their conflicts of interest...and resolve them constructively.

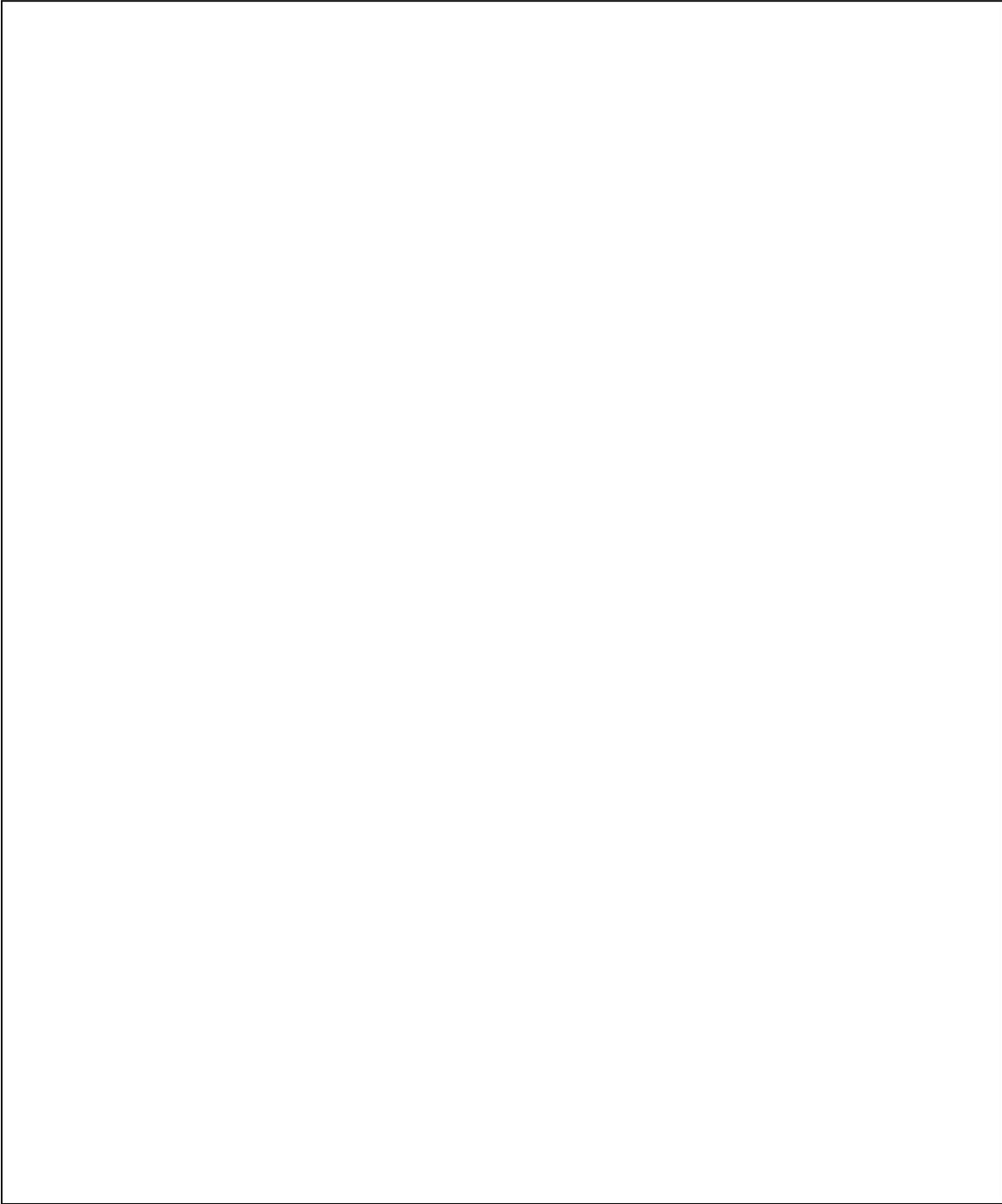
Homework

For this week, reflect on your role as a team player!

- Which skills do you have?
- What would you like to improve?
- How can you improve yourself?



What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



Influencing Others

Activity 2: Internship negotiation (Adapted from [Wesner, & Smith, 2019](#))

STUDENT ROLE:

You were just accepted to your (unpaid) dream internship. You are about to have an interview with your supervisor where you will negotiate your internship benefits and tasks. You really like this internship but you are still considering accepting the other paid internship that is not really interesting for you. Not to mention that the proposed schedule for this dream internship overlaps with other activities you have...

Goal: Arrive at a mutual agreement addressing the following: (unanticipated) benefits, tasks, and schedule.

PRE-NEGOTIATION PLAN

Summary of the situation:

1. Who are the participants of the negotiation?
2. What is the reason for the situation?

Issues

1. What are the issues for you in this situation?
2. What might the issues be for the other party?

Strategy

1. What are your interests and strengths?
2. What is the best that you can get out of this negotiation?
3. What is the least you want to get out of this negotiation?
4. What would be the other's interests?

Solutions

1. Think of as many alternatives (be creative) to reach a 'win-win' situation. Think about the benefits you could get (e.g., learning opportunities, schedule, tasks, etc.).
2. What can you offer, what would you like them to offer you with this internship?

SUPERVISOR ROLE:

You are really interested in getting this student on board. You heard he/she was offered a paid internship; however, you cannot offer any monetary benefits. Nevertheless, he/she has the skills you need for the project and is a great asset to the team.

Goal: Arrive at a mutual agreement addressing the following: (unanticipated) benefits, tasks, and schedule.

PRE-NEGOTIATION PLAN

Summary of the situation:

1. Who are the participants of the negotiation?
2. What is the reason for the situation?

Issues

1. What are the issues for you in this situation?
2. What might the issues be for the other party?

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1. What are your interests and strengths?
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1. Think of as many alternatives (be creative) to reach a 'win-win' situation. Think about the benefits you could get (e.g., learning opportunities, schedule, tasks, etc.).
2. What can you offer, what would you like them to offer you with this internship?

Activity 3: The Win-Win Waltz

Handout: [Solve Tough Dilemmas With the Win-Win Waltz.](#)



What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



THEMATIC AREA 3: RESILIENCE AND FLEXIBILITY

A few words about Resilience and Flexibility Skills training

Life is accompanied by a lot of stress, pressure, and expectations. You are expected to perform well as a student, make something of life, exercise enough, eat healthy, maintain your social contacts, feel good about yourself... These are a lot of balls to keep in the air, and no doubt you will soon or drop a ball. Resilience is the ability to "bounce back" after a setback. The goal of the 'resilience' bootcamp is to provide you with tools and techniques to be more resilient in life, specifically, on how to: live a valued life, to put values in action (strengths), to increase the occurrence of experiencing positive emotions, and to strengthen self-compassion and foster a sense of self-acceptance.

Signature Values and Strengths

Activity 1: Identifying values: A first glance

“Tomorrow, time will stand still for one day...”

What do you picture yourself doing?

- What will you do?
- Where will you go?
- Who will you spend it with?
- How will you feel?

Activity 2: Identifying values: Digging a bit deeper

Step 1: Identify and write down 3-6 people who are important role models or valued connections for you.

They can be persons that are part of your daily life (e.g. your mother), or persons that are not part of your daily life (e.g. Martin Luther King, Greta Thunberg).

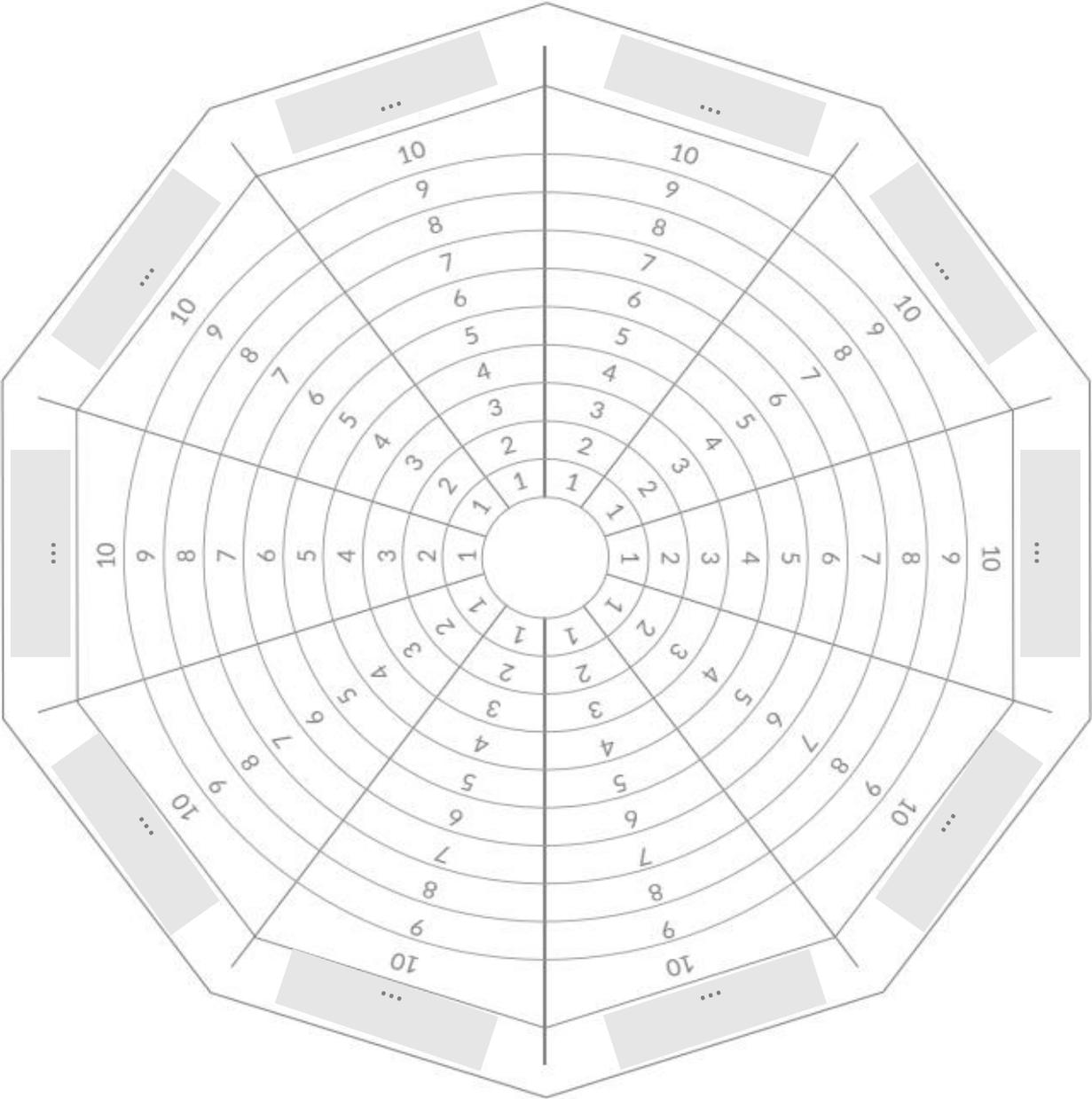
Step 2: Think of the values they embody.

What do you admire in them? What do they represent that you value?

Here's a list of values ([Harris, 2010](#)) to help on identifying them.

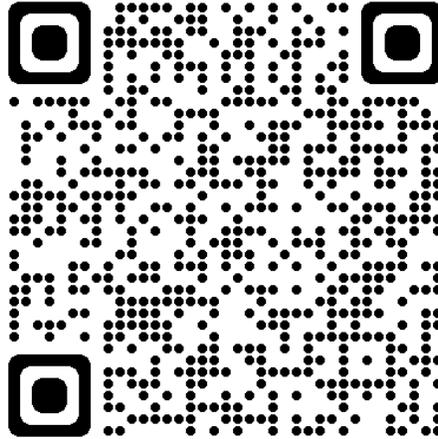


Use the following Bull's Eye grid (adapted from [Lundgren, et al. 2012](#)), to define on which extent (on a scale from 1-10) the values you defined in the previous two exercises, are currently represented in your life?



Activity 3: Living your strengths

Take a few minutes to fill the [VIA survey](#) to identify their natural/signature strengths.



Homework

Think about a future adventure you want to take on.

Something you enjoyed doing in the past, but no longer do at this time

Something you always wanted to learn if you had the opportunity

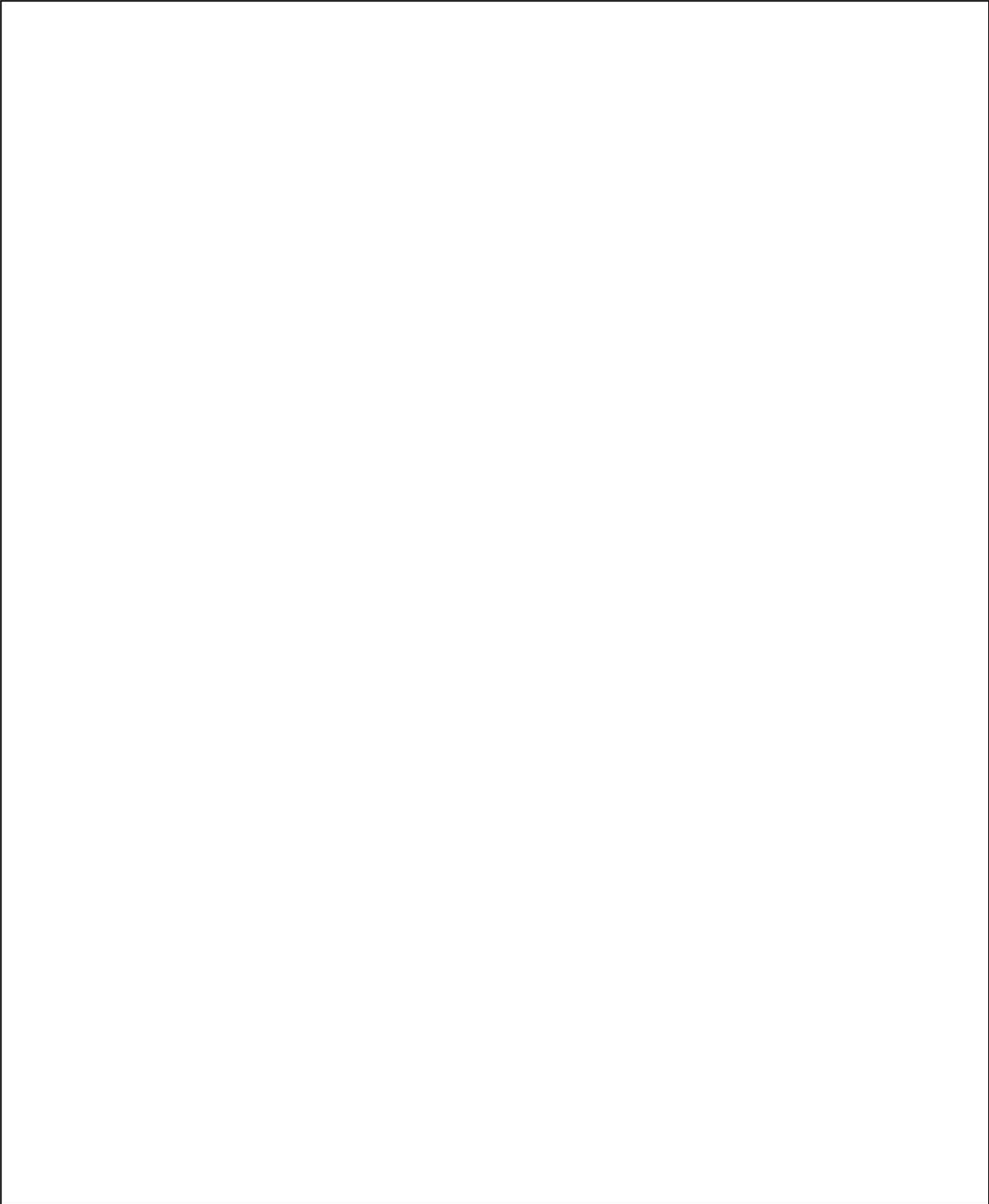
A current hobby or interest that you would like to take further

How does this goal relate to your values?

How will your signature strengths help you to achieve this goal?



What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?

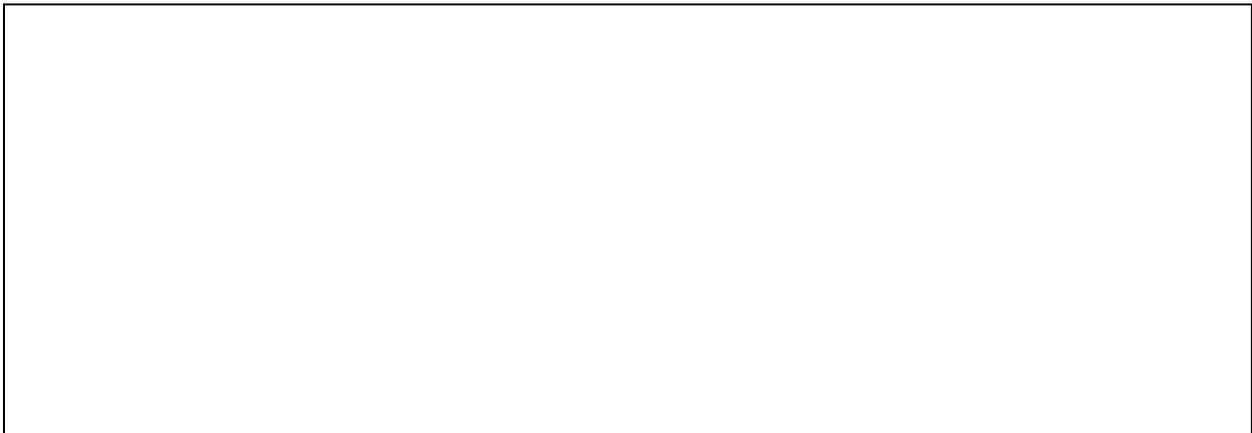


Positive Emotions

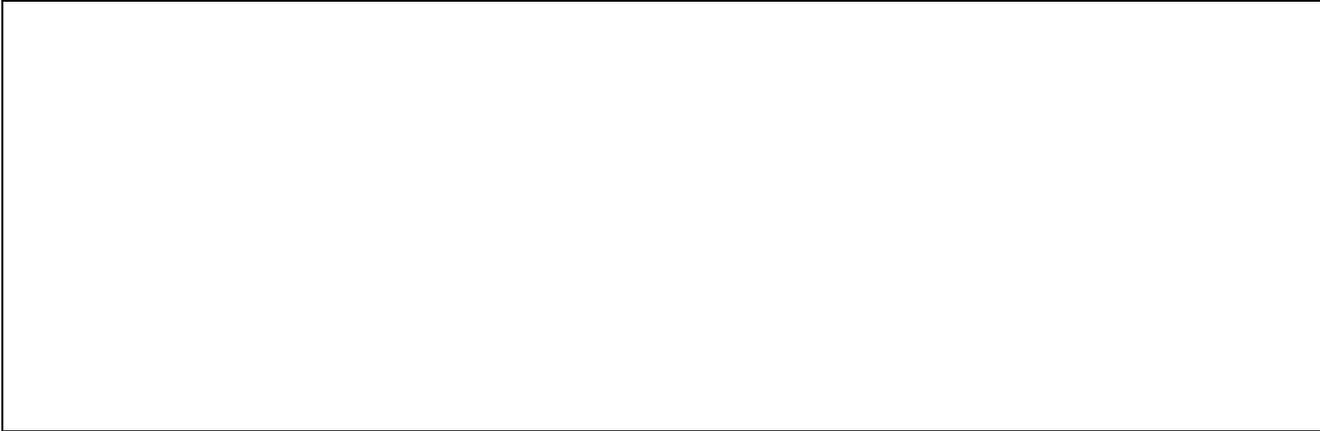
Activity 1: Choose a photo (adapted from [Kurtz, & Lyubomirsky, 2013](#) and [5 pictures: good things this vacation](#)).

Have a look to your phone photo library. **Choose a photo** representing a **pleasant experience** of your life (try to choose a moment that it is not highly personal).

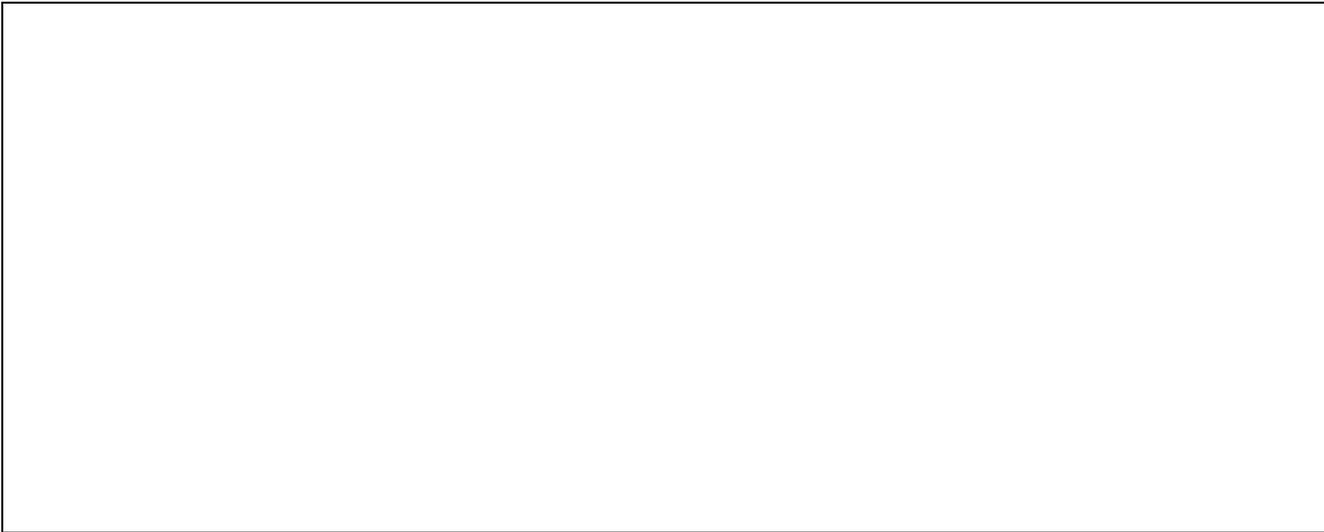
1. What makes that moment, special for you?



2. What kind of positive feelings does it bring back to your memory?



3. Why is this photo meaningful for you?



Activity 2: WOW moments (adapted from [Passmore, & Holder, 2017](#) and [Rudd, Vohs, & Aaker, 2012](#))

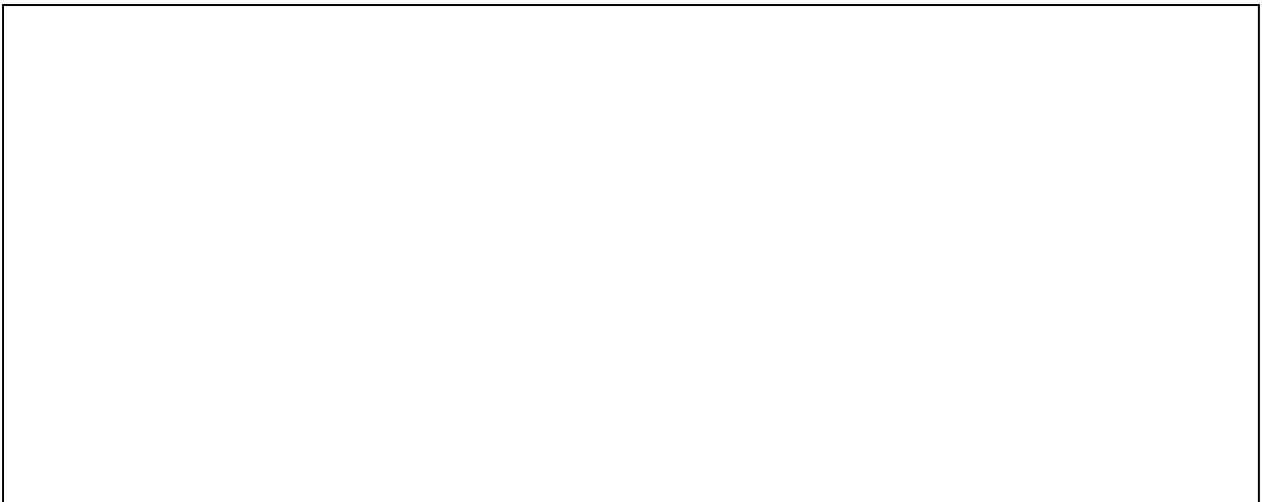
1. Think back to a time when you felt a sense of awe regarding something you saw or experienced when you experienced goosebumps while being in the presence of something vast that transcends your understanding of the world. A moment that made you *aware of the vastness of the world*. A moment that made you feel smaller as a being of this world. Any experience that made you feel like, “*Wow! The world is big and I feel fear and/or wonder as I recognize that!*”.
2. For this exercise, try to think of the most recent experience you’ve had that involved the *feeling of awe*. Allow yourself to relive this moment of awe by closing your eyes for a few minutes and remembering as much about the experience as you can.
3. Now, write about your experience! Be sure to describe in detail:

➤ **What was the source of this experience?**

- **What thoughts or (positive) emotions you experienced? How did you experience in the body and the mind?**



- **In which the way this awe experience has changed your perspective of the world (if applicable).**



Activity 3: All I want to say is... (retrieved from [Greater Good in Action](#)):

Call to mind someone who did something for you for which you are extremely grateful but to whom you never expressed your deep gratitude. This could be a relative, friend, teacher, or colleague.

Try to pick someone who is still alive and could meet you face-to-face in the next week. It may be most helpful to select a person or act that you haven't thought about for a while—something that isn't always on your mind.

Now, write a letter to one of these people, guided by the following steps.

Write as though you are addressing this person directly (“Dear _____”).

Don't worry about grammar or spelling.

Describe in specific terms what this person did, why you are grateful to this person, and how this person's behavior affected your life. Try to be as concrete as possible.

Describe what you are doing in your life now and how you often remember their efforts.

Try to keep your letter to roughly one page (around 300 words).

1. **Homework** (adapted from positivepsychology.com and [the resilience project](#))

Keep a gratitude diary: to write down at least 3 things that they are grateful for each day, things that have gone well. You can also write funny or pleasant moments (such as engaging in a hobby, watching a movie, spending time with loved ones or friends, eating meals, having conversations, sleeping, or noticing moments that made you smile).

Try to identify different things each day:

- people in their life,
- pets and the natural environment,
- things you have seen or heard,
- events you attended,
- situations you have enjoyed,
- things you did well,
- opportunities you have had,
- Rights and freedoms you have.

Diary

Day	Grateful for
	1. 2. 3.

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?



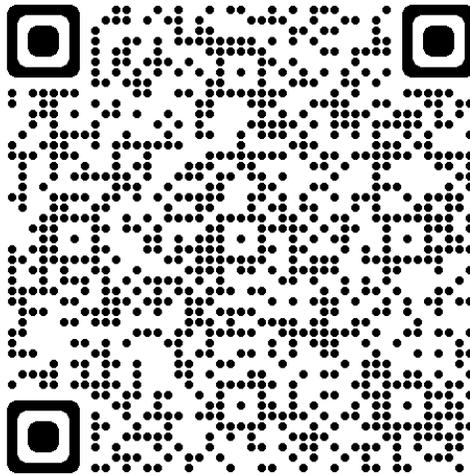
Self-Compassion

Activity 2: Compassionate worksheet

Describe a recent situation that caused you to criticize yourself (pick a daily life event)	Voice of self-criticism	The emotion of being criticized or judged	The perspective of a supportive friend

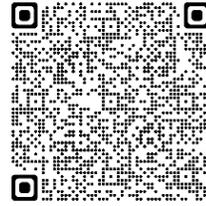
Activity 3: Soften perfectionism plan

1. To some degree, we all engage in perfectionism or certain areas of our life.
2. Take a moment to reflect on the standards you set for yourself. In the [table](#) (from Dr. Jeremy Sutton) below, list one standard you set for yourself in each of the areas of your life.



3. Then ask yourself, is this standard flexible and achievable? Invite participants to take some time to reflect on the standards they set for themselves and use the to write down activities of their daily life that trigger their perfectionism.

Think about a more realistic standard and set a [SMART goal](#) (resource from UC SanDiego).



General goal area:	
<p>Adjusting the standards, I set for myself in this area of my life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current unrealistic high standard 2. A more realistic standard 	
Perfectionism behavior I will be working on	
Specific goal towards reducing this perfectionism behavior	
Time frame	
A compassionate thought	

What are your 3 key takeaways from this session?

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