

Digitalized Emotional Questions

Best Practice guide

Collected by

DEQ consortium

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Partners

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Disclaimer

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

About the project

DEQ is an educational project under the Erasmus+ Youth program dedicated to nurturing the emotional well-being of young people by empowering their widely understood communication skills. It provides direct support for youth, promotes conflict resolution, and strengthens both self-support and mutual assistance. A key focus of DEQ is to combat hate speech, prevent conflicts, and reduce cyberbullying, while fostering effective communication, dialogue, and mediation skills. We actively promote mediation and believe that everyone can become a mediator in their own environment once they acquire diverse new competencies. Both theory (knowledge) and practice (exercises) are produced as free of charge materials available for everybody.

Through innovative dialogue methods, DEQ engages young individuals, particularly those with special needs, in meaningful discussions. The project empowers youth to embrace active citizenship in the aftermath of the pandemic and amid times of crisis and war. Youth workers are also expanding digital efforts to ensure inclusive education, guided by insights from surveys on young people's needs. As part of these efforts, the DEQ team is developing a MOOC educational portal based on the dialogue approach. Participants are equipped with new skills that enhance their critical thinking, emotional resilience, and their ability to act as mediators in everyday life.

The project is supported by the Department of International Management at Comenius University in Bratislava, reinforcing its academic foundation.
The DEQ project is a collaborative effort, bringing together leading organisations committed to fostering dialogue and education: FutuReg (Slovakia), Mentál-Mankó (Hungary), Fundacja Wspierania Dialogu „Rozmawiajmy" (Poland) and Artevio (Czech Republic).

Our project highlights the importance of mediation, showing that with the right skills, every individual can help foster peace in their surroundings.

NOTE:

The authors of the Ebook drew on mainly their own knowledge and experience, referred to sources where possible, and used ChatGPT to unify the content.

DISCLAIMER:

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About Authors



Livia Bott Domonkos

Livia is university Assistant Professor at Faculty of Management Comenius University in Bratislava. Before academic practice she worked in international organizations in the fields of healthcare and the environment. She gained experience in the IT sector in corporations, but has worked mostly in the non-profit sector, where she continues to collaborate with educational institutions and the public sector. She has traveled and studied abroad, where she participated in international projects that brought know-how and raised questions at the local level.She focuses on international management, research methodology, sociology, and project and grant management.

linkedin.com/in/liviadomonkos

About Authors



Iwona Kozieja-Grabowska

Dialogue facilitator and practitioner, peace promoter, mediator, and soft-skills educator. She is based in Warsaw, where she works with the "Rozmawiajmy" Foundation, serving as Vice President too. Her professional path includes many years in international corporations (in marketing and communication), as well as extensive experience in facilitating dialogue, conducting research, and creating educational resources. She is passionate about strengthening dialogue and healthy communication, emotional literacy, and constructive conflict resolution engagement in the communities. She acts both locally and internationally.

www.rozmawiajmy.org

About Authors



Veronika Škubalová

Veronika is an educational creator working at the intersection of communication skills and digital learning. She designs interactive, gamified learning experiences that help young people build practical soft skills. Her approach is hands-on and learner-tested: she turns complex topics into simple tools students can use in school, online, and everyday life. She is based in Brno and studied vocational teaching and educational counseling at Mendel University.

linkedin.com/in/veronikaskubalova

About Authors



Beata Kovácsne Tesleér

Beáta Kovácsné Tesléry is a psychologist, music and art therapist, infant–parent relationship specialist, and mindfulness teacher. Her work focuses on supporting young people's mental health through emotional regulation, mediation, communication, and inclusive dialogue in educational and youth work settings. She has extensive experience in Erasmus+ projects, digital detox programmes, and training youth and professionals in conflict-sensitive, culturally aware communication.

About Authors



Viktória Valachová

Viktória holds a Master's degree in International Economic and Political Relations from the University of Economics in Bratislava. She currently works as a Financial Analyst and is actively involved in the non-profit organization Futureg, where she has led project DEQ as a Project Manager. As part of her work, she was responsible not only for project coordination and management but also for the graphic design and visual development of this e-book.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/viktoria-valachova/

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Introduction

Many studies and observations highlight the growing crisis in mental health and the search for purpose among young people. Addiction to mobile phones and social media has become a serious societal issue, affecting relationships, productivity, and overall well-being. The constant exposure to curated online realities can lead to anxiety, depression, and a sense of inadequacy.

At the same time, every person has the potential to become a mediator. With knowledge, skills, and experience, individuals can learn to navigate conflicts, foster understanding, and build bridges between people. This capacity is not reserved for professionals alone-it is a human ability that, once cultivated, enriches life, strengthens well-being, and contributes to the creation of a culture of dialogue.

In this eBook, we invite educators working with young people to embark on a journey through key themes of good communication. From dialogue and conflict resolution to emotions, stereotypes, and cultural differences, and all the way to resilience and mediation, each chapter offers a thoughtful exploration of these essential topics. We aim to empower educators to guide young people not only in developing communication skills but also in discovering their own role as mediators in everyday life. By doing so, they can help nurture healthier relationships, stronger communities, and a more inclusive society.

We have proposed topics and activities that we believe are important and complement each other. We hope they will support your work or inspire your own ideas
We invite you to walk this path with us.
A high-school environment is naturally a place where different opinions, needs, attitudes, and experiences come together—students, teachers, parents, colleagues. Conflicts are inevitable: between students, between teachers and students, but also between parents and the school or among staff. Without the right tools to resolve these conflicts, there is a risk that tensions will manifest themselves as aggression, bullying, disrupted relationships, disrupted learning conditions, a deteriorated atmosphere, and a general feeling of insecurity at school. (Mediation and School mediation, 2024)
Mediation—whether professionally mediated ("school mediator") or peer-mediated ("peer mediator")—provides an opportunity to resolve disputes constructively, with an emphasis on understanding, dialogue, and agreement. Mediation promotes communication, respect, responsibility, and empathy — skills that are key to a healthy social environment, personal development, and long-term problem prevention. (Research Institute For Child Psychology in Slovakia, 2025)
In addition to resolving conflicts, mediation has a preventive dimension: when mediation is part of the school culture, it helps prevent minor disputes from escalating, reduces aggression, and builds trust among all members of the school community.

Introduction to Mediation

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

In the current digital age, young people are navigating an increasingly complex social landscape. Conflicts that once happened in the schoolyard now extend into 24/7 digital environments, including social media groups, gaming chats, and instant messaging. As educators, we often observe that young people lack the vocabulary and structural tools to de-escalate these disputes. Instead, conflicts often result in "ghosting", online toxicity, or emotional burnout.

This chapter serves as the foundational module of the mediation training program. It is designed not to train professional legal mediators, but to equip young people (Peer Mediators) with a "starter toolkit" for constructive dialogue. The philosophy behind this chapter is that conflict is a normal part of life. It is not a sign of failure, but a signal that different needs or goals have collided. The way we respond to this signal determines the quality of our relationships.

The primary goal is to demystify mediation. Educators should aim to move learners from a passive understanding of conflict (where things "just happen" to them) to an active role where they can facilitate a solution. Specifically, this chapter aims to:

1. Redefine Conflict: Shift the narrative from "winning/losing" to "problem-solving".
2. Establish Safety Boundaries: Teach learners to distinguish between a healthy dispute and an unsafe situation (harassment, abuse) where mediation is dangerous.
3. Provide a Map: Introduce the 5-step mediation process as a reliable structure to prevent chaotic arguments.

Introduction to Mediation

By the end of this theoretical and practical block, the learner will be able to:

- Define Mediation: Explain mediation as a voluntary, confidential, and facilitated dialogue.
- Assess Suitability (The Filter): Apply the "3-Question Filter" (Voluntary? Safe? Future-focused?) to real-life scenarios to decide if mediation is appropriate.
- Navigate the Process: Outline the five stages of the mediation map: Open, Stories, Topics, Options, Agreement.
- Create Agreements: Draft a "Who-What-When" agreement that is specific and measurable, avoiding vague promises.
- Demonstrate Ethics: Understand why a mediator must remain neutral and why the parties must have self-determination.

Effects of Work

This chapter focuses on upgrading learner's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies. These are the core skills that allow you to navigate high-pressure situations, empathize without taking sides, and lead others through conflict.

The learner will move away from the misconception that mediation is about "judging who started it". They will understand that the mediator's role is to manage the process, not the content. They will gain knowledge of specific terminology such as confidentiality, neutrality, and voluntary participation.

Introduction to Mediation

The learner will acquire the ability to spot Red Flags. This is a critical life skill - knowing when to stop and seek help instead of trying to fix a dangerous situation alone. The learner will be able to guide a conversation using the "MAP" (Open -> Stories -> Topics -> Options -> Agreement), which reduces anxiety during confrontations.
By learning tools like the "STOP micro-tool" (Stop, Breathe, Observe), learners build emotional resilience and impulse control.
While this chapter focuses on human interaction, these skills are transferable to AI and digital literacy. Understanding how to de-escalate human conflict is essential for managing digital communities and interacting safely in online spaces.

Target Group(s)

This content is tailored for young people aged 15 - 30.
This includes: High school students, University students, Members of youth organizations or sports teams, Young professionals entering the workforce. This age group resists "lectures" from authority figures. Therefore, the mediation model emphasizes self-determination - the idea that the disputants decide the solution, not the adult. Their conflicts often have a "hybrid" nature (starting offline, escalating online, or vice versa). The examples used in this chapter (e.g., group chat exclusion, social media comments) reflect their reality.
Search for Identity: They are often exploring their values. Mediation helps them articulate their needs ("I feel disrespected") rather than just reacting with anger.

Introduction to Mediation

Methodology

Pedagogical Approach: Non-Formal Education
The chapter is designed to be delivered as an interactive workshop rather than a formal lecture. The role of the educator is that of a facilitator, not an instructor delivering absolute truths.

Key Methodological Elements:

1. Safe Learning Space: The educator must establish that the training is a "no-grades" zone. Learners should feel safe to share examples from their lives (or use hypothetical ones if they prefer privacy).
2. Micro-Learning Structure: The content is divided into small segments (micro-lessons). This combats the short attention span often associated with digital content consumption.
3. Self-Reflection Tools: We utilize the "Spider Chart" method. This allows learners to visualize their skills rather than just hearing about them. It shifts the focus from "passing a test" to "personal growth".
4. Inquiry-Based Learning: Instead of giving answers, the educator asks questions (e.g., "Why do you think mediation might fail here?"). This mirrors the Socratic method used in mediation itself.

Timing

Part 1: Theory & Core Concepts (45 mins)
Part 2: The Process & Practice (60 mins)

Introduction to Mediation

Main Content

Reframing Conflict: The “Signal” Theory

The educator should begin by normalizing conflict. In many cultures, conflict is viewed as a failure of education or character. The Peer Mediation model views conflict as “a signal”.

Concept: Conflict happens when people have different needs, goals, or feelings.

The Shift: It does not automatically mean the relationship is broken. It means the relationship needs an update or a new agreement.

Mediation Definition: Mediation is a safe, structured way to talk about a problem. Two or more people in conflict meet with a neutral third person, called a mediator.

The mediator helps them listen to each other and agree on a realistic plan. Mediation is different from a fight because it has clear rules, and it is different from a court because there is no judge and the people in conflict make the decision.



Introduction to Mediation

Main Content

The Three Pillars of Mediation Ethics

Before teaching how to mediate, we must teach how to be a mediator. The ethical framework rests on three pillars that the educator must emphasize:

Voluntary Participation (Choice): Mediation cannot be forced. If a teacher forces two students to shake hands, that is not mediation; that is coercion.

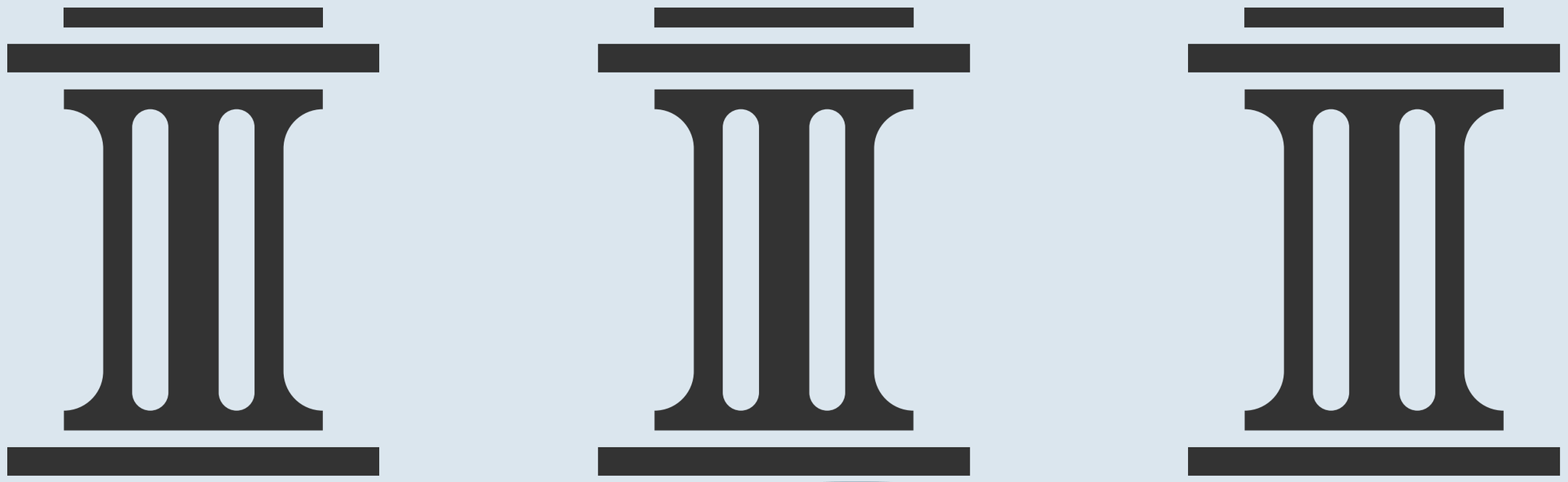
Teacher Script: "People join by choice. They can also choose to leave/stop at any time."

Confidentiality (Trust): What happens in the room stays in the room. This builds trust.

Exception: The only time a mediator breaks confidentiality is if there is a safety risk (suicide, abuse, crime).

Self-Determination (Ownership): The mediator does not give advice. The mediator does not say, "You should apologize." The parties must find their own solution.

Why? Because people keep agreements they created themselves much better than agreements forced upon them.

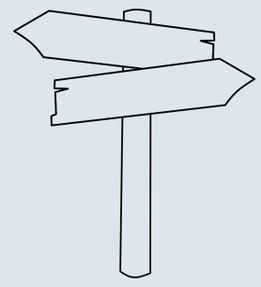


Introduction to Mediation

Main Content

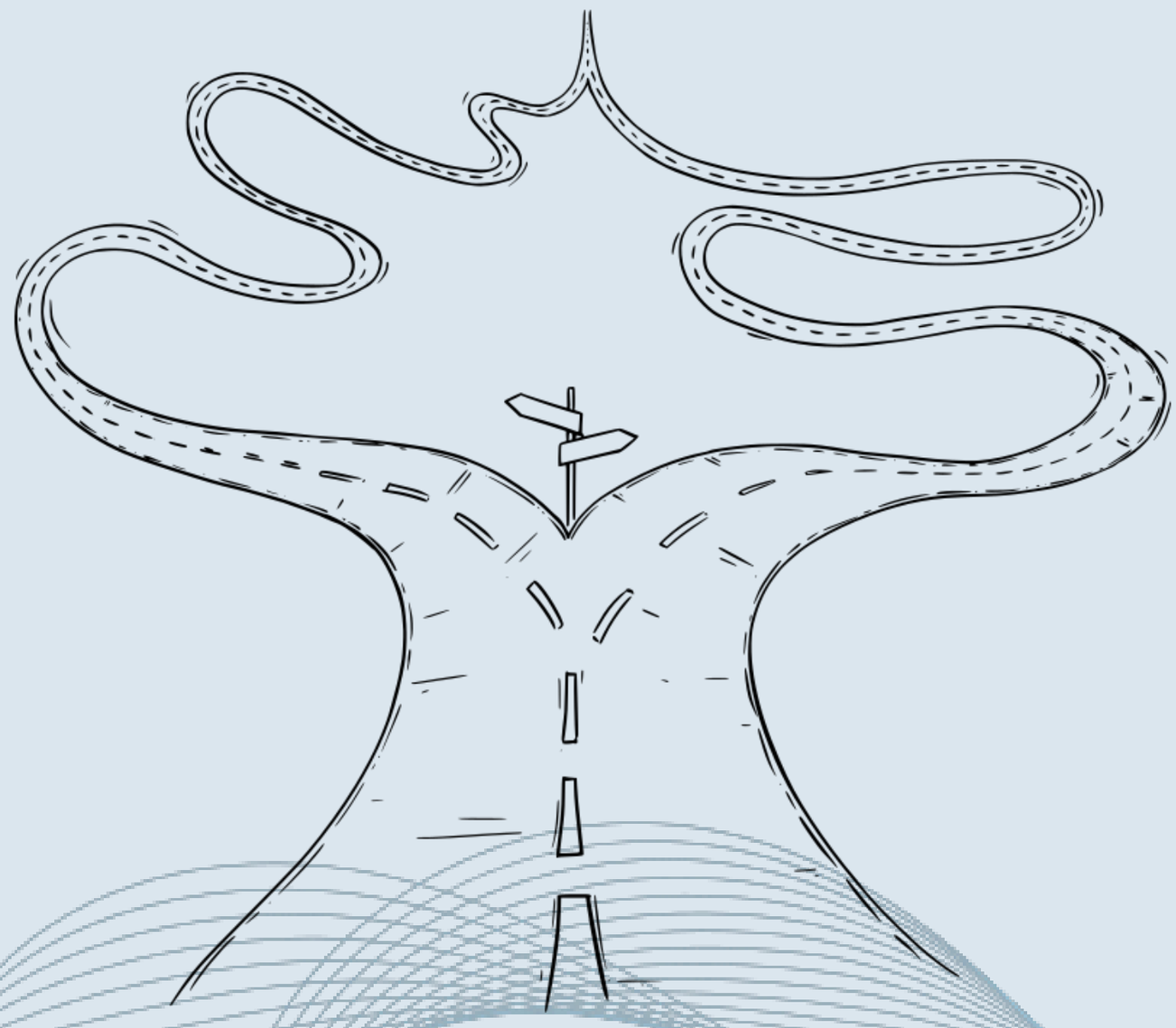
The "CHOICE" Filter: When to Mediate?

A crucial skill for a young mediator is knowing when NOT to mediate. We introduce the 3-Question Filter. The educator should present this as a "Safety Check" before any session:



Is it Voluntary? Do both sides want to fix this?
Is it Safe and Balanced? Can both speak without fear? Is there a power imbalance (e.g., a bully vs. a victim)?
Is it Future-focused? Are they ready to plan for tomorrow, or do they only want to punish for yesterday?

Red Flags (STOP Signs): If the answer to the safety questions is "No" we encounter Red Flags. These include threats, fear of speaking, severe power imbalance, or harassment requiring official investigation. In these cases, the educator must instruct learners to pause and seek adult or professional support.



Introduction to Mediation

Main Content

The Mediation MAP: The 5-Step Structure

To prevent the conversation from turning into a chaotic argument, the mediator follows a map. The educator should explain each step in detail:

- Step 1: OPEN (The Welcome): The mediator sets the tone. They welcome the parties and set Ground Rules.
    - *Key Ground Rules:* One person speaks at a time; respectful language, breaks are allowed.
    - *Consent:* The mediator asks, "Do you agree to these rules?" to get a "Yes" before starting.
- Step 2: STORIES (The Viewpoints): Each person gets uninterrupted time to say what happened from their perspective. The mediator listens and summarizes but does not judge.
- Step 3: TOPICS (The Agenda): The mediator helps the parties move from "complaining" to "listing problems".
    - *Example:* Instead of "He is annoying", the topic is "Communication in the group chat".
- Step 4: OPTIONS (Brainstorming): "What can we do about this?" The mediator encourages ideas without evaluating them yet.
- Step 5: AGREEMENT (The Plan): The parties select the best options and turn them into a clear plan.

Introduction to Mediation

Main Content

The "Who-What-When" Agreement

Educators often see student agreements fail because they are vague (e.g., "We will be friends"). A working agreement must be practical. The educator should teach the SMART or Who-What-When mini-template:

WHO is doing the action?

WHAT exactly will they do? (Specific behavior).

WHEN will they do it? (Timeline/Frequency).

Check: How will we know it worked?

Mediator Communication Tools

The chapter concludes with specific linguistic tools to manage emotions:

- Paraphrasing: "So you mean [fact], right?" - This checks understanding.
- Reflecting Feelings: "It sounds like you are [emotion] because [reason]." - This validates the person without agreeing with their facts.

The 3-Step Reset for Emotions:

1. Name it: "You seem upset."
2. Validate it: "That makes sense given what happened."
3. Need: "What do you need right now to continue?"

Introduction to Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

This section provides detailed instructions for the educator to facilitate the practical part of the workshop.

Activity 1: The Skills Spider Chart (Self-Assessment)

Purpose: To benchmark the learner's current confidence in conflict resolution skills.
Materials: Printed "Spider Chart" (or digital equivalent) with 8 axes: MAP, LISTEN, CALM, FAIR, BRIDGE, WORDS, CHOICE, BOUNDARIES.
Instructions for Educator:
Explain that this is not a test.
Read the definition of each skill (e.g., BOUNDARIES: "I notice red flags and know when to stop").
Ask students to mark a dot from 1 (Novice) to 10 (Expert) on each axis.
Connect the dots to see the shape of their "web".
Reflection Question: "Which skill is your strongest? Which one do you want to improve during this course?"

Introduction to Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2: "Red Flag" Scenarios (Critical Thinking)

Purpose: To practice the "Choice" and "Safety" filter.
Instructions for Educator: Read the scenarios aloud. Ask students to vote (Raising hands or moving to sides of the room) on whether they would MEDIATE or STOP.

- Scenario A: "Two gamers are arguing over who caused the team to lose. They are shouting, but both say they want to play together tomorrow."
    - *Correct Action:* MEDIATE. (High emotion, but voluntary and future-focused).
- Scenario B: "A student shows you a private message where another student threatens to beat them up if they tell anyone."
    - *Correct Action:* STOP. (Threats = Red Flag. This is a safety issue, not a mediation issue).
- Scenario C: "A couple broke up. One person wants to mediate to get back together, the other person refuses to talk."
    - *Correct Action:* STOP. (Not voluntary. Mediation cannot be used to force contact).

Introduction to Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3: The "Who-What-When" Clinic

Purpose: To practice writing effective agreements.
Instructions for Educator: Write these "Bad Agreements" on the board and ask groups to rewrite them using the "Who-What-When" formula .

- *Bad Agreement:* "Stop being rude."
- *Better Version:* "When we disagree, Student A (Who) will take a 5-minute break before replying (What/When) instead of using insults."
- *Bad Agreement:* "Help more with the project."
- *Better Version:* "Student B (Who) will create the slide deck (What) by Friday at 5 PM (When)."

Activity 4: Emotional Reset Practice

- Purpose: To practice the 3-step response to anger.
- Instructions for Educator: In pairs, one student acts "upset" (e.g., "This is unfair!"). The other student practices the specific sentence: "You seem frustrated. What do you need to continue?".

Introduction to Mediation

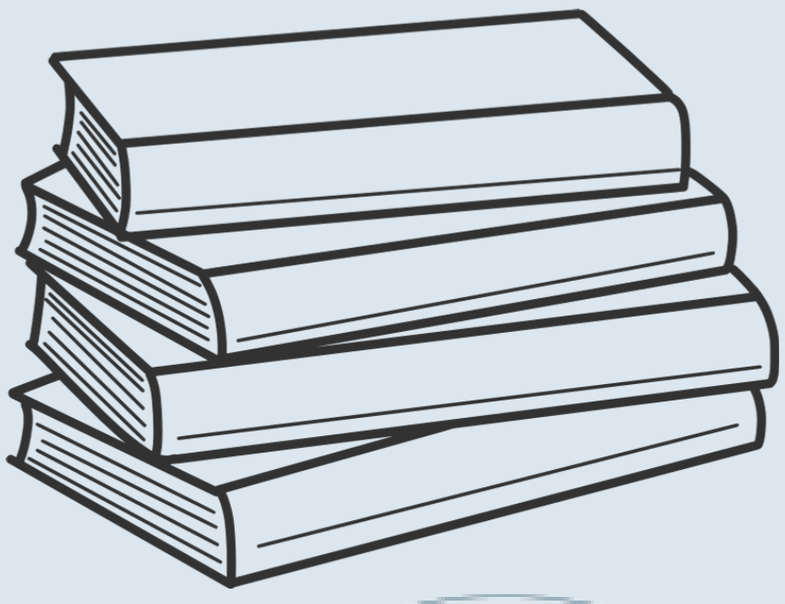
Summary

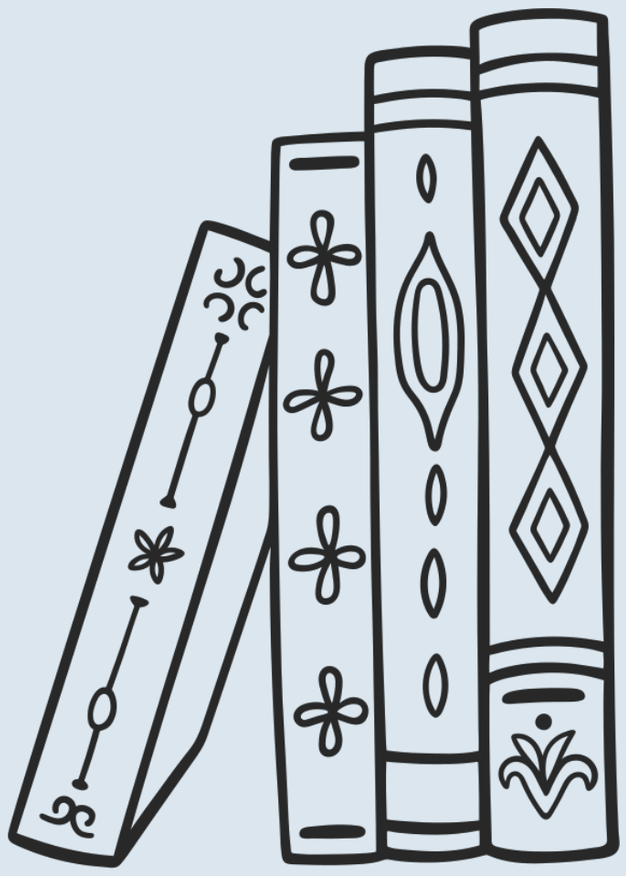
In this introductory chapter, we have established the foundation for Peer Mediation. We moved from the understanding that conflict is a natural signal to the practical application of a structured process. Key Takeaways for the Educator to Reinforce:

- Structure Creates Safety: The 5-step MAP protects the conversation from becoming a chaotic argument.
- The Mediator is a Guide, Not a Judge: Ethical mediation relies on the parties making their own decisions (Self-determination).
- Safety First: Recognizing "Red Flags" and knowing when not to mediate is just as important as knowing how to mediate.
- Clarity is King: Agreements must be specific (Who-What-When) to be effective in the long run.

By mastering these basics, the learner is now ready to explore deeper topics in the subsequent modules, such as Active Listening, Stereotypes, and Resilience.







Introduction to Mediation

Knowledge Check

To ensure understanding, the educator can administer this short quiz or use it as a group discussion guide.

1. What is the primary goal of mediation?
A) To find out who is lying.
B) To punish the person who started the conflict.
C) To help the parties agree on a future plan.
Correct Answer: C.

2. Which of the following is a "Red Flag" (reason to stop mediation)?
A) The parties are crying.
B) One party is afraid to speak due to threats.
C) The parties disagree about the facts.
Correct Answer: B.

3. In the "Who-What-When" agreement formula, why do we need "When"?
A) To make it legally binding.
B) To make the action measurable and clear, so we know if it was done.
C) To rush the process.
Correct Answer: B.

Introduction to Mediation

Knowledge Check

4. True or False: A mediator should tell the parties what the best solution is.
False. This violates the principle of Self-Determination. The parties must decide the outcome.

You will find more about Mediation in Chapter 10 of this Ebook.

Further Reading or Resources

To deepen your understanding as an educator or to provide advanced reading for motivated students, we recommend the following resources.

International Resources (English):

- Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (2011). Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In. Penguin Books. (The global standard for "interest-based negotiation", explaining why we focus on needs, not positions).
- Rosenberg, M. B. (2015). Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life. PuddleDancer Press. (Essential for understanding the "Reflect Feeling" and "Needs" techniques used in this course).
- Moore, C. W. (2014). The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict. Jossey-Bass. (A comprehensive academic resource on the mediation map).

Regional Resources (Czech):

- Holá, L. (2003). Mediace: Způsob řešení mezilidských konfliktů. Grada Publishing. (A foundational text for understanding the Czech mediation context and law).
- Plamínek, J. (2012). Mediace a facilitace: Řešení konfliktů a vedení jednání. Grada Publishing. (Focuses on practical facilitation techniques applicable in schools and youth work).
- Asociace mediátorů ČR (AMCR): Ethical Code of Conduct. Available at www.amcr.cz. (Useful for educators to understand the professional standards of confidentiality and neutrality).
- Šišková, T. (Ed.) (2012). Facilitativní mediace. (Explores the non-directive approach used in this peer mediation model).

Basics of Communication

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

Communication is the joint, dynamic process of creating, sending, receiving, and interpreting signals (words, tone, expressions, silence) to make meaning with another person. In mediation that "making meaning" is the bridge between what happened and what can happen next: it's how you move from conflict to understanding and agreement. (Foundational models below show different ways to think about that process.)

Effects of Work

Educators and students enhance their communication skills, cultivate stronger relationships, and develop an appreciation for diverse perspectives. This practice encourages reflection, mutual understanding, and collective intelligence, benefiting both individuals and the wider community

Target Group(s)

These lessons are primarily designed for adolescents aged 13 and above; however, they also provide significant benefits to educators, community organizations, and individuals seeking to incorporate resilience and constructive dialogue into daily life. The principles underpinning these practices are universally applicable, fostering both personal development and collective learning.

Basics of Communication

Methodology

This chapter combines theory, practice, and reflection. It begins with a short introduction to communication as a process of sending, receiving, and interpreting meaning. Case studies are used to connect theory to real-life situations. Interactive exercises, such as role-plays, help participants practice communication skills. A dialogue session encourages reflection and sharing of experiences.

Timing

Training Duration: 2–3 hours

Section	Time	Methodology	Materials
Warm-Up Activity	10 min	Icebreaker	Whiteboard/Chat
Introduction to Communication	15min	Trainer Input + Discussion	Slides
Nonverbal Communication	30 min	Explanation + Demonstration	Slides/Video
Activity: Decode the Message	20 min	Group Activity	Cards/Prompts
Deep Dive: Types of	3 min	Micro-lecture + Practice	Slides
Role-Play: Nonverbal Skills	25 min	Pair Role-play	Scenarios
Reflection + Quiz	2min	Self-reflection + Matching Quiz	Quiz Sheet
Wrap-Up	10 min	Summary + Q&A	—

Basics of Communication

Main Content

What is Communication in Mediation and Why Is It Important?

Communication in mediation is more than simply exchanging words - it is the intentional practice of listening, understanding, and guiding dialogue toward resolution. The word "communication" comes from the Latin communicare, meaning "to share, to make common." In the context of mediation, communication is the bridge that allows parties in conflict to share their perspectives, understand each other's experiences, and collaboratively find solutions.

Effective communication in mediation is not just about talking; it is about creating a safe, respectful space where all voices can be heard and where meaning is co-created. It allows individuals to move beyond conflict, misunderstanding, or tension, toward mutual understanding and constructive outcomes. Mediation occurs in diverse contexts: schools, workplaces, families, and communities. Conflicts are an inevitable part of life, and without guidance, they can escalate into lasting resentment, emotional harm, or dysfunctional relationships. Communication is the core tool mediators use to prevent escalation and foster constructive dialogue. By carefully facilitating the exchange of ideas, emotions, and needs, mediators help participants navigate disagreements with clarity, empathy, and focus. In this way, communication in mediation acts as both a shield and a bridge: a shield against destructive patterns and a bridge toward shared understanding and collaborative problem-solving.

Basics of Communication

Main Content

The practice of communication in mediation combines several interconnected elements. First, it involves active listening, which goes beyond merely hearing words. Active listening requires attention, reflection, and sometimes repeating or rephrasing what has been said to ensure accurate understanding. This helps participants feel validated and reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation. Second, communication in mediation emphasizes empathy - the ability to perceive and appreciate the emotions and perspectives of others. Empathy does not mean agreement, but it creates a foundation of trust and openness, enabling parties to move past defensiveness or hostility. Third, communication in mediation is guided by clarity and neutrality. Words are chosen deliberately to express meaning without judgment or blame, creating an environment where solutions can emerge collaboratively rather than coercively.

The modern world has changed how conflicts arise and how they are communicated. Conflicts are no longer confined to face-to-face interactions; they can unfold over email, messaging apps, social media, or virtual platforms. Misunderstandings are easily amplified when tone, intent, or context is unclear. In this environment, the principles of mediation - careful listening, reflection, empathy, and neutral facilitation - are even more crucial. Practicing communication skills in mediation equips individuals with the ability to navigate these digital and interpersonal conflicts thoughtfully, reducing harm and promoting understanding across various channels.

Basics of Communication

Main Content

We can explore four core areas of communication practice in mediation, which together foster constructive dialogue and resolution. While this list is not exhaustive, focusing on these elements helps mediators and participants develop skills that transform conflict into opportunity:

1. Active Listening: Fully attending to what others are saying, without interruption or judgment. Techniques include reflective paraphrasing, summarizing points, and asking clarifying questions. This builds understanding and demonstrates respect for the other person's perspective.
2. Empathy and Emotional Awareness: Recognizing and validating emotions - both your own and others' - is essential. Being aware of emotional dynamics allows parties to communicate more openly, prevent escalation, and respond thoughtfully rather than reactively.
3. Clear and Neutral Expression: Using language that conveys needs and concerns without blame or aggression. This includes "I" statements (An I-statement is a communication technique used to express your feelings, thoughts, or needs from your own perspective without blaming or accusing others. It helps reduce defensiveness and promotes clear, respectful communication.), calm tone, and specific descriptions of issues rather than generalized accusations. Neutral language encourages collaboration rather than defensiveness.

Basics of Communication

Main Content

4. Co-Creation of Meaning and Solutions: Mediation is not only about understanding problems but also collaboratively finding ways forward. Effective communication allows participants to co-create agreements, brainstorm solutions, and build shared commitment to follow-through.

When practiced consistently, communication in mediation strengthens relationships, reduces misunderstandings, and promotes personal and collective growth. Like resilience in the digital world, mediation communication is a skill that requires practice, reflection, and intention. It allows individuals and groups to navigate challenges with patience, clarity, and respect. Beyond resolving immediate conflicts, these skills enhance emotional intelligence, social cohesion, and the capacity for ongoing collaboration.

In essence, communication in mediation transforms conflict from a destructive force into an opportunity for learning and growth. It combines listening, empathy, clarity, and shared problem-solving to create spaces where people feel heard, understood, and empowered to reach agreements that honor all perspectives. Through these practices, mediation cultivates not only solutions but also stronger, healthier relationships, greater trust, and the ability to navigate the complexities of modern life with confidence and skill.

Basics of Communication

Main Content

Overall, the course equips learners with practical tools and foundational knowledge to become more intentional, confident, and effective communicators.

- Welcome & Warm-Up (10 minutes) Activity: "Say It Without Saying It"
- Introduction to Communication (15 minutes)
- Definition of Nonverbal Communication 10 minutes
- Deep Dive(Content Delivery) (10 minutes)

Theoretical concept of 3 communicational problems. Watch videos and practice

Shannon-Weaver (the transmission problem)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y1JsGFZprc

National version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdtG1m_GRXE&t=

Think of communication like a radio signal: there's a source → transmitter → channel → receiver → destination. Noise (literal or psychological) distorts the signal. The model helps mediators notice technical problems in communication — e.g., poor phrasing, interruptions, or a medium that's wrong for the conversation.
Use it to ask: Is the message getting through?

Basics of Communication

Main Content

SMCR (Berlo) – ingredients matter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUGW2d6nXe0

Berlo's SMCR model breaks the process into Source - Message - Channel - Receiver, and emphasizes how each party's skills, attitudes, culture, and knowledge shape encoding/decoding. For mediators: mismatched backgrounds or vocabularies explain many misunderstandings - not malice. That invites practical fixes (reframing, translating jargon, building rapport).

Transactional view (communication as co-creation)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boTsXOPv8Xo

Modern thinking treats communication as simultaneous and co-created - people send and receive at the same time; meaning emerges in interaction.



Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 1 - What is Communication? (45 minutes)

Objective: Students will reflect on their own understanding of communication in the peer mediation process.

Steps:

Individual Reflection: Each student writes what comes to mind when they hear the word "communication."

Prompts: What does it mean to you to make connection? When have you needed nonverbal communication?

Educator's Input (10 min): Share the definition: origin from Latin communicare. The Latin word communicare means "to share," "to make common," or "to communicate," where communis = common, shared and care (from -ficare) = to make or to cause

In fact, communicare literally means "to make something common between people," which is also the root idea of the modern word communication - sharing information, ideas, or understanding.

Verification and Comparison (10 min): Students revisit their initial notes and compare them with the educator's explanation. They mark similarities, differences, and new insights.

Collective Definition (15 min): In plenary, ideas are gathered on the board. Together, the group formulates a shared definition of communication that emphasizes bouncing back, staying grounded, and thriving in the digital world. Add examples from daily life (e.g., handling online criticism, recovering after a stressful exam). Watch the video https://youtu.be/l9D3dyGLOQI

Outcome: Students will understand communication as a skill of self-presentation and adaptation, and see its importance in navigating digital challenges.

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - What is Non-Violent Communication? (45 minutes)

Welcome & Warm-Up (10 minutes) Activity: "Say It Without Saying It"
Ask volunteers to express an emotion using only nonverbal cues. The group guesses the emotion.
Objective: Introduce the concept that communication happens beyond words.
Trainer Tips: Encourage natural behavior. Use humor to relax the group.

Introduction to NVC Communication and Rosenberg (15 minutes)
Talking Points (Trainer Input):

What is communication? (Message sent → Message received → Meaning interpreted)
Principles of Nonviolent Communication (NVC)(Based on Rosenberg, 2003)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0

Communication is a fundamental building block of everyday life. If we want to function well in society, we need to learn to communicate effectively with the people surrounding us. Often when we communicate with others – irrational conflicts and misunderstandings arise, and we end up leaving conversations feeling disregarded or in despair.

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

This is where NonViolent Communication enters the stage. At its core is the belief that all human beings have the capacity for compassion and empathy. We only resort to harmful behavior when we don't identify more effective strategies.

1. Human behavior is driven by universal needs
All humans share the same fundamental needs (e.g., safety, respect, connection, autonomy, meaning, play).
Conflict arises not because needs differ, but because strategies for meeting needs collide.
Focusing on needs - not blame, judgment, or diagnoses - creates mutual understanding.

2. Feelings arise from needs being met or unmet
Emotions are natural indicators of the relationship between our needs and current circumstances.
NVC invites us to take responsibility for our feelings by linking them to our own needs rather than to others' behavior.

3. Observations must be separated from evaluations
To avoid triggering defensiveness, Rosenberg emphasizes giving clear, factual observations free from judgment, exaggeration, or labels.
Example:
Observation: "You arrived 20 minutes after the agreed time."
Evaluation: "You're always late and irresponsible."

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

4. Communicate feelings rather than interpretations

Many statements that appear to express feelings are actually judgments (e.g., "I feel ignored"). NVC encourages identifying genuine emotions (e.g., "I feel sad" or "I feel frustrated").

5. Identify the underlying needs

Needs are never tied to specific people or actions - they are universal qualities, such as: belonging, understanding, consideration, honesty, choice, rest.

When we name needs, communication shifts from accusation to collaboration.

6. Make clear, doable, present-moment requests

Requests should be: concrete and actionablestated in positive terms (what we do want, not what we don't want) invitations, not demands. Demands create resistance; requests encourage cooperation.

7. Cultivate empathy and presence

NVC emphasizes listening for feelings and needs beneath words - our own and others'. Empathy is not giving advice, fixing, or analyzing -it is simply being with what is alive in someone.

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

8. Express honestly and receive empathetically
NVC is a two-part process:
Self-expression (honesty): Observation → Feeling → Need → Request
Empathic listening: Hearing the other's Observation, Feeling, Need, and Request - even if they express them imperfectly.

9. Replace moral judgments with compassion
NVC challenges cultural habits of blame, obligation language ("should," "must"), and coercive communication.
Compassion flows when we view behavior as the expression of met or unmet needs - not as right/wrong categories.

10. Aim for connection, not winning
The goal is mutual understanding and collaboration, not persuasion, punishment, or control. When both people's needs matter equally, creative solutions become possible. Why communication matters in life, relationships, and work.

Verbal vs. non-verbal channels
Use the provided course introduction text to energize participants. Definition of Nonverbal Communication (Content Delivery) (10 minutes)

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Use this learner-friendly explanation
"Nonverbal communication is how we share messages without using words. It expresses emotions, attitudes, and intentions through body language, facial expressions, tone, gestures, posture, eye contact, and space."

Methodology: Explain → demonstrate → learners imitate
Ask learners:
"What is one nonverbal cue you use when nervous?"
"What about when excited?"

Activity 3 - What is Nonverbal Communication? (45 minutes)

Deep Dive: Types of Nonverbal Communication (30 minutes)
For each type below, the trainer should: Explain the definition, Demonstrate with an example and Ask learners to mirror or create an example
Expressions:
1. Body Language
How we move our body (crossed arms, tapping foot, relaxed shoulders)
2. Facial Expressions (Mimiques)- Smiling, frowning, eyebrows raised, confusion, joy
3. Gestures- Waving, thumbs-up, pointing, open hand gestures
4. Posture Leaning in (interest), slouching (boredom), standing tall (confidence)

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

5. Tone of Voice- Pitch, volume, pace, warmth, stress
6. Eye Contact- Confidence, attention, respect, discomfort
7. Proxemics (Use of Space) Standing too close vs. too far

Activity: Decode the Message (20 minutes)

Instructions: Split learners into pairs with each pair a scenario card:

- "You are bored but don't want to say it."
- "You are excited about a surprise."
- "You disagree but want to stay polite."

Learners act it out using ONLY nonverbal cues. Others guess the meaning.

Purpose:

- Reinforces subtle signals
- Builds observation skills

Trainer Notes:

- Praise creativity
- Ask observers: "What cues helped you guess the communicated form?"

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 4 - Role-Play your Non-violent communication adding non-verbal Communication (45 minutes)

Scenarios:

1. Greeting a classmate for the first time
2. Explaining something with a calm tone
3. Presenting nervousness vs. confidence
4. Asking a classmate for help
5. Handling a disagreement respectfully

Role-Play: Communication Situations (25 minutes)

Role-Play Flow:

- Round 1: Learners use poor/non-effective nonverbal cues
- Round 2: Learners repeat using improved cues

Debrief Questions:

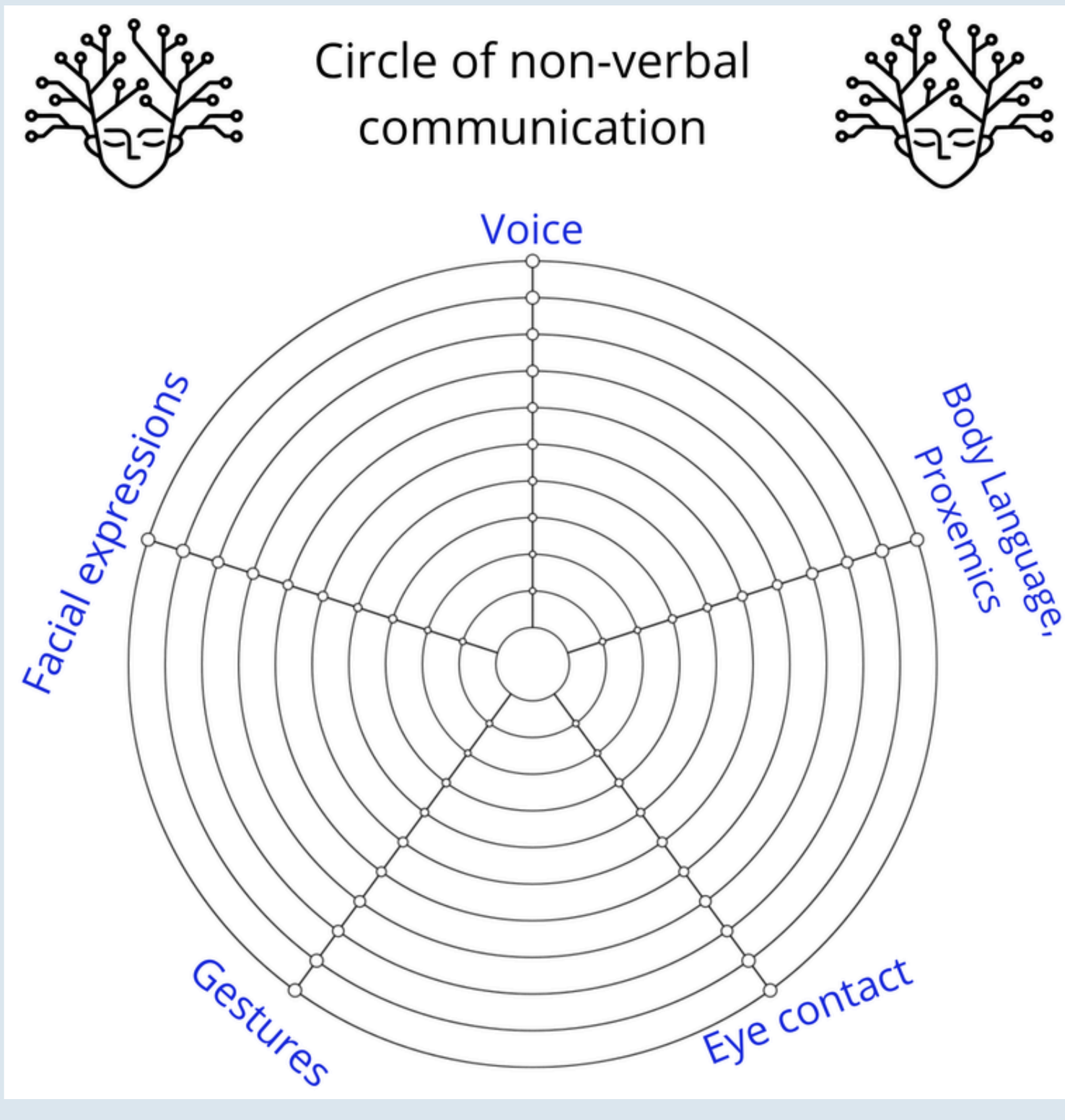
How did the nonverbal change the meaning?

Which cues were strongest?

Summarize your communicational model in Wheel where the point closest to the centre is the lowest rate, the farther it is the better you are in this segment.

Basics of Communication

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



Compare and discuss your Wheels with your schoolmates: who is the most similar to you?

Compare: Nonverbal communication Wheel in the above mentioned Communication Situations (20 minutes)

Basics of Communication

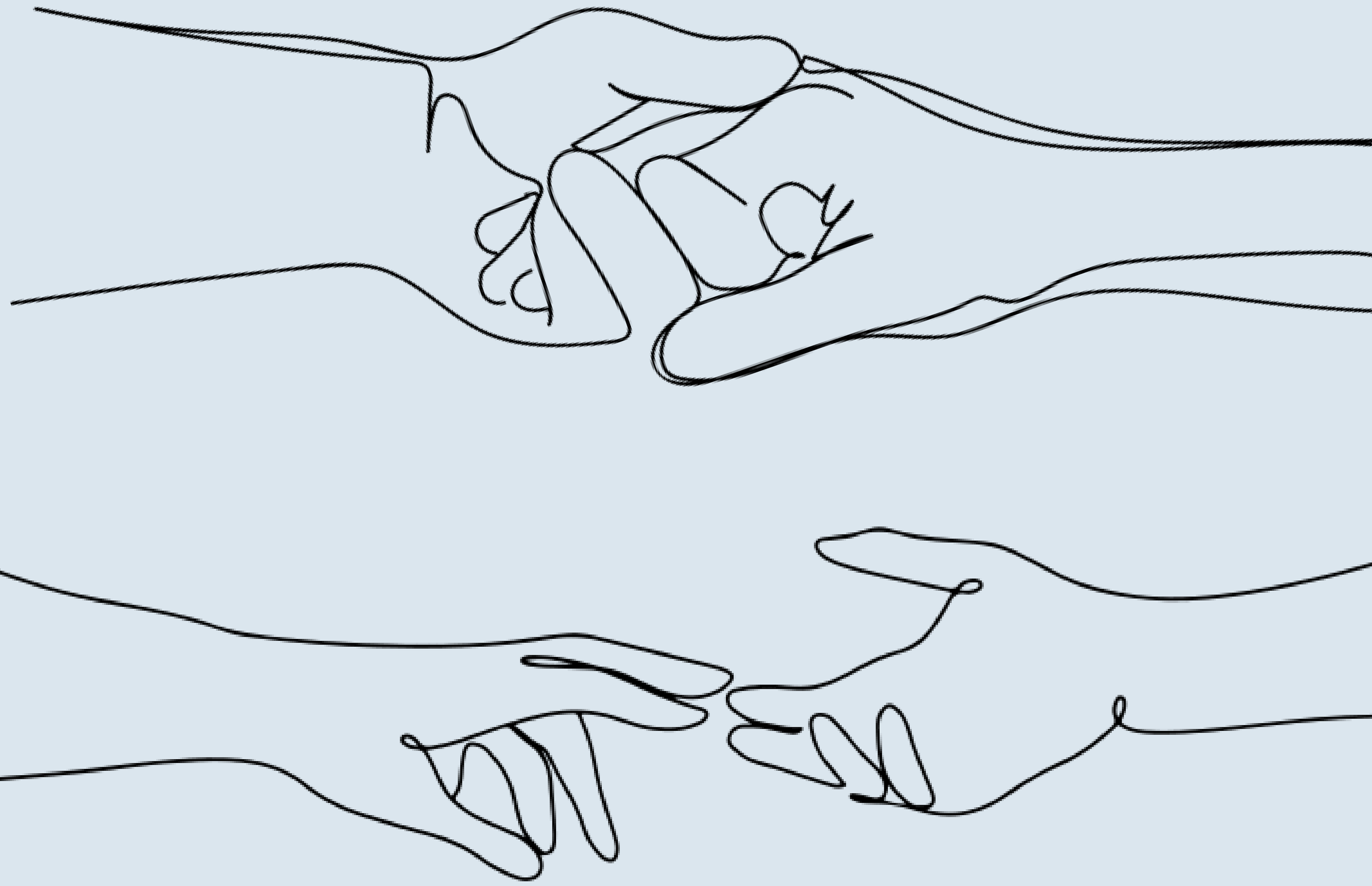
Summary

Recapping the key points covered in the chapter we reinforce the importance of the skills or knowledge shared. Communication in mediation is more than simply exchanging words - it is the deliberate practice of listening, understanding, and guiding dialogue toward resolution. In conflicts, effective communication acts as a bridge, transforming tension and misunderstanding into opportunities for connection and collaboration. At its core, communication in mediation combines clarity, empathy, emotional regulation, and mutual respect, allowing parties not only to express their perspectives but also to grasp those of others. When paired with mediation techniques, communication becomes a shared process: acknowledging feelings, asking questions, and co-creating solutions that honor all voices. Through this approach, communication in mediation fosters trust, accountability, and constructive outcomes, turning disagreement into a pathway for growth. This course introduces the essential principles that underpin effective human communication. Participants will examine both verbal and non-verbal communication and understand how each influences message delivery. The program emphasizes active listening as a core skill for fostering clarity and mutual understanding. Learners will develop techniques to articulate thoughts and ideas with precision and confidence. A key focus is on analyzing and adapting to the needs, expectations, and perspectives of diverse audiences. The course highlights strategies for building strong interpersonal connections through intentional communication practices.

Basics of Communication

Summary

Trainers will guide participants in recognizing the impact of communication on personal, social, and professional success.
The curriculum underscores the role of effective communication in conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving. By strengthening communication competencies, participants enhance their ability to navigate complex interactions and relationships.



Basics of Communication

Knowledge Check

Suggest how the acquired knowledge can be tested. Include questions or exercises to test the learner's understanding. Trainer can use the MOOC from VIDEO

 You can also watch and use the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9D3dyGL0QI

a mix of multiple-choice, open-ended, or practical tasks for reflection.

Provide videos from Rosenberg Communication model, e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0

Reflection Questions

Ask learners to write or discuss:

1. Have you ever noticed someone's mood from their body language?
2. Which nonverbal habits do you personally want to improve?
3. What cues do you show when nervous, excited, or avoiding something?

Quiz: Introduction to Nonverbal Communication – Exercise 1 (Match the Text)

Instructions:

Basics of Communication

Knowledge Check

Match each term to its correct explanation/example.

Terms:

1. Eye Contact
2. Facial Expressions
3. Gestures
4. Posture
5. Handshake
6. Touch

Definitions/Examples:

A. Use open-handed movements to show openness

B. Smiling to express enthusiasm

C. Firm handshake to show confidence

D. Maintaining upright stance for confidence

E. Light, appropriate touch to show warmth

F. Use of eye focus to build trust



Basics of Communication

Further Reading or Resources

Handouts e.g., the Wheel of Dialogue Practices (for printing)

Books

- Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Proctor, R. F. (2018). Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication. Oxford University Press.
- Covers nonverbal cues, workplace communication, and the influence of environment and stress.
- Gupta, C. B. (2017). Business Communication: Skills, Concepts, and Applications. Sultan Chand.
- Shockley-Zalabak, P. (2015). Fundamentals of Organizational Communication. Pearson.

Articles / Journals

- Glasø, L., & Einarsen, S. (2008). "Emotion Regulation in Leader–Follower Relationships." European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology.

Peer-reviewed Sources

- Hofstede, G. (2001). Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations. Sage. Explains power distance and how hierarchy changes tone, confidence, and communication styles.
- Tannen, D. (1995). The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why. Harvard Business Review.
- Birkenbihl, V. F. (2007). Kommunikációs gyakorlatok – Az emberek közti kapcsolatok sikerességéhez, fejlesztéséhez (Nagy Imre, Ford.; Trivium Kiadó). Budapest, HU. ISBN 978-963-9711-11-2.

Dialogue

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

The chapter aims to help young people understand dialogue as more than usual conversation - developing openness, respect, and curiosity while balancing advocacy and inquiry. Learning objectives include practicing attentive listening, mindful speaking, and co-creating shared meaning and understanding.

Effects of Work

Educators and students strengthen dialogue skills, build healthier relationships, and learn to value diverse perspectives. The work fosters reflection, mutual understanding, and collective intelligence, enriching both individuals and groups/communities.

Target Group(s)

The lessons are designed for young people (15+), but can also benefit educators, community groups, and anyone interested in dialogic practices.

Dialogue

Methodology

The approach combines reflection, educator input, paired practice, and collective definition (shared meaning). Through experiential exercises, students practice skills, such as advocacy and inquiry, compare insights, and co-create shared definitions of dialogue.

Timing

For an educator to get knowledge and prepare materials regarded as needed: about 1-1,5 hour(s).
For students: 3 lessons, 45 minutes each (duration may vary according to group size).

Main Content

What is Dialogue?
The root of the word dialogue goes back to the Greek. Dia logos is most often translated as through the word, between words, or the flow of meanings. Dialogue is not merely talking - it is a deeper process of exchanging perspectives and creating shared meaning.

Dialogue

Main Content

In literature and life, dialogue is often discussed from four perspectives:

- Communication and interaction – dialogue as a conversation or a special form of communication in which mutual understanding is central.
- Relationships – dialogue as a way of building bonds, nurturing healthy and close contacts, and supporting human development through dialogical relationships.
- Collective intelligence (shared understanding) – dialogue as the ability to learn from each other and make better decisions through appropriate communication, where listening and openness to other opinions are crucial.
- Philosophy – dialogue as the encounter between human beings, a meeting that emphasizes dignity, respect, and the philosophy of encounter.

No matter how we look at it, dialogue is essential if we are to better understand ourselves, others, and ultimately the world around us. It is both a personal practice and a collective necessity, shaping the way we live, learn, and grow together.

Dialogue is frequently confused with debate or discussion. While debate and discussion often focus more on convincing and proving one's point, dialogue emphasizes listening, understanding, and explaining. It is less about winning and more about connecting.

Dialogue

Main Content

If we were to propose a definition of dialogue, it might look like this:

"Dialogue is a kind of contact, interaction between people, in which mutual curiosity and openness to other people are important. The desire to find out what other people think, what she/he is, what her/his opinions, thoughts, and experiences are. A relationship full of respect for difference, which enriches both parties, in which we learn from each other, thanks to which we know more and become better."

Five Core Practices of Dialogue (partly based on Dialogue Practices by Bill Isaacs)

To cultivate meaningful dialogue with and within young people, we can encourage these five practices (rules):

1. Listening attentively (LISTEN) – giving full presence to the speaker, without interruption or distraction.
2. Speaking mindfully (VOICE) – expressing thoughts clearly and respectfully, considering the impact of words.
3. Suspending assumptions (SUSPEND) – holding back judgments and preconceived ideas to remain open to new perspectives.
4. Respecting diverse opinions (RESPECT) – acknowledging that every viewpoint has value, even if it differs from one's own.
5. Co-creating a positive atmosphere (ATMOSPHERE) – fostering trust, safety, and openness so that dialogue can flourish.

All these rules can be practised to be better in dialogue.

Dialogue

Main Content

You can also watch and use the video: 5 Key Dialogue Principles

Remember:

- Conversation is a powerful tool. It occupies a central place in people's lives.
- Still, sometimes we find it difficult to speak up when needed and to listen to
- others with curiosity. *Dialogue is a conversation where everyone's voice is heard and valued equally*.

Balancing inquiry and advocacy

- Practicing dialogue, we can also balance what we want to say (advocacy) with openness and curiosity toward what others express (inquiry).
- Advocacy means expressing your own perspective clearly and confidently. It's about stating your ideas, feelings, or proposals so others understand what matters to you. *Example:* "I believe that building trust in a group requires regular check-ins."
- Inquiry means asking questions with genuine curiosity to understand others' perspectives. It's about listening openly, exploring assumptions, and inviting different viewpoints. *Example:* "How do you see trust being built in your community?"
-

Dialogue

Main Content

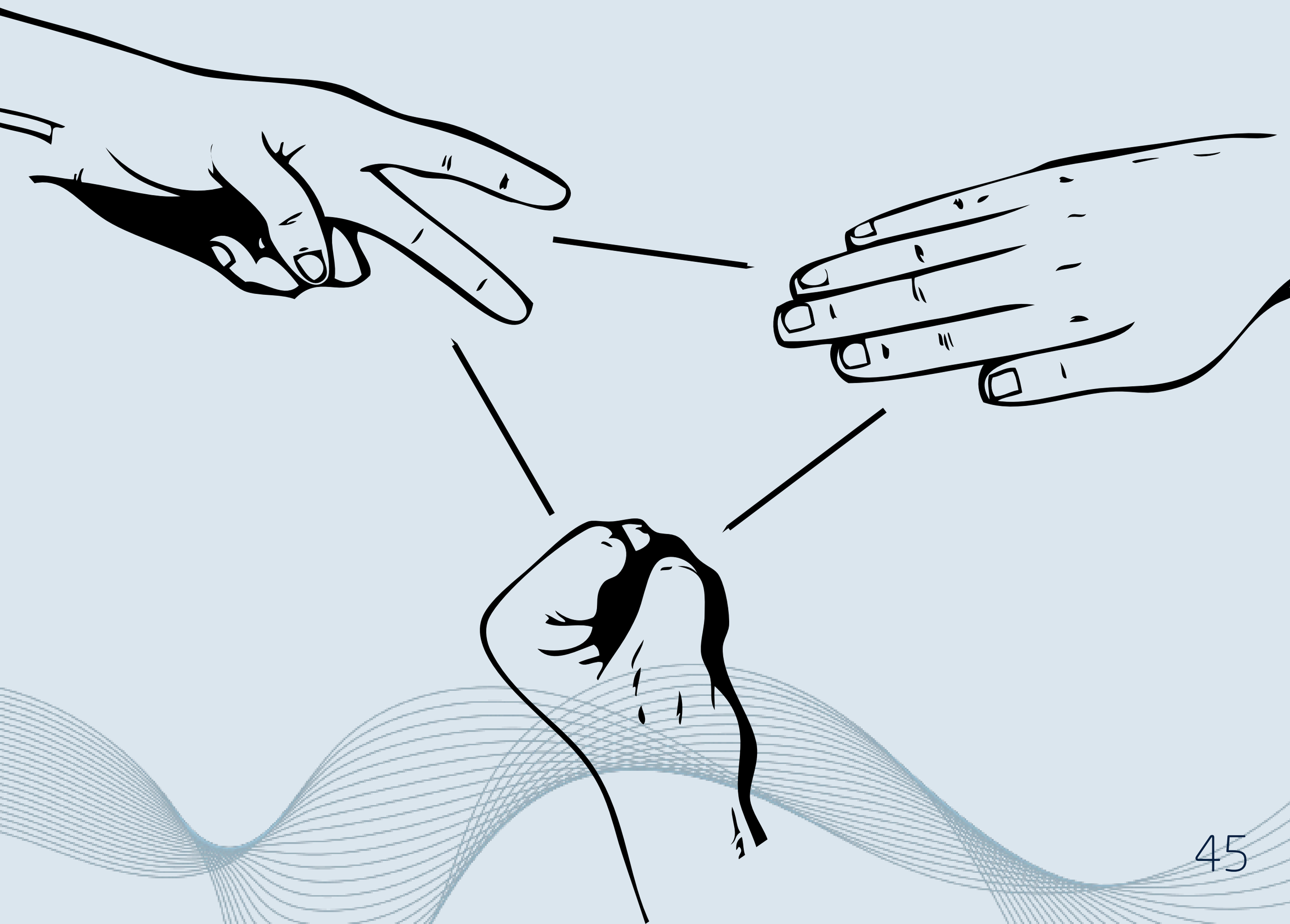
Practical tips for advocacy:

- Be clear and concise, avoid jargon.
- Share reasoning behind your view, not just conclusions.
- Speak with respect, not dominance.

Practical tips for inquiry:

- Ask open-ended questions ("What do you think...?" rather than "Do you agree?").
- Listen actively-don't prepare your reply while the other speaks.
- Show curiosity, not interrogation.

In genuine dialogue, true balance arises when we speak our truth with clarity while staying open and curious to the truths of others.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people. These activities will help them experience dialogue not only as conversation, but as a way of building relationships, fostering respect for differences, and learning from one another. Through practicing advocacy (speaking one's truth clearly) and inquiry (listening with curiosity), young participants can strengthen emotional literacy, develop mutual understanding, and co-create a positive atmosphere where every voice is valued.

Activity 1 - Exploring Dialogue (45 minutes)

Objective: Students will reflect on their own understanding of dialogue, learn key practices, and co-create a shared definition (shared meaning of the topic).

Steps:

Individual Reflection

Each student writes on a separate sheet of paper what comes to mind when they think of dialogue. This encourages personal associations and independent thinking.

Educator's Input

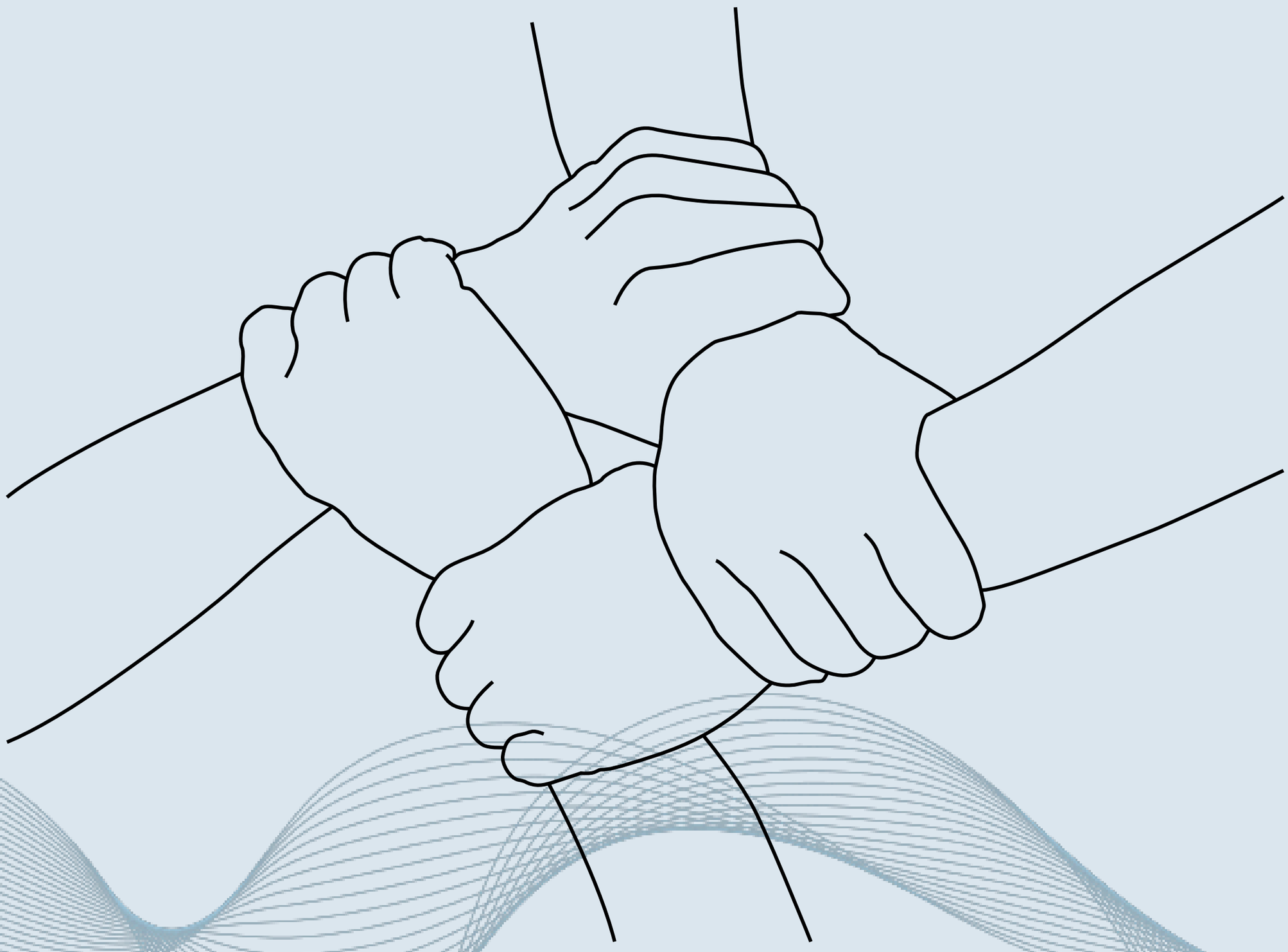
The educator shares knowledge about what dialogue is, its roots, and its practices (listening, speaking mindfully, suspending assumptions, respecting diverse opinions, co-creating atmosphere). Students are introduced to the difference between dialogue and debate/discussion.

Dialogue

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Verification and Comparison
Students share their meaning of dialogue written before. Students revisit their initial definitions/associations and compare them with the educator's explanation. They note similarities, differences, and new insights.
Collective Definition/Meaning.
In a plenary session, ideas are gathered (e.g., written on the board). Together, the group formulates a shared definition of dialogue that reflects everyone's contributions.

It is the activity to feel the collective intelligence, the shared meaning when people create the meaning together.
Outcome: By the end of the lesson, students will have both a personal and collective understanding of dialogue, recognizing it as a practice of openness, respect, and shared meaning.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Exploring Dialogue Practices (45 minutes)

Objective: Students will learn about five key practices of dialogue, reflect on their own comfort level with each, and discuss ways to strengthen their skills.

Steps:

Educator's Input

The educator introduces the idea of dialogue as a practice and explains the five practices (rules):

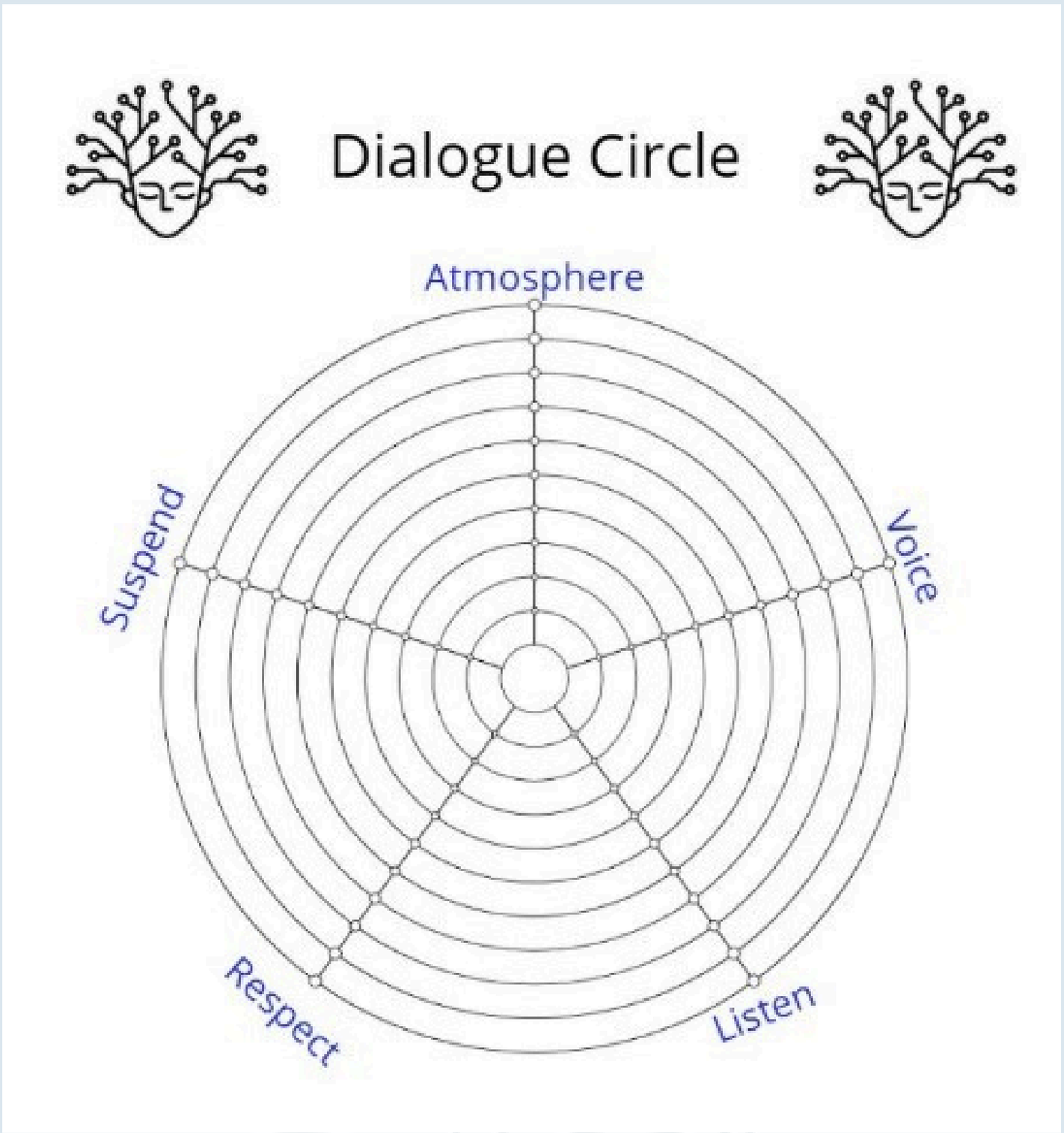
- Listening attentively (LISTEN) – giving full presence to the speaker(s), without interruption or distraction.
- Speaking mindfully (VOICE) – expressing thoughts clearly and respectfully, considering the impact of words.
- Suspending assumptions (SUSPEND) – holding back judgments and preconceived ideas to remain open to new perspectives.
- Respecting diverse opinions (RESPECT) – acknowledging that every viewpoint has value, even if it differs from one's own.
- Co-creating a positive atmosphere (ATMOSPHERE) – fostering trust, safety, and openness so that dialogue can flourish.

Dialogue

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Dialogue Wheel Activity
Each student receives a printed Dialogue Wheel handout (a circle divided into five sections, one for each practice).
Instructions for students:
Mark on the scale how comfortable, confident, or good you feel with each practice. In the middle of the circle is 0 (meaning not at all).

- In other words, there is a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the maximum.
- Note: This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Ativity 3 - Balancing Advocacy and Inquiry

Objective:

Students will explore the practices of advocacy and inquiry in dialogue, reflect on their own tendencies, and practice balancing clear self-expression with genuine curiosity toward others.

Steps:

Individual Reflection

Each student writes down how they usually participate in conversations:

- Do they tend to speak their views strongly (advocacy)?
- Or do they ask more questions and listen (inquiry)?

Note: Often, some people prefer to speak while others prefer to listen. Also, some people feel comfortable in both. It is a good topic for a group dialogue. This encourages self-awareness and personal connection to the topic.

Educator's Input:

The educator introduces the concepts and stresses the importance of balancing them to have a good dialogue :

Advocacy: expressing your perspective clearly and confidently.

- Example: "I believe that building trust in a group requires regular check-ins."

Inquiry: asking questions with genuine curiosity to understand others' perspectives.

- Example: "How do you see trust being built in your community?"

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Practical tips for advocacy:

- Be clear and concise, avoid jargon.
- Share reasoning behind your view, not just conclusions.
- Speak with respect, not dominance.

Practical tips for inquiry:

- Ask open-ended questions ("What do you think...?" rather than "Do you agree?").
- Listen actively - don't prepare your reply while the other speaks.

Show curiosity, not interrogation. Emphasize once again: In genuine dialogue, balance arises when we speak our truth with clarity while staying open and curious to the truths of others.

Paired Practice

Students form pairs. In each pair, one student practices advocacy (sharing a perspective on a chosen topic), while the other practices inquiry (asking questions to understand). After 5 minutes, they switch roles. Topics can be simple but meaningful (e.g., "What makes a group feel safe?" or "How should communities celebrate traditions?").

Verification and Comparison:

Students reflect on the experience:

- How did it feel to advocate?
- How did it feel to inquire?
- What was easy or difficult?

They compare their reflections with the educator's explanation of balance in dialogue. Note similarities, differences, and new insights.

Dialogue

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Group Reflection (common dialogue).

Together, the class discusses each practice:

- What does it look like in action?
- What makes it challenging?
- What helps us improve?
- Students share strategies for strengthening their skills.
- The educator notes key points on the board to create a collective map of growth strategies.

Closing

Students look again at their Dialogue Wheel.

Prompt:

“Choose one practice you want to focus on improving. What is one concrete step you can take?”

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand the five practices of dialogue.
- Reflect on their own comfort levels using the Dialogue Wheel.
- Identify practical steps to strengthen their dialogic competence.

Dialogue

Summary

Dialogue is more than conversation - it is a practice of exchanging perspectives with openness, respect, and curiosity, creating shared meaning. Unlike debate or discussion, which often seek to win, dialogue emphasizes listening, understanding, and connection, helping us learn from one another and grow together. In dialogue, everybody is a winner. Dialogue balances advocacy (speaking our truth) with inquiry (welcoming the truths of others), which helps people to have good, deep, and meaningful conversations.
NOTE: In this E-book you will find more connection to dialogue e.g. in the Chapters:

- Conflict(s) and conflict resolution.
- Critical thinking - broaden perspective.
- Resilience and dialogue in a digital world.

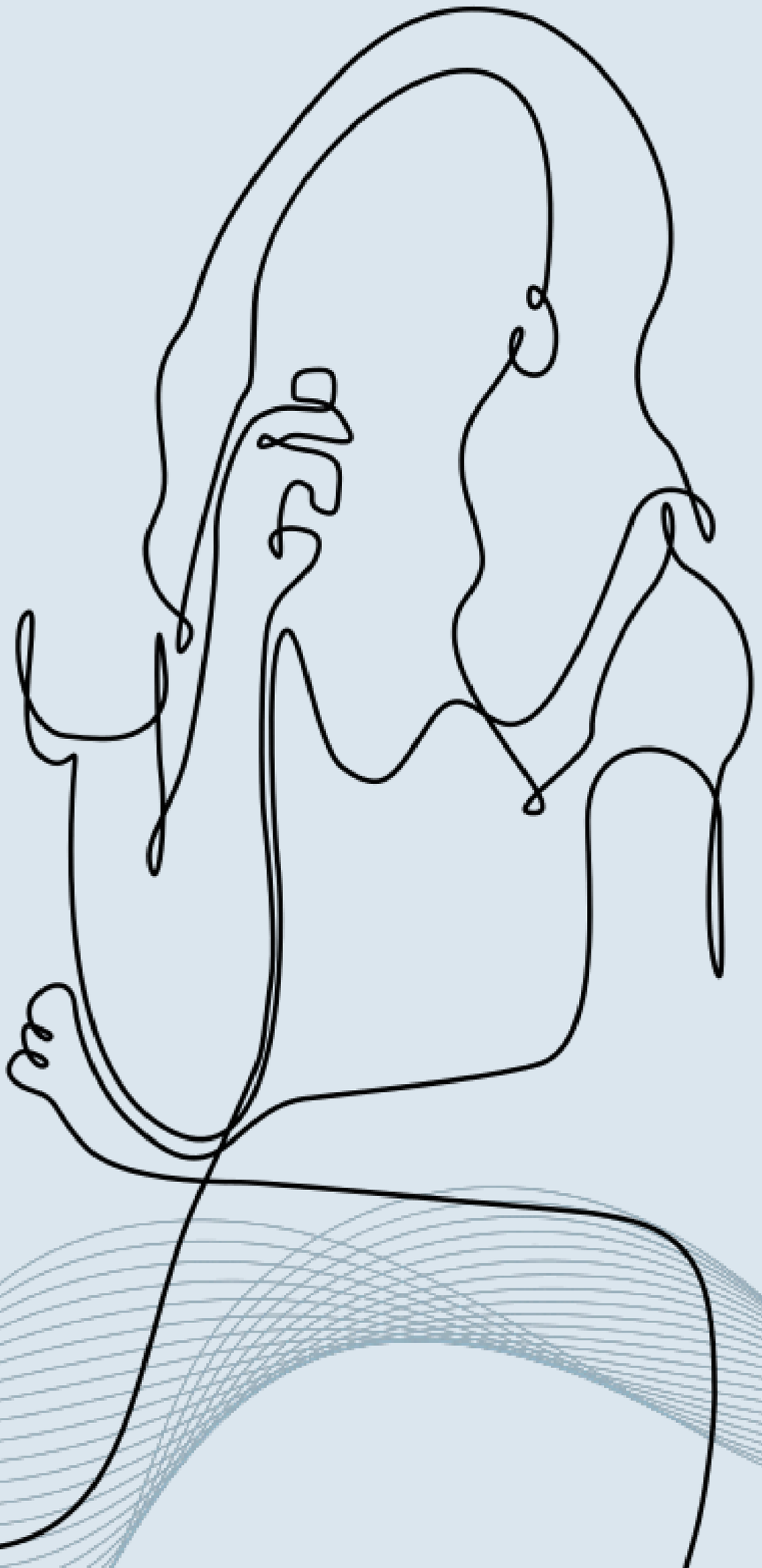


Dialogue

Knowledge Check

You may find it helpful to check your knowledge and reflect on yourself:

1. What is dialogue? What is the main difference between dialogue and debate/discussion?
2. In dialogue, what does advocacy mean, and how is it practiced respectfully?
3. What does inquiry involve, and why is it important for building mutual understanding?
4. Name two of the five core practices of dialogue that help create good communication among people.



Dialogue

Further Reading or Resources:

Books:

"Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together" by Isaacs William

"The Fifth Discipline" by Peter Senge

"The Spirit of Dialogue" by Daniel Yankelovich

Websites:

About the dialogue - "Rozmawiajmy"

People need more dialogue, European Union needs more dialogue. | E...



Conflict Resolution

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

The chapter aims to help young people understand that conflict is a normal part of life and can be transformed into opportunities for growth, connection, and better communication.

Effects of Work

Educators and students enhance their ability to identify the causes of conflict, apply constructive resolution strategies and a dialogical approach, and foster healthier relationships in everyday situations.

Target Group(s)

The lessons are designed for young people (15+), but can also benefit educators, community groups, and anyone interested in dialogic practices, as conflict resolution skills are universally valuable.

Methodology

The approach combines reflection, educator input, interactive activities, and collective definition-building to engage participants in both understanding and practicing conflict resolution.

Timing

For an educator to get knowledge and prepare materials regarded as needed: about 1-1,5 hour(s).
For students: 3 lessons, 45 minutes each (duration may vary according to group size).

Conflict Resolution

Main Content

What is Conflict?

The word conflict has Latin roots. It comes from conflictus, which is the past form of confligere - a word that means “to strike together.”

Conflict is a natural part of life - it occurs when people perceive things differently. And let’s be real: we’re all different. Everyone knows that, but even knowing it doesn’t make it easier to understand each other. Whether it’s a small disagreement or a full-blown argument, we deal with clashes almost every day.

Generally, a conflict isn’t something to fear - it’s normal. What matters is how we handle it. That means learning how to communicate better, understanding where others are coming from, and practicing those skills on our own or with friends. The more we work on it, the better we get at turning conflict into connection.

Main reasons for conflicts:

People grow up with different ideas about what’s right, wrong, important, or respectful. When those values clash, as when one person values honesty while another avoids confrontation, it can lead to tension or misunderstandings.

Conflict Resolution

Main Content

Below, we underline some known reasons for conflicts:

- Different values and beliefs – when people hold different priorities, principles, or worldviews, even small decisions can create tension. What feels obvious or important to one person may seem irrelevant to another - and without space for open dialogue, these differences can quickly turn into conflict.
- Poor communication (lack of dialogue) - not saying what you really mean, interrupting, or ignoring someone's point of view can quickly turn a small issue into a big argument.
- Misunderstandings - sometimes conflict happens simply because someone misunderstood a message, tone, or intention. A joke might be taken as an insult, or silence might be seen as rejection.
- Jealousy or competition - whether it's over friendships, grades, sports, or attention, rivalry can create conflict - especially if people feel left out or judged.
- Peer pressure - feeling pushed to do something you're not comfortable with - or pressuring others - can lead to serious disagreements.
- Lack of respect or boundaries - when someone crosses personal boundaries (like invading privacy or being too controlling), it can cause frustration and conflict.
- Stress and emotions - when people are tired, stressed, or upset, they're more likely to snap or overreact - even to small things.

The list is not finished. Can you add your ideas?

Conflict Resolution

Main Content

Five main strategies for conflict resolution (based on Thomas–Kilmann model).
Conflict can be approached in many ways - through avoidance, competition, accommodation, compromise, or collaboration - and each strategy teaches us something different about human relationships. Exploring these styles with young people helps them see that conflict isn't just about winning or losing, but about learning how to balance self-expression with respect for others. By diving deeper into these approaches, they can build stronger communication skills and discover creative paths toward understanding and cooperation.
5 strategies:

- Avoidance: ignoring or withdrawing from the conflict without addressing the issue.
- Competition: pursuing one's own goals at the expense of others.
- Accommodation: yielding to the other party's needs to maintain harmony.
- Compromise: each side gives up something to reach a middle-ground solution.
- Collaboration: working together to find a win–win solution that satisfies all parties.

🎥 You can also watch and use the video: Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people. These activities will help them to learn more about conflicts and strategies towards them.

Activity 1 - Exploring Conflict (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will reflect on their own understanding of conflict, learn about its roots and causes, and co-create a shared definition of conflict as a normal part of human interaction.

Steps:

Individual Reflection

Each student writes on a separate sheet of paper what comes to mind when they think of *conflict*. For more interesting activities, students can also be asked to draw on paper an association or several associations related to conflict (*coloured pencils or markers are needed*). This encourages personal associations, independent thinking, and awareness of their own experiences.

Educator's Input

The educator explains the origins of the word *conflict* (from Latin *conflictus*, past form of *confligere*, meaning "to strike together"). Conflict is presented as a natural part of life - it occurs when people perceive things differently. Emphasize: conflict is not something to fear by definition; what matters is how we handle it.

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Share the main reasons for conflicts:

- Different values and beliefs
- Poor communication
- Misunderstandings
- Jealousy or competition
- Peer pressure
- Lack of respect or boundaries
- Stress and emotions

Verification and Comparison

Students revisit their initial reflections and compare them with the educator's explanation. They note similarities, differences, and new insights about what conflict means and why it happens.

All together practise dialogue about the topic.

Collective Definition/Meaning.

In a plenary session, ideas are gathered (e.g., written on the board). Together, the group formulates a shared definition of conflict that reflects everyone's contributions, such as:

"Conflict is a normal part of life that arises when people see things differently. It can be challenging, but it also offers opportunities to learn, grow, and connect."

Together all participants have some more dialogue on common conflicts. People can share e.g. last conflict they had and how they tried to solve it.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Have both a personal and collective understanding of conflict.
- Recognize conflict as a normal part of human relationships.
- Identify common causes of conflict in everyday life.
- Begin to see conflict not only as a challenge but also as a chance to practice communication and build connection.

Activity 2 - Exploring Conflict Resolution Strategies (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will learn about five main strategies for conflict resolution, reflect on their own comfort level with each, and discuss ways to strengthen their skills in handling disagreements constructively.

Steps:

Educator's Input

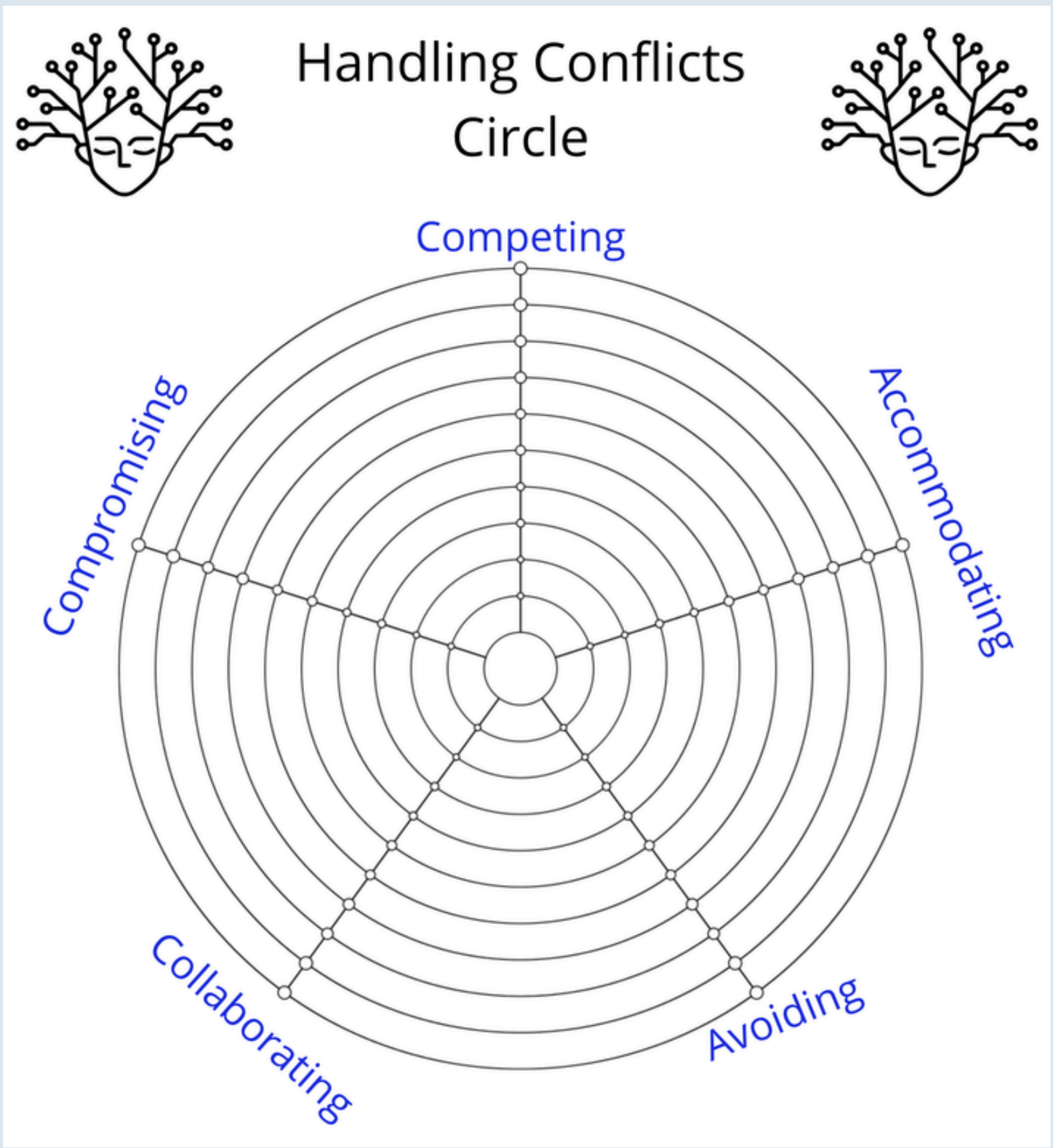
The educator introduces the idea of conflict as something normal and explains the five strategies (Thomas–Kilmann model):

- Avoidance – ignoring or withdrawing from the conflict without addressing the issue.
- Competition – pursuing one's own goals at the expense of others.
- Accommodation – yielding to the other party's needs to maintain harmony.
- Compromise – each side gives up something to reach a middle-ground solution.
- Collaboration – working together to find a win–win solution that satisfies all parties.

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Emphasize: Each strategy has strengths and risks, and learning to choose wisely helps us grow in relationships.



Conflict Wheel Activity

- Each student receives a Conflict Wheel handout (a circle divided into five sections, one for each strategy).
- Instructions for students:
- Mark on the scale how comfortable or confident you feel with each strategy. In the middle of the circle is 0 (meaning not at all).

In other words, there is a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the maximum.

Note: This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now.

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Group Reflection (common dialogue): Together, the class discusses each strategy:

- What does it look like in action? Any examples?
- What makes it challenging?
- What helps us improve? Students share personal examples or observations, and the educator notes key points on the board to create a collective map of growth strategies.

Closing:

students look again at their Conflict Wheel.

Prompt:

"Choose one strategy you want to focus on exploring more. Why?"

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand the five strategies for conflict resolution.
- Reflect on their own comfort levels using the Conflict Wheel.
- Identify practical steps to strengthen their ability to handle conflict constructively.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 -Balancing Advocacy and Inquiry in Conflict (45 minutes)

NOTE: More about balancing advocacy and inquiry, you can find in the Chapter: Dialogue and the Art of Shared Understanding. Take advantage of its content.

Objective:
Students will explore how advocacy and inquiry can be used in conflict situations, reflect on their own tendencies, and practice balancing clear self-expression with genuine curiosity to support healthier conflict resolution.

Steps:
Individual Reflection
Each student writes down how they usually respond in conflicts and difficult situations:

- Do they tend to advocate strongly for their own perspective?
- Or do they lean toward inquiring into the other person's view?

This encourages self-awareness and personal connection to conflict styles.

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Educator's Input:

Introduce the concepts in the context of conflict:

Advocacy in conflict – expressing your perspective clearly and confidently.

- Example: "I feel frustrated when decisions are made without asking for my input."
- Tips: Be clear and concise, share reasoning, not just conclusions, speak with respect, not dominance.

Inquiry in conflict – asking questions with genuine curiosity to understand others' perspectives.

- Example: "Can you tell me what feels most important to you in this situation?"
- Tips: Ask open-ended questions, listen actively, and show curiosity rather than interrogation.

Emphasize:

Using dialogue methods in conflict -> in conflict, balance arises when we express our truth while staying open to the truths of others. This balance helps move from confrontation to connection.

Conflict Resolution

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Collective Definition/Meaning:

In plenary, ideas are gathered (e.g., written on the board). Together, the group formulates a shared definition of balanced conflict resolution, such as:

"Balanced conflict resolution means expressing one's own perspective clearly while remaining open and curious to others' perspectives, turning disagreement into an opportunity for understanding."

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand how advocacy and inquiry function in conflict situations.
- Recognize their own tendencies when facing disagreements.
- Practice balancing clear self-expression with genuine curiosity in conflict.
- Co-create a shared definition of balanced conflict resolution as a practice of openness, respect, and mutual learning.

Conflict Resolution

Summary

Conflict is more than a clash of opinions - it is a natural meeting of differences that, when approached with openness, respect, and curiosity, can become a source of growth. Unlike arguments that aim to win or dominate, constructive conflict resolution emphasizes listening, understanding, and connection, helping us transform tension into learning and stronger relationships. It balances advocacy - speaking our truth clearly with inquiry (welcoming the truths of others). So that disagreement becomes an opportunity for shared meaning and cooperation.

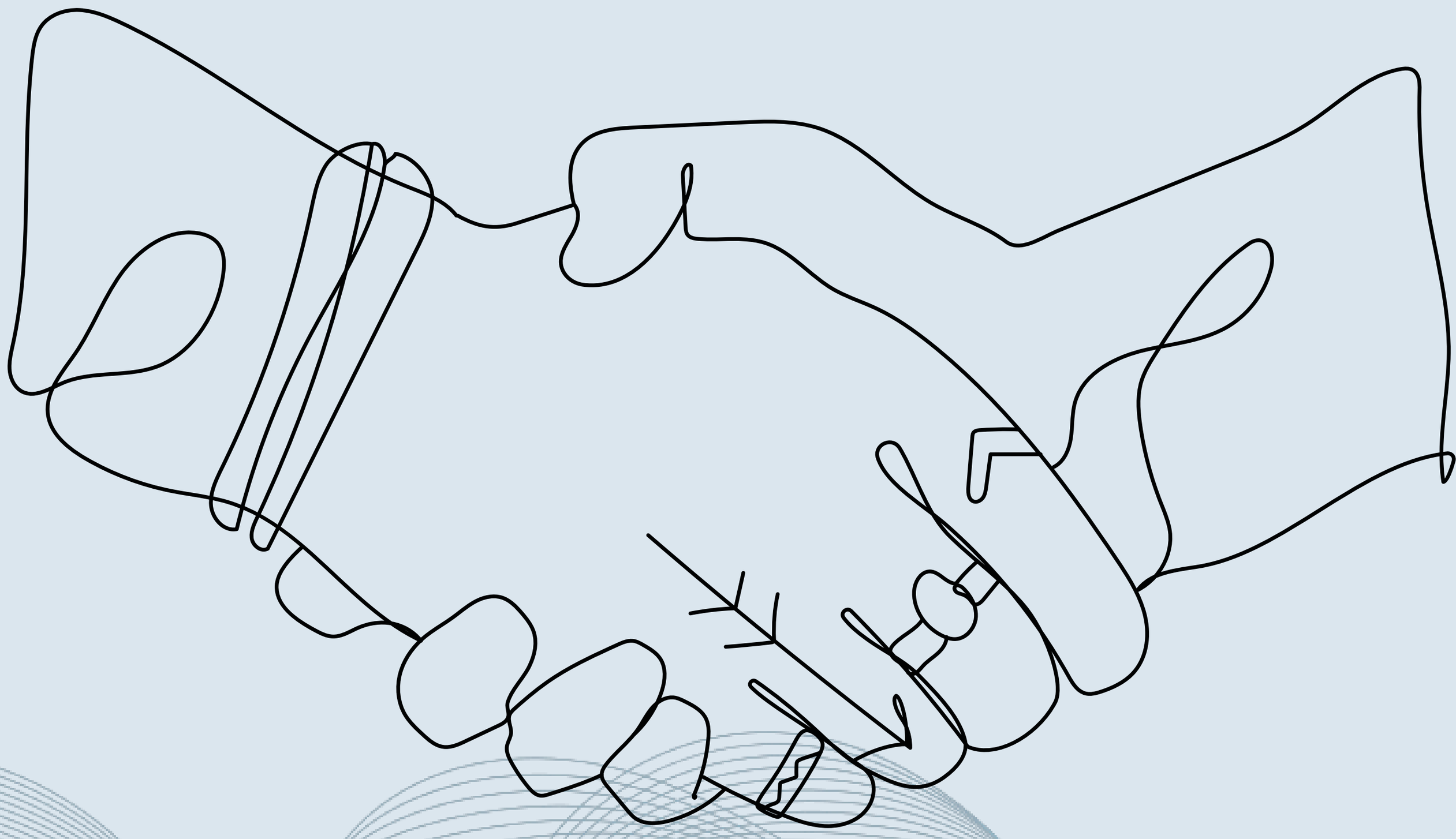


Conflict Resolution

Knowledge Check

You may find it helpful to check your knowledge and reflect on yourself:

1. What does the Latin root of the word conflict (“conflictus” from confligere) mean?
2. Name three common reasons why conflicts arise between people.
3. What are the five main strategies for conflict resolution described in the Thomas-Kilmann model?
4. Which conflict resolution strategy focuses on finding a win-win solution, and why is it valuable?
5. How can practicing good communication and curiosity help turn conflict into connection?



Conflict Resolution

Further Reading or Resources

Books:

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen

The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict by Christopher W. Moore

Websites:

Conflict Prevention, Peace building and Mediation | EEAS

What do you know about conflicts? | EPALE

Emotions

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

Emotions as the Foundation of School Mediation

Conflicts in schools rarely emerge exclusively from objective facts; instead, they typically stem from emotional reactions, unmet socio-emotional needs, misunderstandings, or perceived threats (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005). During adolescence, emotional intensity is especially high due to ongoing brain development - most notably the delayed maturation of the prefrontal cortex and the heightened activity of the limbic system (Steinberg, 2014). As a result, young people experience emotions more rapidly and more intensely, while simultaneously having fewer strategies to manage them effectively.

For this reason, preparing young volunteer mediators requires much more than teaching communication structures. They must learn to recognize emotions in themselves and others, manage their own affective states during challenging moments, and support peers in expressing their feelings constructively. Emotional competence becomes the gateway skill that determines whether mediation succeeds or fails (Brackett, 2019).

This chapter provides a comprehensive theoretical and practical overview for youth workers and educators who prepare young people for mediation roles. It integrates psychological research, developmental considerations, conflict-resolution theory, and hands-on exercises that can be used in training sessions or in classroom-based preparation.

Emotions

Effects of Work

By working through this chapter, learners will significantly improve their emotional competence in the context of school mediation. The activities and theoretical content develop both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills that support constructive conflict resolution.

After completing this chapter, learners will be able to:

- Recognise and name a wide range of emotions in themselves and others, including subtle emotional shifts that contribute to escalating conflict.
- Demonstrate deeper self-awareness regarding their own emotional triggers, stress signs and the physiological aspects of emotional reactions.
- Apply emotional regulation strategies such as grounding, calming techniques, and cognitive reframing to remain balanced during challenging interactions.
- Engage in deep, empathic listening by paying close attention to verbal and non-verbal communication cues (tone of voice, body posture, facial expression).
- Identify and validate emotional experiences expressed by peers, supporting them to feel heard and respected.
- Use neutral and supportive language that reduces tension and facilitates mutual understanding.
- Intervene early in escalation by recognising the "warning signs" of frustration, defensiveness or overwhelm.
- Facilitate constructive dialogue by helping peers express underlying needs and emotions instead of focusing on blame or attack.

Emotions

Effects of Work

- Take responsibility for their own emotional presence, knowing when to pause, slow down or ask for help during mediation.
- These skills contribute not only to successful mediation sessions but also to improved classroom climate, empathy development and young people's overall emotional well-being. Emotional literacy enables mediators to create safe psychological spaces where peers can express themselves honestly and work towards shared solutions.

Target Group(s)

This chapter is intended primarily for:

- Young volunteer peer mediators in school settings (aged approximately 12–18)
- Students and pupils who participate in non-formal learning programmes, mediation clubs or peer-support initiatives
- Youth workers, teachers and school counsellors who train and supervise young mediators

The content is adapted to the developmental needs of adolescents, who:

- are at a stage of heightened emotional sensitivity,
- are learning to regulate impulses and frustration,
- depend strongly on peer acceptance and belonging,
- are developing communication skills and empathy,
- benefit from structured practice and supportive feedback.

Emotions

Target Group(s)

The learning approach used in this chapter (experiential activities, role-play, self-reflection, emotional awareness) is aligned with the way adolescents naturally acquire social and emotional skills - through observation, active practice and interaction with peers in a safe environment.

This chapter can be used in:

- formal education environments (schools, student councils, school mediation programmes)
- non-formal education settings (youth centres, summer camps, Erasmus+ activities)

The tasks can be adapted for different ages and levels of experience, ensuring that every young mediator can apply the acquired knowledge directly in real mediation cases.

Methodology

This chapter follows an experiential learning methodology, combining theory with active participation and guided reflection. Learners do not only read about emotions -they observe, explore, express and practise them in realistic mediation contexts. The structure is grounded in:

Theoretical Framework

Short explanations based on emotional intelligence, affective neuroscience and school mediation theory provide a solid understanding of:

- what emotions are,
- why they escalate,
- and how to manage them constructively in peer conflict.

Emotions

Methodology

Case-Based Learning

Examples and short conflict scenarios show how emotions shape real school interactions, helping learners translate theory into understanding.

Interactive Role-Play & Practice

Learners engage in role-plays, simulations and structured observation, building confidence to use emotional skills in live mediation sessions.

Reflection & Self-Awareness

Activities such as triggers mapping, emotional check-ins and guided debrief questions promote personal growth and mediator presence.

Visual and Kinesthetic Tools

Emotion cards, volcano diagrams and identity mapping sheets make emotional processes tangible, accessible and memorable for young learners.

This blended methodology supports different learning styles and ensures that new skills become applied competencies, not just abstract knowledge.

Emotions

Methodology

Tips and Best Practices for Trainers and Mediators

- Model calm behaviour - emotional regulation is learned socially
- Use neutral, validating language (e.g., "I see this is important for you")
- Pause when emotions rise - slowing down prevents escalation
- Focus on needs, not blame - what is behind the emotion?
- Encourage naming the feeling - language gives control
- Celebrate progress - emotional awareness develops step by step

Do's

- Create a safe, respectful environment
- Invite all voices to be heard
- Pay attention to nonverbal signals
- Offer choice and agency during activities

Don'ts

- Don't minimise emotions ("It's not a big deal")
- Don't rush to solutions before listening
- Don't ignore the quieter participants
- Don't label the person - only describe behaviour

Emotions

Methodology

Interactive Elements

How learners stay engaged and actively involved

The chapter includes:

- Emotion recognition games
- Small group dialogues
- Peer feedback and observation
- Self-evaluation checklists
- Creative expressive tasks
- Mindfulness-based grounding

These elements ensure active learning, emotional safety and high motivation among young mediators.



Emotions

Timing

The full chapter can be completed in 2.5 to 4 hours, depending on the training context and group needs.

Component	Estimated time
Theoretical introduction	20–30 minutes
Activity 1 – Emotion Charades	20–25 minutes
Activity 2 – Triggers Map	30–40 minutes
Activity 3 – Emotion–Need Exploration	40–50 minutes
Activity 4 – Volcano Exercise	25–30 minutes
Reflection & debriefing	15–20 minutes
Optional mindfulness grounding	+10 minutes

Emotions

Main Content

The Psychological Foundations of Emotion

What Are Emotions?

Emotions are rapid, coordinated responses involving physiological arousal, cognitive interpretation, expressive behaviour, and subjective experience (Ekman, 1999). They evolved to help humans respond adaptively to the environment - protecting against danger, promoting social bonding, and facilitating decision-making.

Emotions are therefore not obstacles to mediation; they are signals that reveal what matters to the participants. Learning to decode these signals is one of the mediator's essential tasks.

Primary and Secondary Emotions

A central distinction in emotional theory is that between primary and secondary emotions (Greenberg, 2011):

- Primary emotions are immediate, instinctive reactions: fear, anger, sadness, joy, surprise, disgust.
- Secondary emotions are shaped by interpretations, beliefs, and social learning: jealousy, shame, guilt, pride, embarrassment.

Young people often express a secondary emotion, such as anger, that masks a more vulnerable primary emotion like hurt or fear. Mediators who understand this dynamic can gently guide participants to the underlying feeling, which typically enables a deeper, more authentic conversation.

Emotions

Main Content

Emotions, Needs, and Triggers

According to Human Needs Theory (Burton, 1990), conflicts arise when fundamental needs are threatened, including:

- safety
- belonging
- autonomy
- fairness
- respect
- competence

In school settings, emotional triggers often relate to peer acceptance, reputation, academic stress, or social identity. Training young mediators to identify underlying needs instead of focusing solely on visible behaviour significantly increases the effectiveness of their interventions.

Emotional Development During Adolescence

Adolescence is marked by increased emotional reactivity, sensitivity to peer evaluation, and a strong desire for belonging (Siegel, 2014). Peer relationships become central to identity formation, which explains why seemingly "small" social incidents may generate intense feelings.

Emotions

Main Content

Research shows that adolescents:

- interpret ambiguous social cues more negatively (Somerville, 2013),
- are more likely to experience shame and humiliation in peer conflict,
- rely heavily on emotion-driven decision-making when under stress,
- have not yet developed fully mature emotion-regulation skills.

Thus, emotional literacy training is not an optional component of mediator preparation - it is a developmental necessity.

Emotional Regulation as a Key Mediator Competence

Why Regulation Matters

A mediator's ability to stay calm, neutral, and grounded has a direct impact on the parties' emotional states through co-regulation mechanisms (Porges, 2011). If the mediator becomes stressed, defensive, or rushed, the conflict parties mirror this tension. Conversely, the mediator's calm tone, slow pace, and grounded posture help participants feel safe enough to express themselves.

Regulation Strategies to Teach Young Mediators

Effective emotional regulation includes physiological, cognitive, and behavioural strategies. Research-based methods suitable for adolescents include:

Emotions

Main Content

Physiological strategies

- deep breathing techniques (slow exhale to activate parasympathetic response)
- box breathing (4–4–4–4)
- grounding exercises (5–4–3–2–1 sensory scan)
- posture changes (open-chest posture reduces stress arousal)
- mindful walking or micro-breaks

(See: Feldman, 2018; Kabat-Zinn, 2003.)

Cognitive strategies

- cognitive reappraisal ("This situation is not a threat to me.")
- perspective-taking ("What might they be feeling?")
- identifying thinking errors (overgeneralisation, catastrophising, mind-reading)
- intentional pausing before responding

(Reappraisal is one of the most effective regulation strategies; Gross, 2015.)

Behavioural/communication strategies

- naming emotions ("It seems like you're feeling frustrated.")
- validating ("That reaction makes sense given your experience.")
- slowing down the conversation
- clarifying statements

Validation is critical because conflicts often escalate from the experience of being misunderstood or dismissed (Rogers, 1961).

Emotions

Main Content

Developing Emotional Literacy in Young Mediators

The Importance of Emotional Vocabulary

Most adolescents use a limited vocabulary to describe feelings. Without nuanced language, they struggle to articulate their inner states, leading to miscommunication and escalation. Youth workers should introduce tools such as:

- emotion wheels (Plutchik)
- emotion thermometers (intensity scales)
- metaphor-based tools (traffic light, storm levels)

These tools improve emotional granularity, which is strongly associated with improved regulation (Barrett, 2017).

Understanding the Emotion–Behaviour Sequence

Helping young mediators identify the steps linking thoughts, emotions, and behaviours builds self-awareness:

- Trigger
- Interpretation
- Emotion
- Behaviour
- Consequence

This model aligns with Cognitive Behavioural Theory (Beck, 2011) and enables mediators to guide peers from reactive behaviour to reflective understanding.

Emotions

Main Content

Recognising Emotions in Others

Skills include observing:

- tone of voice
- facial micro-expressions (Ekman, 2003)
- body posture
- pacing and energy
- eye contact

However, youth must avoid assumptions; instead, they "check in": "I'm noticing your hands are shaking a little. Are you feeling nervous about the situation?"

This contributes to emotional safety and reduces misinterpretation. Creating Emotional Safety in Mediation

Emotional safety is a precondition for dialogue. According to safety theory (Coan & Sbarra, 2015), people can only engage in problem-solving when they feel secure.

Key components include:

- neutrality
- confidentiality
- predictability
- voluntary participation
- respect and equal voice

The mediator's role is to maintain this climate through consistent boundaries and clear structure.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Tools and Techniques for Supporting Emotional Expression

Statements

The formula ("I feel... when... because... I need...") supports non-blaming communication and aligns with Nonviolent Communication principles (Rosenberg, 2003).

Emotion Scaling

Using a 0–10 intensity scale externalises the emotion and makes it more manageable:

"On a scale of 0–10, how intense is the frustration right now?"

STOP–NAME–CHOOSE

A simple sequence:

1. Stop
2. Name the emotion
3. Choose a response

Supported by mindfulness research (Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Time-Outs

Breaks allow the nervous system to return to baseline. Mediators must learn to offer breaks confidently and neutrally.

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

The following activities are designed to help young mediators strengthen their emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and communication skills. All exercises can be used by youth workers, educators, facilitators, and school psychologists in group training sessions, workshops, or mediation preparation programs. Each activity includes theoretical grounding, clear steps, and reflective questions that support deeper learning.

Activity 1 - Emotion Charades – Nonverbal Emotion Recognition Training

Duration: 20–25 minutes

Purpose:

- to improve recognition of nonverbal emotional cues (Ekman, 2003)
- to train attention to facial expressions, gestures, tone, and posture
- to build empathy and mentalisation skills

Materials Needed

- 15–20 cards with basic and complex emotions
- (anger, fear, shame, nervousness, disappointment, relief, envy, gratitude, excitement, tension, confusion)

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Procedure

1. Participants sit in a circle.
2. One volunteer draws an emotion card.
3. They act out the emotion without words.
4. The group guesses the emotion.
5. After revealing the answer, the group discusses:
   - What nonverbal signs helped you identify the emotion?
   - What body posture or facial expression signalled it?
   - Was it easy or difficult to recognise? Why?

Trainer Notes

This activity improves perceptual sensitivity and teaches mediators to "read the emotional room," a crucial skill for de-escalation and gaining trust.

Reflection Questions for Mediators

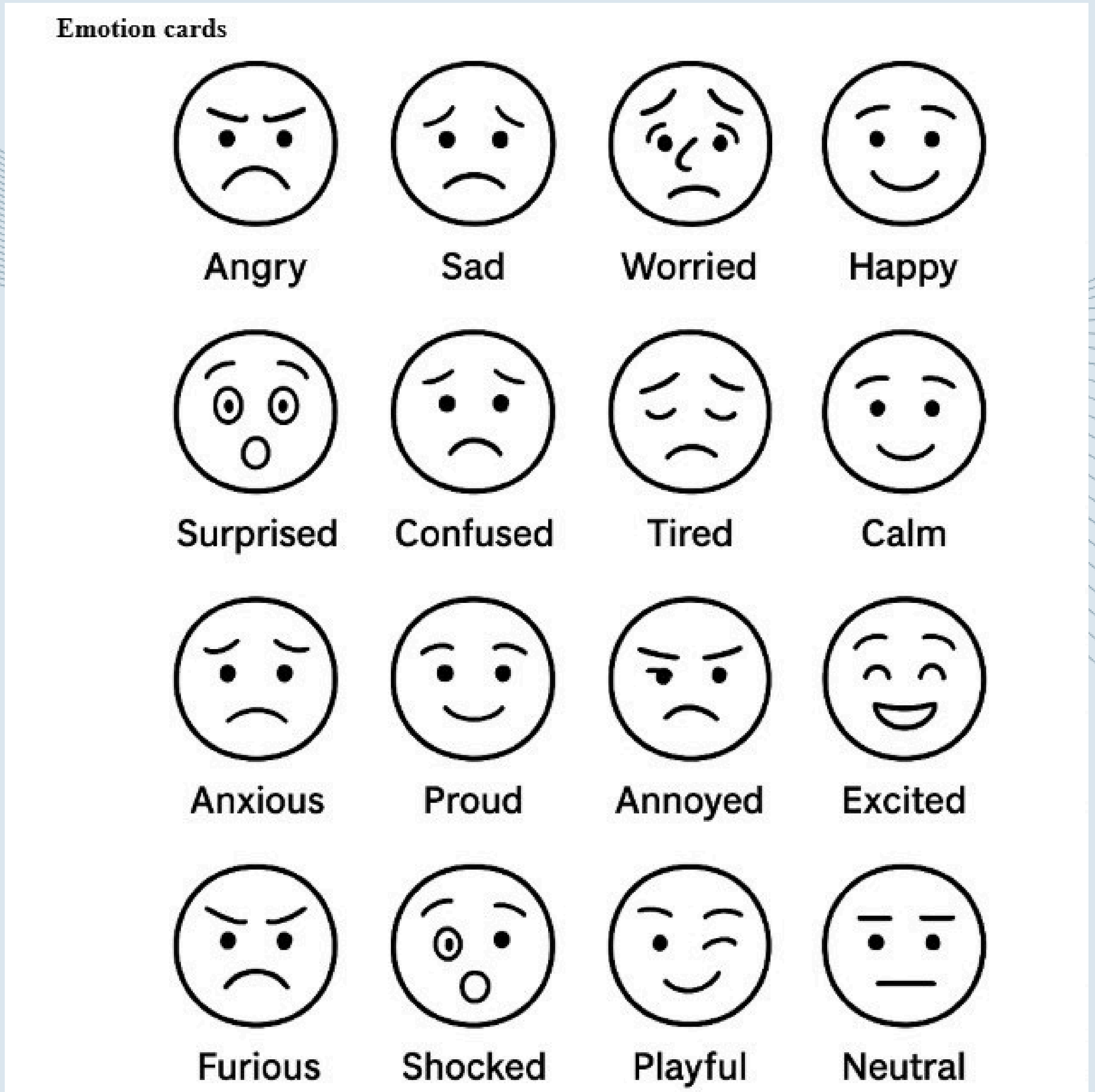
- How can nonverbal signals help you intervene earlier during a mediation?
- What signs tell you someone is overwhelmed or shutting down?
- What risks arise if a mediator misreads emotional cues?

Variations

- Silent Conflict Scene: two participants act out a short conflict silently; observers identify the emotional undercurrents.
- Emotion Switch: halfway through, the trainer shows the actor a new emotion card that must be switched instantly.

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Triggers Map – Identifying Personal Emotional Triggers

Duration: 30–40 minutes

Purpose:

- to increase self-awareness of personal emotional triggers
- to prepare mediators for neutrality under stress
- to prevent personal reactions from interfering with the mediation process

Materials Needed

- A4 sheets
- Markers
- Sample diagram with three zones: mild / moderate / strong triggers

Procedure

1. Each participant draws three concentric circles labelled (see example in Annex 7, Triggers Map):
   - Mild triggers (small irritations)
   - Moderate triggers (frustration, tension)
   - Strong triggers (anger, fear, shame)
2. Individually, they fill each circle with real triggers from personal experience.
3. In pairs or small groups, participants may share (optional).

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

4. In plenary, the trainer facilitates discussion:
   - Which triggers appeared most frequently?
   - Why do certain situations affect us more than others?
   - Which triggers would be challenging to manage as a mediator?
5. Each participant writes a "Personal Regulation Plan" for their strongest trigger.

Theoretical Background

The exercise is grounded in cognitive-behavioural and emotion-regulation research (Gross, 1998; Feldman, 2018). Mediators must recognise their own emotional thresholds to remain neutral and supportive.

Reflection Questions:

- How does my body react when I am triggered?
- What helps me regulate myself quickly?
- What would I need to do in a real mediation if this trigger appeared?

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Emotion-Need Exploration – Connecting Emotions to Underlying Needs

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Purpose:

- to help participants understand that emotions signal unmet needs
- to teach mediators to look below the surface of conflict
- to strengthen empathy and de-escalation skills

Materials Needed

- Short conflict scenario cards relevant to school life (see annex 9, School Conflict Scenario Cards)
- Emotion lists and needs lists (based on Nonviolent Communication, see annex 10, Emotion List, and annex 11, Needs List)

Procedure

1. Small groups draw a scenario card.
2. They identify the emotions experienced by each conflict party.
3. They list the unmet needs behind the emotions (e.g., dignity, fairness, respect, belonging, safety).
4. Groups present their analysis:
   - What emotions did you identify in Person A and B?
   - Which needs might be driving these emotions?
5. Discuss how a mediator can help the parties express these needs.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Theoretical Background

Derived from Rosenberg's NVC model (2003), this exercise teaches the "deep structure" of conflict: behaviour is just the surface; needs and emotions drive the interaction.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it crucial to recognise needs during mediation?
- How does the conflict change when we understand "why it hurts"?
- What language helps surface needs without blame?

Activity 4 - The Volcano Exercise – Understanding Emotional Escalation

Duration: 25–30 minutes

Purpose:

- to help young mediators recognise stages of emotional escalation
- to train early intervention strategies
- to understand the physiology of anger and stress

Materials Needed

- A large volcano diagram drawn on flipchart paper (see a sample in Annex 12, Volcano Diagram)
- Sticky notes of different colours

Procedure

1. Trainer introduces the escalation steps:
    - Irritation → Frustration → Anger → Explosion
2. Participants write examples of behaviours or thoughts for each level and place them on the volcano.

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

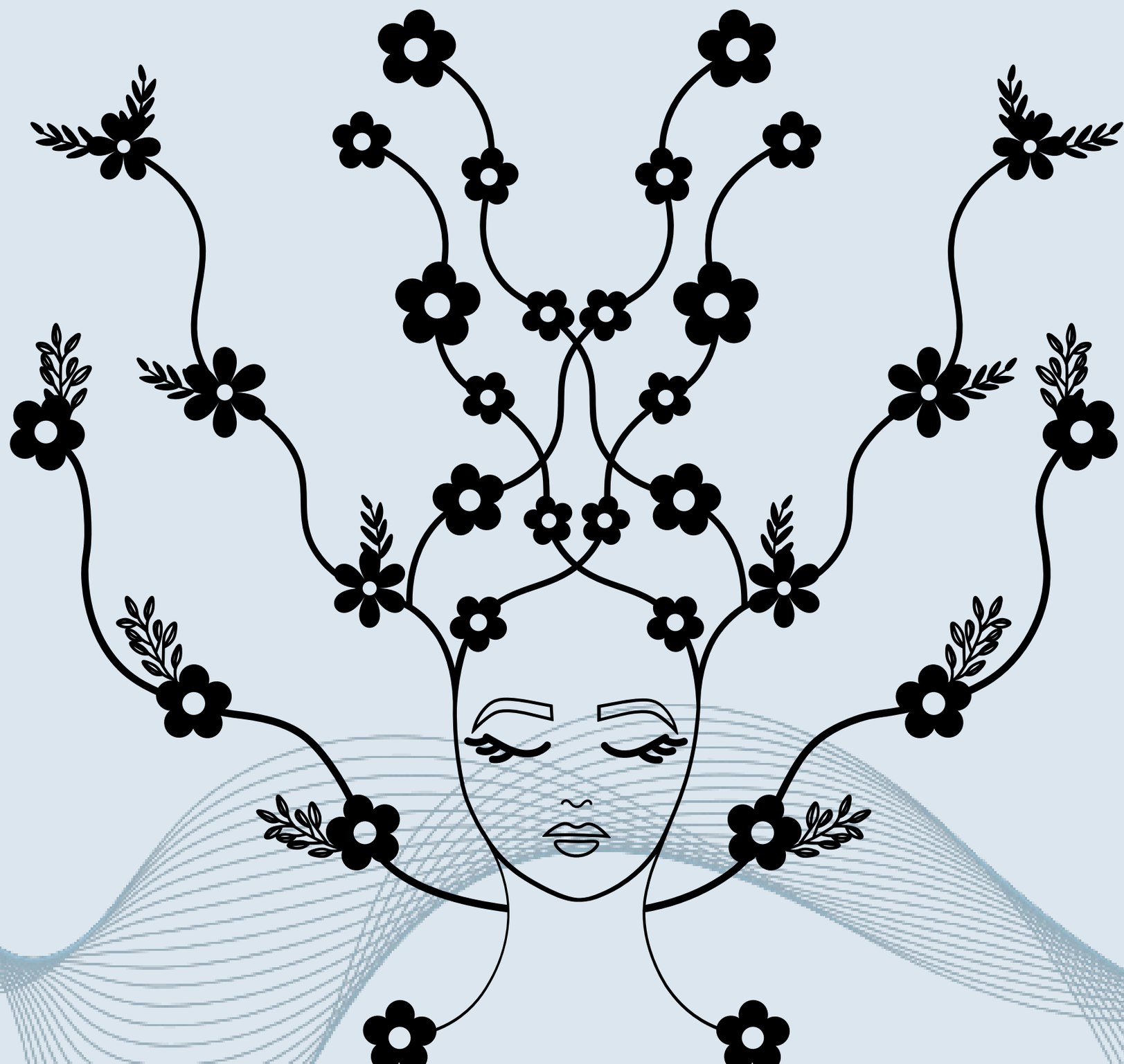
3. Discussion points:
   - What early warning signs can you spot at each stage?
   - What interventions can prevent escalation?
4. As a group, they create a "Mediators' Intervention Toolkit" for each escalation level.

Theoretical Background

The activity is based on affective neuroscience and the fight–flight response models (LeDoux, 1996). Teaching young mediators to detect early signs increases the likelihood of successful de-escalation.

Reflection Questions

- How do you personally escalate during conflict?
- What signs tell you someone is approaching "explosion"?
- What could you say as a mediator to help them calm?



Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 5 - Mediation Role-Plays with an Emotional Focus

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Purpose:

- to integrate emotion skills into real mediation practice
- to build confidence, presence, and neutrality
- to train validation, active listening, and grounded communication

Materials Needed

- 2–3 detailed school conflict scenarios
- Role cards: Mediator, Person A, Person B, Observers
- Observation sheets (emotional cues noticed, validation attempts, tone, pacing)

Procedure

1. Participants are divided into triads + observers.
2. The mediator conducts an 8–10 minute mini-mediation.
3. The mediator must intentionally practise:
   - naming emotions
   - validating feelings
   - using pauses or time-outs
   - slowing the pace when escalation appears
   - maintaining neutrality
4. Observers give structured feedback.
5. Participants rotate roles.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Theoretical Background

This draws on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and social learning theory. Role-play allows trainees to internalise emotional regulation methods and test them in safe situations.

Reflection Questions

- When did you feel most challenged as the mediator?
- Which validation phrase worked well?
- What emotional signals did you miss?
- How confident did you feel managing the emotional climate?

Activity 6 - (Optional) Mindfulness-Based Grounding for Mediators

Duration: 10–12 minutes

Purpose:

- to help mediators regulate internal states quickly
- to improve attention, clarity, and emotional steadiness
- to cultivate presence before or during a mediation

Emotions

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Procedure

- Guided slow breathing (inhale 4, exhale 6).
- Short body scan from head to toes (e.g. https://youtu.be/e0f9wa2SUX0?si=CT48Kj25szrUKI5c).
- Emotional check-in ("What am I feeling right now? Where in my body?").

Closing intention:

- "What do I release?"
- "What quality do I bring into the mediation?"

Theoretical Background

Mindfulness enhances cognitive flexibility and reduces reactivity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). It helps mediators centre themselves.

Use this at the beginning of training sessions or before role-plays.

Summary:

These expanded activities:

- build emotional intelligence, awareness, and regulation;
- prepare young mediators for real-world conflict situations;
- can be used in training programs, MOOC modules, youth exchanges, or school-based workshops; and each has a clear theoretical foundation and reflective component.

Emotions

Summary

Common Emotional Barriers in School Mediation

These include:

- fear of vulnerability
- shame
- avoidance
- loss of status
- anger masking hurt
- the belief that "showing emotion is weakness"

Research shows that shame is one of the strongest predictors of aggression in adolescents (Tangney et al., 2007), so mediators must learn to handle it sensitively.

Case Studies

(Expanded versions for training; already summarised earlier, now written in narrative format.)

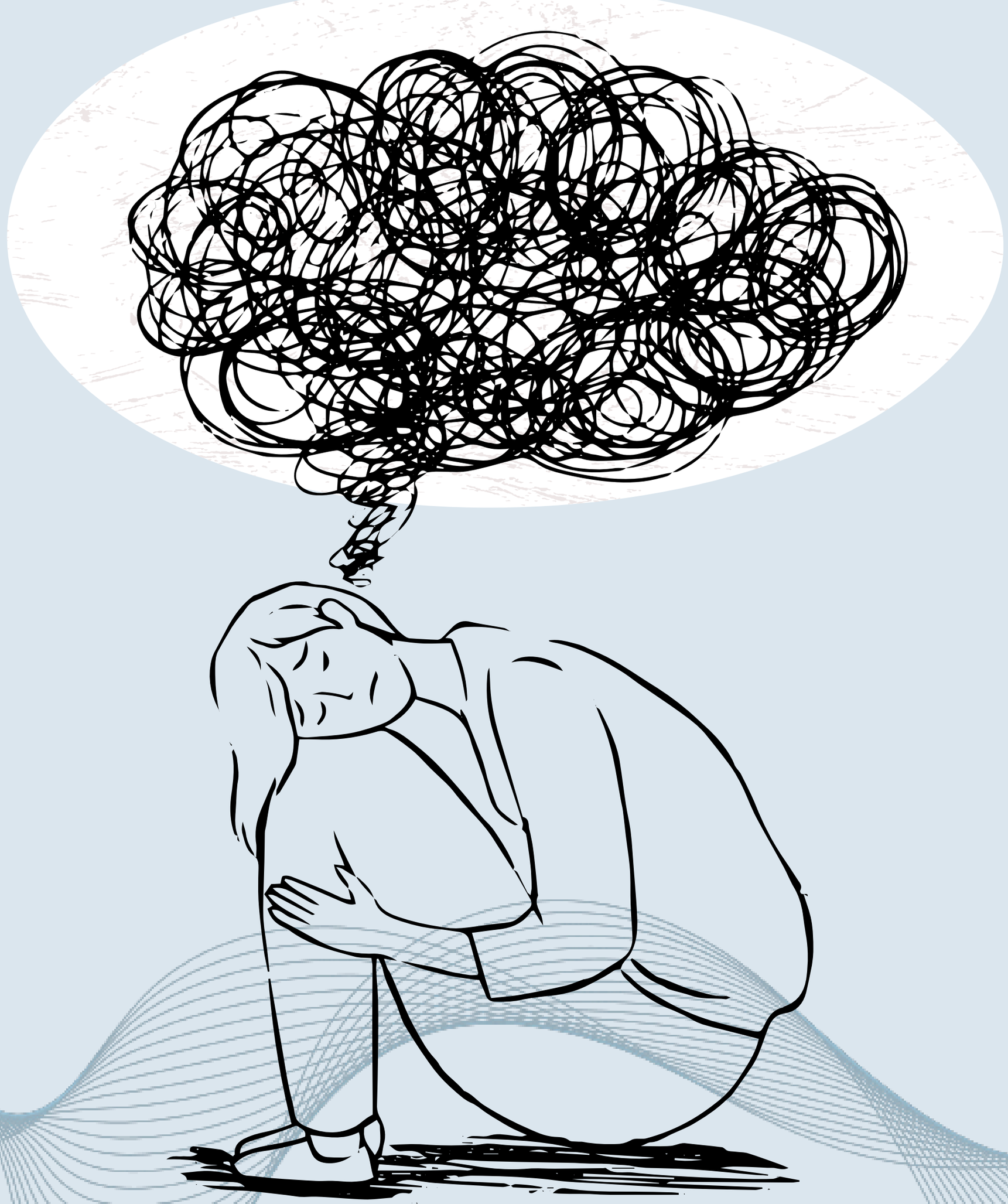
1. Group chat exclusion → underlying need: belonging.
2. Mocking someone's accent → shame + identity threat.
3. Broken trust → sadness + fear + need for safety.

These cases should be analysed with mediators in training to build emotional insight.

Emotions

Summary

Emotions are not obstacles to mediation; they are the structural components of conflict. When youth workers support young mediators in developing emotional literacy, regulation skills, and empathic presence, they empower them not only as conflict-resolvers but as emotionally intelligent members of their school communities. Integrating the science of emotion with practical tools allows young mediators to navigate conflicts with clarity, compassion, and confidence.



Emotions

Knowledge Check

This section helps learners review the key concepts and skills from the chapter. Trainers may use the questions individually, in pairs, or as a group discussion. The tasks combine cognitive recall, emotional insight and real-life application – reflecting the core goals of mediator training.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the best answer.

1. Which statement best describes emotional regulation?

A. Ignoring or suppressing emotions

B. Recognising and managing emotional responses constructively

C. Preventing others from expressing their emotions

D. Allowing emotions to control the conversation

2. Which sign may indicate emotional escalation during conflict?

A. Calm tone and steady breathing

B. Pauses and reflective listening

C. Raised voice, tense posture and faster speech

D. Regular eye contact and nodding

Emotions

Knowledge Check

3. What is the main purpose of emotional validation during mediation?

A. To agree with one party
B. To show that the mediator understands and respects feelings
C. To decide who is right or wrong
D. To finish the conflict quickly

4. Which tool helps connect emotions with underlying needs?

A. Volcano diagram
B. Emotion–Need mapping
C. Grounding breath exercise
D. Random guessing

Correct answers: 1B, 2C, 3B, 4B

Open-Ended Questions

Answer in 2–4 sentences each.

1. Why is emotional awareness important in peer mediation?
2. How can a mediator recognise their own emotional triggers?
3. What strategies can a mediator use to stay calm during a conflict?
4. Why are non-verbal signals essential in conflict communication?

(Trainer note: score based on clarity, empathy awareness and accuracy.)

Emotions

Knowledge Check

Practical Scenarios

Read the short situations and respond as a mediator.

During a mediation, one student becomes visibly frustrated, crossing their arms and looking away. The other sighs loudly and starts talking over them.

→ What could you say or do to de-escalate the moment?

Two friends argue, and one exclaims: "You always embarrass me on purpose!"

→ How would you help them shift from blame to expressing feelings and needs?

A student begins crying and apologising repeatedly during mediation.

→ What supportive intervention could you offer?

(Trainer note: acceptable responses include validation, pausing, slowing down, naming emotions, grounding.)

Self-Reflection (For Mediator Journals)

- Which emotions are hardest for me to notice in others?
- What physical signs tell me my emotions are rising?
- How comfortable do I feel naming emotions out loud?
- What is one emotional skill I want to strengthen before my next mediation?

Emotions

Knowledge Check

Scoring and Evaluation Suggestion

Multiple-choice accuracy

/4

Open-ended answers

/8

Practical application

/12

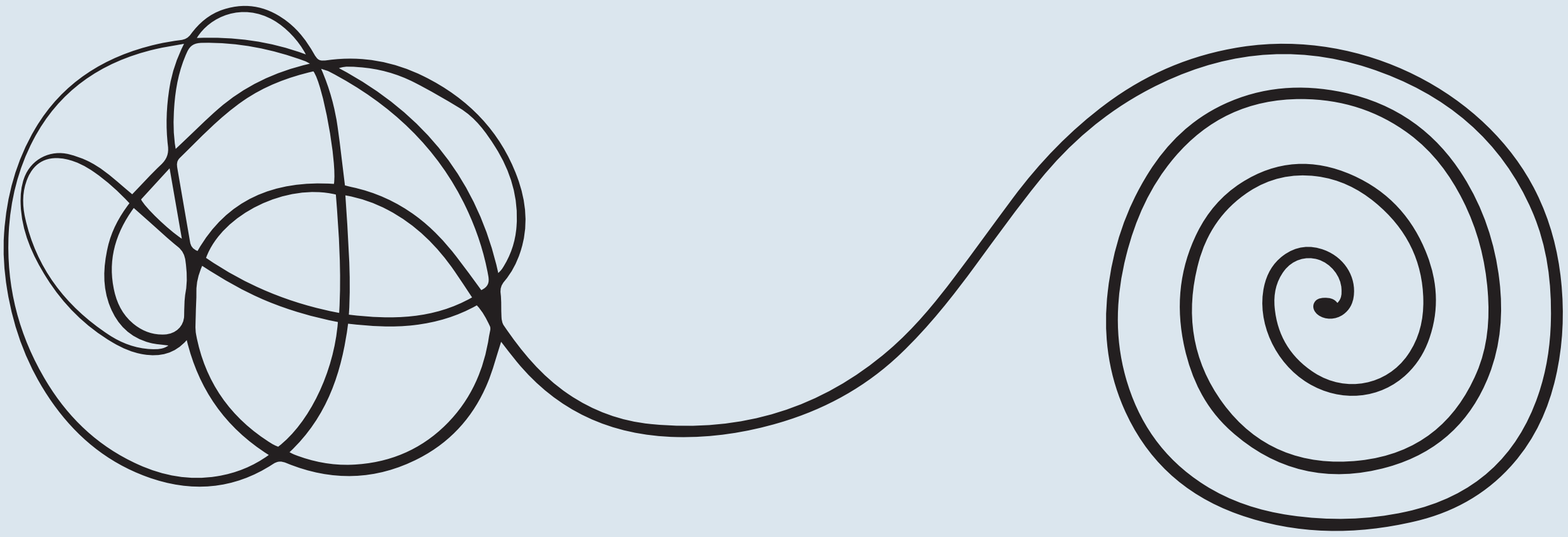
Reflection quality

/6

Total

/30

→ A score ≥ 22 indicates good readiness for emotional components of mediation.



Emotions

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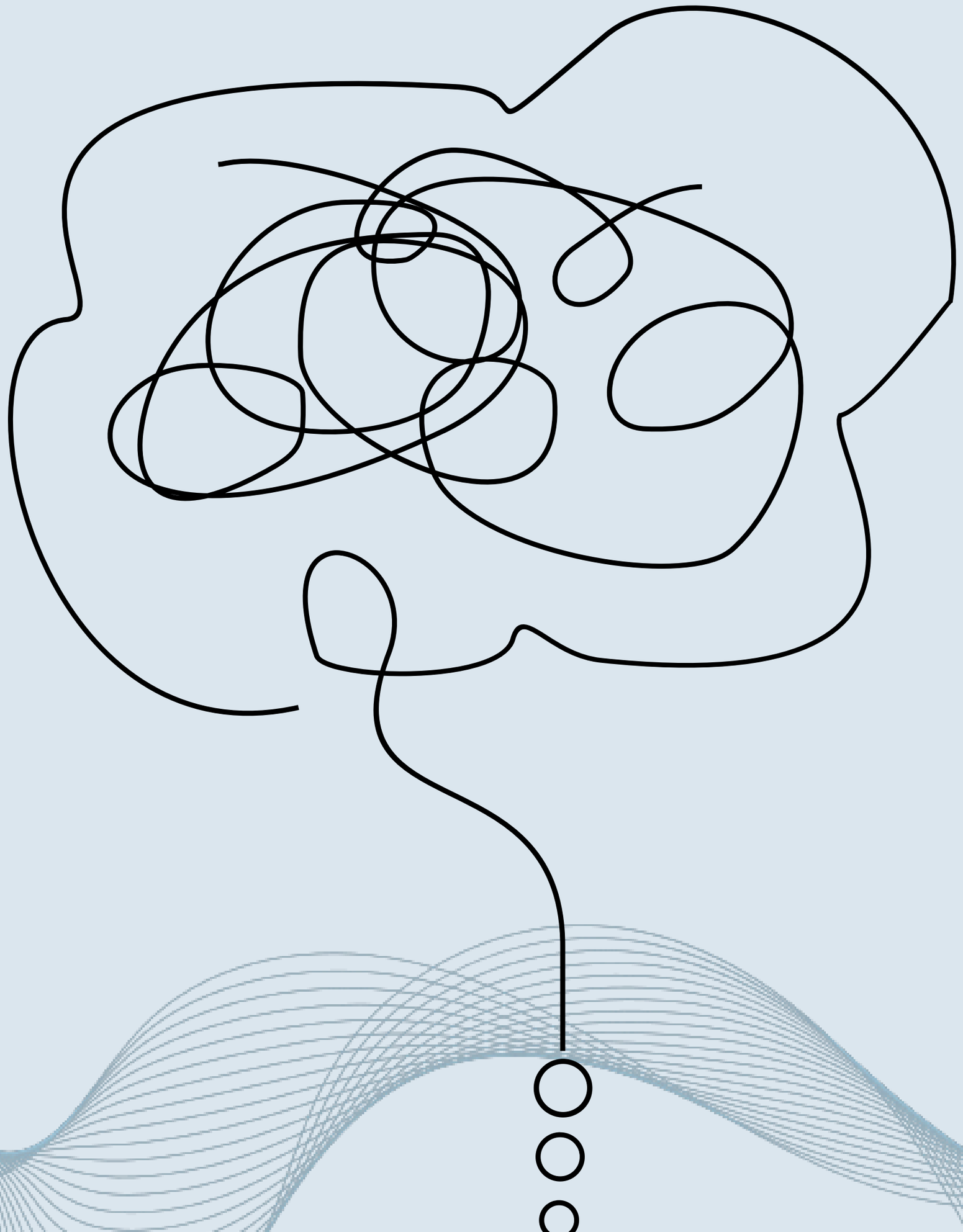
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Stereotypes

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

A school environment is a complex social landscape where adolescents continuously negotiate who they are, who they belong with, and how they are valued. During this process, young people form quick judgments about others based on visible group markers such as clothing, gender, accent, or academic performance. These generalized assumptions - stereotypes - shape expectations and influence interactions long before personal experiences can correct them.

Stereotypes play a particularly strong role in school conflicts. When students feel they are judged not for what they did but for who they are, the emotional impact deepens: shame, anger and defensiveness escalate the situation. Mediation becomes an essential tool to break through these assumptions, enabling students to see each other as individuals with feelings and unique stories. Empowering young mediators to identify and address stereotypes is therefore key to building inclusive and emotionally safe school climates.



Stereotypes

Effects of Work

After completing this chapter, learners will be able to:

- recognise stereotype-based assumptions in peer conflict;
- facilitate shifts from generalized judgments to personal stories;
- apply curiosity-driven questions that uncover personal needs and emotions;
- identify identity-based harm and emotional escalation caused by stereotypes;
- promote belonging and inclusion through neutral, respectful mediation language;
- strengthen empathy by highlighting shared human experiences;
- reflect on and regulate their own biases and assumptions as mediators.

These skills support fairer, more constructive resolutions while increasing social cohesion and student well-being

Target Group(s)

This chapter is intended for:

- Young peer mediators (ages ~12–30)
- Students involved in school conflict resolution, mediation clubs, or inclusion programmes
- Youth workers, teachers and school counsellors preparing young mediators

The content is developmentally appropriate for adolescents, who:

- rely heavily on peer perception and belonging,
- are sensitive to identity-related judgments,
- benefit from structured practice, reflection and feedback.

The activities allow both beginner and experienced mediators to practise stereotype-aware conflict facilitation.

Stereotypes

Methodology

This chapter is based on experiential learning: real-life situations, emotional engagement and guided reflection. Short theoretical input provides psychological foundations, followed by interactive activities that allow learners to experience the effects of stereotyping first-hand.

Key methodological components:

- Case-based learning: real examples from school conflicts
- Role-play & simulation: practising safe mediation responses
- Reflective journaling: strengthening mediator self-awareness
- Collaborative discussion: exploring different viewpoints
- Creative identity expression: transforming labels into personal stories

Tips for trainers

- Model respectful and inclusive communication
- Encourage curiosity instead of judgment
- Focus on behaviours and feelings, not labels
- Allow silence - emotional insight needs time

Best practices

- Ensure psychological safety before stereotype-related activities
- Stop harmful behaviour immediately, even during a role-play
- Highlight commonalities without denying differences

Stereotypes

Timing

Suggested delivery time: 3–4 hours total

Component	Estimated time
Theoretical introduction	25–35 minutes
Activity 1	35–45 minutes
Activity 2	40-50 minutes
Activity 3	20-30 minutes
Activity 4	35–45 minutes
Reflection & debrief	15–20 min

Main Content

1. What Are Stereotypes and How Do They Work?

Stereotypes are generalised beliefs about individuals based on group membership (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). They simplify complex identities into quick assumptions such as:

- "Students who are quiet are unfriendly"
- "Immigrant kids struggle academically"
- "Girls don't play football well"

Stereotypes

Main Content

Stereotypes become problematic when:

- they replace personal experiences with assumptions,
- they shape expectations before interaction happens,
- they influence behaviour and decision-making.

In mediation, the danger is that students stop seeing each other as unique people, which restricts dialogue and escalates conflict.

2. Why Stereotypes Develop in Adolescence

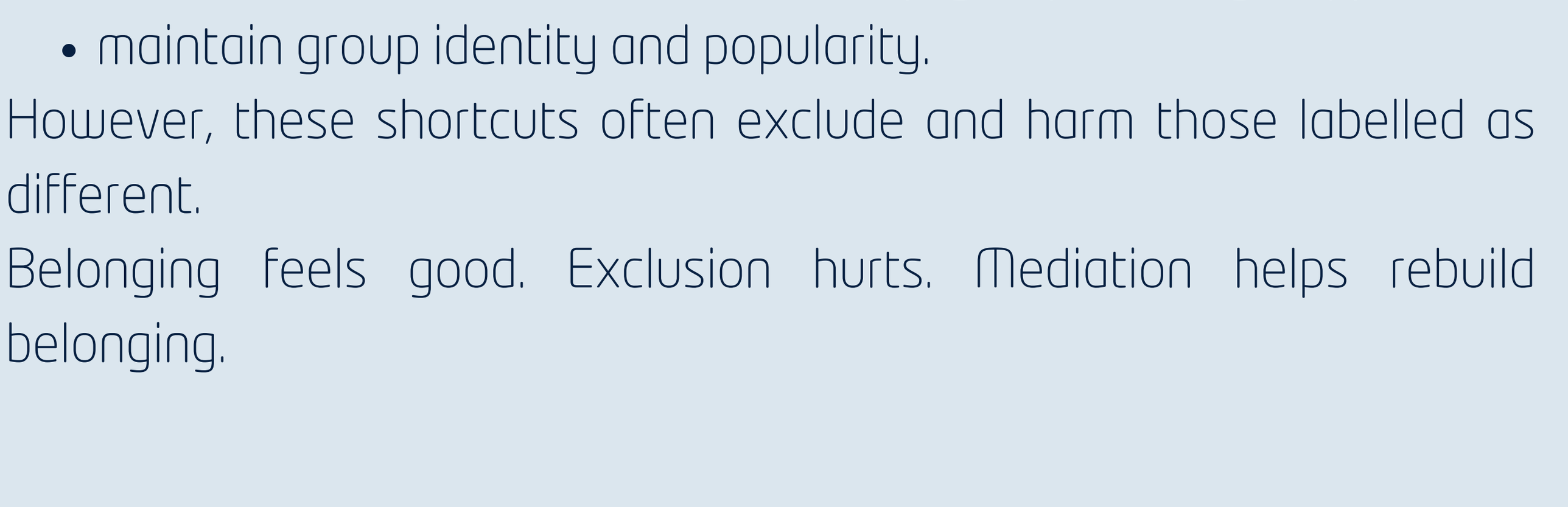
Adolescents actively seek belonging and approval from peers. Social identity becomes a key source of safety and status.

Stereotypes help young people:

- categorise large social environments (cognitive shortcut),
- decide who is "us" and who is "them" (ingroup vs. outgroup),
- maintain group identity and popularity.

However, these shortcuts often exclude and harm those labelled as different.

Belonging feels good. Exclusion hurts. Mediation helps rebuild belonging.



Stereotypes

Main Content

3. The Psychological Impact of Stereotyping

Stereotypes affect three levels of experience during conflict:

Level	Impact	School example
Emotional	Shame, anger, fear	Being mocked for clothing
Social	Exclusion, bullying	Not invited to group work
Cognitive	Performance declines	Stereotype threat in STEM

When someone feels judged for identity, they may:

- feel exposed and embarrassed,
- withdraw OR attack,
- conflict escalates rapidly.

Mediators must learn to recognise identity harm as a hidden driver of conflict.

4. Stereotypes in Typical School Conflicts

Stereotypes appear frequently in:

- Gender-based conflicts: leadership, subjects, sports
- Cultural misunderstandings: language accents, customs
- Academic status tension: “smart” vs. “popular” groups
- Socioeconomic judgement: clothing brands, technology
- Disability or neurodiversity bias: sensory or behavioral differences
- Online identities: gamer, influencer, fandom stereotypes
- Minorities, refugees: different habits, culture, etc.

These stereotypes turn small conflicts into identity battles.

Stereotypes

Main Content

5. How Mediators Address Stereotypes

Mediators must:

- stay neutral - avoid reinforcing group labels,
- acknowledge the emotional hurt, even if unintended,
- use curiosity-driven questions:
  - “What happened between you - not between groups?”
  - “How did that comment make you feel?”
- help shift from generalisation to personal experience,
- focus on individual needs and feelings instead of blame.

Helpful Mediator Phrases:

Instead of...

Say...

“That’s not true about girls!”

“Let’s focus on her experience in this situation.”

“Don’t assume that!”

“What else could explain what happened?”

“Calm down!”

“I see this is important - let’s slow down.”

The goal is dignity-restoring communication.

Stereotypes

Main Content

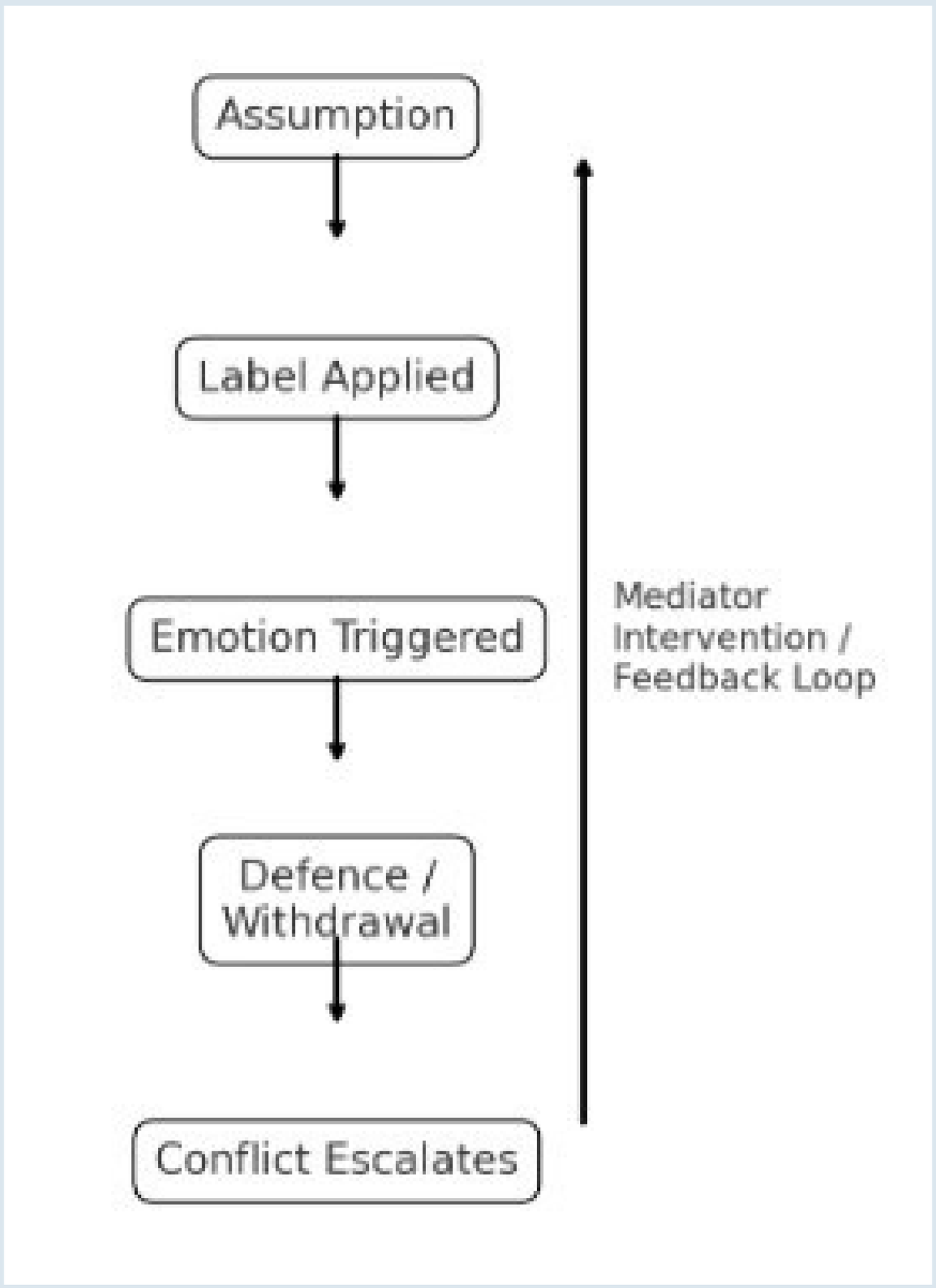
6. Link to Emotional Intelligence

Recognising stereotypes requires advanced emotional awareness:

- noticing one's own discomfort and assumptions,
- identifying emotions behind hurtful comments,
- validating others' emotional reactions.

This connects strongly to the Emotions Chapter and reinforces a holistic mediation skill set.

7. Visual Aid — Stereotype Escalation Pathway



This visual can be printed as a training poster to help mediators identify intervention points.

Stereotypes

Main Content

8. Key Insight

Stereotypes are not just thoughts - they shape how young people feel, interact and resolve problems.

When mediators learn to identify stereotypes early, they protect identity safety, build empathy and restore trust.



Stereotypes

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 1 - “Just Because...” Identity Cards

Purpose: challenge stereotypes through personal expression
Duration: 35–45 min
Procedure:
Participants complete cards:
“Just because I ___, it doesn’t mean I ___.”
Pairs share stories; group dialogue explores emotional impact.
Trainer focus: affirmation, identity safety.



Stereotypes

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Social Snapshot Role-Labels

Purpose: experience how assumptions shape behaviour
Duration: 40–50 min
Procedure:
Visible or hidden stereotype labels placed on participants → free interaction → reflection on surprising misjudgements.
Mediator link: noticing non-verbal attitude changes.



Stereotypes

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Similarity Mapping (“Common Ground”)

Purpose: reduce “us vs. them” thinking
Duration: 25–35 min
Procedure:
Students walk around finding unexpected similarities with peers.
Outcome: belonging and empathy increase.

Find classmates with whom you share similarities.
Write a name in each bubble and describe what you have in common.

Name:

Similarity: _____

Name:

Similarity: _____

Name:

Similarity: _____

Name:

Similarity: _____

Name:

Similarity: _____

Name:

Similarity: _____

Stereotypes

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 4 – Story Behind the Label

Purpose: transform harmful labels into authentic identity narratives

Duration: 40–50 min

Procedure:

Participants select a label they have received → write and/or draw the real story behind it → small circle sharing.



Stereotypes

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 5 - Stereotype-Spotting Mediation Role-Play

Purpose: practise identifying stereotype language in conflict
Duration: 45–60 min
Procedure:
Pairs role-play a conflict containing stereotype phrases. Observers note when labels appear and propose supportive mediator questions.

1 The New Student
Characters:
• Amir – shy, recently moved from another country, speaks with an accent
• Tom – confident, doesn't like changes in the group
Conflict: Tom refuses to work with Amir because of his accent.

2 Not Smart Enough
Characters:
• Mia – sporty, energetic, struggles with science tests
• Anna – top student, competitive
Conflict: Anna says Mia would slow the project down because sports kids are not smart.

3 The Weird One
Characters:
• Viktor – quiet, creative, different clothing style
• Classmates – care a lot about popularity
Conflict: The group laughs at Viktor's ideas, calling him strange.

4 The Gamer Label
Characters:
• Luca – passionate gamer, often tired in class
• Martin – nervous about grades
Conflict: Martin claims Luca won't take teamwork seriously because gamers only play.

5 Gender Stereotype
Characters:
• Nora – responsible, wants to be class leader
• Bence – jokes a lot, believes boys lead better
Conflict: Bence says girls are too emotional to be leaders.

6 Social Status Judgment
Characters:
• Petra – kind, wears second-hand clothes
• Zsófi – popular, follows fashion trends
Conflict: Zsófi excludes Petra for not looking cool enough.

Stereotypes

Summary

Stereotypes can distort how students perceive each other and escalate conflicts into emotionally damaging interactions. They undermine learning opportunities, belonging and self-confidence. Through guided practice and mediation, young people can shift from judgment to understanding - recognising that every individual is more than a set of assumptions. Developing stereotype awareness builds fairness, empathy, and dignity, which lie at the core of effective school mediation.



Stereotypes

Knowledge Check

This section helps learners review the key concepts and apply their skills in realistic situations. The tasks mix recognition, deeper thinking and mediator competence.

Part A — Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the best answer:

Which statement best defines a stereotype?

A. A personal opinion based on individual experience

B. A generalised belief about a group applied to all members

C. A scientific fact about cultural differences

D. A type of conflict that is easy to resolve

What is one emotional effect of being stereotyped?

A. Increased confidence

B. Feeling seen and understood

C. Shame, anger or defensiveness

D. Total emotional neutrality

What should mediators do when stereotypes appear in conflict?

A. Ask curiosity-based questions and focus on individual experiences

B. Tell one student to apologise immediately

C. Choose the side that seems more logical

D. Ignore the statement and move on quickly

Stereotypes

Knowledge Check

What is a common cognitive bias reinforcing stereotypes?

A. Balanced thinking

B. Confirmation bias

C. Deep listening

D. Critical reflection

Correct answers: 1B, 2C, 3A, 4B

Part B — Open-Ended Questions

(2–4 sentences)

1. How do stereotypes escalate school conflicts?
2. Why is it important for mediators to stay neutral regarding group labels?
3. How can finding common ground reduce prejudice in peer mediation?
4. What strategies help a mediator address stereotype-based harm?

(Trainer: evaluate based on emotional insight and understanding)

Stereotypes

Knowledge Check

Part C — Practical Scenarios

Apply mediator skills.

A student says:

"Kids like him never care about studying anyway."

→ Write a mediator response using curiosity and reframing.

A girl is denied participation in a robotics team because "girls are not good at engineering".

→ How would you address fairness and inclusion?

Two classmates exclude a boy calling him "weird" because he avoids eye contact.

→ How would you support dignity and understanding?

Trainer evaluation focus: neutral language, empathy prompting, individualisation of the issue.

Part D — Self-Reflection for Mediators

- When have I unintentionally judged someone by a label?
- What stereotypes exist in my school environment?
- How comfortable am I confronting stereotype language as a mediator?
- What can I do to challenge my own biases?

Learners can write in journals or share in small circles.

Stereotypes

Knowledge Check

Bonus: Short Matching Exercise

Match the concept with the correct explanation:

Concept

Explanation

1. Ingroup

A group we feel we belong to

2. Outgroup

A group seen as “different”

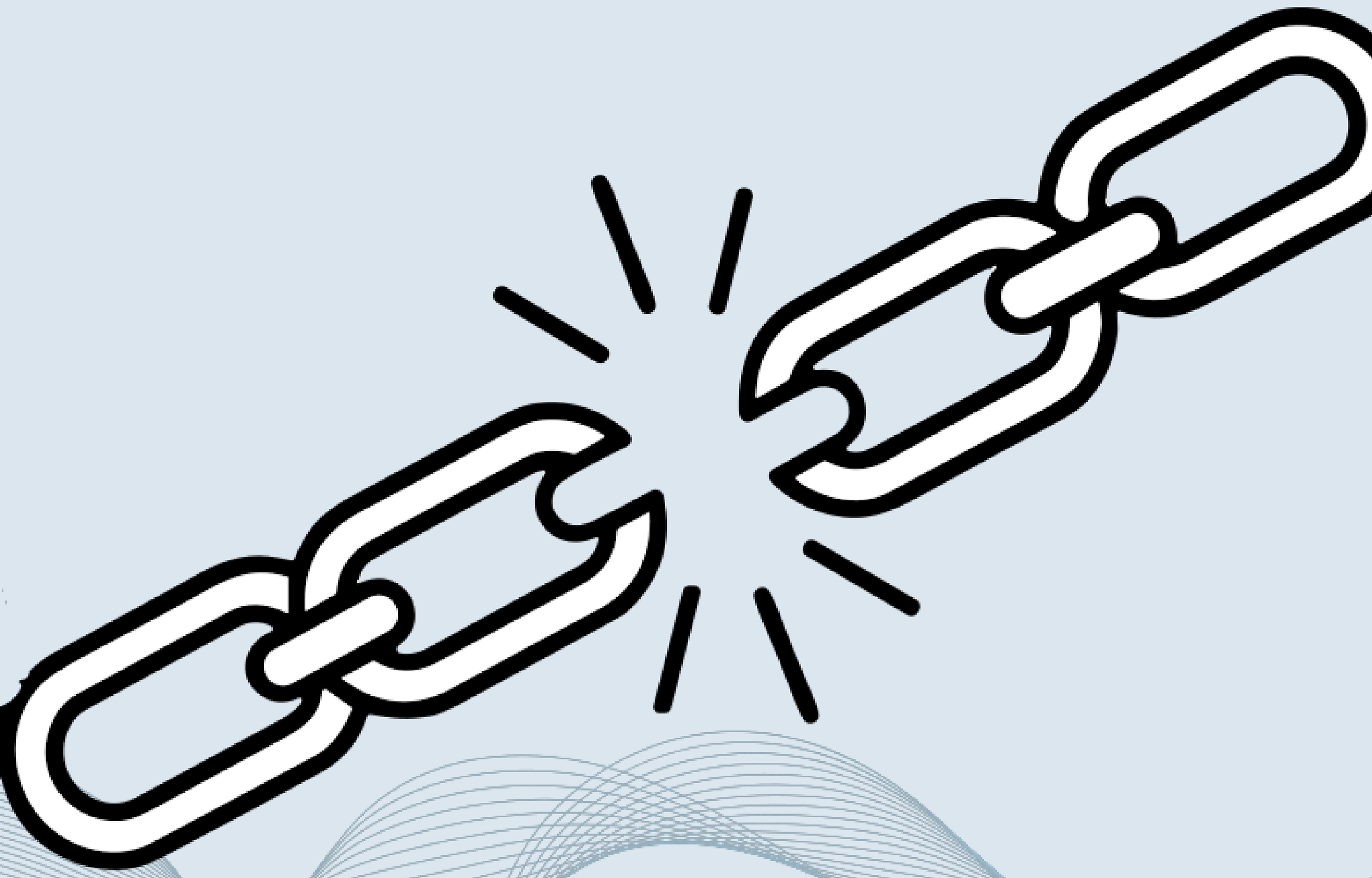
3. Stereotype threat

Fear of confirming a negative assumption

4. Halo effect

One trait influences full judgment

Correct match: 1→A, 2→B, 3→C, 4→D



Stereotypes

Knowledge Check

Scoring suggestion

Assessment area

Max points

Multiple-choice

/4

Open-ended answers

/8

Practical scenarios

/12

Reflection

/6

Total

/30

22+ points: strong understanding and readiness for mediation

15–21 points: requires more practice in stereotype recognition

Below 15: facilitator support recommended before real cases



Stereotypes

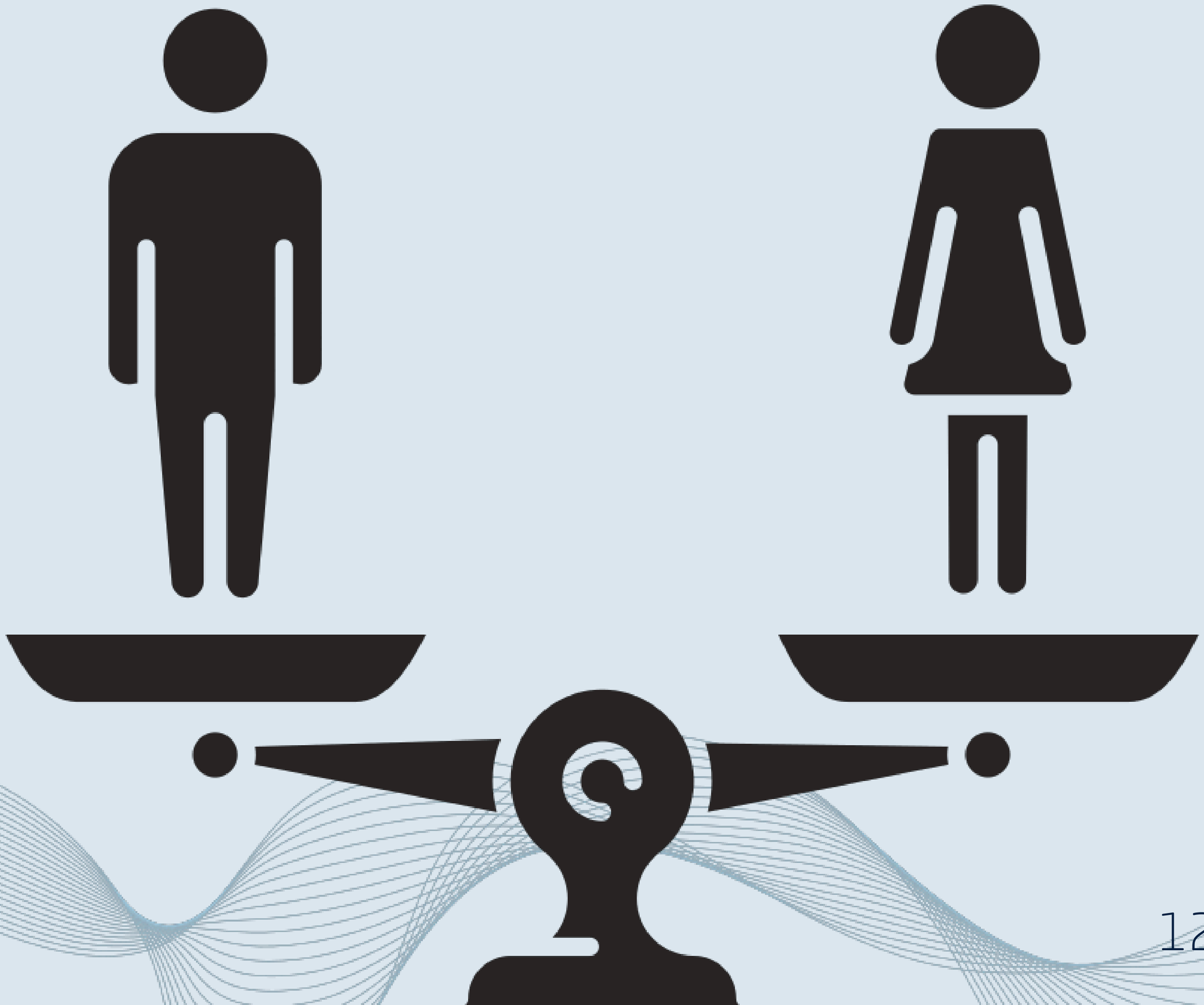
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Cultural Differences

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

Schools are vibrant environments where young people from diverse cultural backgrounds and peer groups interact every day. Culture shapes how individuals think, communicate, and understand the world -— from conflict styles to emotional expression and expectations of respect.

Cultural differences are not only linked to nationality or ethnicity; they appear in micro-cultures students belong to:

- sports teams
- online communities
- artistic groups
- neighbourhoods
- family traditions
- faith-based or value-based groups

When misunderstandings arise because of these differences, conflicts easily become identity-sensitive, leading to embarrassment, anger or exclusion. Young mediators therefore play a key role in creating spaces where students feel understood and respected beyond stereotypes or assumptions.

Culturally informed mediation helps students:

- recognise the intention behind different styles of communication (e.g., direct vs. indirect)
- avoid misinterpreting behaviours through their own cultural lens
- build empathy and belonging across cultures

A diverse school environment is not a challenge to manage -— it is an opportunity to develop global citizenship, cooperation and social harmony.

Cultural Differences

Effects of Work

After completing this chapter, participants will be able to:
identify visible and invisible cultural differences in school interactions,
recognise culturally influenced communication styles in conflict,
avoid stereotyping based on cultural background,
ask sensitive, curiosity-driven questions in mediation,
support identity safety during cross-cultural tensions,
enhance inclusion by discovering shared interests and values,
reflect on their own cultural assumptions and biases.
These skills support fairness, mutual respect, and positive peer relationships.

Target Group(s)

This chapter is designed for:

- Peer mediators ages 12–18
- Students in multicultural or socio-economically diverse schools
- Youth workers and teachers working with mixed groups
- Classes preparing for international exchange projects
- Cultural competence in mediation is especially useful in: international classrooms
- schools receiving newcomer students
- peer groups with strong internal identities (e.g., sports teams, gamers)

The activities are accessible for beginners while beneficial for advanced mediators.

Cultural Differences

Methodology

This chapter uses experiential learning, where real-life cultural interactions are explored in a safe environment. Short theoretical inputs provide background, followed by reflection and skill practice.

Core methods used:

- role-plays based on real scenarios
- storytelling and narrative sharing
- guided dialogue circles
- perspective-taking and reframing exercises
- creative and movement-based activities

Tips for youth workers and mediators

- Validate experiences -— never minimise identity-based harm
- Encourage curiosity before judgment: “What did you mean by that?” vs. “That’s wrong!”
- Use neutral language during cultural conflict
- Always check emotional safety before sharing personal identity stories
- Avoid reinforcing stereotypes while addressing them

Best Practices

- Build a “culture of respect” at group start
- Let participants teach each other about their cultures
- Clarify that different ≠ wrong

Cultural Differences

Timing

Component	Estimated time
Introduction + cultural icebreaker	20–30 min
Theory + examples	30–40 min
Activity 1	35–45 min
Activity 2	45–55 min
Activity 3	30–40 min
Activity 4	40–50 min
Debrief + reflection	20–25 min

Cultural Differences

Main Content

Culture is a dynamic system of shared meanings, beliefs, values, and behavioural norms that guide how individuals interpret their experiences and navigate social interactions (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). In school contexts, young people form their cultural identity through multiple layers: family traditions, national background, language, religion, peer group membership, neighbourhood, and even online communities. Culture therefore should not be seen as a fixed category, but a living and developing aspect of who we are (UNESCO, 2017).

Recognizing cultural differences in mediation is essential because conflicts often arise from misinterpreting behaviour through one's own cultural lens. Students frequently assume their own style of communication is the "normal" or "correct" way (Gudykunst & Kim, 2017). This ethnocentric bias can lead to negative judgments, such as labeling someone as rude simply because their communication style is more direct, or considering someone disinterested because they express emotions less visibly.

Cultural norms influence various domains such as eye contact, tone of voice, physical distance, and turn-taking in conversations (Hofstede, 2011).

Cultural Differences

Main Content

In some cultures, assertive expression represents honesty and mutual respect, while in others, indirect communication is valued to maintain group harmony and avoid confrontation. Without cultural awareness, these differences can quickly escalate tension in peer relationships. The role of the mediator is to redirect attention from assumptions to curiosity-based exploration, asking neutral clarifying questions such as:

"How do you mean that?",
"Can you say more about what happened?"
or
"What matters to you in this situation?"

Importantly, culture also intersects with identity safety - —the need to feel accepted and valued without having one's sense of self questioned or rejected (Pollock et al., 2018). When cultural identity becomes the trigger or target of conflict (e.g., accent, dress, tradition), young people's emotional reactions intensify because they perceive the situation as a threat not only to their behaviour, but to who they are. Mediators must therefore ensure that dialogue spaces promote respect, validation, and psychological safety.

Cultural Differences

Main Content

Another key concept is recognizing visible vs. invisible cultural elements. While some differences are easy to observe (e.g., clothing, food, religious symbols), others remain hidden, such as personal values, family expectations, learning styles, or emotional expression rules. Misunderstandings frequently occur when students incorrectly guess the meaning behind invisible elements. A mediator's task is to support participants in uncovering intentions and needs beneath the surface level.

Despite differences, human beings share universal needs — belonging, fairness, autonomy, and dignity (Rosenberg, 2015). Mediators can reduce conflict by guiding students to move from cultural stereotypes ("People like you always…") toward individual narratives ("In your life, what does this mean?"). When dialogue shifts from generalisation to personal connection, empathy becomes possible, and intercultural conflict transforms into a learning opportunity.

Key message: Cultural diversity in schools is not a barrier, but a powerful resource.

Through culturally aware mediation, misunderstandings become opportunities for connection, global citizenship, and inclusive community building.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 1 – My Culture Shield

Purpose:

Increase cultural self-awareness and explore identity layers.

Duration:

45 minutes

Materials:

Culture Shield Template

Pens/markers

Instructions for facilitator:

1. Introduce the idea that culture has visible and invisible parts.
2. Participants fill the shield:
   - Section 1: Important groups I belong to
   - Section 2: Traditions/habits that define me
   - Section 3: My communication style
   - Section 4: Something unique that others may not know
3. Pair-sharing: each presents one part they are proud of.

Debrief Questions:

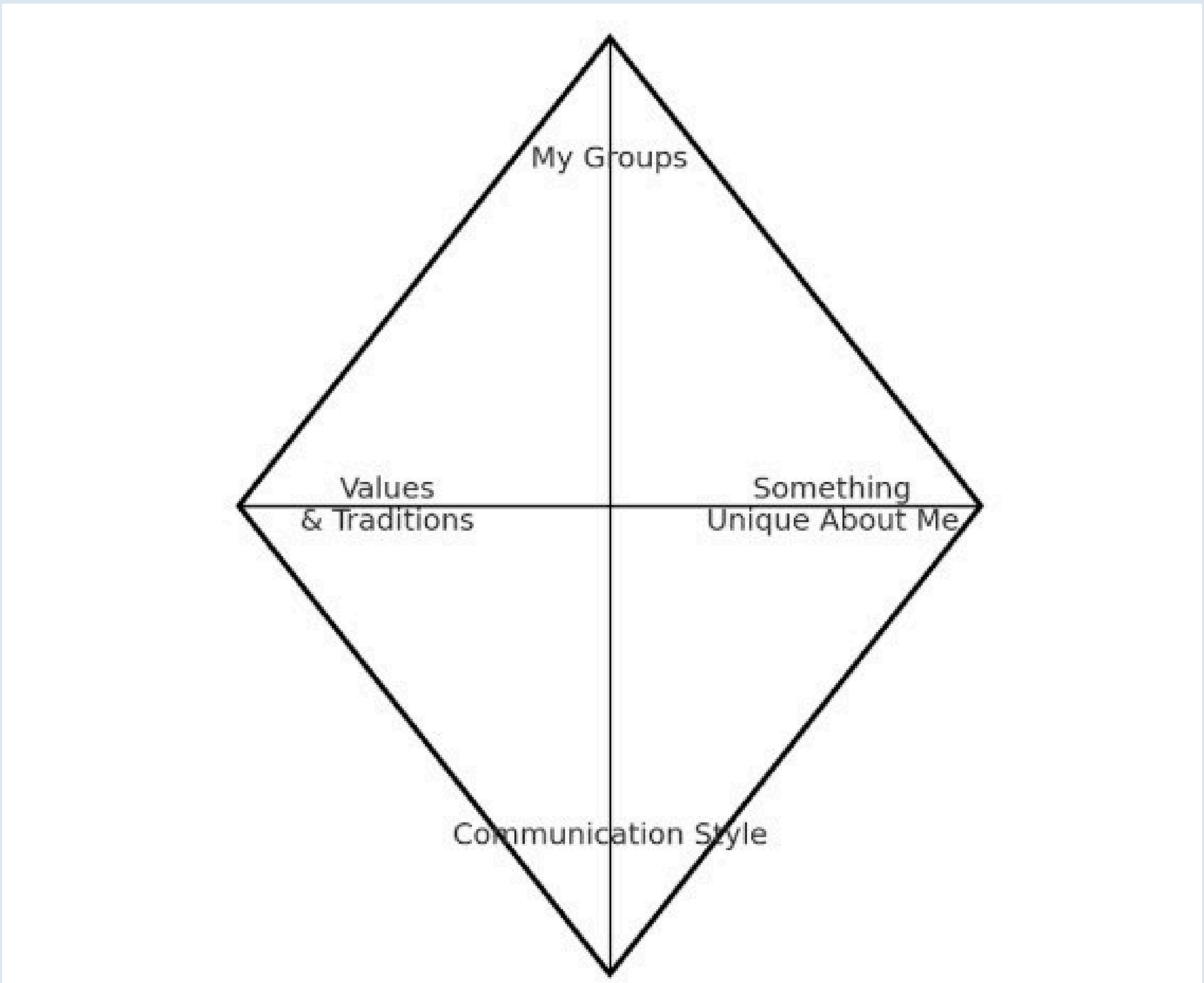
- How did it feel to share something personal?
- Which parts of identity are often misunderstood?
- What happens when someone questions an important identity?

Mediator skill focus:

Building identity safety in conflict conversations.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



Every shield tells a story about who you are.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 – Lost in Translation

Purpose:

Recognise different communication styles and reduce misinterpretation.

Duration:

35–45 minutes

Materials:

Lost in Translation Role Cards

Instructions:

1. Small groups receive a misunderstanding-based script.
2. They role-play once without mediation → conflict escalates.
3. Perform again with a peer mediator helping them check assumptions.

Debrief Questions:

- What behaviours were misunderstood?
- How did the mediator reveal the intention behind actions?
- How can curiosity replace judgement?

Mediator skill focus:

Reframing, open questioning, behaviour–intention distinction.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

🎭 Card #1 — “Why are you shouting?”
Characters:
Marco – Italian exchange student, enthusiastic, expressive gestures
Erik – Quiet local student, prefers low voice and calm talk
Misunderstanding:
Erik thinks Marco is angry whenever he speaks with passion.
Mediator hint:
Check intention vs. perception.

🎭 Card #2 — “She ignored me!”
Characters:
Aisha – from a culture where avoiding eye contact is respectful
Lili – thinks eye contact shows honesty and friendship
Misunderstanding:
Lili feels rejected when Aisha looks away during discussion.
Mediator hint:
Explore respect meanings in different cultures.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 – Step In: Inclusion Walk

(based on "Privilege Walk" but safely adapted for youth mediation)

Purpose:

Understand how cultural factors influence inclusion/exclusion.

Duration:

40 minutes

Materials:

Step In Prompts

Instructions (safe design):

1. Participants stand in a circle.
2. Facilitator reads statements:
   - "Step in if you speak more than one language."
   - "Step in if you felt left out because of your interests."
3. After each step in/out → participants look around silently.
4. Group discussion in pairs first → then entire circle.

Debrief Questions:

- When did you feel connected to others?
- When did you feel different?
- How can a mediator support the one left outside the circle?

Mediator skill focus:

Empathy + perspective-taking.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Step In Prompts

- Step in if you speak more than one language.
- Step in if you have lived in more than one place.
- Step in if you have a family tradition that is important to you.
- Step in if your name has a special meaning.
- Step in if you have ever felt left out because of your interests.
- Step in if you celebrate a holiday not everyone knows.
- Step in if you love a type of music others find unusual.
- Step in if you sometimes feel misunderstood.
- Step in if you have a unique hobby or talent.
- Step in if you eat food from different cultures at home.
- Step in if others have made assumptions about you.
- Step in if you belong to a team, club, or community.

Facilitator Instructions

Read the prompts aloud one by one.

Participants step into the circle if the statement applies to them.

After 6–8 steps, pause for reflection in pairs or small groups.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 4 – Cultural Conflict Mediation

Purpose:

Practice real-life mediation where identity is involved.

Duration:

50 minutes

Materials:

Cultural Conflict Scenarios

Instructions:

1. Groups of 3:
   - 2 students play peers in conflict
   - 1 student acts as mediator
2. Mediator practices:
   - validating identity-based emotions
   - avoiding stereotypes
   - shifting focus to shared needs
3. Groups rotate → each tries the mediator role.

Debrief Questions:

- What made this type of conflict challenging?
- How did empathy help lower tension?
- What did the mediator say that worked best?

Mediator skill focus:

Identity-sensitive dialogue + equal respect.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Cultural Conflict Scenarios

"Eye Contact = Respect?"

Characters:

- Aisha – avoids direct eye contact, cultural sign of respect
- Lili – believes eye contact means honesty and interest

Conflict:

Lili thinks Aisha is ignoring her and hiding something.

Mediator focus:

Clarify different meanings of respect in communication.

"He Is So Loud!"

Characters:

- Marco – expressive, gestures a lot, passionate voice
- Erik – quiet, finds loud speech aggressive

Conflict:

Erik feels attacked when Marco speaks loudly, even when he's excited.

Mediator focus:

Help separate emotions from communication style.

Cultural Differences

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

"Don't Make Fun of My Family!"

Characters:

- Sara – brings homemade traditional food
- Noel – jokes about it being "strange"

Conflict:

Sara feels her culture is being disrespected.

Mediator focus:

Support identity safety and respectful curiosity.

"Why Doesn't He Speak?"

Characters:

- Kenji – needs more time to think before responding
- Bence – quick speaker, interrupts without intent to harm

Conflict:

Bence assumes Kenji is "not interested".

Mediator focus:

Normalize pace differences in dialogue.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

"Private or Public?"

Characters:

- Mira – shares her achievements proudly (family encourages it)
- Ádám – prefers modesty, hates showing off

Conflict:

Ádám calls Mira a "show-off" → she feels judged.

Mediator focus:

Explore different value systems (modesty vs pride).

"Online Rules vs. Real-Life Rules"

Characters:

- Tomi – uses sarcasm/emojis like in gamer culture
- Anna – takes messages literally

Conflict:

Anna feels mocked by messages Tomi meant as friendly.

Mediator focus:

Clarify intent vs impact online.

Cultural Differences

Summary

Cultural differences are a natural part of school life. Misunderstandings appear when students interpret others only from their own perspective. Mediators create a bridge: helping peers listen, learn and connect across identities. By practicing cultural awareness, young people become more respectful, empathetic and confident in diverse communities.



Cultural Differences

Knowledge Check

Multiple Choice

1. Cultural differences can be:
A) Only nationality-based
B) Visible and invisible
C) Always the cause of conflict
→ Correct: B

2. Which is a mediator's role in cross-cultural tension?
A) Choosing sides
B) Explaining who is right
C) Supporting curiosity and understanding
→ Correct: C

3. Ethnocentrism means:
A) Believing all cultures are equal
B) Assuming one's own way is normal/right
C) Admiring multiple cultures
→ Correct: B

Open-Ended (Short Answer)

Describe a situation where cultural assumptions created a misunderstanding.

- What could a mediator have done differently?
- Why is identity safety important during mediation?

Cultural Differences

Knowledge Check

Application Task

Mini scenario:

"She doesn't look me in the eye -— she must be hiding something."

Write a mediator response that:

- avoids judgement
- shows curiosity
- asks a clarifying question (2–3 sentences)

Evaluation criteria:

- neutral language
- identity-sensitive awareness
- promotes dialogue



Cultural Differences

Further Reading or Resources

Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2017). Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication (5th ed.). Routledge.

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014

Pollock, M., Kohli, R., & Sánchez, J. E. (2018). Interrupting racism in the classroom: New perspectives on race, teachers, and the diversity gap. Phi Delta Kappan, 100(3), 52–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721718808254

Rosenberg, M. B. (2015). Nonviolent communication: A language of life (3rd ed.). PuddleDancer Press.

Ting-Toomey, S., & Dorjee, T. (2018). Communicating across cultures (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

UNESCO. (2017). Education for global citizenship: Topics and learning objectives. UNESCO Publishing. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000243278

Critical Thinking

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

The chapter aims to help young people understand the meaning and importance of critical thinking as a skill that goes beyond analysis, involving questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and seeking clarity of meaning. In our approach, we highlight how critical thinking and dialogue can - to some extent - complement or support each other: one sharpens discernment and reflection, while the other opens us to listening, connection, and diverse perspectives.

Effects of Work

Through these lessons, educators and students strengthen their ability to question information, evaluate sources, and balance clear self-expression with genuine curiosity. At the same time, they learn to connect critical thinking with dialogic practices, fostering openness, respect, trust, and shared meaning in group settings.

Target Group(s)

The lessons are designed for young people (15+), but can also benefit educators, community groups, and anyone interested in critical thinking and being open to new perspectives.

Critical Thinking

Methodology

The approach combines individual reflection, educator input, group discussion, and paired practice. It uses interactive tools such as the Critical Thinking Wheel and collective definition exercises to engage students actively. The methodology emphasizes experiential learning, co-creation, and the integration of dialogue practices with critical thinking rules.

Timing

For an educator to get knowledge and prepare materials regarded as needed: about 1-1,5 hour(s).
For students: 3 lessons, 45 minutes each (duration may vary according to group size).

Main Content

What is Critical thinking?
There are many different approaches and a wide range of literature available on critical thinking. Shortly, we can say that critical thinking is a skill that involves analyzing and evaluating information to make sound judgments.
The root of the word critical comes from the Greek kritikos, meaning the ability to discern, to judge, or to separate. Critical thinking is not merely analyzing; it is a deeper process of questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and seeking clarity of meaning.

Critical Thinking

Main Content

It is essential if we are to better understand ourselves, others, and the complexity of the world around us. It is both a personal discipline and a collective necessity, shaping the way we reason, decide, and grow together. While dialogue emphasizes listening and connection, critical thinking emphasizes discernment and reflection; together they form a dynamic balance, one opening us to others, the other sharpening our understanding of what is true and meaningful.

Here are proposed five key rules for cultivating strong critical thinking:

1. Question (everything): don't take information at face value. Ask yourself, "Is this true?" and look deeper, seek evidence to support claims.
2. Evaluate sources: consider the reliability and credibility of the source. Is it biased? Is it backed by research or expertise?
3. Check for logical consistency: ensure that arguments are coherent and free from contradictions or logical fallacies.
4. Consider different perspectives: examine issues from multiple angles to gain a well-rounded understanding and avoid personal biases. Be open to dialogue.
5. Reflect and adjust: be open to revising your beliefs and opinions when presented with new, reliable evidence.

📹 You can also watch and use the video: Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking

Main Content

We proposed here five key rules, but maybe you can add or change anything from your experience? Feel free to do it, be creative!

Openness for different perspectives - more dialogue.
Critical thinking also involves looking at problems from different sides, not getting stuck in our own opinions and biases. It's about being open to dialogue, listening to others, and learning from their experiences, too. When we reflect on what we believe and stay ready to adjust our opinions if new evidence or ideas come along, we grow stronger in our thinking. This way, critical thinking becomes not just about questioning, but also about staying curious, flexible, and respectful toward different perspectives.

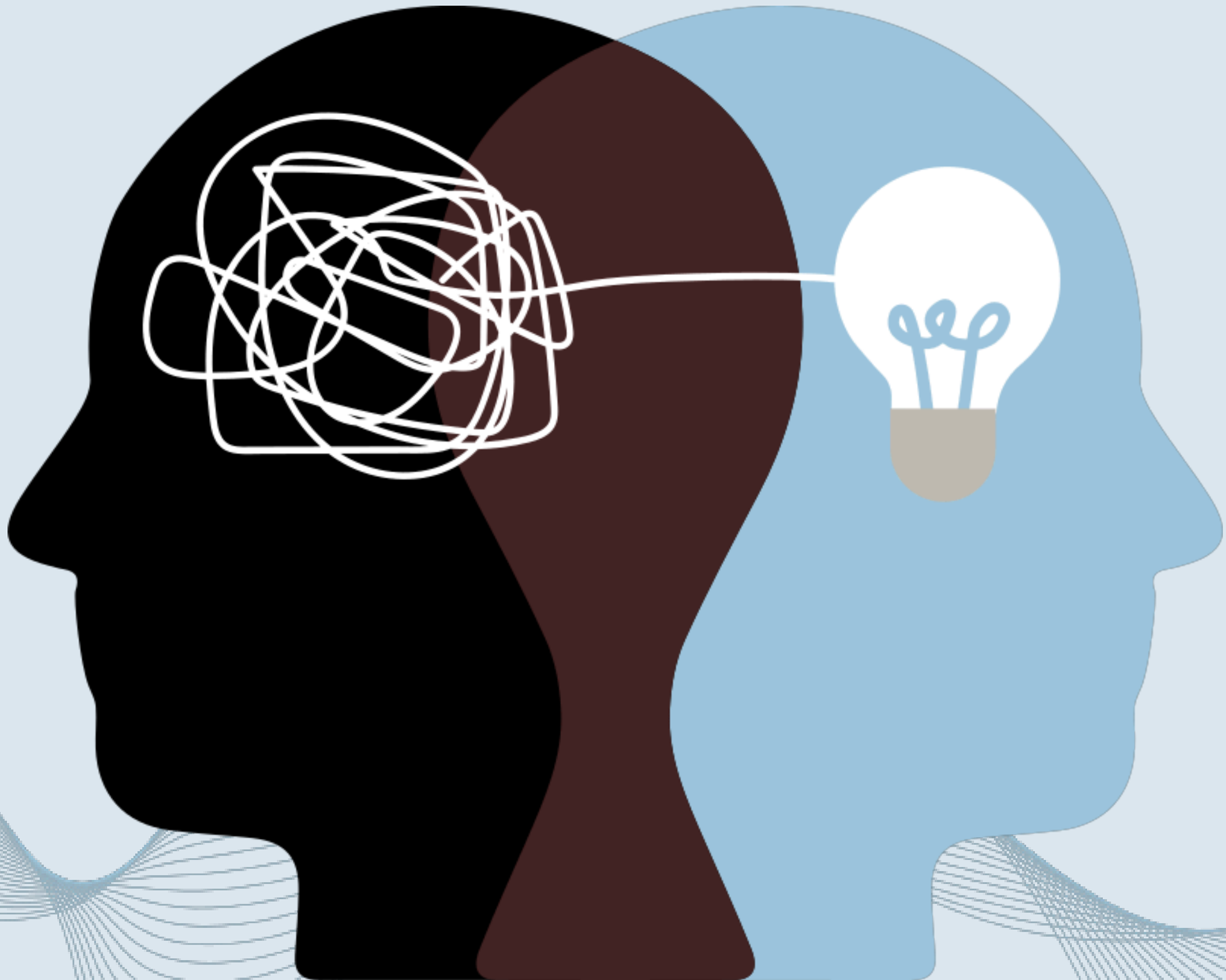
Dialogue also means curiosity - very helpful for critical thinking. It is important to ask questions instead of just accepting information, because questioning helps us uncover hidden assumptions and check whether claims are supported by reliable evidence. By doing so, we avoid being misled, deepen our understanding, and strengthen our ability to think independently and critically.

Critical Thinking

Main Content

So, dialogue can also act as a kind of laboratory for critical thinking: a place where we experiment with ideas, receive feedback, and co-create meaning. In this sense, dialogue does not weaken critical thinking - it strengthens it by adding perspectives, questions, and real human experiences that deepen our understanding.

NOTE: more about DIALOGUE you can find in the Chapter: Dialogue and the Art of Shared Understanding.



Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people.

Activity 1 - What is Critical Thinking? (45 minutes)

Objective: Students will explore the meaning of critical thinking, connect it to dialogue, and co-create a shared definition.
Steps:

Individual Reflection:
each student writes what comes to mind when they hear “critical thinking.”

Prompts:
What does it mean to you? When do you use it? Why is in important?

Educator’s Input:
share the definition: origins of the word kritikos, the deeper process of questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and seeking clarity.

Show the connection:
dialogue can support critical thinking, e.g. by openness to different points of view and deep listening/curiosity.

Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Verification and Comparison:

students revisit their initial notes and compare them with the educator's explanation. They mark similarities, differences, and new insights. They share experiences from their lives (have some dialogue together!).

Collective Definition:

In plenary, ideas are gathered on the board. Together, the group formulates a shared definition (shared understanding) of critical thinking that emphasizes both personal discipline and collective necessity. Find more examples from daily life and discuss them.

Outcome:

Students will understand critical thinking as a practice of questioning, evaluating, and reflecting, and see how it can be connected with dialogue.

Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Five Rules of Critical Thinking (45 minutes)

Objective:
Students will learn five proposed key rules of critical thinking, reflect on their own strengths, and discuss ways to apply them in dialogue.

Steps:
Educator's Input: Introduce the five rules:

- Question (everything)
- Evaluate sources
- Check for logical consistency
- Consider different perspectives (linked to dialogue)
- Reflect and adjust

Critical Thinking Wheel Activity:
Each student receives a handout (circle divided into five sections).

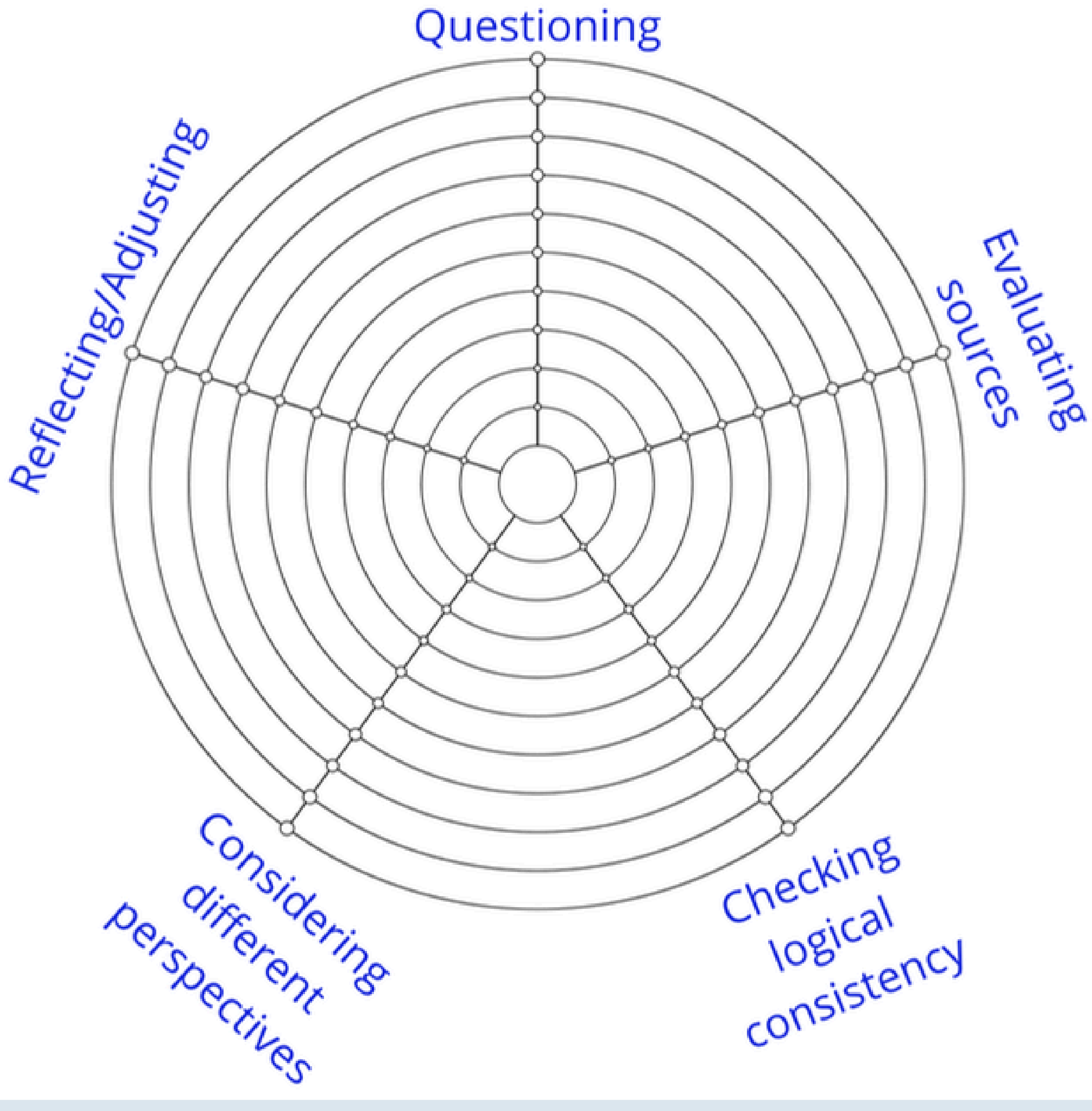
Instructions for students:
Mark how confident you feel with each rule. How close to you is each of them?
In the middle of the circle means 0 (not at all).
In other words, there is a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the maximum.

Note: This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now.

Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Critical Thinking Circle



Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Group Reflection: discuss each rule:

- What does it look like in practice?
- What makes it challenging?
- How does dialogue help us apply it?

Educator notes strategies on the board to create a collective "map of growth."

Closing:
students choose one rule to focus on improving. Prompt: "What is one concrete step you can take to strengthen this practice in your daily conversations?"

Outcome:
Students will understand the five rules, reflect on their own comfort levels, and identify practical steps to strengthen their critical thinking and dialogue.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Linking Dialogue Practices with Critical Thinking
MINUTES

Objective:
Students will connect dialogue practices (LISTEN, VOICE, SUSPEND, RESPECT, ATMOSPHERE) with critical thinking rules, and practice applying them together.

Steps:
Educator's Input:
present to students 5 dialogue practices (-> see the Chapter on Dialogue in the Ebook).

Individual Reflection:
Students write: Which dialogue practice helps me most with critical thinking? Which is hardest for me?

Educator's Input:
show how each dialogue practice supports critical thinking:

- LISTEN → helps "consider different perspectives."
- VOICE → supports "question everything" and "share reasoning."
- SUSPEND → aligns with "reflect and adjust."
- RESPECT → strengthens openness to diverse viewpoints, opinions.
- ATMOSPHERE → creates safety for questioning and revising beliefs.

Critical Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Paired Practice:

in pairs, students discuss the chosen dialogue practice and look for examples when it is helpful with critical thinking. E.g., RESPECT - how does respecting other opinions help to find gaps in our thinking? Any examples from life?

Discussion:

Students reflect: How can dialogue practices make critical thinking easier in some cases? Compare experiences.

Collective Definition:

Together, the group formulates a shared statement like (example): "Critical thinking and dialogue together mean questioning with clarity while staying open to others' perspectives."

Outcome:

Students will recognize the synergy between dialogue and critical thinking, practice applying them together to be better at analyzing information before accepting it as true.

Critical Thinking

Summary

There are many existing resources on critical thinking available "on the market", but this chapter is unique in explicitly linking critical thinking with dialogue practices. By combining discernment with openness, it offers a practical and creative way for young people and educators to strengthen their curiosity, reasoning, and ability to connect meaningfully with others. It also offers some concrete methods - including dialogue practices - that can be used to strengthen reflective judgment, analytical thinking, and thoughtful evaluation.

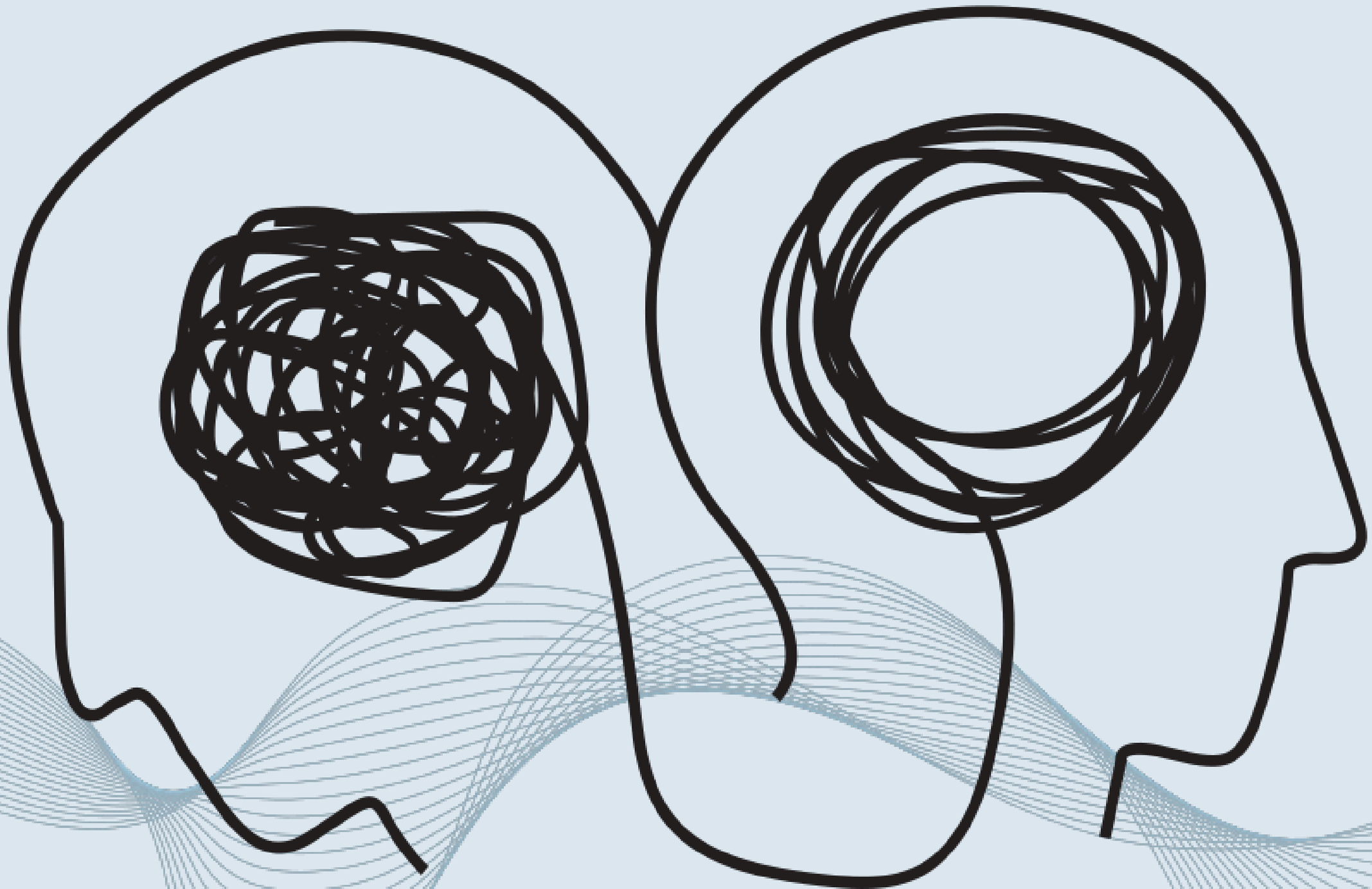


Critical Thinking

Knowledge Check

You may find it helpful to check your knowledge and reflect on yourself:

1. What does critical thinking mean in simple words?
2. Where does the word critical come from?
3. Why is it important to ask questions instead of just accepting information?
4. Name five rules of critical thinking. Reflect on them.



Critical Thinking

Further Reading or Resources

Books:

“Critical Thinking” by Richard Paul & Linda Elder

Websites:

Teaching critical thinking to prepare pupils for global challenges | European School Education Platform

Reflective Thinking

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

This chapter introduces reflective thinking as a structured psychological and educational process that enables individuals to analyze their experiences, evaluate their own thought patterns, and make informed improvements in future behavior. Reflective thinking is not merely introspection; it is a purposeful and critical examination of one's actions, assumptions, mediation and decisions. Because reflection enhances self-awareness, strengthens decision-making, and supports personal as well as professional growth, it is especially relevant in fields that rely on interpersonal understanding—such as psychology, counseling, social work, education, and leadership.

Effects of Work

Effects of learning how to evaluate information logically and objectively, recognizing biases, assumptions, and flawed arguments:

- Strengthening decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Applying critical thinking in real-life scenarios
- self-assessment, self- worth
- enhancement for thinking deeper.
- ability to ask better questions.
- make smarter decisions.

Reflective Thinking

Target Group(s)

Educators and students strengthen reflective skills, build healthier relationships, and learn to value diverse perspectives. The work fosters reflection, mutual understanding, and collective intelligence, enriching both individuals and groups/communities.

Methodology

Methodology used in 4 lessons is combining theory with less theoretical framework and case studies, drama therapy.

- Case Study interactive exercises, Sheldon Coo
- Dialogue sessions and how they support learning.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle provides a structured six-stage process that guides learners from describing an experience to planning future improvement.This model encourages students to move beyond simple narration and engage in deeper evaluation of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. By analyzing what worked well and what did not, Gibbs' approach supports continuous development in both academic and professional settings.

Reflective Thinking

Methodology

1. Feelings: Explore your thoughts and emotions during and after the event.
2. Evaluation: Assess the good and bad aspects of the experience from your perspective.
3. Analysis: Make sense of the situation by drawing on theories, literature, or other experiences to understand why things went as they did.
4. Conclusion: Summarize your learning, identifying what you'd do differently or what you could have done better.

Action Plan: Create a concrete plan for how you'll handle similar situations in the future.

Schön's reflection-in-action focuses on thinking critically during an activity rather than after it has happened. This real-time reflection allows practitioners - such as counselors, teachers, or managers - to adjust their behavior on the spot. Schön's model highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability when dealing with complex or unpredictable situations.The "What? So what? Now what?" framework simplifies reflective practice into three intuitive steps.In the first step, "What?", the learner objectively describes the situation or experience.

In the "So what?" phase, they analyze the meaning, significance, and personal impact of the event.Finally, in the "Now what?" stage, the learner identifies specific actions, strategies, or changes to apply in future situations.

Reflective Thinking

Timing

Training Duration: 2–3 hours, providing 4 lessons with 30 minutes exercises
Audience: Trainers conducting communication-skills sessions
Training Purpose: Equip trainers with tools, activities, and methodologies to effectively deliver "Reflective Thinking " to learners.

Main Content

What is Reflective Critical Thinking? The root of the word is reflection.
Conversation is a powerful tool. It occupies a central place in people's lives.
Still, sometimes we find it difficult to speak up when needed and to listen to
others with curiosity. Dialogue is a conversation where everyone's voice is heard and valued equally.
Balancing creativity and logical fallacies
Creativity means expressing original ideas or perspectives in ways that are meaningful and engaging to others. Example: "I believe that building trust in a group requires regular check-ins."
Logical fallacies means asking questions with genuine curiosity to understand others' perspectives. It's about listening openly, exploring assumptions, and inviting different viewpoints. Example: "How do you see trust being built in your community?"

Reflective Thinking

Main Content

- Practical tips for teachers: use interactive cards
- Practical tips for logical fallacies:
    - Ask open-ended questions ("What do you think...?" rather than "Do you agree?").
    - Listen actively - don't prepare your reply while the other speaks.
    - Show curiosity, not interrogation.

In genuine dialogue, true balance arises when we speak our truth with clarity while staying open and curious to the truths of others.



Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people. These activities will help them experience reflective thinking not only as conversation, but as a way of building relationships, fostering respect for differences, and learning from one another. Case studies help by developing this skills.

Activity 1 - Exploring Reflective Thinking (45 minutes)

Objective:
Students will reflect on their own understanding, reflective thinking, learn key practices, and co-create a shared definition.

Steps:
Individual Reflection
Educator's Input
Verification and Comparison:

- *Students revisit their initial definitions and compare them with the educator's explanation.*
- *They note similarities, differences, and new insights.*

Collective Definition
In a plenary session, ideas are gathered (e.g., written on the board). Together, the group formulates a shared definition of reflective thinking that reflects everyone's contributions.

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will have both a personal and collective understanding of dialogue, recognizing it as a practice of openness, respect, and shared meaning. Students will learn how to reflect on experiences using two structured models and apply them to a real or hypothetical classroom situation.

1. Warm-Up Activity – "Micro-Experience" Reflection

Time: 5 minutes

Materials: None Teacher instructions: Ask students to recall something small that happened today or yesterday in school (e.g., a group task, a conversation, a mistake, something they learned). Tell them they will reflect on this experience using simple questions.

2. Introduction to Reflection Models

Time: 8 minutes

Materials: Board/Projector

A. Explain the "What? – So what? – Now what?" model:

- What? – What happened? What did you do? Who was involved?
- So what? – Why is this important? What did you learn? How did it make you feel?
- Now what? – What will you do differently next time? What is your action plan?

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

B. Briefly introduce Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (adapted for teens):

1. Description
2. Feelings
3. Evaluation
4. Analysis
5. Conclusion
6. Action plan

Explain that Gibbs is a longer, more detailed version of the three-step model they already know.

3. Pair Exercise – Applying "What? – So what? – Now what?"

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: Worksheet or notebook

Task: Students work in pairs and fill out these prompts based on their micro-experience:

1. What? Write 3–5 sentences describing what happened.
2. So what? Why does this event matter? What did you think or feel?
3. What did it show you about yourself or others?
4. Now what?
5. One change or improvement you could try next time.
6. One positive habit you want to keep.

Teacher role: circulate and guide, help students expand their answers.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

4. Small Group Activity – Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (Simplified)

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: Group chart / large paper

Students work in groups of 4.

They choose one shared experience (e.g., teamwork project, class challenge, school event) and complete the 6 stages:

Group prompts:

1. Description: What happened?
2. Feelings: How did the group members feel?
3. Evaluation: What went well? What didn't?
4. Analysis: Why did things happen that way?
5. Conclusion: What could we have done differently?
6. Action plan: What will we do better next time?

Groups create a mini-poster or use a digital tool to present their reflection.

5. Sharing & Discussion

Time: 7 minutes

Discussion questions:

- Which model was easier to use? Why?
- How does reflecting help us improve learning and teamwork?
- What is one insight you gained from today's reflection?

Allow 2–3 groups to share key points.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

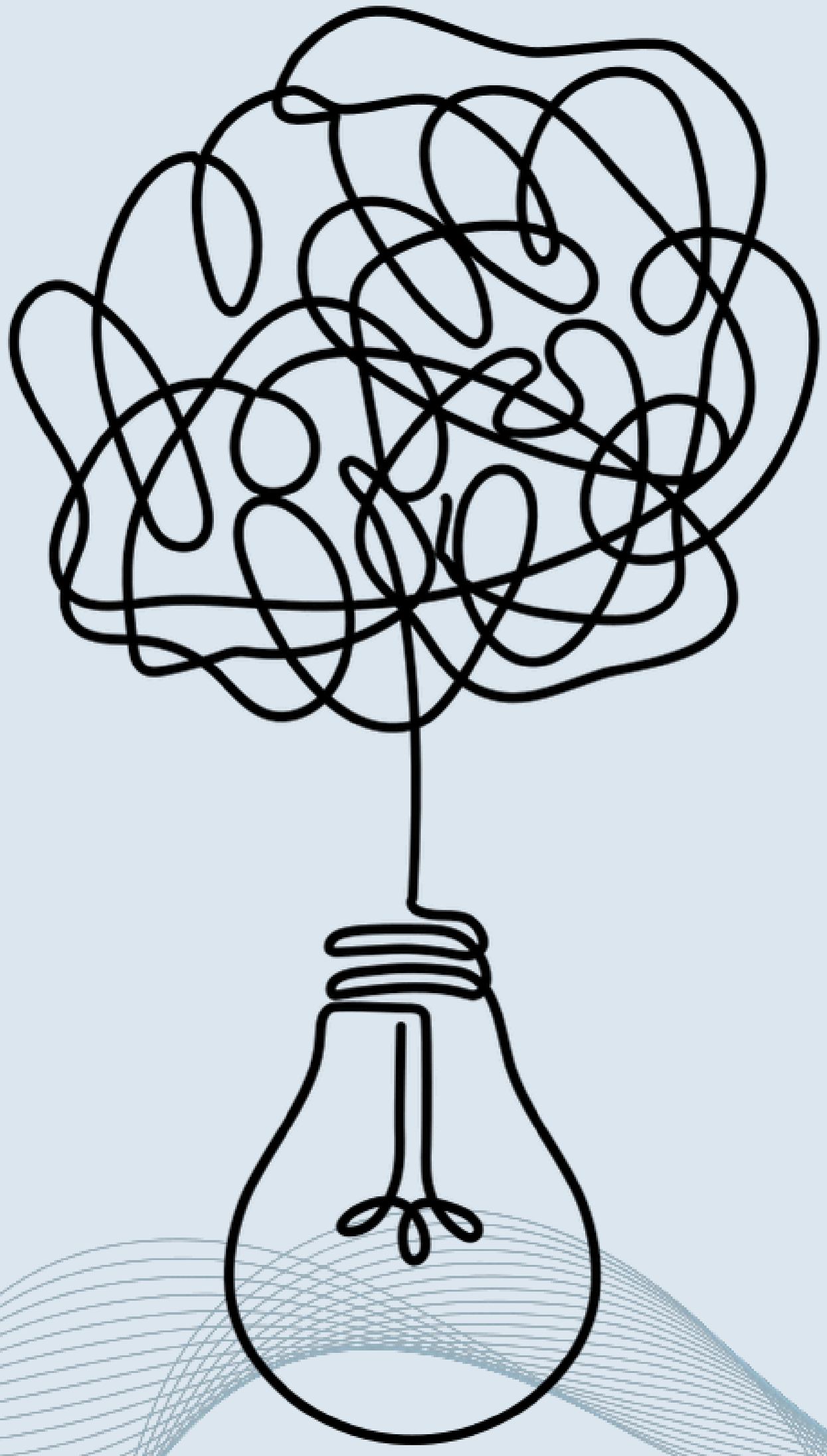
6. Closing Activity – Personal Reflection Card

Time: 5 minutes

Students complete one final sentence on a card or in their notebook:

- "One thing I learned about myself today is..."
- "One goal for next time is..."

They keep the card for future lessons.



Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Exploring Reflective Thinking Practices (35 minutes)

Objective:

Students will learn about five key practices in reflective thinking, reflect on their own comfort level with each, and discuss ways to strengthen their skills. Steps, Educator's Input are connected with practice. The educator introduces the idea of dialogue as a practice and explains the five practices: "Critical thinking is purposeful, reflective judgment that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference.

Group Reflection are planned together, the class discusses each practice:

- What does it look like in action?
- What makes it challenging?
- What helps us improve?
- Students share strategies for strengthening their skills.
- The educator notes key points on the board to create a collective map of growth strategies.

Closing questions, reflection

Students look again at their Reflective thinking wheel.

Prompt: "Choose one practice you want to focus on improving.

What is one concrete step you can take?"

Outcome should be focused on action plan and racionalizing.

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand the Gibbs Cycle
- Reflect on their own comfort levels using the Gibbs Cycle
- Identify practical steps to strengthen their reflective thinking competence.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Exploring Dialogue Practices (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will learn about five key practices in reflective thinking, reflect on their own comfort level with each, and discuss ways to strengthen their skills.

Steps, Educator's Input

The educator introduces the idea of dialogue as a practice and explains the five practices:

There are five effective strategies to foster reflective thinking in mediation, explained in a practical and professional way:

1. Active Listening and Paraphrasing
   - Strategy: The peer/ mediator listens carefully to each party and then paraphrases or summarizes what they said.
   - Purpose: Encourages parties to slow down and reflect on their own statements, as well as understand the other person's perspective.
   - Example: "So, what I hear you saying is that the main issue is feeling excluded from decisions. Is that correct?"

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

2. Asking Open-Ended, Reflective Questions
   - Strategy: Use questions that prompt deep thinking rather than yes/no answers.
   - Purpose: Helps parties explore their emotions, assumptions, and underlying needs.
   - Examples:
     - "What do you think caused this misunderstanding?"
     - "How would you feel if the other person approached this differently?"

3. Encouraging Self-Assessment and Perspective-Taking
   - Strategy: Invite parties to evaluate their own role and consider the situation from the other person's viewpoint.
   - Purpose: Promotes self-awareness, reduces defensiveness, and enhances empathy.
   - Example: "How do you think your response might have been perceived by the other party?"

4. Journaling or Notetaking During Mediation
   - Strategy: Encourage parties to jot down their thoughts, emotions, and potential solutions.
   - Purpose: Reflective writing externalizes thinking, clarifies priorities, and supports structured problem-solving.
   - Example: After a tense discussion, the mediator asks: "Could you write down the main points that matter most to you before we continue?"

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

5. Debriefing and Summarization
   - Strategy: At the end of a session, ask each party to reflect on what they learned about themselves, the other party, and the conflict.
   - Purpose: Consolidates insights, highlights progress, and reinforces reflective thinking as a habit.
   - Example: "Looking back on today's discussion, what is one thing you've realized about your needs or the other person's perspective?"

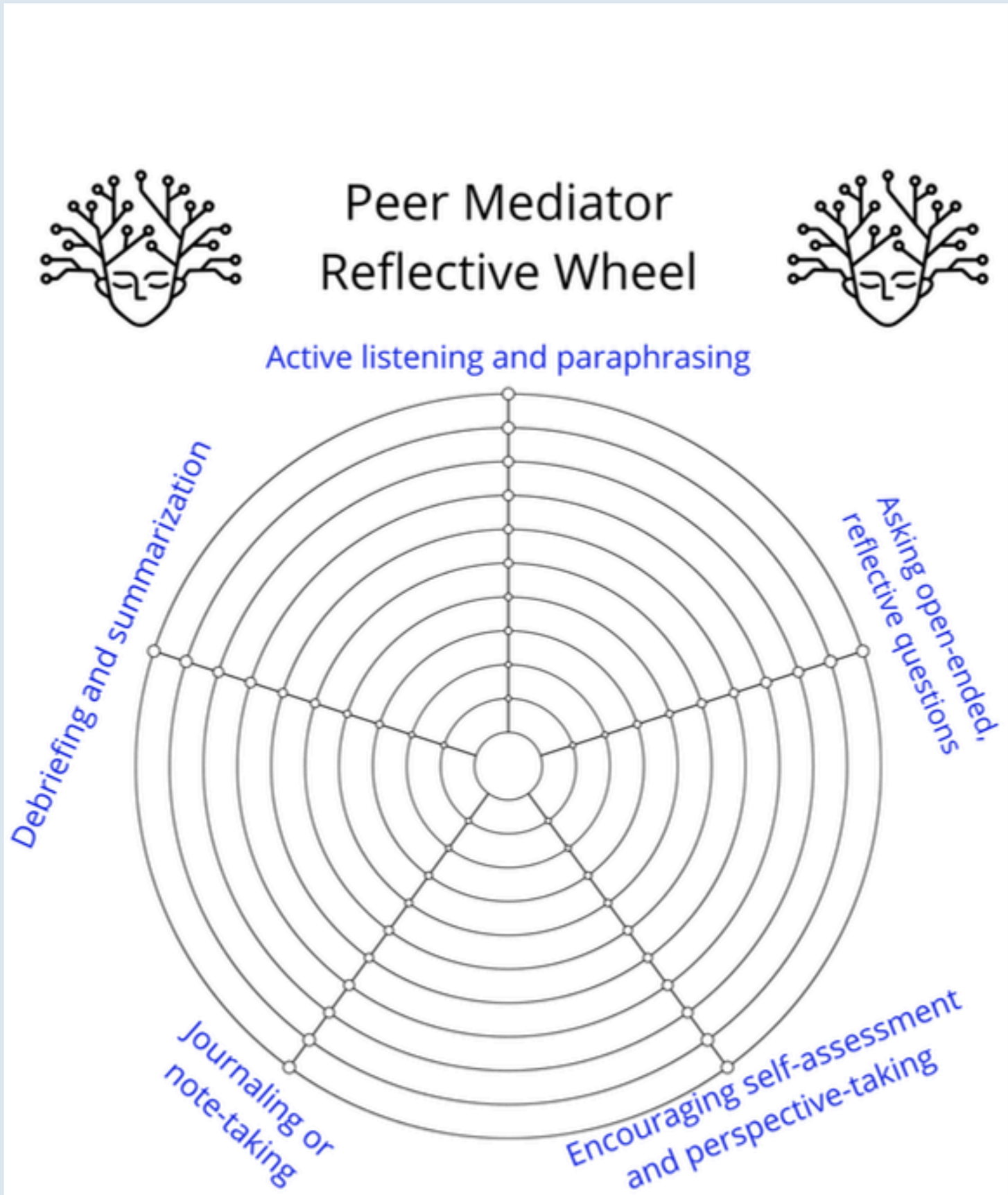
Peer Mediator Reflective Wheel Activity
Each student receives a Peer Mediator Reflective Wheel handout (a circle divided into five sections, one for each practice).

Instruction:
"Mark on the scale how comfortable or confident you feel with each practice. This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now."

"***Critical thinking is purposeful, reflective judgment that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference***."

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



Group Reflection

Together, the class discusses each practice:

What does it look like in action?

What makes it challenging?

What helps us improve?

Students share strategies for strengthening their skills.

The educator notes key points on the board to create a collective map of growth strategies.

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Closing:

Students look again at their Reflective thinking wheel.

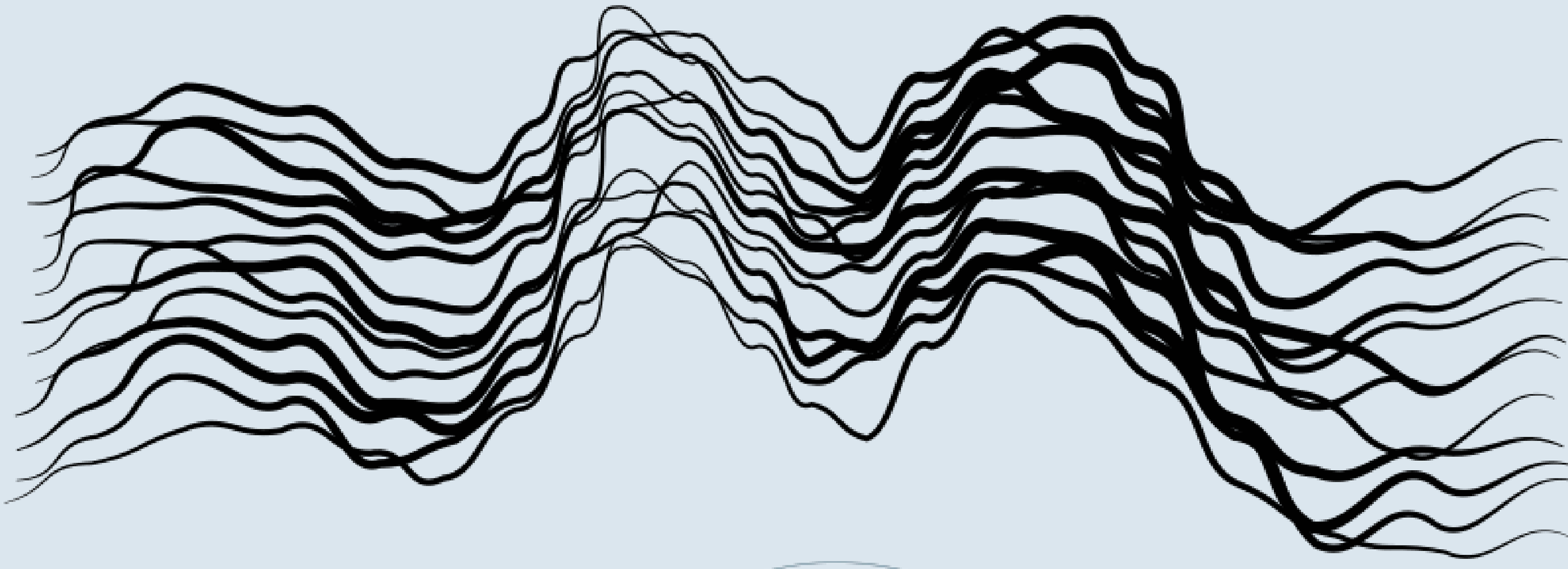
Prompt:

"Choose one practice you want to focus on improving. What is one concrete step you can take?"

Outcome:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand the five practices of dialogue.
- Reflect on their own comfort levels using the Peer Mediator Reflective Wheel.
- Identify practical steps to strengthen their dialogic competence.



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 4 - Case Study Sheldon Cooper

The objective of the lesson is to make it possible for Students will explore the practices of critical thinking by logical Fallacies. Sheldon Cooper and Amy Farrah Fowler are starting to live together, and Sheldon struggles with expressing his discomfort about the situation. He doesn't want to tell Amy directly that he is feeling uneasy about it, so he relies on non-verbal communication and indirect actions to convey his feelings. After watching the scene, identify the non-verbal cues Sheldon uses to communicate his discomfort without directly saying it (e.g., body language, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions).

Relationship to Critical Thinking
A core theme of the video is likely that critical thinking enables us to detect and avoid fallacies, strengthening communication and reasoning skills.

- Recognizing fallacies prevents people from being *persuaded by confident delivery alone*.
- Being able to *ask the right questions* (e.g., "Does this argument actually follow logically?") is highlighted as key to sound thinking.
- It also supports clearer communication: if you avoid fallacies, your arguments are more credible and less likely to mislead others.

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CR7eJOjrgc

Common Cognitive Traps Behind Fallacies

While the video probably focuses on examples, critical thinking literature emphasizes why fallacies are *psychologically tempting*:

- Cognitive biases (e.g., confirmation bias, fast emotional thinking) make us jump to conclusions or accept weak reasoning.
- These psychological tendencies mean that even rational people can inadvertently produce or accept fallacious arguments.

Educational Value

From a learning perspective, the structure of the video is likely designed to:

- teach recognition of flawed reasoning,
- promote reflection on one's own arguments,
- and encourage skeptical, evidence-based thinking

This aligns with critical thinking frameworks that see fallacy detection as a central skill in reasoning, debate, and academic research

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Answer the Following Questions based on the video with Amy and Sheldon

1. What non-verbal cues does Sheldon use to convey discomfort about the idea of moving in with Amy?

Sheldon uses body language such as fidgeting, avoiding eye contact, and crossing his arms to convey his discomfort.

2. Why do you think Sheldon chooses to communicate his discomfort through body language rather than verbally expressing it? What might this tell us about his character?

Sheldon likely uses body language because he finds it difficult to express his emotions verbally. This suggests that he may be uncomfortable with vulnerability and prefers to maintain a logical and detached demeanor.

3. How does Sheldon's facial expression change when Amy talks to him about living together?

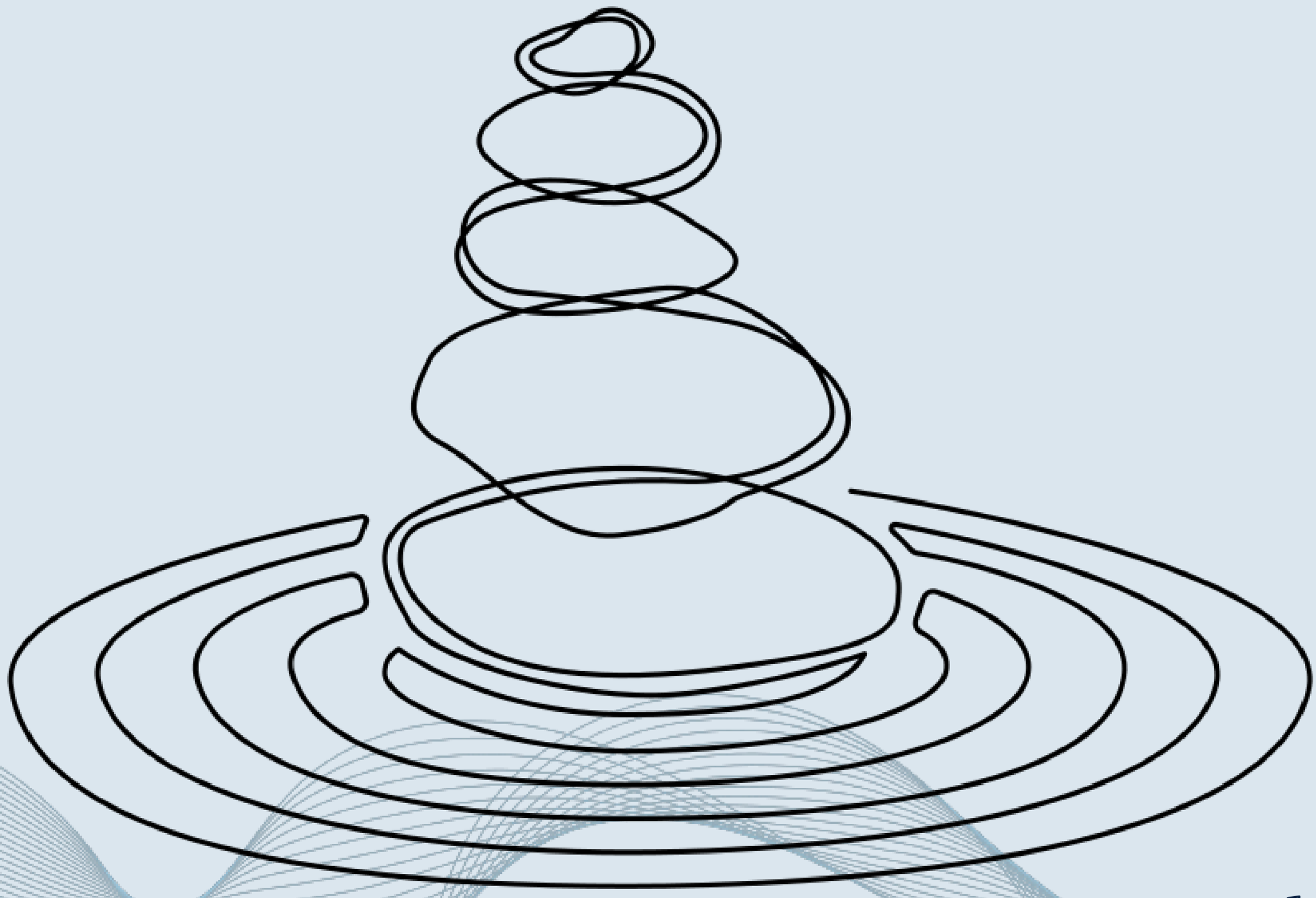
Sheldon's facial expression changes from neutral to tense, indicating his anxiety and reluctance about the idea of living together.

Reflective Thinking

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand the difference between reflective thinking and evaluative thinking
- Recognize their own tendencies in providing criticism.
- Practice balancing clear self-expression with logical fallacies
- Co-create a shared definition of reflective thinking



Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 5 - Logical Fallacies Case Studies

Logical Fallacies Defined as plot holes - these gaps in narrative leave unanswered questions.

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that make arguments invalid or misleading. These are mistakes in how premises lead to a conclusion, rather than mistakes in factual information alone.

This distinction is crucial for critical thinking: you can spot bad reasoning even when the conclusion happens to be true, because the support for that conclusion wasn't logically valid.

Examples of Common Fallacies

- False Cause (Post Hoc) - assuming A caused B because one came before the other (e.g., "dinosaurs ate plants; thus plants are bad" is used as illustration).
- Strawman - misrepresenting someone's argument to make it easier to attack.
- Begging the Question - assuming what you are trying to prove in your premise.
- False Dilemma - presenting only two choices when more exist.

These examples help viewers *recognize fallacies when they occur*, encouraging evaluation of arguments beyond surface persuasiveness

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Logical Fallacies in the Harry Potter Movies

1. Ad Hominem (Attacking the Person Instead of the Argument)

Example: Many characters dismiss Harry's warnings about Voldemort by attacking Harry's character instead of considering his evidence.

- "Harry is attention-seeking; therefore Voldemort isn't back."
- This shifts focus from the actual claim (Voldemort's return) to personal insults.

2. Appeal to Authority

Example: The Ministry of Magic uses its political authority to claim Voldemort isn't back.

- "The Ministry says he hasn't returned, so it must be true."
- This assumes a statement is true only because authority says so.

3. Bandwagon Fallacy

Example: In Order of the Phoenix, most of the wizarding community believes Harry is lying simply because "everyone else thinks so."

- "Everyone says Harry is crazy, so he must be."

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

4. Strawman Fallacy

Example: Rita Skeeter misrepresents Harry's experiences in her articles.

She exaggerates and distorts his words so her arguments are easier to attack.

- She presents a false version of Harry's statements, then criticizes that version.

5. Slippery Slope

Example: Characters sometimes argue that a small event will lead to extreme outcomes.

- "If Hogwarts allows students to practice defense spells, chaos will follow."
- The conclusion is exaggerated without evidence.

6.False Dilemma (Either/Or Thinking)

Example: The Ministry frames the issue as only two choices:

- "Either you support the Ministry, or you are a threat."
- This ignores other possibilities (e.g., disagreeing but still being loyal).

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

7.Hasty Generalization

Example: Many wizards assume all giants are dangerous because of past events.

- "A few giants behaved violently, so all giants are bad."
- This conclusion is based on insufficient evidence.

8.Appeal to Fear Example: Voldemort and Death Eaters manipulate others by creating fear.

- "If you oppose us, you will die."
- Fear is used instead of logical argument.

9.Confirmation Bias (not a fallacy but faulty thinking)

Example: Dumbledore refuses to share information with Harry at times because he interprets events through his pre-existing beliefs.

Characters sometimes seek only information that confirms what they already think.

10.Genetic Fallacy

Example: Many wizards judge Harry's credibility based on who he is (the Boy Who Lived) rather than the truth of his statements.

- "Harry's parents were famous, so Harry must be dramatic."
- A claim's origin is judged instead of its accuracy.

Reflective Thinking

Summary

Understand the core principles of reflective thinking
– including its psychological foundations and its role in learning and personal development.
Recognize the importance of self-awareness in professional and interpersonal contexts
– such as counseling interactions, teamwork, leadership, and client communication.
Apply structured reflection models – e.g., Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, Schön's reflection-in-action, or the "What? So what? Now what?" technique.

- Develop practical skills for improving dialogue and communication

– by identifying personal biases, emotional triggers, and habitual response patterns.

- Use reflective thinking to enhance decision-making and problem-solving

– particularly in complex or emotionally charged situations.

- Understand mediation and conflict-resolution techniques

– and how reflective thinking supports impartiality, empathy, and constructive dialogue.

- Incorporate reflective practices into daily academic, professional, or clinical routines

– through journals, supervision sessions, feedback tools, or guided questioning.

Reflective Thinking

Summary

Read the essay to better understand the topic in big picture:

In today's interconnected world, I've come to realize how easily logical fallacies can creep into our thinking - especially in multicultural settings where diverse perspectives challenge our assumptions. One moment that stands out to me involved a team project with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. Initially, I found myself making a hasty generalization, assuming that a teammate from an East Asian country would naturally be more reserved and less likely to speak up in meetings. It wasn't until I got to know them better that I realized how limiting and unfair that stereotype was. They turned out to be one of the most insightful and engaged members of the team.

Another moment of reflection came when I encountered the appeal to tradition. During a discussion about flexible work arrangements, someone said, "We've always worked from the office in our culture, so your preference for remote work must be wrong." At first, I hesitated to challenge this view out of respect. But I later recognized that tradition, while valuable, shouldn't be a barrier to innovation or inclusivity. Respecting heritage doesn't mean resisting progress.

Reflective Thinking

Summary

I've also witnessed ethnocentrism in subtle ways - comments like, "If your culture doesn't celebrate Christmas the way we do, it's cold or unwelcoming." These moments made me reflect on how easy it is to unconsciously place one's own culture at the center of what's considered "normal" or "right." It reminded me to stay curious and open, rather than judgmental.

Lastly, I've felt the pressure of groupthink, especially when everyone around me supported a particular practice simply because it was the norm. For example, during a team-building event, someone said, "Everyone in our culture enjoys after-work drinks, so you should too." It took courage to voice a different opinion and explain my personal and cultural reasons for not drinking alcohol, but doing so opened up a richer, more inclusive dialogue.

These experiences have taught me the importance of self-awareness, humility, and the willingness to question my own biases. In a multicultural environment, embracing diverse perspectives isn't just respectful - it's essential for growth, empathy, and better decision-making.

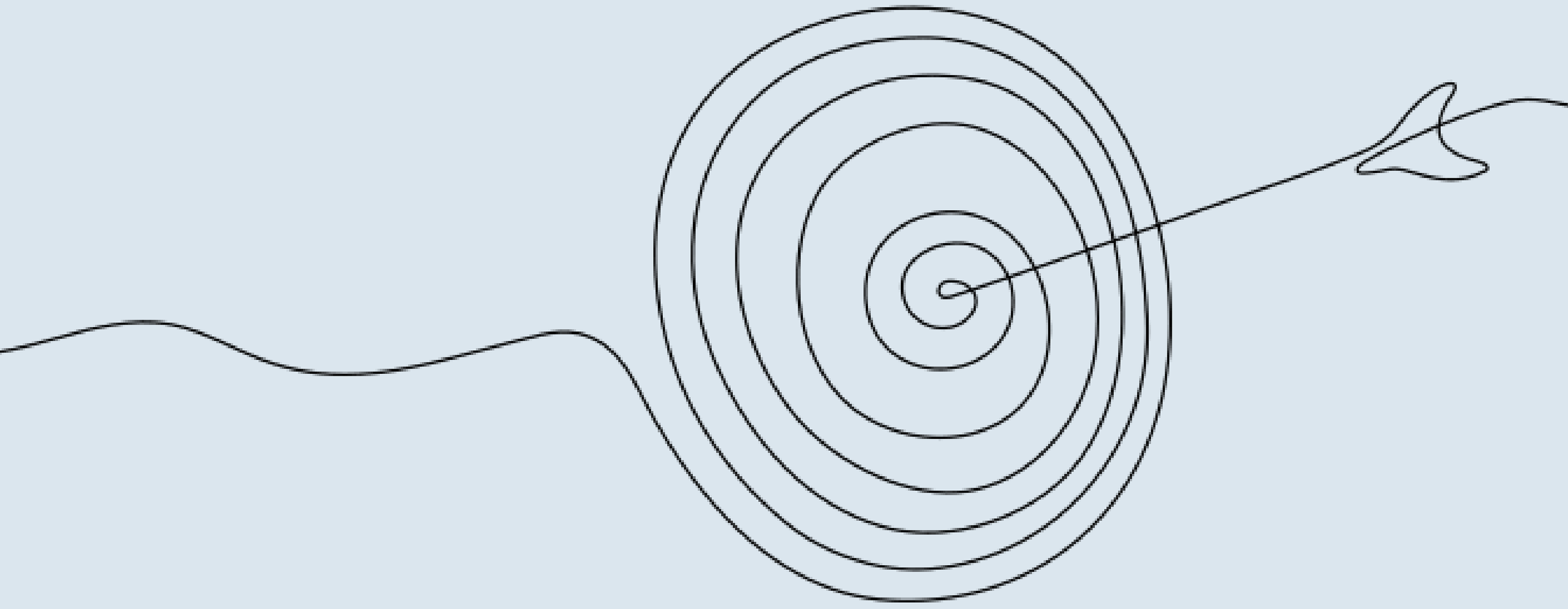
Reflective Thinking

Knowledge Check

You may find it helpful to check your knowledge and reflect: (BASED ON MOOC)|

Which of the following is a good first step before making a decision?

What could introduce bias into your decision-making process?



Further Reading or Resources

Books:

Ennis, R. H. (2011). The nature of critical thinking: An outline of critical thinking dispositions and abilities. University of Illinois.
(Classic definition; foundational text.)
Facione, P. A. (2015). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. Insight Assessment.
(One of the most widely cited modern descriptions of critical thinking.)
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(Highly practical framework used in education and professional development.)
Halpern, D. F. (2014). Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking (5th ed.). Psychology Press.
(A psychology-based, research-grounded book.)
Brookfield, S. D. (2012). Teaching for critical thinking: Tools and techniques to help students question their assumptions. Jossey-Bass.
(Strong pedagogy-focused reference.)

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Kuhn, D. (1999). A developmental model of critical thinking. Educational Researcher, 28(2), 16–25.
(Research-based article from developmental psychology.)
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Turek, I. (2010). Didaktika. Iura Edition. (Contains sections on kritické myslenie in the context of modern education.)
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Facione (2015): "Critical thinking is purposeful, reflective judgment that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference."
Ennis (2011): "Critical thinking is reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do."Birkás, G. (n.d.). Érvelési hibák (handout / online PDF).
Univerzitný handout/publikácia sumarizujúca klasické a moderné érvelési hibák; užitočné pre výklad typológie falácií. szavaiistvan.hu

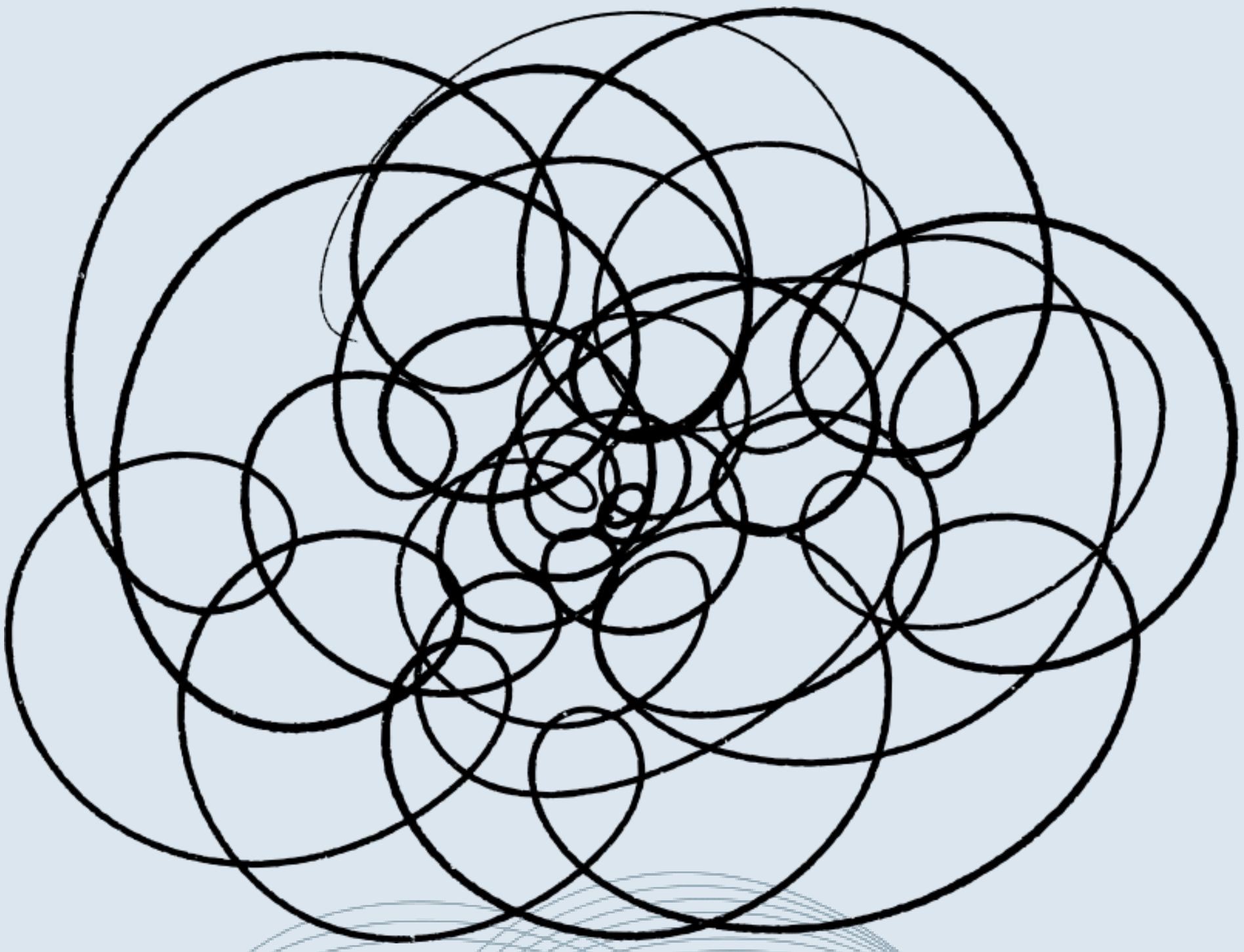
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Kutrová / ELTE oktatási anyag (n.d.). Érvelési hibák (course handout / PDF). Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem oktatási anyag. — Štruktúrované vysvetlenia chýb v argumentácii, vhodné vo výučbe argumentačných techník. kutrov.web.elte.hu

Érvelési hibák (chapter). (n.d.). In Magyar elektronikus könyvtár (MEK) — online text/učebnica (chapter on argumentation errors).. mek.oszk.hu

Szkeptikus.hu. (2014). Érvelési hibák gyűjteménye (online collection). Szkeptikus Társaság

Majtényi, L., & Bayer, J. (n.d.). Információs jog I. (university textbook / media law notes).. jogikar.uni-miskolc.hu



Resilience in Digital World

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

The chapter aims to help young people understand the terms resilience and dialogue as essential skills for navigating the challenges of the digital world. It shows how these practices support emotional balance, critical thinking, and healthy communication online and offline.

IMPORTANT: In this chapter, "resilience" is presented in a simplified way and is not based on a psychological approach. It refers more to inviting one to slow down and look beneath the surface of this theme. Also, with reference to living in dialogue with oneself and others, and strengthening one's inner capacity to cope.

Effects of Work

Educators and students strengthen their ability to bounce back from digital pressures while building trust and openness in dialogue. Together, they develop strategies that foster well-being, reflection, and meaningful connections in a fast-changing environment.

Target Group(s)

The lessons are designed for young people aged 15+, but they also benefit educators, community groups, and anyone seeking to integrate resilience and dialogue into everyday life. These practices are universal and can support both personal growth and collective learning.

Resilience in Digital World

Methodology

The approach combines individual reflection, educator input, group discussion, and practical exercises that link resilience with dialogic practices. By engaging actively and co-creating definitions (shared meaning), participants experience resilience and dialogue not only as concepts but as lived skills.

Timing

For an educator to get knowledge and prepare materials regarded as needed: about 1-1,5 hour(s).
For students: 3 lessons, 45 minutes each (duration may vary according to group size).

Main Content

What is Resilience, and why is it important in the "digital world"?
The word resilience comes from Latin resilire, meaning "to spring back, to rebound". Resilience - to put it simply - is the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger in the face of challenges or difficulties. It also refers to the capacity to live in dialogue with oneself, to listen to one's internal voice.
Resilience can help young people face challenges by giving them the inner strength to recover from setbacks, adapt to difficulties, and maintain balance in a fast-changing digital environment. It supports their ability to bounce back from negative experiences, stay grounded, and continue learning and growing despite pressures from the online world.

Resilience in Digital World

Main Content

The digital world offers many opportunities but also carries serious risks, especially for young people. Constant exposure to social media can create pressure to compare oneself with others, leading to anxiety, low self-esteem, or distorted self-image. The speed and volume of online information make it easy to spread misinformation, which can confuse or mislead those still learning to think critically. Excessive screen time may reduce face-to-face interactions, weakening social skills and empathy. At the same time, risks such as cyberbullying, online harassment, and invasion of privacy can harm emotional well-being and trust. For young people, navigating the digital world requires guidance, reflection, being open for dialogue and strong critical thinking skills to stay safe and balanced.

Resilience and dialogue - the antidote to digital life.
We propose to explore five areas of practising resilience, helping to be more resistant to threats to digital life. Inner strength grows where it is supported by dialogue - with ourselves and with others. As it is also through meaningful conversations that we learn to understand, regulate, and consciously shape our lives, building both our way of living and our capacity for resilience in the digital age.
Of course, this list is not a closed topic - rather, encouragement for exploration - and can be expanded with new ideas and experiences.
Still, by focusing on these areas, people can build some resilience and thrive in our digital age.

Resilience in Digital World

Main Content

1. Emotional regulation: being able to understand, express, and manage your emotions effectively is crucial. Techniques like deep breathing, journaling, and talking to trusted friends or family members can help.
2. Social connections: having a strong support network of REAL friends, family, and colleagues provides emotional support and practical assistance. Building and maintaining healthy relationships and practising dialogue with others is key to resilience.
3. Physical health: taking care of your body through regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep helps you stay strong and energised. Physical health also includes managing stress and avoiding harmful habits.
4. Mental health: developing a positive mindset and practising mindfulness can greatly enhance resilience. This includes managing negative thoughts, practising gratitude, and seeking professional help when needed.
5. Purpose and meaning: finding a sense of purpose and meaning in life can provide motivation and a reason to keep going during tough times. This could come from work, hobbies, volunteering, or personal passions

📹 You can also watch and use the video: Resilience – The Antidote to Digital Life

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people. These activities will help them to explore the subject of resilience, also in connection with dialogue.

Activity 1 - What is Resilience? (45 minutes)

Objective:
Students will reflect on their own understanding of resilience, learn its roots and meaning, and co-create a shared definition connected to the digital world.

Steps:
Individual Reflection:
Each student writes what comes to mind when they hear "resilience" or "mental toughness". Prompts: *What does it mean to you? When have you needed resilience/mental toughness? Why is this topic so popular?*
Educator's Input :
Share the definition: originating from Latin *resilire* ("to spring back"), the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger. Highlight resilience as an antidote to challenges of digital life (social media pressure, misinformation, cyberbullying) - activities in real life.
Verification and Comparison:
Students revisit their initial notes and compare them with the educator's explanation. They mark similarities, differences, and new insights.

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Collective Definition/Meaning (common dialogue in practice):
In plenary, ideas are gathered on the board. Together, the group formulates a shared definition of resilience that emphasises bouncing back, staying grounded, and thriving in the digital world. Also, add examples from daily life (e.g., handling online criticism, recovering after a stressful exam).
Outcome:
Students will understand resilience as a skill of recovery and adaptation, and see its importance in navigating digital challenges.

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Five Areas of Resilience (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will explore five proposed areas of resilience (emotional regulation, social connections, physical health, mental health, purpose/meaning), reflect on their own strengths, and discuss ways to strengthen them.

Steps:

Educator's Input: Introduce the five areas of resilience. Give short examples:

- Emotional regulation → calming down after online conflict.
- Social connections → talking to real friends instead of only online followers; real dialogue with yourself and people.
- Physical health → sleep and exercise to balance screen time.
- Mental health → gratitude, mindfulness, positive mindset.
- Purpose and meaning → hobbies, volunteering, passions.

Resilience Wheel Activity:

Each student receives a printed handout (circle divided into five sections).

Instructions for students:

Mark how strong you feel in each area today. In the middle of the circle is 0 (meaning not at all).

In other words, there is a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the maximum.

Note: This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now.

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



Group Reflection (common dialogue): discuss each area:

- What does it look like in practice?
- What makes it challenging in the digital world?
- What helps us improve?
- How can "listening" to oneself help to build strength?

Educator notes strategies on the board to create a collective "map of resilience."

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Closing:

students choose one area to focus on improving. Prompt: "What is one concrete step you can take this week to strengthen your resilience?"

Outcome:

students will understand the five areas of resilience, reflect on their own strengths, and identify practical steps to grow.



Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Practising Resilience in Digital Life (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will connect resilience skills with real challenges of the digital world and practice strategies to bounce back and stay balanced, while also using dialogue practices to support reflection and mutual learning.

Steps:

Individual Reflection:

Students write: What is one challenge I face in the digital world (e.g., social media pressure, too much screen time, online conflict)?

Educator reminds that sharing these reflections later requires dialogue skills, e.g. VOICE (speaking mindfully), LISTEN (be curious of others) and ATMOSPHERE (creating safety).

NOTE: Here educator can take advantage of the Chapter in the eBook: Dialogue and the Art of Shared Understanding.

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Educator's Input:

Show how resilience helps (and is connected to inner dialogue and dialogue with others):

- Emotional regulation → managing stress from online comparison (e.g.LISTEN to your own emotions).
- Social connections → relying on real friends for support (e.g. RESPECT diverse opinions and experiences to have good relations).
- Physical health → balancing screen time with movement (e.g. SUSPEND assumptions that "being online is always necessary").
- Mental health → practising gratitude after negative online experiences (e.g. VOICE - making positive reflections).
- Purpose → focusing on meaningful goals beyond digital approval (ATMOSPHERE of encouragement, peace and dialogue in your conversations and life).

Paired Practice:

In pairs, one student shares a digital challenge, and the other suggests a resilience strategy or dialogue practice.

E.g.

Student A: "I got a really mean comment under my photo yesterday. It stuck with me all evening and I kept rereading it."

Student B: "That sounds really upsetting. One resilience strategy could be to take a step back from it (calm down) - remind yourself that one comment doesn't define you, and sometimes it helps to create a bit of distance by not checking it again for a while."

Resilience in Digital World

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

After 5 minutes, they switch roles. → Educator highlights that this exercise requires VOICE (to present your point of view), LISTEN (attentive presence) and INQUIRY (curiosity about the other's perspective).

Verification and Comparison:

Students reflect: How did resilience strategies make digital challenges easier? Which strategies felt most useful? They can also compare experiences, noticing how dialogue practices (LISTEN, RESPECT, VOICE, SUSPEND, ATMOSPHERE) made sharing and learning safer and more effective.

Collective Definition/Meaning:

Together, the group formulates a shared statement like (example): "Resilience in the digital world means bouncing back from online challenges while staying grounded and true to yourself, supported by dialogue practices that foster openness, respect, and connection." Then the group can have more dialogue and discussion on it.

Outcome:

Students will recognise how resilience applies directly to digital challenges, practice strategies, and co-create a definition of resilience in digital life that is strengthened by dialogue practices.

Resilience in Digital World

Summary

Resilience is more than simply “coping” with difficulties - it is the practice of adapting, recovering, and growing stronger in the face of challenges. Also, to find a way to live with dialogue with oneself.

In the digital world, resilience and dialogue act as an antidote to pressures such as social comparison, misinformation, and online conflict, helping young people stay grounded and balanced. Generally, resilience combines emotional regulation, supportive relationships, physical and mental well-being, and a sense of purpose, enabling us not only to bounce back but also to thrive. When linked with dialogue, resilience becomes a shared practice: like listening, respecting, and co-creating meaning together while navigating the fast-changing digital environment.

Resilience in Digital World

Knowledge Check

You may find it helpful to check your knowledge and reflect on yourself:

1. What does the word resilience mean?
2. Why is resilience especially important in the digital world?
3. Name one of the five areas of resilience and explain how it helps in daily life.
4. How can real social connections and dialogue strengthen resilience?

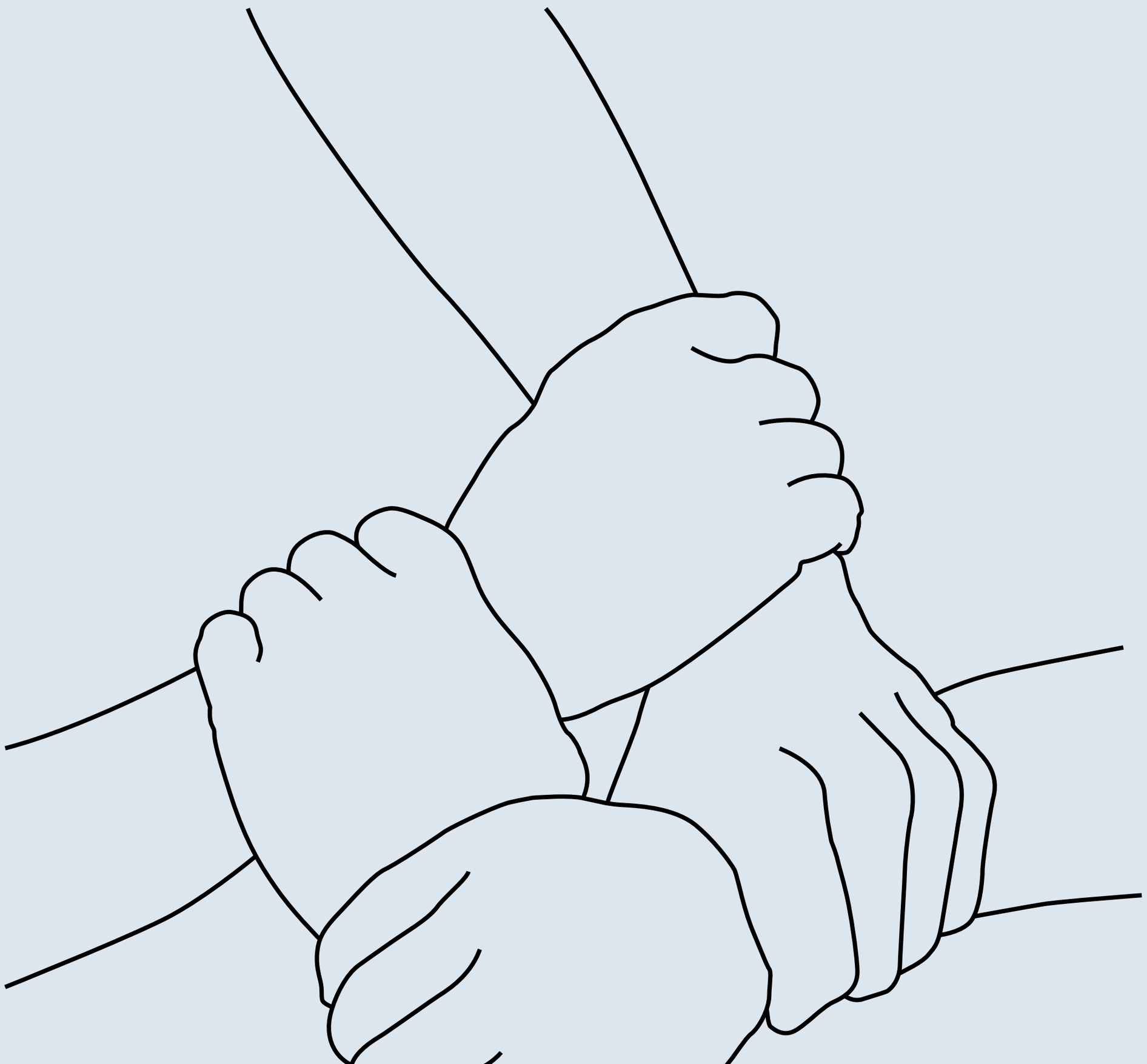


Further Reading or Resources

Books:

"Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together" by Isaacs William

"Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, and Finding Joy" by Sheryl Sandberg & Adam Grant



Mediation

Introduction/Goals/Learning Objectives

The chapter aims to help young people understand peer mediation as essential skills for navigating the challenges of a world of conflict. It shows how these practices support conflict resolution, balance, critical thinking, and healthy communication online and offline.Mediation both professional and peer is currently one of the proven and effective tools for resolving conflicts e.g. in the school environment. It promotes dialogue, reflective and critical thinking, empathy, responsibility, and the skills to resolve disputes constructively. Peer mediation also involves the students themselves in the process, thereby promoting participation, self-regulation, and a community culture of respect and understanding. Research - both at home and abroad- shows a high percentage of successfully resolved conflicts, improved interpersonal relationships, and a positive impact on the school climate.

Effects of Work

Educators and students strengthen their ability to solve conflicts in peaceful ways while building trust and openness in dialogue. Together, they develop strategies that foster well-being, reflection, and meaningful connections in a fast-changing environment. It is therefore reasonable for schools to consider introducing mediation as part of their educational strategy. If mediation and communication skills are part of education, they can contribute to making schools not only a place of learning, but also a safe and fair space for growth, respect, and joint conflict resolution.

Mediation

Target Group(s)

The lessons are designed for young people aged 15+, but they also benefit educators, community groups, and anyone seeking to integrate peer mediation and dialogue into everyday life. These practices are universal and can support both personal growth and collective learning.

Methodology

The approach combines individual reflection, educator input, group discussion, and practical exercises that case study and simulations deals with dialogues in practical situations. By engaging actively and co-creating definitions, participants experience resilience and dialogue not only as concepts but as lived skills.

Timing

For an educator to get knowledge: about 1- 2 hour(s) For students: 4 lessons each lasting 30- 45 minutes each, but the duration may differ according to the group size and interactivity.

Mediation

Main Content

What is Mediation, and why is it important for youth?
The word mediation comes from Latin mediare, meaning there is a neutral person (mediator) who is neutrally moderating and making peace.
Mediation is an extrajudicial method of dispute resolution in which a neutral third person (the mediator) assists disputing parties to communicate and reach a mutually acceptable agreement.
Mediation can help young people face these challenges by giving them the inner strength to recover from setbacks, adapt to difficulties, understand both parties and communicate more clearly (active listening, paraphrasing).
1.Pre - mediation (preparation)
The peer mediator contacts the parties and explains the principles of mediation. He or she determines whether mediation is appropriate. The time, place, and conditions are agreed upon, and an agreement to commence mediation is signed.
2. Introductory meeting
The peer mediator introduces himself/herself and the rules and principles of mediation (voluntary participation, confidentiality, impartiality). The parties are asked to agree to the rules. Each party briefly describes its view of the conflict.
3. Identification of problems and interests
The mediator helps the parties identify the key issues. He separates facts from emotions. The parties identify their needs and expectations.

Mediation

Main Content

4. Generating possible solutions
Ideas, suggestions, and possible solutions are sought together. The mediator encourages the parties to be creative without judgment.
5. Negotiating and evaluating options
The pros and cons of the proposals are discussed. Realistic and mutually acceptable solutions are sought.
6. Agreement
The parties agree on a specific solution. The mediator helps to give the agreement a clear form (written, structured). The agreement contains specific commitments, deadlines, and responsibilities.
7. End of mediation
Signing of the agreement (if a solution has been reached). Or termination without agreement if the parties do not wish to continue. The mediator summarizes the process and next steps.
Mediation is a process that can be used to resolve some conflicts, such as interpersonal issues at school, at work, and in the family. The mediation process at school involves two disputants and two trained peer mediators.
Mediation is always voluntary in the terms of court and justice, confidential, and led by mediators who remain impartial throughout the entire process.
Mediators listen to the disputants and help them come to their own solutions. At school, a conflict is referred to mediation by a school counselor, administrator, or teacher. Bullying is never suitable for peer mediation.

Peer Mediation

Main Content

Peer mediation is a voluntary, structured process where students (or peers of the same age or status), acting as neutral mediators, assist others in:

- communicating respectfully,
- understanding each other's perspectives,
- identifying shared interests, and
- reaching their own mutually acceptable agreement.

The peer mediators do not take sides, make decisions, or impose solutions - they support dialogue and problem-solving.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Based on the description above, we propose 3 lessons (meetings) with young people. These activities will help them

Activity 1 - What is Mediation? (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will reflect on their own understanding of mediation, learn its roots and meaning, and co-create a shared definition connected to the conflicts.

Show a video about conflicts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD_wqjgdQIQ (Masha and the Cucumber)

Masha and the Cucumber conflict. What can you recommend?. How can you mediate this situation?

Mediation strategy could be to take a step back from it (calm down) - remind yourself that one comment doesn't define you, and sometimes it helps to create a bit of distance by not checking it again for a while."

Steps: Simulations

Individual Reflection:

Each student writes what comes to mind when they hear *"mediation"* or "mental toughness". Prompts: *What does it mean to you? When have you needed to solve conflict with peer mediation?*

Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Educator's Input (10 min):

Share the definition: origin from mediare ("to bring together"), the ability to adapt, recover, and grow stronger. Highlight mediation as an antidote to challenges of violent communication. Latin root medius, meaning "middle" or "in the middle."

- Latin: medius = middle
- Latin verb: mediare = to be in the middle, to intervene
- Late Latin: mediatio = intervention, intercession
- English: mediation = the act of intervening between parties to help resolve a dispute (Do not mix it up with meditation)

The root reflects the core idea of mediation: A mediator stands in the middle. Helps parties connect, communicate, and understand. Does not take sides or impose a solution

Mediation literally means "bringing people together from the middle."

Verification and Comparison (10 min):

Students revisit their initial notes and compare them with the educator's explanation. They mark similarities, differences, and new insights.

Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Collective Definition (15 min):

In plenary, ideas are gathered on the board. Together, the group formulates a shared definition of mediation that emphasizes bouncing back, staying grounded, and thriving in conflicts. Add examples from daily life (e.g., handling criticism, recovering after a stressful exam).

Outcome:

Students will understand that mediation is a form of conflict resolution and a skill of solving conflict in a peaceful way and adaptation, and see its importance in navigating digital challenges.

Disagreement is part of our everyday life. What was your latest disagreement?

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 2 - Five Parts of Peer Mediation Process (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will explore five steps (gathering information, underlying needs, brainstorming solutions, evaluation, closing and peer agreement), reflect on their own strengths, and discuss ways to strengthen them.

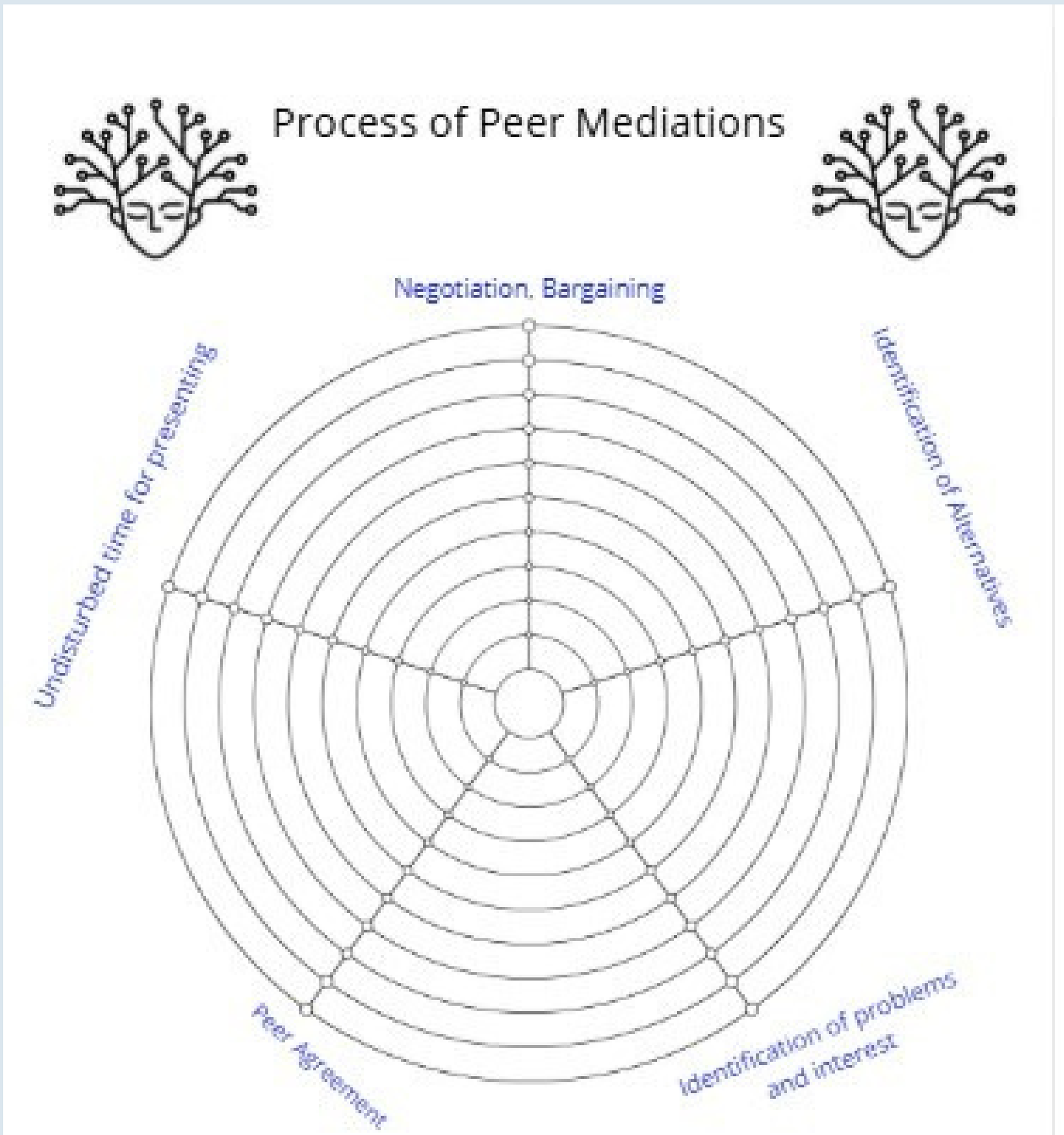
Steps: Comparing Peer Mediation and Mediation

Educator's Input (10 min):

Introduce the five parts of the peer mediation process. Give short examples and mark how good a Peer mediator should be in each category:

1. Gathering information *- Undisturbed time for presenting
2. Underlying needs
3. Brainstorming solutions
4. Evaluation
5. Closing and peer agreement

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice



PROCESS Wheel Activity: Each student receives a handout (circle divided into five sections). Instruction:
"Mark how strong you feel in each area. (1-10 - 1 weak, 10 strong)

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

This is not about right or wrong-it's about noticing where you are now."

Group Reflection: discuss each area:

- What does it look like in practice?
- What makes it challenging in the conflicts?
- What helps us improve?
- Educator notes strategies on the board to create a collective "map of conflicts."

Closing:

students choose one area to focus on improving.

Prompt:

"What is one concrete step you can take this week to strengthen your conflict resolution skills?"

Outcome: students will understand the five areas of conflict resolution, reflect on their own strengths, and identify practical steps to grow.

Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Activity 3 - Practising Mediation Simulations (45 minutes)

Objective:

Students will connect mediation skills with real challenges of the conflicts and practice strategies to bounce back and stay balanced, while also using negotiation, clarification and mediation to support reflection and mutual learning. We can divide our mediation style.

- Negotiation is a process in which two or more parties communicate directly to reach an agreement by discussing their interests, needs, and possible compromises.
- Mediation is a structured process in which a neutral third party supports communication between people in conflict to help them understand each other and reach a voluntary agreement.
- Clarification is the act of making ideas, feelings, or positions clearer by asking questions, restating information, or summarizing to ensure shared understanding.
- Conflict reframing is the process of changing how a conflict is described or understood, shifting from blame or positions to underlying needs, interests, and opportunities for resolution.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Steps:

Look at the video BUSINESS MEDIATION DEMO, how could you change the style to Peer Mediation at school?

Social connections → relying on real friends for support (e.g. RESPECT diverse opinions and experiences to have good relations).

Physical health → balancing screen time with movement (e.g. SUSPEND assumptions that "being online is always necessary").

Mental health → practising gratitude after negative online experiences (e.g. VOICE - making positive reflections).

Purpose → focusing on meaningful goals beyond digital approval (ATMOSPHERE of encouragement, peace and dialogue in your conversations and life).

Paired Practice:

In pairs, one student shares a digital challenge, and the other suggests a resilience strategy or dialogue practice.

Individual Reflection:

Students write:

What is one challenge I face in my life and often have conflicts in the world (e.g., social media pressure, too much fun, different opinions)?

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

→ Educator reminds that sharing these reflections later requires
NEGOTIATION SKILLS (speaking with non-violent communication) and
CONFLICT REFRAMING (explaining with paraphrasing and summarizing)
CLARIFICATION (creating safety, clear information).
Paired Practice (15 min):

In pairs, one student shares a conflict challenge, the other suggests a resilience strategy or dialogue practice.
Student A: NEGOTIATION
"I got a really mean comment from my schoolmate. It stuck with me all evening and I kept thinking about conflict, there is a high level of stress left inside me."
Negotiation Case Study: The Group Project Deadline
Two students, Maya and Lucas, are working on a group project. Maya wants to finish early because she has several extracurricular activities coming up. Lucas wants to slow down because he has two tests this week and feels overwhelmed. Tension builds as both feel the other is being inconsiderate.

As peer mediators, students explore underlying needs: Maya wants free time and reduced stress later; Lucas wants time management and mental space. Through negotiation, they agree to complete the most challenging parts now (satisfying Maya's need to move forward) and schedule lighter tasks for later in the week (meeting Lucas's need for flexibility). They leave feeling respected and supported.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Student B: CONFLICT REFRAMING - Short Scenarios for Conflict Reframing

Reframing Scenario 1: "She's Ignoring Me on Purpose!"

René believes Maria is intentionally giving them the silent treatment. Maria explains she's been overwhelmed and didn't realize she seemed distant. Reframing shifts René's statement from "She's being mean" to "I feel disconnected and want clearer communication."

SOLUTION EXAMPLE

Neutral facilitation: Mediator doesn't blame or side with anyone.

Focus on feelings and needs: Beyond the "stain," the mediation addresses emotional impact and dignity.

Collaborative problem-solving: Both parties participate in creating a fair resolution.

Mediation Steps

Set Ground Rules: Respect, no interruptions, honesty, and confidentiality. Emphasize that mediation is about understanding, not blaming.

Mediation

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Share Perspectives: Each person explains their experience and feelings:

- René: "I feel disconnected and anxious when I don't hear from you."
- Maria: "I've been overwhelmed and didn't realize I seemed distant."

Identify Needs and Feelings

- René: clarity, acknowledgment, reassurance of friendship
- Maria: space, understanding, and support during stress

Reframe the Conflict

Change from blaming statements ("She's being mean") to expressing needs and feelings ("I feel disconnected and want clearer communication").

This reduces defensiveness and opens the way for solutions.

Brainstorm Solutions Together

Examples: Maria checks in with René when she feels overwhelmed. René expresses feelings early if they feel ignored. Agree on signals or phrases that indicate when one needs space versus wants connection.

Agree on Action Steps

- Commit to clear communication and mutual understanding.
- Consider a follow-up conversation to see if the plan works.

Close the Mediation

- Highlight progress: both parties feel heard and have concrete steps to improve communication.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

Reframing Scenario 2: "He Thinks I'm Stupid."
Lea says that Adam "always corrects her to make her look dumb." Adam shares he's just trying to help. Reframing moves the blame to a need: "Lea wants to feel respected and heard when working together."
Reframing Scenario 3: "They Never Listen." Alex accuses their group of "ignoring everything I say." The group explains that conversations move fast and they didn't realize Alex felt left out. Reframing focuses on needs: "Alex wants to feel included in decisions and have space to share ideas."

Students C: Mediation - 2 Short Scenarios for Mediation
Scenario 1: Borrowed Jacket
Andrea lent their jacket to Peter, who returned it with a stain. Andrea is angry that Peter didn't apologize; Peter feels embarrassed and hoped Andrea wouldn't notice. Now they're avoiding each other at school. They come to mediation to talk about responsibility and honesty.

Scenario 2: Seating Dispute
Two friends, Nora and Eli, have been fighting over who sits next to their mutual friend Samuel at lunch. Each feels left out when the other gets the spot. Small arguments have turned into silent treatment and eye-rolling. Mediation is requested to rebuild communication and explore ways everyone can feel included.

Work to Be Done/Exercises/Lessons/Practice

After 5 minutes, they switch roles. →Educator highlights that this exercise requires

- COMMUNICATION SKILLS (active listening) and
- OPEN-MINDEDNESS (taking into consideration other's perspective).

Verification and Comparison (10 min) Students reflect:

How did conflict resolution and critical thinking strategies make mediation challenges easier?

Which strategies felt most useful? (e.g., Chapter 8 LOGICAL FALLACIES, REASONING, Chapter 2 Communication ARGUMENTING) made sharing and learning safer and more effective.

Collective Definition (5 min):

Together, the group formulates a shared statement like (example):

""Mediation is purposeful, reflective judgment that results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference."

"Mediation is reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do.

Outcome:

Students will recognise how mediation can help by challenges, practice strategies, and co-create a definition of resilience in digital life that is strengthened by dialogue practices.

Mediation

Summary

In its basic form, peer mediation can be carried out by a young mediator and school mediation can be carried by a teacher, school psychologist, or employee with mediation training - and can help resolve conflicts across relationships within the school, including students, teachers, and parents. However, peer mediation also plays an important role: students who complete mediator training help their classmates resolve disputes among themselves. Peer mediation deepens their communication and social skills, promotes shared responsibility and participation, and gives children confidence in their own ability to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. Sometimes online conflict, helping young people stay grounded and balanced. At its core, peer mediation combines emotional regulation, supportive relationships, empathy, and a sense of reflective critical thinking, enabling us not only to bounce back but also to thrive. When linked with dialogue, resilience and assertive communicational background it becomes a shared practice: listening, respecting, and co-creating meaning together while navigating the non-violent conflict free and safe environment.

Mediation

Knowledge Check

1.What does the word mediation mean?
2. Why is peer mediation especially important for youth?
3. Name one of the five parts of mediation process strategies and explain how it helps in daily life.
4. How can real negotiations, agreement, active listening ,alternative thinking empathy and assertive communication strengthen mediation and the relevance of a solution?

QUIZ
What is the main role of a peer mediator?
A. To decide who is right
B. To punish students
C. To help peers talk and find a solution together
D. To report conflicts to teachers
Correct answer: C

Which rule is most important in peer mediation?
A. Interrupting to defend yourself
B. Listening respectfully to others
C. Winning the argument
D. Speaking louder than others
Correct answer: B

Mediation

Knowledge Check

What should a peer mediator do if they agree with one side?
A. Support that side
B. Argue with the other side
C. Stay neutral and fair
D. End the mediation
Correct answer: C

Which solution is best in peer mediation?
A. One student gets everything they want
B. The mediator chooses the solution
C. Both students agree on the solution
D. The conflict is ignored
Correct answer: C

Why is peer mediation helpful in schools?
A. It increases punishment
B. It builds communication and responsibility
C. It replaces teachers
D. It avoids talking about problems
Correct answer: B

Further Reading or Resources

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