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Empowering Futures: A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People

Module 2

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Program Overview

This comprehensive curriculum is designed to prepare young people (ages 16-24) for careers in the mental health field through a pre-apprenticeship program. It combines foundational knowledge, skills development, hands-on experience, and wraparound support to equip participants for success in this rewarding field.

Curriculum Goals

- Increase awareness of mental health careers and pathways. Facilitate transitions to registered apprenticeships or employment opportunities in the mental health field.
- Develop foundational knowledge in mental health concepts, terminology, and support strategies.
- Build essential skills in communication, active listening, problem-solving, and cultural competency.
- Provide hands-on experience through supervised pre-apprenticeship placements in a variety of mental health settings.
- Foster personal and professional development through mentorship, peer support, and access to mental health services.

Curricular Approach

Learner-Navigator Approach

The curriculum must follow a Learner-Navigator model, where:

Learners: Youth participants (18+), with limited prior experience in mental health fields.

Navigators: Facilitators (e.g., NYEC members) who guide the sessions. These individuals may not have formal mental health training but need clear guidance to facilitate.

Ideal Navigator and Learner Roles

Navigator

Role: Facilitator guiding participants through content and skill-building exercises in a way that encourages engagement, while also providing support to the Learners and fostering a supportive environment for practice and feedback.

Ideal Profile:

- NYEC member or community leader with experience in youth programming, communication training, and/or leadership.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to model effective communication strategies.
- Familiarity with the following topics is preferred, but not required:
 - mental health topics
 - conflict resolution
 - active listening techniques

Responsibilities:

- Deliver content using the facilitator guide, ensuring all key topics are covered.
- Facilitate group discussions and encourage participation.
- Provide feedback on self-reflection exercises and wellness plans.
- Lead role-playing and practice activities, providing constructive feedback to Learners.
- Create a safe, inclusive space for discussions.
- Manage guest speaker sessions and coordinate logistics.
- Coordinate observation opportunities with mental health professionals for real-world context.

Learner

Role: Participant actively engaging in skill-building exercises to enhance communication abilities and interpersonal effectiveness and gain foundational knowledge about mental health.

Ideal Profile:

- Youth aged 16–24, potentially disconnected from work or school and/or interested in exploring mental health career pathways and developing professional and interpersonal communication skills.
- Limited prior exposure to mental health topics but a strong interest and willingness to learn.

- Open to engaging in interactive activities, such as discussions and role-playing scenarios; open to receiving feedback.

Responsibilities:

- Actively participate in discussions, activities, and group exercises.
- Complete all self-reflection exercises and wellness plans.
- Practice applying communication strategies, such as active listening and conflict resolution.
- Reflect on feedback from the Navigator and peers to improve skills.
- Observe and document communication strategies used by mental health professionals during shadowing opportunities.
- Provide feedback on learning experiences for continuous improvement of the program.

Implementation Plan

Navigator Activities

Preparation: Review the facilitator guide and additional resources provided for each module.

Session Facilitation: Conduct interactive sessions, ensuring clear communication of key topics.

Coordination: Arrange for guest speakers and manage Q&A sessions. Arrange for other activities, such as career fairs or shadowing of a mental health professional.

Feedback: Evaluate Learners' participation and provide constructive guidance on activities.

Learner Activities

Learning Engagement: Participate in discussions on mental health, communication, and more.

Skill Application: Engage in role-playing and group activities to practice foundational strategies and ensure understanding of topics.

Personal Growth: Develop a final portfolio to demonstrate acquired knowledge and growth throughout the program.

Curriculum Structure

The curriculum is divided into four modules, each focusing on a key area of learning:

- Module 1: Introduction to Mental Health
- Module 2: Communication and Interpersonal Skills
- Module 3: Mental Health Support Strategies
- Module 4: Career Exploration and Pathways

Use of Technology

When Learners have technology available in addition to Internet access, there are ways to bring the use of technology into the mix. For example, Navigators can use tools like Kahoot for Icebreakers and Warm-ups, adding a bit of fun and engagement when possible. There are also many activities in the curriculum that require Learners to do research on certain topics, so these activities naturally integrate technology, as Learners can use their phone, tablet, or computer to do so.

However, we also know that some Navigators might be working with Learners who don't have access to their own devices, like tablets or computers, or they might be teaching in spaces without Wi-Fi. As a result, we've made sure the curriculum is flexible and can work even in simple learning environments. If the Navigator recognizes that Learners might not be able to research topics easily (for whatever reason), the Navigator should print out research articles ahead of the class that the Learners can read and use for those activities.

Session Outline

Week	Session	Module & Session Topic(s)	Time
1	1	Pre-apprenticeship Overview & Introductions 1.1 Mental Health Awareness	2.5 hours
	2	1.2 Cultural Perceptions of Mental Health 1.3 Stigma Reduction	2.5 hours
2	3	1.4 Mental Health Conditions 1.5 Recovery and Resilience	2.5 hours
	4	1.5 (continued) Recovery and Resilience 1.6 Self-Care and Well-being	2.5 hours
3	5	Module 1 review 2.1 Active Listening	2.5 hours
	6	2.2 Non-verbal Communication 2.3 Effective Communication	2.5 hours
	7	2.3 (continued) Effective Communication	2.5 hours

4		2.4 Conflict Resolution	
	8	2.4 (continued) Conflict Resolution Module 2 review	2.5 hours
5	9	3.1 Crisis Intervention 3.2 De-escalation Techniques	2.5 hours
	10	3.3 Peer Support Frameworks	2.5 hours
6	11	3.4 Basic Counseling Skills	2.5 hours
	12	3.5 Cultural Competency in Care Module 3 Review	2.5 hours
7	13	4.1 Mental Health Careers 4.2 Educational Pathways	2.5 hours
	14	4.2 (continued) Educational Pathways 4.3 Job Search Strategies	2.5 hours
8	15	4.4 Networking and Professional Development 4.5 Transition Support	2.5 hours
	16	4.5 Transition Support Portfolio Presentations & Course Wrap-up	2.5 hours
Total time:			40 hours

Module 2: Communication and Interpersonal Skills

2.1 Active Listening: Developing Effective Listening Skills and Demonstrating Empathy

2.2: Nonverbal Communication: Understanding the Role of Body Language and Nonverbal Cues

2.3 Effective Communication: Communicating Clearly and Respectfully in Different Settings

2.4 Conflict Resolution: Developing Strategies for Managing Conflict and De-escalating Challenging Situations

Purpose

This module aims to equip young people with essential communication and conflict resolution skills for success in a variety of personal and professional settings. By focusing on active listening, respectful dialogue, and cultural sensitivity, participants will learn to build rapport, navigate challenging situations, and de-escalate conflicts effectively. Additionally, the module emphasizes understanding mental health considerations and adapting communication styles to various audiences, fostering empathy and building trust. Ultimately, this training empowers young individuals to communicate clearly, respectfully, and confidently, enabling them to build stronger relationships and navigate complex interactions.

Learning Outcomes for Module 2

- Practice verbal and non-verbal communication strategies for diverse settings, such as active listening skills to demonstrate empathy and understanding.
- Understand the components of effective communication, including clarity, respect, and cultural sensitivity.
- Learn strategies that can help resolve conflicts and de-escalate challenging situations effectively.
- Learn about the importance of building rapport and trust with individuals experiencing mental health challenges.

- Identify common sources of conflict in personal and professional settings.
- Identify barriers to communication in different settings and strategies to overcome them.
- Practice using verbal and non-verbal techniques for clear and respectful communication.
- Develop the ability to adapt communication styles to fit different audiences and contexts.

Session 5: Module 1 Review & Module 2.1: Active Listening

150 minutes (2.5 hours)

Materials

- Laptop/computer with Internet and projector
- PowerPoint presentation: *Session 5_Empowering Futures - A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners) of Feelings Wheel PDF: *Session 5_wheel color*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners) of Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe, if not using the whiteboard for the activity: *Session 5: Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe* (page 13 below)
- 2-3 packs of Post-it/sticky notes
- Pencils/pens
- Any necessary items for the icebreaker activities that you choose (See notes below.)

Preparation

- Read through all of the activities below.
- Print all of the necessary documents and worksheets for the session.
- Copy and paste Community Norms (agreed upon in Session 1) on Slide #3 of PowerPoint presentation.
- Research and choose 1 icebreaker that will last 5-10 minutes.
- Prepare the game board for Activity 2 (Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe).

Instructions

Activity 1: Community Norms Review & Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Navigator welcomes Learners and takes time to show the Community Norms to the group; these are the Community Norms agreed upon in their last session. Navigator asks Learners to take a moment to read them silently and asks if they have anything they want to add or change.
- The Navigator then takes the group through an icebreaker activity (or two) of their choosing.

Activity 2: Module 1 Review – Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe (45 minutes)

- This activity will serve as a fun, engaging way for the Learners to review the key concepts covered in Module 1: Introduction to Mental Health. It is structured as a Tic-Tac-Toe Challenge, incorporating discussions, roleplaying, and knowledge recall. This can be done virtually or in person.

Instructions for Facilitator (Navigator)

- **Prepare the Game Board:** Draw a 3x3 tic-tac-toe grid on a whiteboard or flip chart (for in-person play) or use a shared digital document (for virtual play; See *Session 5: Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe* handout.) Each square will contain a review question or activity related to the key topics from Module 1. Players must answer correctly or complete the activity to place their "X" or "O" in a square.
- **Split Participants into Two Teams:** Assign one team as "X" and the other as "O." Teams take turns picking a square and attempting to complete the challenge.
- **Facilitate the Challenge:** If the team successfully answers the question or completes the task, they claim the square. If they are incorrect or unable to complete the task, the other team gets a chance to answer and steal the square.
- **Winning the Game:** The first team to get three squares in a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) wins. If the game ends in a draw, the team with the most correct answers wins.

Facilitator Tips

1. Encourage Discussion: If a question sparks discussion, allow space for it before moving to the next turn.
2. Adjust for Accessibility: If the Learners don't have access to technology, ensure that all questions can be answered without digital tools.
3. Provide Positive Reinforcement: Acknowledge all answers, even if they are not entirely correct. Use feedback to guide understanding.

Activity 3: Active Listening Introduction (25 minutes)

- First, Navigator will explain that there are 2 types of listening: internal listening (when we tend to relate things back to ourselves, which is normal human behavior) vs. active listening, which is what the module focuses on. (Use Slide 8)

- Navigator proceeds to tell Learners that they will play two YouTube videos for them; one of the videos is a great example of internal listening, while the other video is a great example of active listening. Navigator should encourage Learners to take notes of the differences they see in the types of listening to discuss after watching the videos.

Internal listening video: [Everyone Is Waiting To Talk About Themselves](#)

Active listening video: [The Big Bang Theory - Active Listening](#)

- After the activity, Navigator asks Learners how they knew which example was which type of listening and debrief the activity using the questions on Slide 12.
- Navigator proceeds to walk Learners through the key components of active listening on Slides 13 and 14.

Suggested Brain Break: 5 minutes

Activity 4: Active Listening & Empathy (15 minutes)

- First, Navigator reviews the different parts of active listening on Slide 16. Then Navigator introduces the concept of empathy, as well as the Feelings Wheel, on Slide 17. Navigator hands out individual copies of the Feelings Wheel to Learners and gives them a few minutes to read over all the feelings listed there.

Activity 5: Feeling Identification Activity (10 minutes)

- Navigator instructs Learners to get into pairs and sit back-to-back with their Feelings Wheel in hand.
- Navigator explains that she will read a series of prompts out loud; after each prompt, one Learner should say one of the feelings that comes to mind when they hear that prompt. The other Learner will respond with another feeling that comes to mind. The Learners will continue naming feelings until Navigator gives them the next prompt. The prompts are:

How do you feel when....

The weather is 75 and sunny

Someone in your group project isn't doing their share of the task

It's 15 degrees, snowy, and you still have to go to school/work

When you get a surprise Venmo from a friend for \$15

When your loved ones start talking about politics

- Navigator leads a debrief with the Learners and asks them what they think about the Feelings Wheel, how hard or easy it was to identify their feelings, etc.

Activity 6: The Role of Empathy in Active Listening (10 minutes)

- Navigator covers the content related to empathy and active listening on Slides 19-21.
- When on Slide 22, Navigator encourages Learners to do a quick online search for cultural bias, age bias, and confirmation bias to find examples. Navigator asks Learners to share what they find with the group.
- Navigator continues covering the content on Slides 23-24.

Activity 7: Active Listening Practice (25 minutes)

- Navigator instructs Learners to sit back-to-back so they cannot see one another. The Navigator will ask the questions listed below, and the Learners will take turns answering said prompts, alternating so that only one of them is talking at one time. The Learners who are answering the question should talk for 3 to 4 minutes without stopping.
- The listening Learner must try to focus on their peer's answers (solely on what they can hear, since they can't see them) and employ some of the active listening strategies. Then the listening Learner has to paraphrase what they heard from the other Learner and then formulate a follow-up question that demonstrates they've been actively listening.
 1. *Talk about some of the goals you have on your bucket list; choose one and explain why it's so important for you to achieve or do this.*
 2. *Tell me about your favorite teacher, boss, or mentor. Why were they so impactful? What did you learn from them?*
 3. *Share about a difficult time in your life, and how you worked to push through this difficult time.*
 4. *What would you call your most significant achievement?*
- The Navigator will lead a group debrief afterwards, asking the Learners about the difficulty (or lack thereof) of the exercise, and strategies they used to try to be better active listeners.
- Navigator will cover the content on empathy on Slides 29 and 30 and will wrap up the session for the day, making sure to clarify any questions the Learners may have.

Empowering Futures:
A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People
 Session 5: Mental Health Tic-Tac-Toe

TIC-TAC-TOE CHALLENGE BOARD		
1	2	3
Define "mental health" and "mental illness."	Share a stigma about mental health and explain why it's incorrect.	Role-play: How would you support a friend struggling with anxiety?
List 3 self-care activities that promote mental well-being.	What is the mental health continuum?	What is one cultural belief about mental health that can impact help-seeking behavior?
Explain the difference between public, self, and structural stigma.	Name two mental health conditions and their symptoms.	Why is resilience important in mental health recovery?

Session 6: Module 2.2: Nonverbal Communication & Module 2.3: Effective Communication

150 minutes (2.5 hours)

Materials

- Laptop/computer with Internet and projector
- PowerPoint presentation: *Session 6_Empowering Futures - A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners; print enough for half of the total group) of *Session 6 Article 1_Carmichael and Mizrahi_Connecting cues_The role of nonverbal cues in*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners; print enough for half of the total group) of *Session 6 Article 2_news.gsu.edu-Georgia State News Hub_New Study Suggests Existence of a Universal, Nonverbal Communication System*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners) of *Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening Bingo Cards* worksheet
- Posters or Post-it Super Sticky Easel Pad Sheets (see example [here](#))
- Post-it notes (2-3 packs)
- Pencils/pens, markers
- Any necessary items for the icebreaker activity that you choose (See notes below.)

Preparation

- Read through all the activities below.
- Print all the necessary documents and worksheets for the session.
- Copy and paste Community Norms (agreed upon in Session 1) on Slide #3 of PowerPoint presentation.
- Research and choose 1 icebreaker that will last 5-10 minutes.

Instructions

Activity 1: Community Norm Review & Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Navigator welcomes Learners and takes time to show the Community Norms to the group; these are the Community Norms agreed upon in their last session. Navigator asks Learners to take a moment to read them silently and asks if they have anything they want to add or change.

- The Navigator then takes the group through an icebreaker activity (or two) of their choosing.

Activity 2: Review - Active Listening & Empathy Warm-up (20 minutes)

- Navigator instructs Learners to get into groups of 2-3 and grab markers and a poster (Post-It note Easel). In their groups, they need to create an infographic: How to Be an Active Listener.
- Navigator tells Learners that they can use their notes from the last session, and they need to make sure it's clear and easy for someone to follow, as they will present the poster to the rest of the class.
- Navigator calls on each group and asks them to stand up and present their infographic to the group. Navigator provides verbal feedback for each group.

Activity 3: Non-verbal Communication (20 minutes)

- Navigator asks Learners what they think of when they hear the term 'non-verbal communication' (Slide 7). Navigator then covers content on non-verbal communication on Slides 8 and 9.
- Navigator explains how non-verbal communication can vary across cultures (Slide 10).
- Navigator passes out Post-it notes to students and tells them to spend time looking up non-verbal communication practices in different cultures and write an example of each Post-it. Then they need to place the Post-it around the room.
- After Learners place Post-it notes around the room with examples of differences in non-verbal communication across cultures, Navigator will instruct Learners to do a gallery walk around the room, taking time to read all the examples of the Post-it notes.
- After Learners return to their seats, Navigator leads a debrief, focusing on how non-verbal communication can vary vastly across different identities.

Activity 4: Common Misinterpretations (15 minutes)

- Navigator will cover the information on common misinterpretations on Slide 12.

- Navigator will lead students through a Think-Pair-Share discussion using the questions on Slide 13:
 1. *Have you had interactions with others during which you found yourself misinterpreting their message or overgeneralizing?*
 2. *How did you work through the conversation to arrive at mutual understanding?*

Think- Learners think quietly for 2-3 minutes about the question.

Pair- Learners get into groups of 2 and discuss the question for 5-6 minutes.

Share – Learners discuss the questions in a large group and share what was discussed in pairs.

Suggested Brain Break: 5 minutes

Activity 5: Non-verbal Communication - Continued (25 minutes)

- Navigator goes over the content on Slide 15, which covers how to enhance one's non-verbal communication.
- Article Breakdown: Navigator divides the group into various small groups; Navigator gives half of the groups Article 1 and the other half of the groups Article 2. Navigator explains that they will take time to read through the article and work in their small groups to answer the following questions:
 1. *What are some of the key takeaways from this article?*
 2. *How does this relate to what we've learned about non-verbal communication thus far?*
- Then, after about 10-15 minutes of work in their small groups, the Learners need to get up and find the other small groups that were reading the same article as them. They will discuss the answers they came up with for the questions listed above, and work through any discrepancies. They will also decide which Learners will present the answer to the two questions to the other half of the class.
- Navigator asks the Learners who read Article 1 to give a summary of their article for the other half of the group and answer the two questions out loud. Navigator then does the same with the Learners who read Article 2. Navigator provides time for Learners to ask their peers questions about the other article (if they have them).

- Navigator goes over key takeaways on non-verbal communication Slide 17 with the group and asks Learners if they have any other takeaways they'd like to add.

Activity 6: Nonverbal Communication Bingo (20 minutes)

- Learners participate in active listening & non-verbal communication bingo. Learners are given bingo cards with different active listening and communication skills (made eye contact, paraphrased, validated someone's feelings, demonstrated empathy, asked clarifying questions, etc.).
- Learners then participate in a group discussion and mark off the squares when they observe those skills being used; they must also write the name of the peer who is doing those skills. The discussion question that will drive the conversation is:
In a world filled with new social media platforms and misinformation, it can be hard to keep up. What is your relationship with the media, and how does it influence your view of politics?
- Navigator leads a debrief afterwards, asking Learners if they feel more aware of how to identify (and exemplify) active listening and non-verbal communication after the activity.

Activity 7: Effective Communication (30 minutes)

- Navigator covers the content on Slide 20.
- Navigator puts Learners in pairs and instructs them to write up and practice a role-playing scenario. The role-playing scenario should require one of them to navigate miscommunication in a specific setting (e.g., a workplace disagreement, cross-cultural interaction, or a client-provider scenario). Learners should aim to use their active listening skills and employ strategies to clarify messages.
- Afterwards, the larger group should come together to watch the small groups present their role-play and then debrief in which they discuss what strategies worked, what challenges they faced, and how it felt to do the role play.

Session 7: 2.3: Effective Communication (continued) & Module 2.4: Conflict Resolution

150 minutes (2.5 hours)

Materials

- Laptop/computer with Internet and projector
- PowerPoint presentation: *Session 7_Empowering Futures - A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People*
- 3-4 packs of Post-it/sticky notes
- Posters or Post-it Super Sticky Easel Pad Sheets (see example [here](#))
- Pencils/pens and markers
- Expo markers and white board OR Chalk and blackboard
- Any necessary items for the icebreaker activity that you choose (See notes below.)

Preparation

- Read through all the activities below.
- Print all the necessary documents and worksheets for the session.
- Copy and paste Community Norms (agreed upon in Session 1) on Slide #3 of PowerPoint presentation.
- Research and choose 1 icebreaker that will last 5-10 minutes.

Instructions

Activity 1: Community Norm Review & Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Navigator welcomes Learners and takes time to show the Community Norms to the group; these are the Community Norms agreed upon in their last session. Navigator asks Learners to take a moment to read them silently and asks if they have anything they want to add or change.
- The Navigator then takes the group through an icebreaker activity (or two) of their choosing.

Activity 2: Reflect & Review from Module 2.3 (20 minutes)

- Navigator will give Learners 5-7 minutes for them to chat with a partner and discuss the following questions, which aim to help them reflect on what they covered in the last session, what they remember, and key takeaways:
 1. *What do you remember about non-verbal communication?*
 2. *What are some techniques to be an effective communicator?*
 3. *What is important to keep in mind about non-verbal communication when considering that we have different cultural identities and lived experiences?*
- Navigator leads a debrief with the larger group, asking Learners to share what they discussed and in turn do a review of Module 2.3.

Activity 3: Communication Barriers in Various Settings & Cultural Communication Audit (35 minutes)

- Navigator covers content on Slide 7 about communication barriers in diverse settings.
- Navigator hands out large Post-it note posters and markers to Learner. Using their own lived experiences and resources found on the Internet, Learners will complete a cultural communication audit in pairs in which they analyze common communication styles in their own culture versus others they may encounter. Things for the Learners to keep in mind and research include direct vs. indirect communication, use of eye contact, personal space preferences, presence (or lack) of emotions in conversation.
- After allowing Learners to work for 12-18 minutes on their own, Navigator brings group back together and asks each group to present what they found.
- Navigator covers the content on Slide 9 about how to be clear and respectful in communication.

Suggested Brain Break: 5 minutes

Activity 4: Respect in Communication (15 minutes)

- Navigator hands out Post-it notes and asks Learners to write down reasons that respect is important in communication. Learners should write one reason on each Post-it note and should aim to write at least three Post-it notes.
- Once complete, Learner should go to the front of the board and stick Post-it on the board.

- Navigator will read aloud the different answers, grouping together reasons that are similar. Navigator will ask Learners to explain why they wrote some of these answers.

Activity 5: Respectful Language Communication – Continued (25 minutes)

- Navigator covers content on Slide 12 about how to be respectful while communicating.
- Navigator has students do an activity to remember what they'd previously covered about inclusive language in Module 1. Navigator hands out Post-it notes once again and asks students to write as many examples as possible related to using inclusive language. For example, someone could write an example of person-first language ('a person facing homelessness' vs. 'a homeless person'.)
- Once complete, Learner should go to the front of the board and stick Post-it on the board.
- Navigator will read aloud the different answers, asking students to explain why that specific language is more inclusive (i.e., talk through the language that should be avoided, and why).
- While Navigator is doing this, they should choose one Learner to go to the front of the board and create a list of inclusive language tips/things to remember on a large Post-it note easel; Navigator can then hang this up in the classroom for future classes.

Activity 6: Effective Communication in the Workplace (20 minutes)

- Navigator covers content on Slide 14.
- Navigator leads Learners in a group discussion using the questions below. Navigator should tell Learners that each one is expected to contribute to the discussion at least twice, and they should concentrate on using their active listening skills.
 1. How can non-verbal communication (tone, gestures, facial expressions) enhance or hinder clarity? How might these vary across cultures?
 2. Why is adaptability important in communication?

Activity 7: Conflict Resolution and Rapport Building (20 minutes)

- Navigator covers the content on Side 17 about conflict resolution and building rapport, making sure students know what 'rapport' means.

- Navigator passes out whiteboard markers (or chalk) and invites students to the front of the board to come up with ideas of what can cause conflict. Navigator encourages Learners to think about conflict at home, conflict at work, etc.
- Navigator reads through the answers and debriefs with Learners.
- Navigator clicks on Slide 18 to show the list of causes of conflict and goes over that content.
- Navigator tells Learners they will continue working on this topic in the next session and asks if they have any final questions before wrapping up.

Session 8: Module 2.4: Conflict Resolution (continued) & Module 2 Review

150 minutes (2.5 hours)

Materials

- Laptop/computer with Internet and projector
- PowerPoint presentation: *Session 8_Empowering Futures - A Mental Health Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Young People*
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners) of *Session 8: Building Rapport & Creating a Supportive and Non-Judgmental Environment* (page 29 below)
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners; 1 for every 3-4 students) of *Session 8: De-escalation Roleplaying* (page 30 below)
- Physical copies (quantity dependent on total number of Learners) of *Session 8: Half-way Reflection* (page 32 below)
- Pencils/pens
- Any necessary items for the icebreaker activity that you choose (See notes below.)

Preparation

- Read through all the activities below.
- Print all the necessary documents and worksheets for the session.
- Copy and paste Community Norms (agreed upon in Session 1) on Slide #3 of PowerPoint presentation.
- Research and choose 1 icebreaker that will last 5-10 minutes.
- **Read through the options for the Module 2 review (below) and choose one; copy and paste the instructions on Slide 17.**

Instructions

Activity 1: Community Norm Review & Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Navigator welcomes Learners and takes time to show the Community Norms to the group; these are the Community Norms agreed upon in their last session. Navigator asks Learners to take a moment to read them silently and asks if they have anything they want to add or change.

- The Navigator then takes the group through an icebreaker activity (or two) of their choosing.

Activity 2: Minute to Win It - Session 6 & 7 Review (10 minutes)

- Navigator will divide the group into two teams. Navigator will explain that the team needs to nominate one person, who will go to the front of the space and will be the Team Writer.
- Once the Navigator begins the 1-minute stopwatch, both teams have one minute to write as many terms and concepts as they can remember from the last couple of modules. The Learners who are not the Team Writer will need to yell ideas to the Team Writer to help them write as much as they can.

Note: This activity can get very loud. You might consider warning neighboring offices/groups that it will be loud for about 1 minute.

- After the minute is up, Navigator instructs the Team Writers to stop writing and takes the whiteboard markers from them.
- Navigator starts to read aloud what Team 1 wrote on the board and asks them to explain some (not all) of the terminology and concepts they wrote up there. If the Learners respond with an incorrect definition or statistic, Navigator will correct them in a friendly way.
- Navigator will do the same thing with Team 2 and what they wrote on the board, inviting the Learners to engage in a dynamic review of the topics covered in the last class.
- Navigator will repeat this exercise, choosing two new Team Writers.

Activity 3: Conflict Resolution (20 minutes)

- Navigator will review content covered in previous session, using questions to encourage Learners to remember what was covered (Slides 8-9).
- On Slide 10, Navigator asks Learners which skills, strategies, and/or techniques discussed thus far in the curriculum could be used to help with conflict resolution. Navigator calls on a few Learners to share their ideas. Navigator clicks on presentation to show the text on the right side and covers this content.

- Navigator leads a Think-Pair-Share (see instructions from previous sessions in which this activity happened), allowing students to reflect on their own for 2 minutes, chat with a partner for 5-6, and share with the larger group for 5-7 minutes:
 1. *How can empathy and active listening transform a conflict into a constructive conversation?*
 2. *How do cultural differences influence conflict resolution and rapport-building strategies?*

Activity 4: De-escalation Techniques (25 minutes)

- Navigator will cover the content on Slide 12.
- Navigator will tell Learners to get into groups of 3-4 and will hand out the paper titled *Session 8: De-escalation Roleplaying* (one per group). Navigator will tell the students to choose a role-play scenario and act it out in a group, making sure to practice their de-escalation techniques. If time permits, they should do more than one role play and change roles so that all members of the group have time to practice using de-escalation techniques.
- Navigator will lead Learners through a group debrief, asking them to share what techniques were most effective and areas for improvement.

Suggested Brain Break: 5 minutes

Activity 5: Building Rapport in Mental Health Settings (15 minutes)

- Navigator covers content on Slide 15.
- Navigator hands out the paper titled *Session 8: Building Rapport & Creating a Supportive and Non-Judgmental Environment*. Learners are told that a friend of a friend (who they do not know well) is experiencing mental health challenges. Learners must write a short reflection on how they would try to build rapport with this individual, focusing on using empathy and creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment. They can do so with a partner.
- Navigator should read their reflections and use them as a formative assessment to gauge how well they are understanding the content of the curriculum.

Activity 6: Module 2 Review (40 minutes)

- Navigator picks one of the two review activities below to help Learners review the concepts covered in Module 2.

Option 1: Communication Story Swap - Written Reflection & Group Collaboration

- Materials needed: Blank sheets of paper (or notebooks), pens or pencils, timer
- Objective: Learners will practice written communication, storytelling, and active listening by collaboratively building a story that demonstrates key communication skills from Module 2: Communication and Interpersonal Skills.
- Introduce the Activity (5 minutes): Ask Learners to think about a situation where communication is important (e.g., a workplace conflict, a misunderstanding with a friend, a high-stakes conversation).

Explain that they will co-write a story that explores different aspects of communication from Module 2, such as active listening, conflict resolution, and non-verbal cues. Emphasize that the story can be realistic, exaggerated, or even humorous, but it must show communication strategies in action.

- Writing Round 1 – Story Starter (5 minutes): Each Learner begins their own story by writing for one minute. The story should introduce a character and a communication challenge (e.g., a misunderstanding at work, a text message taken the wrong way, someone struggling to express their feelings).

After one minute, they fold the paper so only the last sentence is visible and pass it to the person next to them.

- Writing Round 2 – Adding to the Story (10 minutes): Each person reads the last sentence of the story they received and continues the story in a way that demonstrates communication strategies.

Encourage Learners to integrate a lesson from Module 2, such as:

- A character using active listening to solve a problem.
- A moment where non-verbal communication changes the meaning of a conversation.
- A character choosing to de-escalate a situation instead of escalating it.

The process repeats every two minutes until the paper has gone through four different Learners.

- Final Round – Conclusion & Reflection (10 minutes): The last person to receive a story writes the ending, making sure it has a resolution that highlights effective communication.

Each Learner reads the final version of their story out loud to the group.

After reading, each person writes a short reflection (3-5 sentences) answering:

How did communication impact the story's outcome?

What communication strategies did the characters use?

What is one key takeaway from this activity about effective communication?

- Group Discussion & Wrap-up – (10 minutes): Invite Learners to share what surprised them about how their stories changed. Discuss which communication strategies worked well and which could have been improved.

Reinforce that communication is an evolving process—just like how their stories evolved with each new writer.

Option 2: Charades – Communication in Action

- Materials needed: Index cards or slips of paper with communication-related scenarios (see examples below), a bowl or container to hold the scenario slips, a timer (or a phone with a stopwatch function), a whiteboard or flip chart to keep score (optional)
- Objective: Learners will demonstrate and interpret key communication skills from Module 2: Communication and Interpersonal Skills through a charades-style game. This activity will reinforce non-verbal communication, active listening, and conflict resolution strategies in a fun and engaging way.
- Introduce the Activity (5 minutes): Explain that communication isn't just about words—body language, facial expressions, and tone all play a huge role.

Learners will take turns acting out different communication scenarios without speaking. The goal is for their teammates to correctly guess the situation and the communication strategy involved.

Divide the group into teams of 3-5 people (depending on the class size).

- Game Rounds (35 minutes – 2 minutes per turn): One person from the first team picks a scenario from the bowl. Without talking or making sounds, they must act out the situation while their teammates try to guess what's happening. If they guess correctly within 2 minutes, they earn a point.

Bonus points can be awarded if the team can explain what communication strategy should be used to handle the situation effectively.

Continue rotating turns until all teams have had equal opportunities to act.

Example Charades Scenarios

Nonverbal Communication

- Someone trying to apologize without words
- A person losing patience in a conversation
- Two people having a conversation where one is not making eye contact

Active Listening & Engagement

- Someone nodding and showing they are engaged in a conversation
- A person pretending to be distracted while someone else is talking
- Someone showing empathy after hearing bad news

Conflict Resolution & De-escalation

- Two friends having a misunderstanding over text messages
- A co-worker using deep breathing techniques to calm down
- A customer angrily complaining at a store while an employee tries to de-escalate

Communication Barriers

- Someone talking too fast while another person looks confused
- A person trying to explain something in a noisy environment
- A person interrupting constantly while someone else is talking

Debrief & Reflection (5 minutes)

- What was challenging about communicating without words?
- How did non-verbal cues help convey meaning?
- What were some common communication breakdowns in the scenarios?
- How can these skills be used in real-life situations?

Activity 7: Half-way Reflection & Group Chat (20 minutes)

- Navigator will hand out the worksheet *Session 8: Half-way Reflection* and instruct Learners to take 12-15 minutes to answer the questions below:
 1. *What are a few new things you have learned so far?*
 2. *What do you think is going well for the group?*
 3. *What has surprised you about this experience? Why?*
 4. *What could be improved to make the sessions more interesting?*
 5. *What goals do you have for yourself for the second half of this curriculum?*
- Navigator will lead Learners through a group chat of those questions, asking Learners to share what they're comfortable with sharing with the group.
- Navigator will let Learners know that the next Session will include the beginning of Module 3.



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Session 8: De-escalation Roleplaying

Scenario 1: The Overwhelmed Classmate

Situation: One student is visibly stressed out and overwhelmed after receiving negative feedback on an assignment. They are pacing, talking loudly, and appear on the verge of tears.

Roles:

- 1.) The Overwhelmed Student
- 2.) The De-escalator (classmate / friend trying to help)
- 3.) (Optional) A third person observing or supporting

Goal: The De-escalator should use active listening and calming techniques to help the student regulate their emotions and find a solution without dismissing their frustration

Scenario 2: The Heated Argument

Situation: Two co-workers at an internship / job are having an argument over a scheduling conflict. The tension is rising, voices are raised, and it seems like the argument might escalate into a more personal attack.

Roles:

- 1.) The Two Arguing Co-Workers
- 2.) The De-escalator (a colleague / supervisor stepping in to mediate)
- 3.) (Optional) An observer or manager

Goal: The De-escalator should intervene calmly, set ground rules for communication, and help the co-workers find a compromise.

Scenario 3: The Frustrated Customer

Situation: A customer at a community center is upset about an issue with paperwork. They are speaking aggressively to the front desk worker / employee, demanding immediate action.

Roles:

- 1.) The Frustrated Customer
- 2.) The Employee

3.) The De-escalator (a manager / peer who steps in to help)

Goal: The employee and de-escalator should remain calm, validate the customer's frustration, and work toward a resolution without escalating the conflict further.



Session 8: Half-way Reflection

- What are a few new things you have learned so far?
- What do you think is going well for the group?
- What has surprised you about this experience? Why?
- What could be improved to make the sessions more interesting?
- What goals do you have for yourself for the second half of this curriculum?

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