

SUSTAINABLE LIFE SKILLS CAFÉ TOOLBOX

6 modules and 18 lesson templates of practical-based learning material

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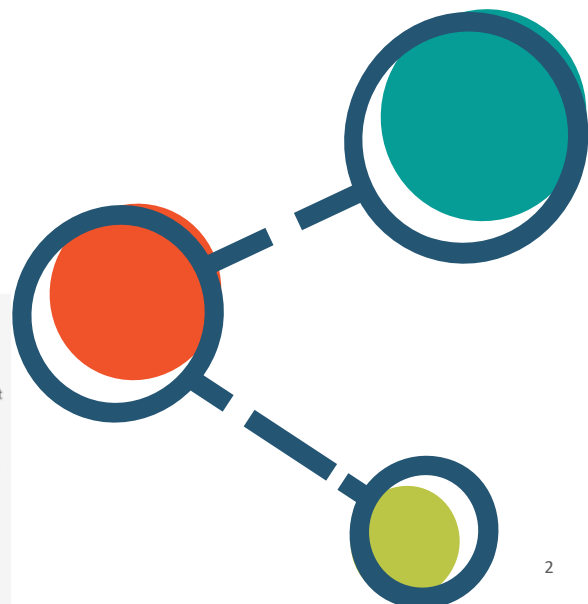
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01 | Guide to this Toolbox:

Within the Sustainable Life Skills Cafe PR1 toolbox, each part consists of several lessons. There are a total of **6** modules and **18** lesson templates included in this practical-based learning material. This publication contains a constructive structure including a logical sequence of lessons. Therefore, it is recommended not to change the sequence of the lessons. However, the trainers/tutors and practitioners might decide to leave out a specific lesson or activity or to extend another of the modules. And, for example, if there is not sufficient time to complete during Life Skills Cafe gatherings, it is also possible to apply the pick and choose approach.

This publication is written so that anybody, but specifically low-skilled/disadvantaged adults can benefit from it along with facilitation of tutors, mentors, coaches etc. In this way, we first pave the way on how to perform these tools in informal learning environments and then it enables peer education as well. This means that for example an adult participant can deliver a session to other participants. All the lessons include practical activities for the learners in the context of sustainable life skills mindset. The activities are closely related to practice and the real world. In this way the course encourages practical learning. Learners should be encouraged to ask questions, as many questions as they can think of.

02 | How to Use Lessons in the Training Material

In order to complete and facilitate the impact of the Training Material it is deemed important to provide a set of informal activities ready to be used by practitioners around the facilitators of Sustainable Life Skills Cafes. Activities should not be taken as isolated events but considered as a process contributing to the personal growth of the learner and its development in terms of life skills mindset.

Each lesson comes with a step-by-step instruction planning to guide some trainers/tutors/facilitators performing the activity. The following lessons will offer an opportunity to stimulate the learners'

reflections and skills through practical, participatory and dialogue-based experiences.

By following these lessons, participants will practice a list of competences which is based upon the European Competence Framework for better lives, also known as LifeComp. This Framework aims to build consensus around a common understanding of Life Skills Competence by defining **9** competence areas (see image below). These competences are linked to the lessons in this training course.

03 | Sustainable Life Skills Competence Framework

Empowering and supporting disadvantaged adults plays a key role in Europe’s Economy since these adults are in a vulnerable state in the labor market, many of them lacking the skills, work experience, job-search abilities and financial resources to find employment. The LifeComp Framework presented in this report proposes a concept of “Sustainable Life Skills” that can be explained in connection with internal capacities and behaviors that allow individuals to “build the needed competencies for human development and to adopt positive behaviors

that enable them to deal effectively with the challenges.

LifeComp is a conceptual framework that describes 9 competencies (P1-3, S1-3, L1-3) that can be learned by everyone in formal, informal and non-formal education. These Competencies are structured in 3 intertwined competence areas: Personal, Social, and Learning to learn. Each of the-areas is made up of 3 competencies, which, together, constitute the building blocks of Life Skills as a competence.

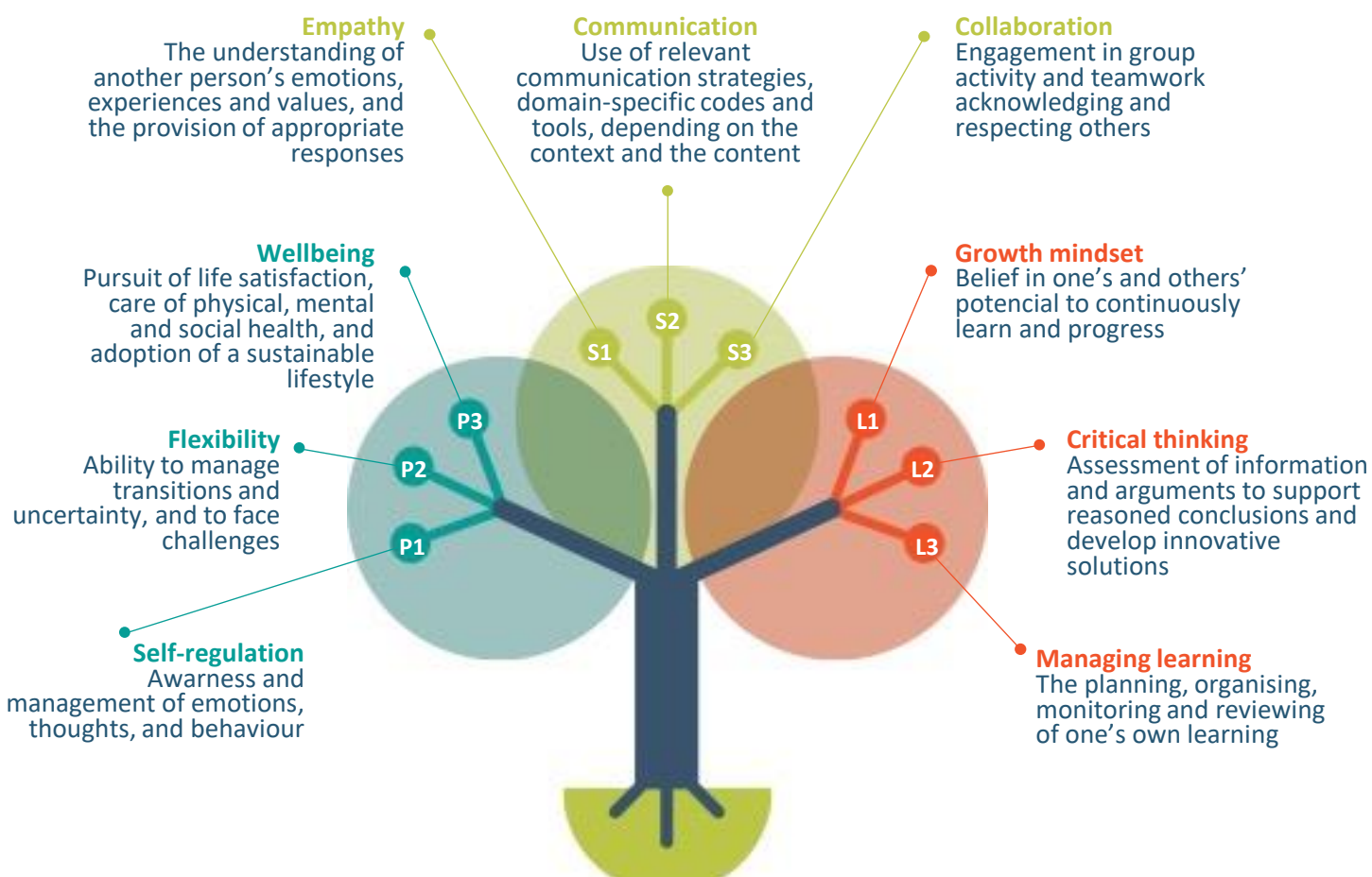


Figure 1: LifeComp Tree of competences describes nine competencies, organised in three areas: The “personal” area (P1, P2, P3), the “social” area (S1, S2, S3) and the “learning to learn” area (L1, L2, L3)
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LifeComp can be used as a basis for the development of curricula and learning activities fostering personal, and social development, and learning to learn.

05

COPING WITH EMOTIONS AND STRESS

- 5.1 Identifying & Expressing Feelings Verbally and Non-verbally
- 5.2 Express Feelings Safely
- 5.3 Coping Strategies for Positive Thinking





Coping with Emotions and Stress

Have you ever heard the expression "Control only what you can control?" That person could have been discussing coping mechanisms. When circumstances feel out of control, our coping mechanisms assist us in regaining control. We accomplish this by either managing emotions or attempting to solve the problem.

The wonder of effective coping strategies is that they work to restore us to balance. When we use coping mechanisms, we unconsciously enter "problem-solving" mode. Our coping strategies highlight the aspects of a circumstance over which we have some control.

Your belief in your ability to positively affect your circumstances is called your internal locus of control. People with a strong internal locus of control are often physically healthier, feel happier, and are six times more likely to be resilient.

Within this section, we will discuss ways in which we can effectively; identify and express our feelings verbally and non-verbally, express our feelings safely and highlight coping strategies for positive thinking.

5.1

IDENTIFYING & EXPRESSING FEELINGS VERBALLY AND NON-VERBALLY

Aim

- To recognise the different types of emotions
- To understand the difference between verbal and non-verbal feelings
- To learn to understand how you react and express your emotions
- To identify the proper way to express emotions, both verbally and non-verbally



Activities

- 15 minutes - Warm-up Activity: **Mind Mapping Feelings**
- 40 minutes - Body Activity: **Brainstorming and Role Play**
- 10 minutes - Follow-up Activity: **Group Discussion**



Resources

- White Boards or Flip Chart



Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making



Duration

- 70 minutes



Keywords

- Emotions, Feelings, Verbal, Non-Verbal, Recognising, Understanding



Warm-up activity

Mind Mapping Feelings



Emotional Intelligence is a key predictor of success in most, if not all, walks of life. Emotional intelligence is founded on self-awareness, the ability to feel emotions and to name them (emotionally literate) and to not be overwhelmed by them, actually being able to understand and process them. It is important to be able to recognise your own emotions. By being able to identify what they are, you can then learn how to understand and express them in both a verbal and non-verbal way.

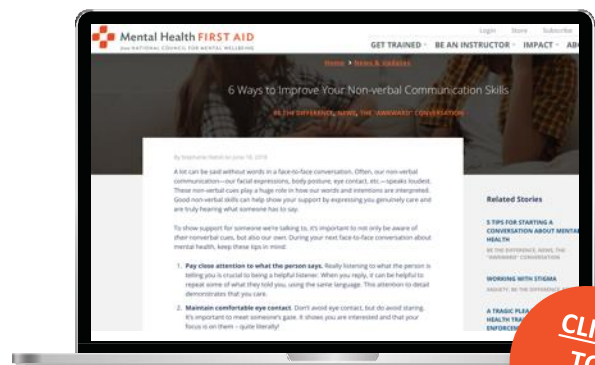
Verbal communication is perhaps the most obvious and understood mode of communication, and it is certainly a powerful tool in your communication toolbox. Put simply, verbal communication is the sharing of information between two individuals using words. Nonverbal communication is a way of communicating without using words. More commonly known as body language, non-verbal communication includes actions such as nodding, facial expressions and the use of hand movements. It can be used on its own, or to emphasis spoken words. To learn to identify and express feelings verbally and non-verbally, have a go at the tools and activities below.



CLICK TO VIEW



CLICK TO VIEW



CLICK TO VIEW

5.1 Digital or non-digital tool: Non – digital

Suggested level of difficulty: Beginner

Body activity:

Brainstorming and Role Play: 40 min



Description:

01

Mind Mapping Feelings: 15 Minutes

In groups, using a white board or flip charts, discuss and write down all the feelings that you know of. For example, anger and happiness.

Once you have all your feelings down, write down how you would express yourself when experiencing each emotion. For example:

- Anger = shouting
- Happiness = laughing

02

Firstly, brainstorm scenarios that might elicit different feelings. Below are a few examples,

- Your friend buys you a present
- Someone bumps into you roughly on the street
- You were yelled at by an important person, e.g., your mother, boss etc.
- Someone stole from you and now you have the chance to confront them about it

Put in the scenarios in a hat, pass it around the group. In pairs, two people take a scenario and read it aloud. Then, they act out how they would respond in that situation.

Each person in the group will then highlight the good and bad elements of their reaction. Based on tone of voice, body language and eye contact.

There is an Annex available highlighting the healthy ways to react verbally and non-verbally to emotions. Give this to the groups after they have role played. Talk them through it and then get them to analyse each pairs scenarios against the healthy ways of expressing feelings.

Then, once a pair have been analysed, ask them to do it again based upon the comments of the group and see if their reactions have changed.

5.1 Follow-up activity: Group Discussion



03

Group Discussion

In the follow up exercise, simply discuss with the group how they handle their emotions. Highlight keyways in which they can control how they express their emotions, using the strategies below.

1. Analyse Your Emotions
2. Write Things Down
3. Consider Another Perspective
4. Get Some Feedback
5. Raise Your Self-Esteem
6. Stop Overthinking
7. Work on Your Delivery
8. Question Your Assumptions
9. Avoid Using Filler Words
10. Open Up Incrementally
11. Use Simple Words
12. Don't Take Things Personally
13. Keep Practicing

5.2

EXPRESSING FEELINGS SAFELY

Aim

- To understand that emotions are important and that every feeling is valid
- To identify that there are proper ways to express our feelings



Activities

- 15 minutes - Warm-up Activity: **Today I am feeling...**
- 45 minutes - Body Activity: **15 Ways to Help Express Feelings**
- 15 minutes - Follow-up Activity: **Fostering Emotional Awareness Reflectively**



Resources

- Warm-up Activity: Pen and Paper
- Body Activity: Cue Cards, pens, and paper
- Follow-up Activity: Access to computer or phone (for YouTube or a streaming service), pen and paper



Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, communication, expression



Duration

- 75 minutes



Keywords

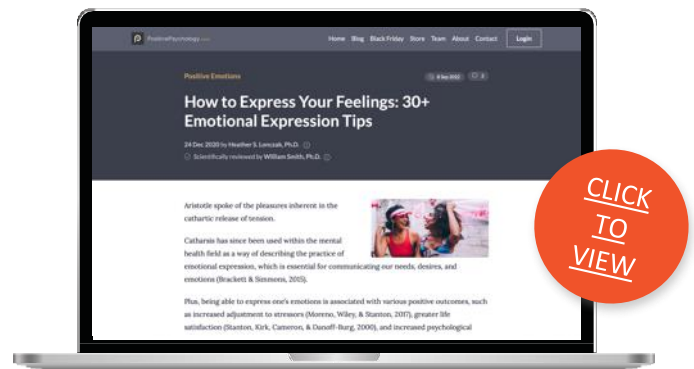
- Emotions, Feelings, Verbal, Non-Verbal, Recognising, Understanding



5.2 Warm-up activity: Today I am feeling...: 15 min

01

You may understand logically that healthy emotional expression is important, just exactly how to go about it isn't always straightforward. It is important that we take the time to understand the importance of expressing our feelings and recognising that our feelings are valid. Fortunately, there are many ways to facilitate healthy emotional expression. These include Use positive self-talk, be a good listener, know your triggers, practice empathy, cut the distractions, practice forgiveness, practice acceptance, practice gratefulness, take risks, be optimistic etc.



Digital or non-digital tool: Digital, non – digital

Suggested level of difficulty: Beginner

02

Description:

Today I am feeling...: 15 minutes

A simple exercise to begin. Each person should grab a pen and paper and on it write the phrase, "Today I am feeling..."

Then, simply write all the emotions you have felt today, from the minute you woke up, to this time.

5.2 Body activity :

15 Ways to Help Express Feelings :

45 min

03



Using cue cards, write down all the following 16 ways to practice expressing your feelings in a healthy way.

1. Use positive self-talk
2. Be a good listener
3. Try spirituality
4. Teach emotion words
5. Practice empathy
6. Model emotional expression
7. Forgive
8. Practice acceptance
9. Be grateful
10. Don't postpone happiness – savour the moment
11. Try something new
12. Take risks
13. Be optimistic
14. Do something active
15. Practice mindfulness

Once you have the 15 cue cards, give each person one. Have them write out 3 ways on how they would do practice the instruction on the card. For example:

For “Practice Empathy”, you could write,

- Put myself in their shoes and try to understand their emotions
- Realise that they have issues of their own, and their feelings are not aimed at me
- Treat them how I would want to be treated in their situation, but also give them space, leading a ear when they need it.

Rotate the cards, allowing each person to write something for all 15 cue cards. At the end, allow everyone to have a discussion about which cards they feel would help them the most.

5.2 Follow-up activity:

Fostering Emotional Awareness

Reflectivity: 15 min



04

Fostering Emotional Awareness Reflectivity

1. Watch an emotional scene in a film or drama between two to four characters.
 2. Now, reflect on how the characters behaved and the feelings they may have experienced.
 3. Write down how you think each character felt.
1. Write down what you think motivated each character.

This exercise fosters empathy and understanding, which ultimately promote stronger relationships

5.3

COPING STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE THINKING

Aim

- To understand the importance of a positive mindset
- To identify the negative thinking and problem-solve ways to combat it



Activities

- 15 minutes - Warm-up Activity: **What does positive thinking mean to you**
- 40 minutes - Body Activity: **Practicing positivity**
- 15 minutes - Follow-up Activity: **Affirmations**



Resources

- Pen and paper for all three



Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving and decision-making, creative problem-solving



Hints & Questions

- In a discussion about positive thinking, it is important to keep a positive attitude throughout the lesson



Keywords

- Positivity, self-awareness, emotions, empathy, understanding



Warm-up activity

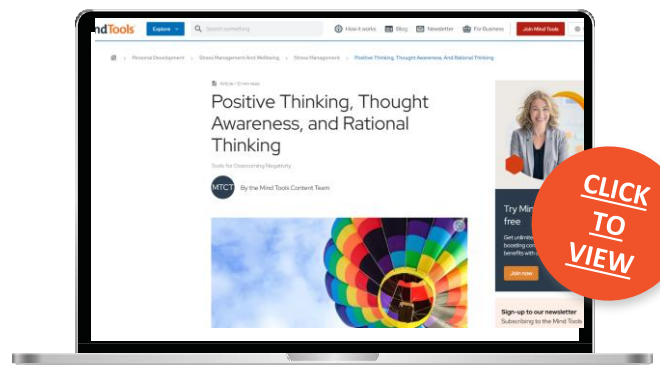
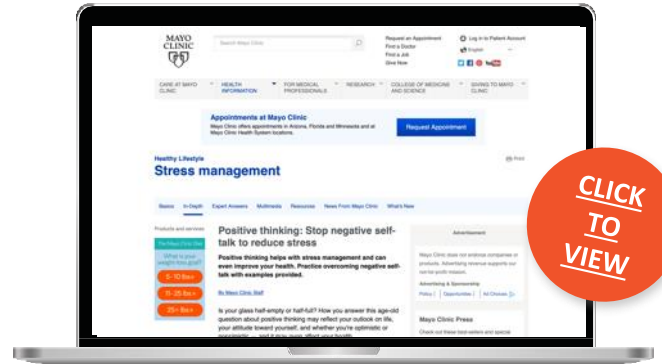
What does positive thinking mean to you: 15 min



Is your glass half-empty or half-full? How you answer this age-old question about positive thinking may reflect your outlook on life, your attitude toward yourself, and whether you're optimistic or pessimistic — and it may even affect your health. Indeed, some studies show that personality traits such as optimism and pessimism can affect many areas of your health and well-being. The positive thinking that usually comes with optimism is a key part of effective stress management. And effective stress management is associated with many health benefits. If you tend to be pessimistic, don't despair — you can learn positive thinking skills.

Positive thinking doesn't mean that you ignore life's less pleasant situations. Positive thinking just means that you approach unpleasantness in a more positive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst. Positive thinking often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head. These automatic thoughts can be positive or negative. Some of your self-talk comes from logic and reason. Other self-talk may arise from misconceptions that you create because of lack of information or expectations due to preconceived ideas of what may happen.

If the thoughts that run through your head are mostly negative, your outlook on life is more likely pessimistic. If your thoughts are mostly positive, you're likely an optimist — someone who practices positive thinking.



5.3 Digital or non-digital tool: Non – digital

Suggested level of difficulty: Intermediate

Description:

What does positive thinking mean to you: 15 Minutes

Using a pen and paper, simply write down what positive thinking means to you. Consider these questions and answer honestly when writing your answer.

1. How do you see yourself? Would you consider your view of yourself more positive or negative
2. In times of trouble or stress, would you take a more positive or negative outlook?
3. When other people are acting negatively, do you tend to agree or disagree with them?
4. Would you agree that having a positive attitude is more likely to create a happy person?

01



5.3 Follow-up activity:

Practicing Positivity: 40 min



02

Firstly, discuss with the group ways in which we can start changing our mindset to be positive.

You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you're creating a new habit, after all. Following are some ways to think and behave in a more positive and optimistic way:

1. Identify areas to change. If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you usually think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute, life changes or a relationship. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way. Think of a positive thought to manage your stress instead of a negative one.
2. Check yourself. Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.
3. Be open to humour. Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humour in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.
4. Follow a healthy lifestyle. Aim to exercise for about 30 minutes on most days of the week. You can also break it up into 5- or 10-minute chunks of time during the day. Exercise can positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. Get enough sleep. And learn techniques to manage stress.
5. Surround yourself with positive people. Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your ability to manage stress in healthy ways.
6. Practice positive self-talk. Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you. Think about things you're thankful for in your life.



Below are examples of negative statements, the aim of the activity is to make the statements positive. Give the group the negative statements and see if they can turn the frown upside down.

Negative self-talk

Positive thinking

| | |
|---|--|
| I've never done it before | It's an opportunity to learn something new |
| It's too complicated | I'll tackle it from a different angle |
| I don't have the resources | Necessity is the mother of invention |
| I'm too lazy to get this done | I couldn't fit it into my schedule, but I can re-examine some priorities |
| There's no way it will work | I can try to make it work |
| It's too radical a change | Let's take a chance |
| No one bothers to communicate with me | I'll see if I can open the channels of communication |
| I'm not going to get any better at this | I'll give it another try |

These are examples, when working with others add more of your own to fit the setting your working in.

5.3 Follow-up activity: Affirmation: 15 min

Description:

Affirmations help you to build self-confidence. By basing your affirmations on the clear, rational assessments of facts that you made using Rational Thinking, you can undo the damage that negative thinking may have done to your self-confidence.

Tip:

Your affirmations will be strongest if they are specific, are expressed in the present tense, and have strong emotional content.

Feelings of inadequacy: "I am well trained for this. I have the experience, the tools, and the resources that I need. I have thought-through and prepared for all possible issues. I can do a really good job."

Worries about performance: "I have researched and planned well for this, and I thoroughly understand the problem. I have the time, resources and help that I need. I am well prepared to do an excellent job."

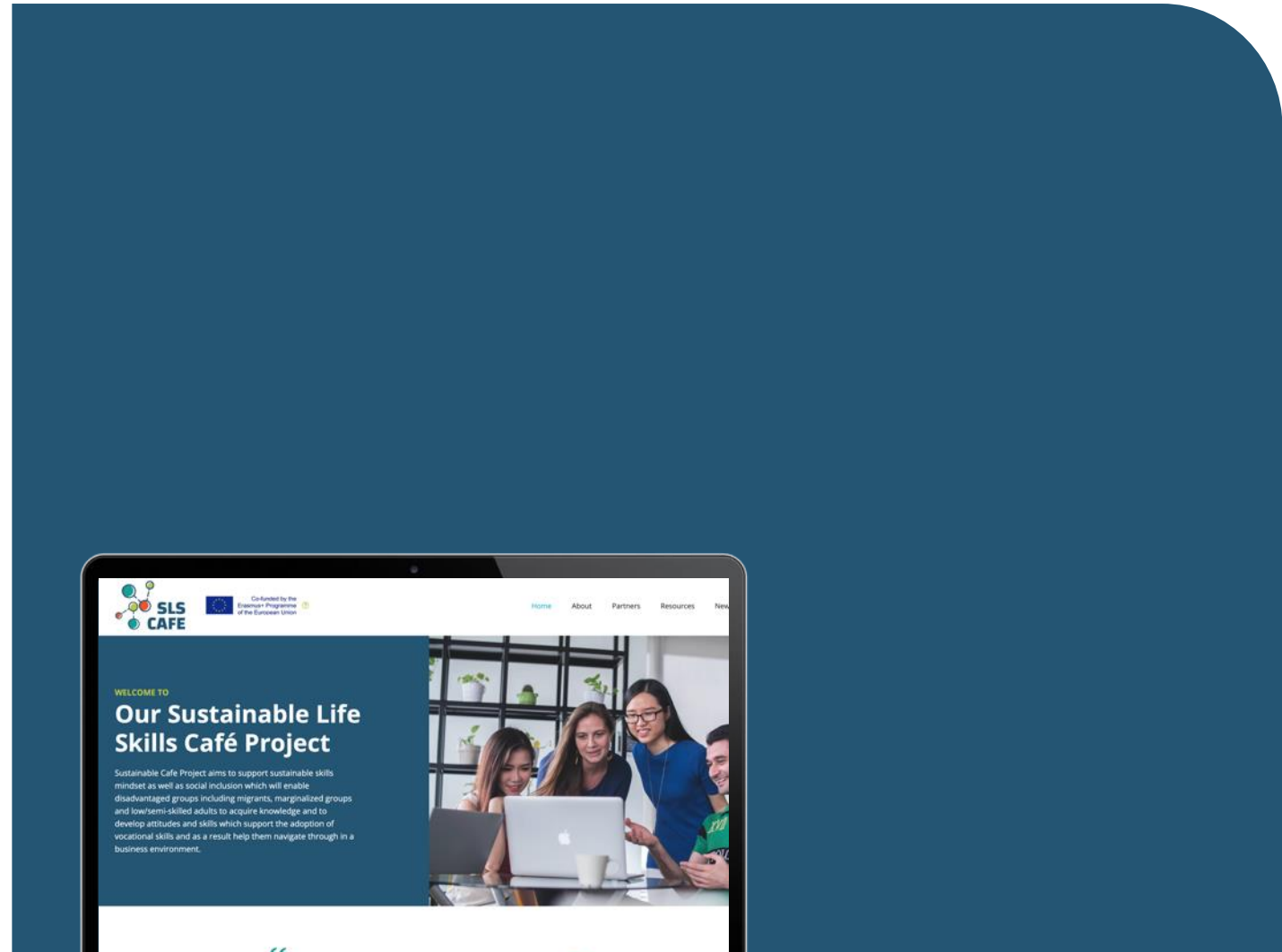
Problems with issues outside your control: "We have thought about everything that might reasonably happen and have planned how we can handle all likely contingencies. Everyone is ready to help where necessary. We are very well placed to react flexibly and effectively to unusual events."

Worry about other people's reaction: "I am well-prepared and am doing the best I can. Fair people will respect this. I will rise above any unfair criticism in a mature and professional way."

If appropriate, write these affirmations down on your worksheet, so that you can use them when you need them.

03





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