

VENTURES

LEARNING AND MASTERING LIFE SKILLS

A NEW WAY OF ASSESSMENT V. 2



THE *Scout* ASSOCIATION
OF MALTA



SCOUTS®
Nibnu Dinja Afjar



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In Scouting,
a boy is encouraged
to educate himself
instead of being instructed

Robert Baden Powell

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Introduction – The First Steps in Youth Leadership

The purpose of the manual is to assist you, the Venture Scout Leader, to effectively assess and assist Venture Scouts in their quest to learn and improve on their life skills. It is intended also to help you understand what Life Skill Education is and to equip you with capabilities to fulfil these responsibilities.

LIFE SKILLS IN SCOUTING

Skills are a vital part of the Scouting program. Opportunities to develop these skills are every bit as important, if not more important, to Venture Scouts and to Scouting in general as any recognition or advancement programme. Scouting offers young people a rich and varied arena in which to learn and use various skills. It is also a way to keep Venture Scouts interested and involved—keeps them busy, organised, and trained, and gives them opportunities to lead.

As part of the Youth Training process, this new method of evaluation provides the core unit-level leadership skills every Scout Leader should know. Every Venture Scout needs and deserves trained leaders. Leaders should understand their responsibilities, the aims of the programme, and how to deliver it with enthusiasm and fun. In short, a Venture Scout's participation in the programme should have a positive influence on their life.

The Venture Programme will assist a Venture Scout to gain confidence in their ability—through hands-on, practical application of skills and proven methods—of influencing growth in positive ways to achieve the purposes of the Scout Movement. As Venture Scout Leaders you need to assist the Venture Scout to grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and morally, so they gain satisfaction in knowing their efforts are truly worthwhile.

As a Leader you understand that “training” is a process that will continue as long as you are active in Scouting. Youths learn when there is a need to learn and when they see that there is an application to their learning effort. The focus on learning by doing in a holistic approach is what makes Scouting different from any other youth organisation.



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LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

Adolescence, a vital stage of growth and development, marks the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is characterised by rapid physiological changes and psychosocial maturation. Adolescence is also the stage when young people extend their relationships beyond parents and family and are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world in general.

As adolescents mature cognitively, their mental process becomes more analytical. They are now capable of abstract thinking, better articulation and of developing an independent ideology.

These are truly the years of creativity, idealism, buoyancy and a spirit of adventure. But these are also the years of experimentation and risk-taking, of giving in to negative peer pressure, of taking uninformed decisions on crucial issues, especially relating to their bodies and their sexuality. Adolescence is thus a turning point in one's life, a period of increased potential but also one of greater vulnerability.



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Adolescence: 14-18 years old

PHYSICALLY, MANY ADOLESCENTS ARE MOVING BEYOND THE “AWKWARD STAGE”

Between ages 14 and 18, most boys and girls outgrow the awkwardness of puberty, but some boys are still growing at a fast pace. Many boys and girls are concerned with body image and often compare their bodies with those of others.

The teenage years are also a great time to reinforce good health and a regime of physical activity. If you model eating well and engaging in regular physical activity, you may find that you have a positive influence on your Venture Scout's habits.

TEENAGERS MAKE STRIDES TOWARD DEFINING THEIR IDENTITIES AND EXPLORING THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Socially, teens are motivated by a strong desire to attain status within their peer group and be recognised as unique individuals. Older teens tend to focus more on forming their identity and less on belonging to a group. Use this opportunity to help your Venture Scouts become engaged in service-learning and volunteering. These experiences enable teens to enjoy their increased independence and take on more adult leadership roles.

During adolescence, youth engage in more co-ed activities—especially dating. Co-ed group learning activities and recreational events provide teens with a safe environment to interact with members of the opposite sex. Teens who do not have secure relationships with caregivers are more likely to become involved in a serious romantic relationship as they try to meet their emotional needs and get the attention they crave—and may not receive—from their parents.

TEENAGE YEARS AS YOUTH BEGIN TO EVALUATE THEIR CHOICES

During the later teen years, many youths develop higher levels of abstract thinking and problem-solving, allowing them to think through and evaluate the choices they make. Teens refine their beliefs and their sense of self, and many develop a greater level of concern about the community and concern for the well-being of others.



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Though most teens have the ability to problem-solve, many need practice to hone this skill. Take time to help your mentee think through important decisions and evaluate the impact of alternatives.

Many teens are also beginning to plan for the future, thinking about employment, University, etc. Teens whose parents talk with them about their career and studies aspirations tend to be better equipped to plan for the future. However, in some teens' homes, the future is rarely a topic of conversation. For families dealing with severe financial pressures and poor living conditions, this can supersede hopes for the future and aspirations.

MANY TEENAGERS ARE WARY OF ADVICE FROM ADULTS

Although they may need and want guidance from adults, most teenagers rarely ask for advice, turning instead to their peer group and/or to the Internet. Search for opportunities to connect with your Venture Scout about issues that s/he's concerned about. There may be instances in which you will feel comfortable talking about how you have faced a particular challenge—especially if it is relevant to their experience.

Be careful about giving advice. Teens are often told what to do by the adults in their life, which causes them to tune out. Modeling problem-solving skills and helping Venture Scouts learn to come up with their own solutions is more useful than giving unwanted advice.

BE AWARE OF YOUR VENTURE SCOUT'S DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

Some teenagers are impacted by developmental roadblocks, such as limited parental support, a history of abuse, or a learning disability. These experiences can impede a young person's development and impact his/her ability to develop positive peer relationships, leaving the adolescent more vulnerable to negative peer influences. As a Leader, it is important to recognise their developmental challenges and seek out experiences that will help them to build skills and develop in positive ways.



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Youth Development

Youth development is a process of mental, physical, social and emotional growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life within the customs and regulations of their society. People who develop programmes and curricula for youth are in the business of providing educational opportunities through which youth can learn information and develop skills they need.

Youth development experiences of high quality don't just happen. The best ones are carefully planned:

- to encourage life skills development while delivering subject matter content and
- to achieve specific results. It has become increasingly important to be accountable for resources expended by documenting programme impact.

By clearly stating desired changes as programme objectives, youth development experiences can be evaluated more effectively to determine if the programme succeeded in making the intended difference in the lives of youth.

The goal of youth programming is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for young people to experience life skills, to practice them until they are learned, and be able to use them as necessary throughout their lifetime.

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities you can learn that will help you to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. In the Life Skills Model categories of life skills are identified and divided into 4 four sections that represent Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Two general categories of skills are included under each of the four headings:-

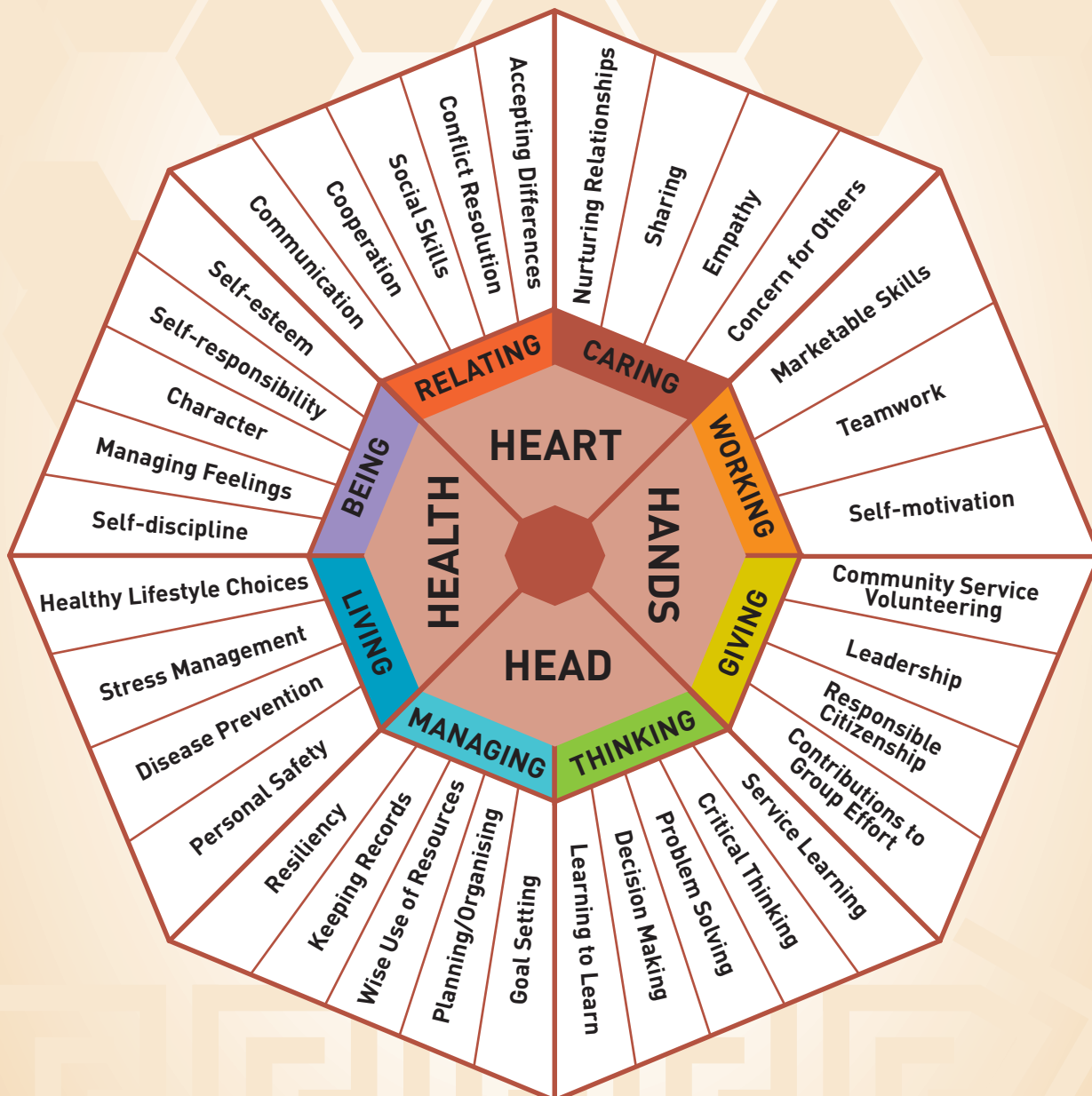


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The Skills Model



Permission granted by the Iowa State University to use the TLS model ONLY within the Scout Association of Malta.



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The Purpose

SPIDER GAP ANALYSIS

Using a gap analysis allows you to examine the current skills set you own and where you want to be in the short/long term. The analysis shows the gap between present and future. It helps you determine the goals you should focus on and what improvements and changes are necessary to achieve those goals.

PRESENT

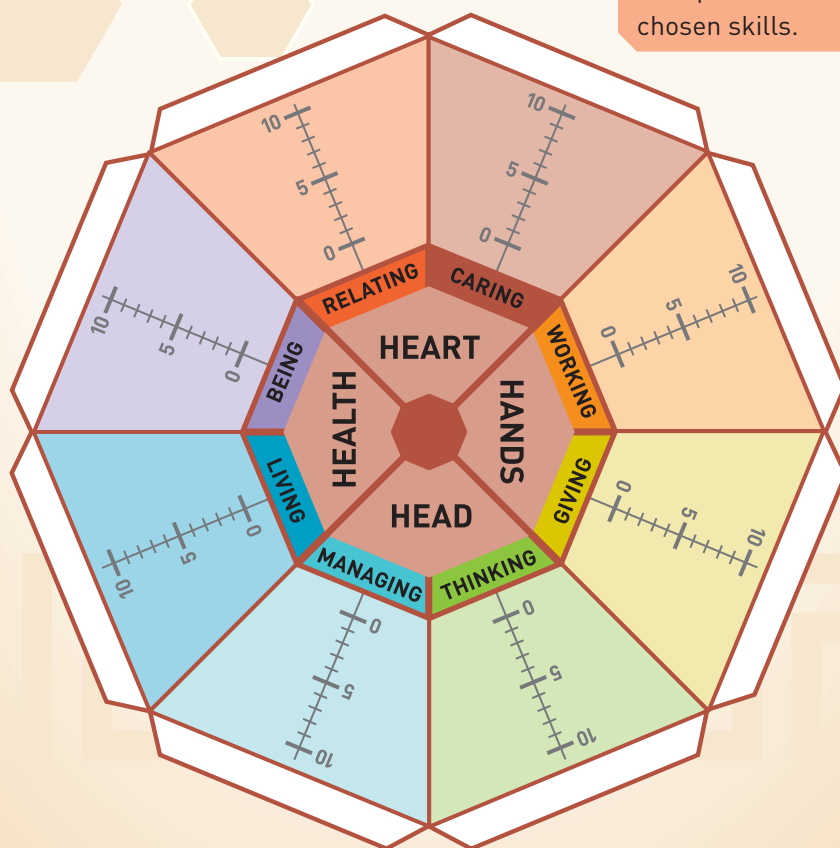
The first step of a gap analysis is to determine where you are now vis-à-vis skills by marking the level of competency for each skill.

GOALS

In order for a gap analysis to be effective, you must determine where you want to be by setting goals. This will mean a 6 month period or a year from now.

CHANGES

The purpose of a gap analysis is to determine what needs to happen to achieve your future goals. Contemplate what developments you need to make for you to become more successful and competent in the chosen skills.





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The Process

The process is quite simple. With every new mission, a new evaluation process needs to be undertaken. Below is a step by step guide on how to assist a Venture Scout:

1. They will choose which mission they are going to undertake; e.g. Athena. There are two ways on how to go about choosing which skills they want to improve:

ONE:

First they select the mission tasks they would like to work upon and plan with whom they are going to do carry them out (on their own or together with their unit). Once tasks are chosen, they can then discuss on which life skills they are going to work on and how they will you improve on them.

TWO:

First select which life skills they would like to improve upon and then select the mission tasks which best suit the life skills chosen.

They still have to plan with whom they are going to perform these tasks with (whether on their own or together with their unit).

2. Choose a minimum of 4 skills and a maximum of 8 skills to improve upon.
 - If they decide to choose 4 skills then make sure they hit one from each "H" category.
 - If they choose 8 skills make sure they choose one from each "H" category and different sub-categories to make it more holistic.
3. They will map their current level on the wheel diagram found on the Progress Sheet at the back of each Mission (see example of The Results page)
4. They will also mark their "Target" level they would like to achieve.
5. Start working through their chosen tasks.
6. Along the way, as a Venture Scout Leader, take the time to discuss their achievements and improvements. You can do this either individually or as a Unit.
7. Once the Mission is completed, the Venture Scouts will map their new level of skills on the same wheel diagram on the Progress Sheet.
8. Together evaluate their improvements and discuss how these can be further improved.



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The Result

As already stated above, as a Venture Scout Leader, you have the responsibility to assist them in understanding how they can improve on their skills. Once the cycle is over and the mission complete, their skills wheel diagram will be similar to the diagram below.

Your responsibility is to discuss and evaluate together with the Venture Scout how they have improved and what they have achieved. This will be a good time to then start assisting them to plan the next cycle and what skills to choose and improve. Since the Unit is made up of different type of Venture Scouts, you will notice that the both the skills and the level will vary. The most important thing is not to push for “production” but to wisely assist each Venture Scout individually to grow and explore different skills at different levels.

The Process is rather simple.

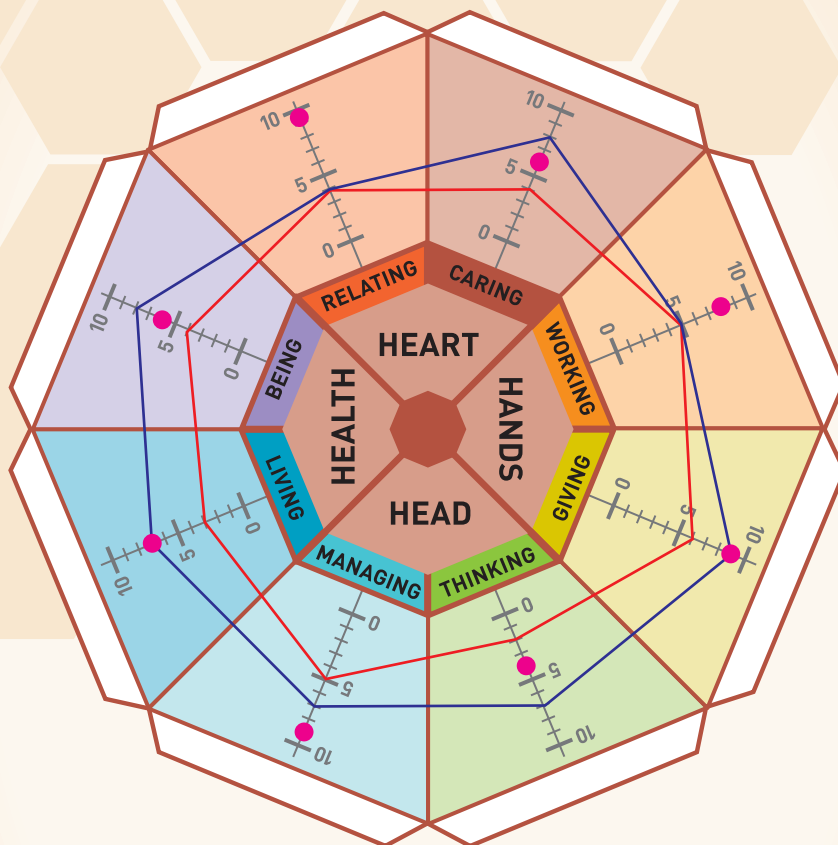
1. The Venture Scout should have plotted both the Actual Skill level (Red) and the Target Level (Yellow).
2. Once the Mission is ready, the Achieved Skill Level (Blue) will be drawn on the wheel. This will automatically create the GAP between the Actual, Target and Achieved Levels.
3. Either on an individual basis or as a Unit, discuss the experience and the difficulties encountered to achieve the Target Levels. If Target is exceeded than this should be highly-praised.
4. There can be 3 types of outcomes:
 - i. **Improvement:** This should be highly-praised, however the best way to keep on developing a skill is to keep practicing, therefore try to give your Ventures the necessary space and ideal situations where they can put into practice what they learnt.
 - ii. **No Improvement:** This might be the case in many instances. The most important thing as a Venture Scout Leader is to try and guide the Venture Scout to strive harder next time. (Get them out of his/her Comfort Zone)
 - iii. **Skill GAP:** A GAP means that the Venture Scout did not reach the desired target. However, it doesn't mean that no improvement was achieved. This should be further discussed ideally on an individual basis to guide the Venture Scout in an appropriate way to make an effort to gain those skills.



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● my Target

Before Taking the Mission

After Taking the Mission



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Key Issues and Concerns of Adolescents

DEVELOPING AN IDENTITY

- Self – awareness helps adolescents understand themselves and establish their personal identity. Lack of information and skills prevent them from effectively exploring their potential and establishing a positive image and sound career perspective.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

- Adolescents have frequent mood changes reflecting feelings of anger, sadness, happiness, fear, shame, guilt, and love. Very often, they are unable to understand the emotional turmoil.
- They think they do not have a supportive environment in order to share their concerns with others. We, as Scout Leaders, should be the persons for them to come and talk since our relationship should be based on trust.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- As a part of growing up, adolescents redefine their relationships with parents, peers and members of the opposite sex. Adults have high expectations of them and do not understand their feelings.
- Adolescents need social skills for building positive and healthy relationships with others including peers of the opposite sex. They need to understand the importance of mutual respect and socially defined boundaries of every relationship.

RESISTING PEER PRESSURE

- Adolescents find it difficult to resist peer pressure. Some of them may yield to these pressures and engage in experimentation.
- Aggressive self conduct; irresponsible behaviour and substance abuse involve greater risks with regard to physical and mental health.
- The experimentation with smoking and milder drugs can lead to switching over to hard drugs and addiction at a later stage.



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ACQUIRING INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND SERVICES ON ISSUES OF ADOLESCENCE

- Exposure to media and mixed messages from the fast changing world have left adolescents with many unanswered questions
- The widening gap in communication between adolescents and parents is a matter of great concern.
- Teachers still feel inhibited to discuss issues frankly and sensitively.
- Adolescents seek information from their peer group who are also ill informed and some may fall prey to quacks.
- Fear and hesitation prevents them from seeking knowledge on preventive methods and medical help if suffering from RTIs and STIs.

COMMUNICATING AND NEGOTIATING SAFER LIFE SITUATIONS

- Sexually active adolescents face greater health risks.
- Girls may also face mental and emotional problems related to early sexual initiation.
- Resisting the vulnerability to drug abuse, violence and conflict with law or society.



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Understanding Life Skills – A Leader's Perspective

Life skills have been defined as “**the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life**” (World Health Organisation – “Skills For Health Information Series”).

‘Adaptive’ means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust in different circumstances. **‘Positive behaviour’** implies that a person is forward looking and even in difficult situations, can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions.

The terms **‘Livelihood skills’** or occupational/vocational skills refer to capabilities, resources and opportunities to pursue individual; household economic goals and relate to income generation. Thus, Life skills are distinct from Livelihood Skills.

KEY LIFE SKILLS

Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills.

1. those related to thinking termed as “**thinking skills**”;
2. and skills related to dealing with others termed as “**social skills**”.

While thinking skills relate to reflection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behaviour and negotiating effectively.

“Emotional” can be perceived as a skill not only in making rational decisions but also in being able to make others agree to one’s point of view. To do that, coming to terms first with oneself is important. Thus, self management is an important skill including managing/ coping with feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure. Young people as advocates need both thinking and social skills for consensus building and advocacy on issues of concern.



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The Ten core Life Skills as laid down by WHO are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Empathy
3. Critical thinking
4. Creative thinking
5. Decision making
6. Problem Solving
7. Effective communication
8. Interpersonal relationship
9. Coping with stress
10. Coping with emotion

1. SELF-AWARENESS includes recognition of 'self', our character, our strengths and weaknesses, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often a prerequisite to effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy with others.

2. EMPATHY – To have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society at large, we need to understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Without empathy, our communication with others will amount to one-way traffic. Worst, we will be acting and behaving according to our self-interest and are bound to run into problems. No man is an island, no woman either! We grow up in relationships with many people – parents, brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts, classmates, friends and neighbours. When we understand ourselves as well as others, we are better prepared to communicate our needs and desires. We will be more equipped to say what we want people to know, present our thoughts and ideas and tackle delicate issues without offending other people. At the same time, we will be able to elicit support from others, and win their understanding.

Empathy can help us to accept others, who may be very different from ourselves. This can improve social interactions, especially, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance, or tolerance, as is the case with AIDS sufferers, or people with mental disorders, who may be stigmatized and ostracized by the very people they depend upon for support.



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3. Critical thinking is an ability to analyze information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to health by helping us to recognize and assess the factors that influence attitudes and behaviour, such as values, peer pressure and the media.
4. Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things that is characteristic of four components – fluency (generating new ideas), flexibility (shifting perspective easily), originality (conceiving of something new), and elaboration (building on other ideas).
5. Decision making helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. This can have consequences for health. It can teach people how to actively make decisions about their actions in relation to healthy assessment of different options and, what effects these different decisions are likely to have.
6. Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.
7. Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This may mean being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It may mean keeping, good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support. It may also mean being able to end relationships constructively.
8. Effective communication means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express opinions and desires, and also needs and fears. And it may mean being able to ask for advice and help in a time of need.
9. Coping with stress means recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress, by changing our environment or lifestyle and learning how to relax.
10. Coping with emotions means involving recognizing emotions within us and others, being aware of how emotions influence behaviour and being able to respond to emotions appropriately. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can have negative effects on our health if we do not respond appropriately.



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Important FAQs:

A. How are Life Skills important for growing minds?

We find that behaviour does not always follow the mind. This is when incidents of “I know but I can’t help it” occur. What we need is the ability to act responsibly. Life skills enable us to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into actual abilities.

B. Why is there a need for Life Skills Education?

The host of factors that promote high risk behaviour such as alcoholism, drug abuse and casual relationships are boredom, rebellion, disorientation, peer pressure and curiosity. The psychological push factors such as the inability to tackle emotional pain, conflicts, frustrations and anxieties about the future are often the driving force for high risk behaviour. Life skills training is an efficacious tool for empowering the youth to act responsibly, take initiative and take control. It is based on the assumption that when young people are able to rise above emotional impasse arising from daily conflicts, entangled relationships and peer pressure, they are less likely to resort to anti social or high risk behaviours.

C. Who needs Life Skills?

Life Skills are imparted in a supportive learning environment for the promotion of health and well being. They are applicable for all ages of children and adolescents. However, the age group targeted is mainly 10-18, adolescent years, since young people of this age group seem to be most vulnerable to behaviour related health problems.

D. How are they imparted?

The method used in teaching of Life Skills builds upon the social learning theory and on what we know of how young people learn from their environment; from observing how others behave and what consequences arise from behaviour.

It involves the process of Participatory learning using 4 basic components:

- 1. Practical activities**
- 2. Feedback and reflections**
- 3. Consolidation and reinforcement**
- 4. Practical application to day to day life challenges**



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Life Skills – Point to Remember

**I READ, I FORGET, I DISCUSS, I REMEMBER,
I DO, I ENCOURAGE.**

- 1.** Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote overall wellbeing and competence in young people as they face the realities of life.
- 2.** Life skills are the beginning of wisdom which focuses on behaviour change or developmental approach designed to address a balance of three areas- knowledge, attitude and skills.
- 3.** Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitude and values into actual abilities. e.g. what to do and how to do it, given the scope and opportunity to do so.
- 4.** Life skills however are not a solution of “how to do abilities” as they are not the only factors that affect behaviour. There are many factors such as social support, culture and environment that affect motivation and ability to behave in positive ways.
- 5.** Effective acquisition and application of Life Skills can influence the way one feels about others, ourselves and will equally influence the way we are perceived by others. It contributes to perception of self confidence and self esteem.
- 6.** We all use Life Skills in different situations such as:
 - To negotiate effectively at home, school or at scouts, we need to have thinking skills as well as social skills;
 - When faced with difficult situations we tend to think critically, to analyze all the pros and cons of the situation to think out of the box to find a solution to seemingly difficult problems.
- 7.** Many life skills are required to manage a particular situation effectively. In a way, various Life Skills work best in conjunction with each other. In fact, the appropriate combination of Life Skills in a given moment is an art.



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Head

1. THINKING

– using one's mind to form ideas and make decisions, to imagine, to examine carefully in the mind, to consider



LEARNING TO LEARN – acquiring, evaluating and using information, understanding the methods and skills for learning.

- Using the senses to gain new information or find new ways to use information.
- Remembering information that is learned, includes processes, such as the Experiential Learning Model, to help ensure information is retained.
- Understanding the meaning of the information.
- Questioning to gain more information.
- Using the learned information in new situations, to solve problems or to change one's behaviour.
- Being able to break down information into parts.
- Integrating parts of information to form a whole.
- Judging the value of information for a given purpose.
- Being able to communicate information to someone else.
- Supporting the efforts of others to learn.
- Being open minded, willing to think about and try new things.



DECISION MAKING – choosing among several alternatives.

A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. Specify goals and constraints (limits).
2. Generate alternatives.
3. Consider risks and appraise alternatives.
4. Choose an alternative to implement.



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PROBLEM SOLVING – clearly identifying a problem and a plan of action for resolution of the problem.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

- i. Identify /clearly define the problem situation
- ii. Gather information, consider priorities, resources, needs, interests.
- iii. Identify possible solutions.
- iv. Compare and select the best alternative
- v. Plan a strategy, set a goal and determine ways to reach it.
- vi. Carry out the plan – apply the solution to the problem
- vii. Evaluate the results: Is the problem solved?



CRITICAL THINKING – strategies for analyzing, comparing, reasoning and reflecting focused on deciding what to believe or do, discovering meaning, building connections with past learning.

Critical thinking can be thought of as talking things over with oneself in one's mind, deciding what to think or do, improving the quality of decision making. The critical thinking process can be stated as a set of questions one asks and answers oneself.

- Observe the situation carefully – Do I agree with what is being said or done?
- Examine your reaction – How do I really feel about what is being said or done?
- Consider alternative responses and opposing viewpoints – Based on what I know, is the statement true?
- Decide among the alternatives – What implications does this decision have for me and my future? Am I willing to use this information in making decisions?



SERVICE LEARNING – gaining skill and experience through active participation in organised service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated with the school and community, learning linked with real life.

Qualities learned through service learning may include:

- Empathy
- Tolerance
- Perspective
- Accountability
- Self-esteem and
- Leadership



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THE SERVICE-LEARNING PROCESS

- Identify opportunities to meet actual community needs.
- Plan a service opportunity with school and community representatives.
- Interact with an interested adult to implement the project.
- Keep records of problem or needs, research completed, services rendered, names, addresses and phone numbers of people involved, other documentation, such as letters, speeches, news articles, journal entries, photographs, etc.
- Learn to apply information problem solving and to help others.

2. MANAGING

– use of to accomplish a purpose



GOAL SETTING – deciding on purpose or desired results thing to work toward.

Six steps to achieving:

- i. Identify an appropriate
- ii. Identify tasks or steps to achieve the goal.
- iii. Make an action plan.
- iv. Follow the plan.
- v. Evaluate the results.
- vi. Revise the plan if the integrated goal was not met.



PLANNING / ORGANIZING – a meaning for doing something that has thought out ahead of time parts can be put together.

- i. Consider the total situation
- ii. Identify the parts, steps and necessary sequence or order.
- iii. Assign a person to be responsible – design a time line and identify resources required to accomplish the parts or steps (if needed).
- iv. Assemble the parts into a structure according to the desired purpose.
- v. We use of resources – using sound judgment, not wasteful, being responsible, setting priorities.



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Resources include (examples are given of each):

- Time – managing time, including wise use of leisure time for enjoyment, balancing work time and play time.
- Money – budgeting income, comparison shopping.
- Materials – recycling paper and plastic, allocating a supply to last a given length of time.
- Space – efficient room arrangement, wise use of available facilities.
- People – efficient use of people's energy or expertise on a project.
- Natural resources – conservation of resources available in the environment.
- Keeping records – recording selected useful information, usually focused for a specific purpose.

DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF THE RECORD

- Choose an appropriate method or plan for recording the information (narrative, list, chart, diagram, outline, video tape, enumeration, etc).
- Select information to include.
- Enter the information for accounting and any explanation.
- Use the information to make a determination, decision or judgment.



RESILIENCY – adaptability, the ability to recover after experiencing misfortune or distress, coping with change, overcoming problems and difficulties.

People with one or more of the following factors tend to be more resilient.

- Ability to see the difficulty as a problem that can be endured or resolved
- Good interpersonal relationships
- A variety of interests and goals
- Flexibility
- Attitudes of hope or persistence
- A sense of self-worth
- Seeing a purpose for one's own life



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LEARNING AND MASTERING LIFE SKILLS

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Heart

1. RELATING

– a mutual or reciprocal connection established between two people that is wholesome and meaningful to both



COMMUNICATION – exchange of thoughts, information or messages between individuals, sending and receiving information using speech, writing, gestures and artistic expression.

Messages must be sent and received for communication to have taken place.

Some examples:

- Reading – considering ideas, thoughts, information or messages that have been written
- Speaking – talking or verbal communication, conversation, planning, organizing and presenting a speech
- Listening – hearing and interpreting verbal (spoken) communications
- Giving feedback – responding to communications from others
- Observing – being attentive to and interpreting nonverbal communications, such as body language and gestures
- Sensitive to thoughts and feelings of others



COOPERATION – to work or act together for a common purpose or mutual benefit

Some skills that aid cooperative effort:


- Communicating effectively
- Setting group goals
- Using social skills
- Interacting effectively with others
- Building and maintaining trust
- Providing leadership
- Engaging in discussion and controversy that produces results
- Managing conflict
- Accepting responsibility



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 **SOCIAL SKILLS** – skills people use when interacting with others and to behave in the accepted manner or customs of the society in which they live, adapting well to one's social environment.

Social skills include:

- Greeting others, making introductions.
- Engaging in conversation.
- Following instructions.
- Accepting 'no' answers.
- Expressing feelings appropriately.
- Disagreeing appropriately, seeking to resolve conflict non-violently.
- Showing respect and consideration for others, having empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.
- Using good manners.
- Cultural competence-having knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- Resistance skills – able to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

 **CONFLICT RESOLUTION** – finding and applying creative and non-destructive ways to resolve differences between two or more persons, getting along with others.

PROCESS FOR WORKING THROUGH A CONFLICT SITUATION

1. Describe the current situation.
'The problem is ...'
 - Person I (self) describes the situation as ...
 - Person ii (other) describes the situation as ...
2. Describe the ideal situation.
'What would like to see is ...'
 - Person I (self) wants ...
 - Person ii (other) wants ...
3. What has been done to the conflict toward a desired or undesirable outcome?
 - Person I (self) did.....
 - Person ii (other) did
4. Describe current feelings.
'The way I feel about this situation'
 - Person I (self) feels ...
 - Person ii (other) feels ...
5. State likely outcomes if conflict is worked out ...
State likely outcomes if conflict is not worked out ...
6. Describe intention.
'What I'm willing to do?'
 - Person I (self) intends to ...
 - Person ii (other) intends to...
7. Do we have a resolution.
Is resolution when both answer 'yes'?...
What is preventing resolutions at this time?...



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Vary the exercise by having person describe his or her view by giving answers to the above while the second person listens. The second person presents what has been said to whether the meaning has been communicated clearly. If the first person accepts the second person's paraphrase as accurate, the second person then completes 1 to 7, and the first person paraphrases to check for understanding.

If there is no resolution, the same sequence of statements may be used again. It may be helpful to have a third person present to facilitate the statement sequence and paraphrasing process.

Skills related to conflict resolution:

- Fighting fairly.
- Attacking the problem, not the person.
- Clearly stating your needs and feelings to others.
- Giving and receiving feedback.
- Listening carefully to what the other person is saying.
- Understanding how the other person feels.
- Speaking up for your rights.
- Respecting the rights of others.
- Controlling impulses and irrational behaviour.
- Developing strategies for taking turns, sharing, compromising, problem solving.
- Negotiating – reaching terms of agreement.
- Mediating – to resolve or settle issues between two parties through a third party or intermediary.



ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES – to recognize and welcome factors that separate or distinguish one person from another.

- Being aware of similarities and differences among people and their cultures.
- Accepting that differences are OK (examples: differences of opinion, cultural diversity).
- Knowing one's own uniqueness and specialness.
- Exploring, understanding and valuing the contributions of a variety of people and their interconnectedness.
- Having positive experience with those who are different from oneself.
- Treating all people with dignity, respect and worth.
- Welcoming and participating in the opportunities that diversity offers.



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2. CARING

– showing understanding, kindness, concern and affection for others

♥ **CONCERN FOR OTHERS** – to worry about, give attention to, the well-being of others.

- Sensitivity to other's situations and their well-being.
- Sympathy- capacity for sharing or understanding the feelings of another, compassion.
- Involving oneself in helping others- demonstrating concern.
- Being able to accept expressions of concern from others.

♥ **EMPATHY** – being sensitive to or identifying with another person's situation, feelings or motives.

Empathy is a complex emotional state that is difficult to describe and is not observable. It is usually determined by indirect evidence.

Empathy includes:

- Emotionally significant experiences that are shared by two or more people.
- Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings and motives.
- Experiencing another's emotional state without pity or judgment, 'feeling with' another person.
- In response to a shared understanding, one person loses feelings of a separate self and becomes joined in feelings and perhaps behaviours with another for a time.

♥ **SHARING** – to have, use or do together with another or others.

- To use and object together at the same time, trading off.
- To divide into parts and distribute evenly (give some away).
- To share responsibility for a task (participate together either at the same time or not).
- To have or own jointly.

♥ **NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS** – two or more people form a connection that contributes to their mutual well-being, each providing care and attention to the other person.

- Feeling included and a sense of belonging.
- Assisting others to feel wanted.
- Contributing to the well-being of others.
- Keeping in touch with others.
- Sharing at least some interests and goals.



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Hands

1. GIVING

– to provide, supply or cause to happen (social responsibility)



COMMUNITY SERVICE / VOLUNTEERING – to donate one's time and/or effort of one's own free will for the benefit of the group without guarantee of reward.

- Contributing to the common good, something bigger than self.
- Participating in community affairs.
- Gaining internal, not external reward.
- Making a difference in one's own life or the lives of others.
- Realizing personal growth and understanding.
- Making sense of personal talents and skills.
- Creating a caring environment.
- Enjoying relationships with others.



LEADERSHIP – to assist the group in meeting its goals by showing or directing along the way, using personal influence to guide the group in reaching its goal.

- The qualities desired in a leader depend upon the situation in which leadership is needed. The ability to lead can be learned.
- Some qualities/competencies demonstrated by leaders include the following (The related competencies are grouped together).
- Has a vision, has a motivation to lead, motivates others (inspires others to action).
- Communicates effectively, is a good listener, gives and receives feedback, speaks clearly and effectively in group settings.
- Works well with people and groups, understands group process/ functioning, facilitates group interaction, able to help group and achieve goals. Has wide knowledge of institutions and people presides over meetings that are productive, is self-confident.



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- Involves other people in meaningful ways, delegates responsibilities, empowers others, sharing, leadership.
- Is able to plan/organize/assessment.
- Is able to define issues, is able to lead group problem solving gets involved in the decision-making process, gathers relevant information for decision-making builds consensus.
- Accepts differences in people in their opinions, is tolerant of disagreements, manages conflict positively, sees perspective of persons and their value, is flexible, is able to negotiate.
- Has personal values and traits of good character, is trustworthy, assumes responsibility, is self-motivated, understands self.
- Generates resources, manages resources, including time, money and human capital.



RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP – an individual demonstrating love and devotion response to duties, rights and privileges as a member of a community or country.

- Loyalty to one's place of residence (city, state, country).
- Entitlements and privileges of citizenship including voting, protection, participation in government, etc.
- Obligations of citizenship.



CONTRIBUTION TO GROUP EFFORTS – to give or supply along with others for a common purpose.

- Similar to 'cooperation' or teamwork except that cooperation implies relationship between those involved and teamwork is a more structured situation, such as in the workplace. Contribution to group efforts implies a volunteer component and less structure than teamwork.
- Identifying a mutual goal.
- Sharing responsibility for accomplishing the goal.
- Usually implies giving without monetary reward (voluntary participation).
- Sharing accomplishment and achievement if goal is achieved.




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2. WORKING

– the physical or mental effort that is required to accomplish something, using skill, effort or ability to accomplish something that earns pay to support oneself


 **USEFUL/MARKETABLE SKILLS** – to have the abilities wanted by employers and needed to hold a job.

Effective workers can:

- Make wise use of resources.
- Work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Acquire, communicate, organize, use and evaluate information, use computers to process information.
- Understand social, organisational and technological systems, design or improve systems.
- Make appropriate use of equipment, tools and technology including maintenance and repair of equipment.
- Communicate effectively.


Effective workers have:

- Basic reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematics skills.
- Ability to learn, to reason, to think creatively, to make decisions and to solve problems.
- Personal qualities of responsibility, discipline, honesty, sociability and self-esteem.
- Personal work ethic.
- Ability to evaluate career opportunities.
- Self-understanding in relation to career choices.

 **TEAMWORK** – work done by two or more people, each doing parts of the whole task.

Teamwork involves:

- Communicating effectively.
- Identifying and greeting on a common task.
- Dividing a task by identifying contributions by each person (roles).
- Accepting responsibility for one's part of the task.
- Coordinating the interaction (working together) to complete the task.
- Sharing accomplishment.

 **SELF-MOTIVATION** – able to make the needed effort to carry out a task or a plan, personal will to take action.

- Inspiring oneself to make the necessary effort- to stimulate to action.
- Taking initiative- taking steps necessary to begin or follow through with a plan or task.
- Self-starting-working independently of supervision.
- Perseverance.



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Health

1. LIVING

– the manner or style of daily life, one's actions or behaviour

+ HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES – selecting a way of living that is in accord with sound condition of body and mind, prevention of disease and injury.

May include:

- Nutritional diet.
- Weight control.
- Regular exercise.
- Resisting harmful activity (alcohol, drugs, smoking).
- Reduction of mental and emotional stress.
- Adequate rest.
- Practicing safety.

+ STRESS MANAGEMENT – to direct or have control over physical or mental strain and pressure or one's reaction to it, coping with change.

(It is important to note that the stress comes from the individual's perception or how an event is interpreted. The same event may be stressful to one person and not another.)

- Understanding the meaning of stress.
- Recognizing signs of stress.
- Identifying personal stressors.
- Learning causes of good and bad stress.
- Learning consequences of stress.
- Learning ways to manage stress positively.
- Identifying support persons to help with stressful situations.
- Setting goals to reduce and actually reducing, stress in one's life.



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+ DISEASE PREVENTION – to anticipate and ward off conditions that keep the body from functioning normally, such as infection or stress that impairs normal physiological functioning.

- Knowing how the human body functions.
- Understanding how disease spreads.
- Practicing cleanliness and self-protection measures, such as Universal Precautions and hand washing.
- Using tested medications and recommendations of physician.
- Avoiding risky situations.
- Having tests and examinations recommended by physiologists.

+ PERSONAL SAFETY – taking and avoid danger, risk or having protection, being cautious physically and emotions.

- Physical safety.
- Emotional safety.
- Handling emergencies.
- Avoiding unhealthy attachments-gangs, bullying.
- Avoiding situations that put one at risk-weapons alone at night, etc.
- If a driver, practicing safety skills, avoiding riding with a supervision drivers.
- Refusal skills.

2. BEING

– a person's basic or essential nature, personal development

+ SELF-ESTEEM – pride in oneself proper regard for oneself as a human being, valuing oneself of ability to cope, learning accept and like oneself.

- Understanding one's abilities strengths and limitations assessment.
- Learning about oneself from relationships with others.
- Gaining acceptance.
- Gaining control over one's life or situation, belief that one can succeed.
- The ability to experience success.
- Having courage, open to new life experiences.
- Having self-confidence.
- Valuing oneself.



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+ **SELF-RESPONSIBILITY** – taking care of oneself, being accountable for one's behaviour and obligations, choosing for oneself between right and wrong.

- Personally accountable without supervision.
- Answering for own actions.
- Capable of making moral and rational decisions.
- Reliable, can be depended on.
- Uses good judgment.

+ **CHARACTER** – a person's moral strength, integrity, fortitude, reputation, a person's usual qualities or traits, adherence to a code of values or ethical principles.

Some characteristics of good character:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Accepting | • Loyalty |
| • Accountable | • Modesty |
| • Altruistic | • Obedience |
| • Autonomous | • Patience |
| • Caring | • Promise-keeping |
| • Compassionate | • Protective of environment |
| • Citizenship | • Punctuality |
| • Courage | • Pursuit of excellence |
| • Courtesy | • Respect |
| • Dependability | • Responsibility |
| • Dignity | • Restraint |
| • Fairness, justice | • Self-discipline |
| • Generosity | • Self-respect |
| • Honesty | • Social justice |
| • Humility | • Temperance |
| • Industriousness | • Tolerance |
| • Integrity | • Trustworthiness |
| • Kindness | |



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+ **MANAGING FEELINGS** – expressing one's feelings appropriately and in proportion to circumstance.

- Recognizing a feeling as it happens to oneself, aware of both one's mood and one's thoughts about that mood.
- Handling one's own feelings so they are expressed appropriately.
- Using emotions to support a goal.
- Recognizing emotions in others, sensitive to what others need or want.
- Skill in managing one's own emotions and those of others when interacting.

+ **SELF-DISCIPLINE** – control of self and one's conduct in line with moral character (what is right and wrong), personal values (what one considers important) and societal expectations, control before acting in a hurtful or harmful way.

Some related life skills include:

- Social skills
- Self-responsibility
- Decision making
- Character
- Self-esteem
- Goal setting
- Critical thinking
- Personal safety
- Concern for others
- Accepting differences
- Managing feelings



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**Scouting is a
medicine composed of
various ingredients
and, unless they are mixed
in their proper proportions
according to the prescription,
the users must not blame
the doctor if the effects
on the patient
are unsatisfactory**

Robert Baden Powell