

Ready for the challenge

Boosting confidence
to return to work



LifeSkills

Created with  BARCLAYS

Introduction

Objectives

This module will help learners to boost their confidence and resilience by increasing positivity, managing their doubts or fears to give them the best chance of success in their return to work.

By the end of the module learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify and embed their top three strengths
- ✓ Become aware of any negative thoughts and how to manage them
- ✓ Increase their confidence in their ability to secure, return or retain work
- ✓ Identify key behaviours which will help them, such as planning ahead, being open to new opportunities, getting back in a routine and making a good first impression

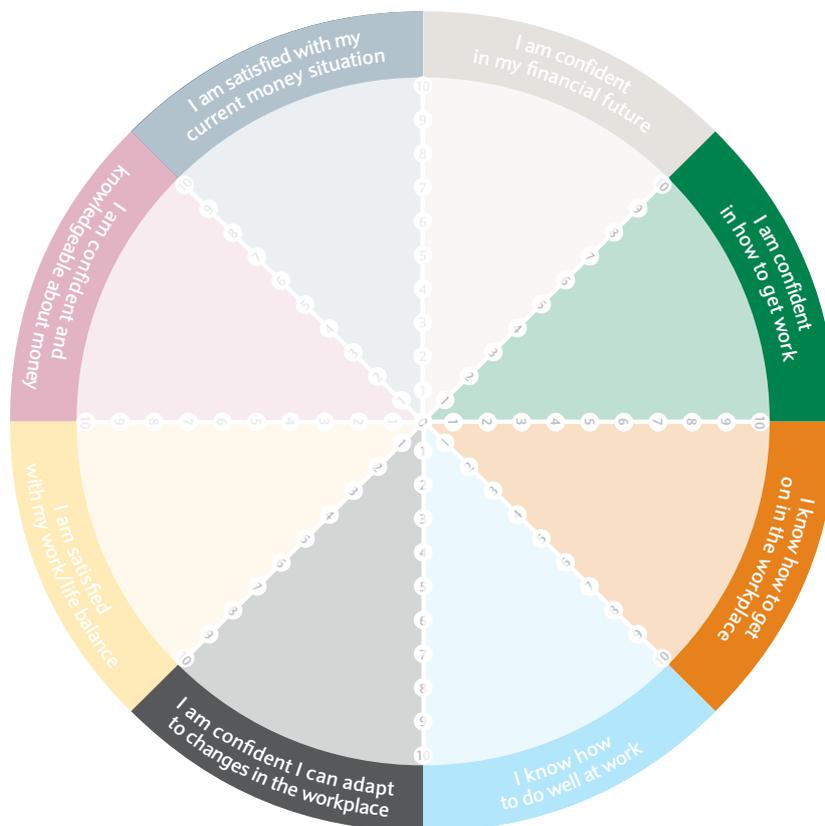
Which will lead to

- ✓ Learners will be able to identify actions they can take to secure the best possible outcome

Important:

Introduce the activity and theme, and remind your learner of the coaching-based approach. Agree the desired outcome of the session with your learner.

- ✓ Throughout the activity, we have included 'do now', 'do soon' and 'do later' actions which may help your learner to think about the next steps they could take. Alternatively, you could use the 'do now', 'do soon' and 'do later' headings to help your learner come up with their own actions.



Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Refer back to your learner's LifeSkills wheel and discuss how they scored themselves in relation to this module. Discuss what they need to know or do to be able to increase how they rate their satisfaction with this area.</p> <p>Explain that the aim of the session is to give your learner the best chance of success in their return to work, by building their self-belief and help them manage any self-doubt. Reassure your learner that getting back to work is a challenge for many people, so they feel reassured that they are not alone.</p> <p>Then explain that the session aims to increase their awareness of the strengths that will help them get a suitable job while they learn how to manage any negative thoughts that might be holding them back.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learners are reminded of where they are now and what they need to do to reach a higher satisfaction score in this area

Core activity: part one

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Discuss with your learner their plans for returning to work. Ask where they are in the process?</p> <p>Note how they describe their situation and use their language throughout.</p> <p>Explain that before we start, it might help to understand that it's normal for people to have self-doubt and fear when faced with doing something new or challenging.</p> <p>There's a psychological reason for this. Uncertainty is a normal part of doing something new, but when your brain detects uncertainty, it sees it as a threat and activates a stress response¹ (or the fight/flight/freeze response).</p> <p>This is because the part of the brain that detects threat hasn't evolved much since the stone age. It responds to a modern-day threat, like a job interview, as it would to a stone age threat, like being faced by a sabre-toothed tiger.</p> <p>So, when people step out of their comfort zone, and the threat response is activated, it is normal for this to trigger insecurities, fear or anxiety and override positive feelings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learners will be encouraged to be open and honest about how they feel ✓ Learners will understand that it's normal for people to have self-doubt and fear, and this will increase their openness and honesty, as well as reducing any embarrassment

1. www.nature.com/articles/ncomms10996

Core activity: part one (continued)

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Explain to your learner that this session aims to redress the balance – moving the dial from the negative more to the positive.</p> <p>Encourage your learner to look at the ‘posidial’ on the How do I feel handout and ask them in their current situation to indicate how positive or negative they feel right now. Then ask them to indicate on the second dial where they would like to be.</p> <p>Talk to your learner about the differences between the two dials and encourage them to talk about the reasons why there may be differences.</p> <p>Encourage your learner to be honest and open about this – as that will be most helpful to them.</p>	<p>✓ Learners will increase their awareness of their own positivity/negativity rating score assessment</p>

Core activity: part two

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Hand your learner the My strengths handout and explain that this will help identify their strengths, and also embed them.</p> <p>Guide your learner to identify three key strengths, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Things they are good at and energised by• Strengths that will help them in a job• Strengths that employers may look for• Remember personal strengths and skills that could be transferred to work <p>Use the List of strength and character traits as a prompt.</p> <p>Then move to the next column on the My strengths handout, ‘What character traits make me good at it?’</p>	<p>✓ Learners will be able to identify their key strengths and character traits and give examples</p>

Core activity: part two (continued)

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>To support your learner, use prompt questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes you good at that?• Why are you good at it?• What personality traits do you have that makes it easy for you? <p>Use the List of strength and character traits as a prompt.</p> <p>Then move to the third column on the My strengths handout, 'One or two specific examples'. Explain that building evidence of their strengths will help to embed them.</p> <p>Ask your learner to outline one or two examples where they displayed each strength. Encourage them to be specific, briefly quoting an actual occurrence or time they displayed this strength.</p> <p>At the end, ask your learner – how are they going to remind themselves of their strengths in the future?</p>	<p>✓ Learners will be able to identify their key strengths and character traits and give examples</p>

Core activity: part three

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Once your learner has identified their strengths, help them identify any negative thoughts that may prevent them from taking action.</p> <p>Ask them to list three negative thoughts they have, or have had, when they think of their situation, on the Potential barriers handout.</p> <p>For each negative thought, ask your learner these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it really true?• Can you think of any other occasion, where this negative thought has not been true?• Does this thought get you what you want, need and deserve? <p>Ask them to fill in on the handout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Given that you want to change your situation, what would be a more useful thought that would help you?• How can you use this positive thought to help you make changes today?	<p>✓ Learners will be able to question their negative thoughts and devise a strategy to manage them in the future</p>

Core activity: part three (continued)

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Explain that even if they think there is truth in the thought, it will still be getting in the way of them taking action.</p> <p>Ask your learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When these negative thoughts appear again, what will you say to counter them? <p>If relevant, signpost to the Understanding your zones of control module for further support on identifying what you can control and what you have little or no influence over.</p>	

Core activity: part four

Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Support your learner to think of ways they can plan ahead, find new opportunities and make a good first impression. Support them to complete the Securing the best outcome handout.</p>	<p>✓ Learners will be able to define concrete actions they can take for a successful outcome</p>

Wrap up

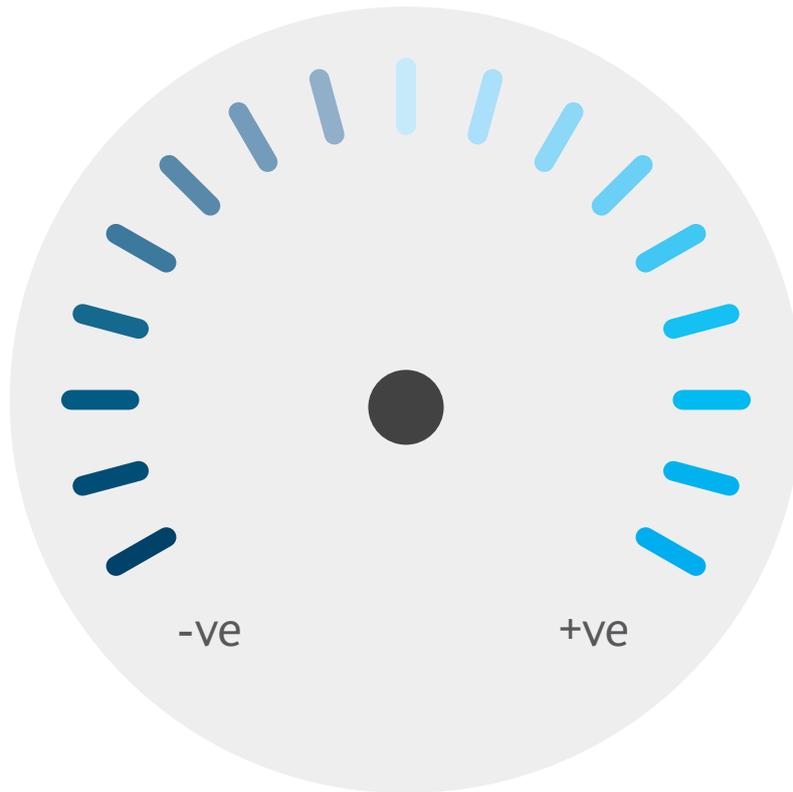
Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Invite your learner to mark on the How do I feel 'posidial' how they feel now.</p> <p>Ask them what they will say to themselves when they have negative thoughts in the future? How will they remind themselves of their strengths and use them to improve their situation?</p> <div style="background-color: #e0f2e0; padding: 10px;"><ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Do now: Consider your strengths and qualities and what you enjoy. What type of job would enable you to use these to the full? How could you describe or develop them so you become even more attractive to employers?✓ Do soon: Keep a diary of three things you have done well each day. Do this with a buddy or mentor if you can. This practice will significantly improve your confidence, as we often don't notice the good things we do. Add to the list of examples of your strengths, keeping them specific. Consider adapting them for your CV.✓ Do later: Keep adding to your strengths list and notice when negative thoughts are stopping you going for what you want. Question your negative thoughts and remember that even though you don't control what happens around you, you are in control of your attitude and your response.</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Learners will be able to take away positive concrete actions

Optional extension

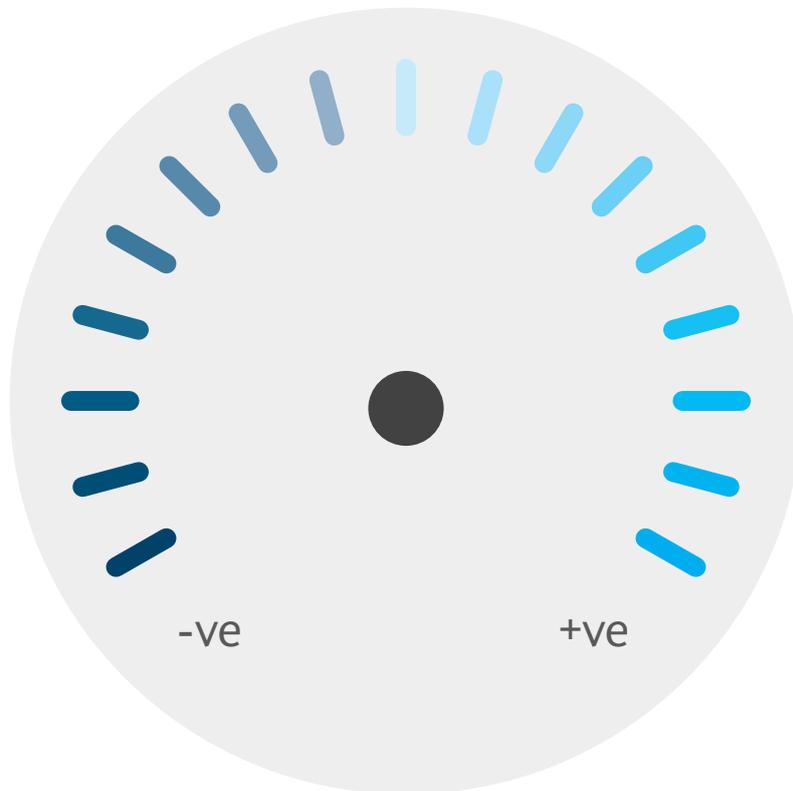
Time	Educator guidance	Expected outcome
	<p>Support your learner to use the List of strengths and character traits to identify six more strengths. Ask how they can use these strengths to identify job opportunities?</p> <p>Then, support your learner to use the negative thought questions on the Potential barriers handout to counter three more negative thoughts.</p> <p>Together with your learner, set some SMART goals for the actions they identified in part four, and ask them to feedback on these in a following session.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Learners will be able to identify more strengths and counter any additional negative thoughts✓ Learners will set SMART goals to identify short and long term actions



How do I feel?



How do I feel now?



How do I want to feel?



My strengths

What I am good at and energised by?	What character traits make me good at it?	One or two specific examples
Talking to people, engaging with them	I am open, honest, I tell it as it is, people trust me	Networking on Tuesday – spoke to a potential customer and organised a follow up meeting with them
Being practical and solving problems	I'm flexible and adaptable, and good at staying positive in tricky situations	When two of the company's drivers called in sick, I organised temporary drivers to cover their shifts so the shipment date was still met
Arranging events	I'm organised, like being social, happy to take the lead	I organised the office social action team away day at my last job and it went really well
Looking after people	I am caring, kind and responsible	I cared for my younger brother growing up when my mum was working night shifts
I am a completer finisher	I work hard, am conscientious, doing a good job is important to me	I worked late at my temp job, to ensure all orders received that day were processed as I knew the next day was Black Friday and the number of orders would triple

What I am good at and energised by?	What character traits make me good at it?	One or two specific examples
How will you remind yourself of these strengths in future?		



List of strengths and character traits

What I am good at and energised by?		
Communication	Self-reliant/self-management	Hardworking
Motivated	Innovative	Emotionally intelligent
Organisational and planning skills	Persistent	Problem solving
Flexible and adaptable	Persuasive	Enthusiastic
Decision-making/judgment	Integrity	Leadership
Humility	Energetic	Presenting
Analytical	Initiative	Aiming high
Coaching/mentoring	Honest	Numeracy
Teamwork	Self-starter/pro-active	
Reliable/dependable	Creative thinking	

What character traits make me good at it?		
Kind	Optimistic	Motivated
Intelligent	Confident	Helpful
Sociable	Flexible	Independent
Strong	Funny	Determined
Creative	Realistic	Respectful
Quirky	Relaxed	Responsible
Down-to-Earth	Honest	Decisive
Hardworking	Cooperative	Brave
Generous	Tolerant	Listener
Modest	Mature	Organised
Insightful	Nurturing	Practical
Enthusiastic	Resilient/staying positive	



Potential barriers

List your negative thoughts:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Choose the 3 negative thoughts that bother you the most and write them below, filling out the answers to the questions when prompted.

Negative thought 1:	
Given that you want to change your situation, what would be a more useful thought that would help you?	
How can you use this positive thought to help you make changes today?	

Negative thought 2:	
Given that you want to change your situation, what would be a more useful thought that would help you?	
How can you use this positive thought to help you make changes today?	

Negative thought 3:	
Given that you want to change your situation, what would be a more useful thought that would help you?	
How can you use this positive thought to help you make changes today?	



Securing the best outcome

To secure the best possible outcome in your situation, list three ways you can do each of the following.

Plan ahead	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Find new opportunities	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Set up a regular routine to help you progress	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Make a good first impression with an employer	
1.	
2.	
3.	