Sharing the World: Educational Responses to Extremism

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Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

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Sharing the World: Educational Responses to Extremism

Part book and part manual, this educational resource aims to support educators in engaging in difficult conversations, to foster the voice and ideas of young people, and to offer some creative ways of reflecting on and thinking about practice.

With heartfelt thanks to our community of collaborators whose ideas and words shaped and informed this educational resource directly and indirectly, including the Expert Youth Advisory Group, our policymaker and practitioner workshop participants, and the wider community of educators who engaged with the research.

It could not have come into being without you.

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Please find more information about the project here: www.edurad.eu

EDURAD
Educational responses to extremism

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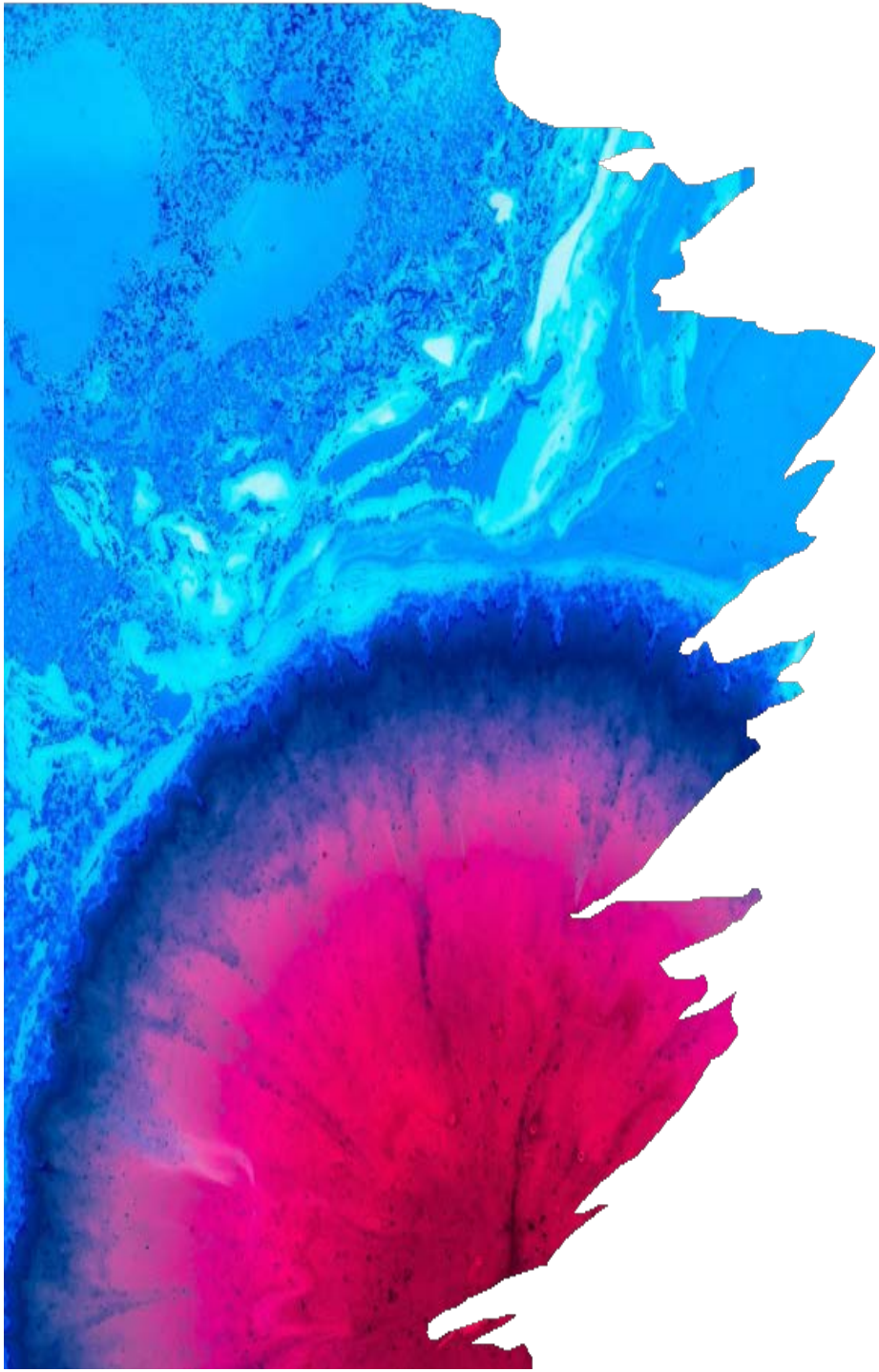
Unit 1, Topic 1

Story of the Module



Topic 1: The Story of the Module - Project Questions

Let's begin Topic 1 by sharing some of the questions that motivated the EDURAD project. We hope this module offers some practical ways of addressing them, as well as theories and insights from research. This resource is designed for educational practitioners and policymakers as a source of information and sharing, prompt to reflection, and pedagogical resource. It is part introductory text, part creative resource, and part pedagogical manual. These questions provide the context for our approach:

- What are educational responses to extremism?
- How can we avoid extreme responses to extremism?
- What do words like 'prevention', 'resilience' 'purpose' or 'vulnerability' mean when approached through an educational lens/tradition?
- How can we also pay attention to other factors affecting young people's lives (many more pressing than this issue)?
- What do certain kinds of ideas give to young people? How do these ideas feel?
- What kinds of pedagogies and educational atmospheres can foster curiosity about the world, belonging in difference, and a taste for pluralism?
- How can we as educators and policymakers best support the voices and perspectives of young people in educational settings?

Topic 1: The Story of the Module – Framing Extremism

We'll talk through this in more detail shortly, but for now here is a quick overview of some of the elements of what might make for an 'extremist' position or extremist way of looking at or being in the world. A different way of thinking of this is that one is "too full" to let anything else in, to listen, or to hear other perspectives. Drawing on Freire's work, **Nourredine Erradi** has described how when someone is in an extremist mindset, they are 'full', like a bottle full of air, and for a time, nothing else can get in, so this process of dialogue can't be forced. Still, creative attention and the art of listening can slowly create a little breathing space for new ideas.

Quassim Cassam describes this differently when he talks about 'mindset-extremism'. It's not that someone would have all of the characteristics listed below, but it can help to listen out for when people are too "full" to listen to others, especially if their identity is based on denigrating and excluding others.

- Desire for purity (Ireland for the Irish only)
- Intolerance/hatred of difference (just because it's different)
- Inability to compromise (on anything)
- Fear of losing one's identity (zero-sum logics of identity)
- Difficulty listening (wants to talk but can't hear what others say)
- Us/them (the world divides neatly into two)
- Ressentiment or philosophy of loss (but not looking at what others are forced to lose)
- Identity seen as fixed and immutable (back to some 'inner essence' of Irishness.
- Belief in superiority of in-group and hatred of other groups

Our participants also wanted to explore how **'extremism of the middle'** works, the practice of dividing societies into those who are categorised as the same and those who are categorised as different. They felt that extremism can be/become mainstream. However, it's also important to be alert to different hierarchies between groups, and different flashpoints of intolerance.

Some questions:

1. *What do extremist ideas/positions **give** to young people?*
2. *What is their impact on school communities?*

   Sometimes young people are exploring and trying out positions but..

1. *What harm does it do to others (and themselves) when educators stay silent when young people, students, colleagues or parents make, for example, racist comments?*
2. *What are the experiences of students, young people (and staff) when educational spaces operate on the basis of sameness?*

Topic 1: The Story of the Module – The Journey

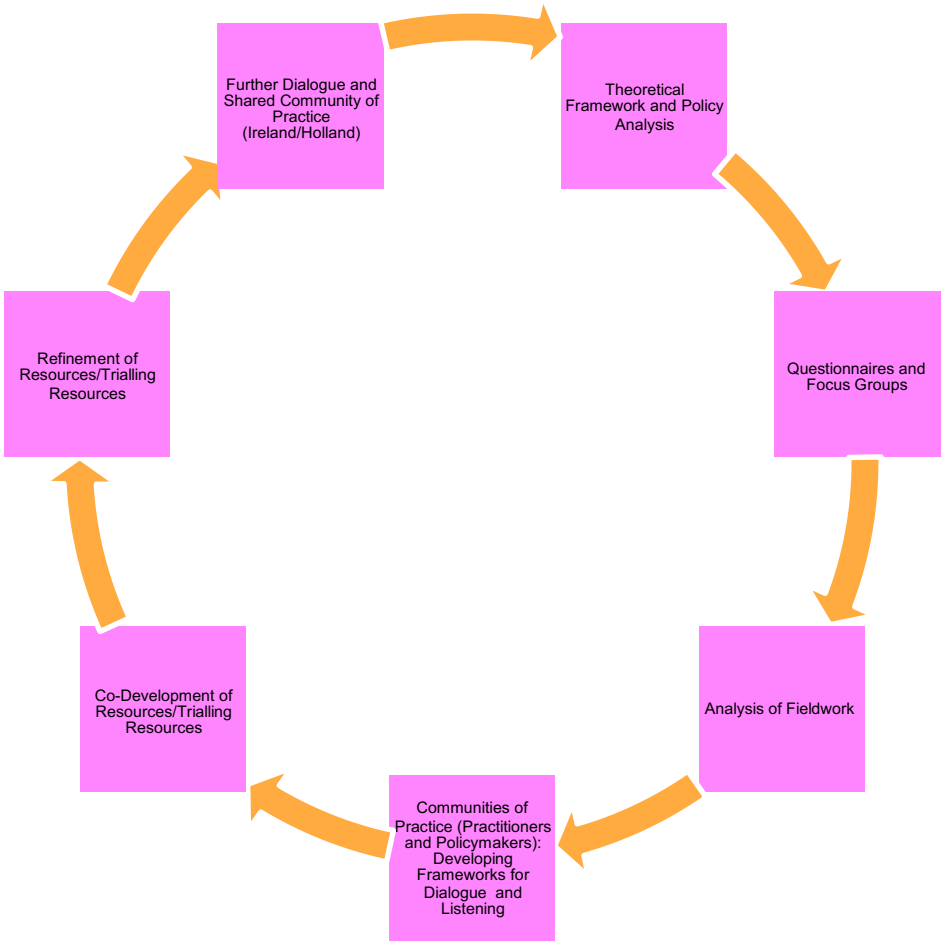
Our journey began with questions and it ends with idea-infused practices and new ideas grounded in practice. It has had lots of stages and involved many different perspectives from different people. One of the challenges that education faces is in navigating resistance to living in a pluralistic world. There are many ways in which sharing the world is resisted, for example, investments in 'extremist' or 'identitarian' identity positions. These are intolerant of pluralism and difference and desire purity. So too, discourses of assimilation and integration permit inclusion only if one loses oneself in a 'superior' or dominant model.

Whilst prevention can seem more attractive than reaction, preventative approaches can close everything down before anything happens. This is the case with certain kinds of pre-emptive strategies and methods that seek to close dissent or protest or free speech 'in case things turn violent' being offered as the excuse. We see this approach in authoritarian states and sometimes in democratic states. So we need to unpack this idea of 'prevention' as well.

In Ireland, many educators and young people felt uncomfortable with words like 'extremism' and 'radicalisation'. As a consequence, we have called this module "Sharing the World: Educational Responses to Extremism".

This is why alongside (philosophical) enquiry we work with aesthetic (feelings and senses) and existential (who am I?) strategies, exploring 'how ideas feel'. This helps to understand why people invest feelings and identities in certain positions and helps to explore issues like fear of loss of identity or even desire for power that can drive such closed positions.

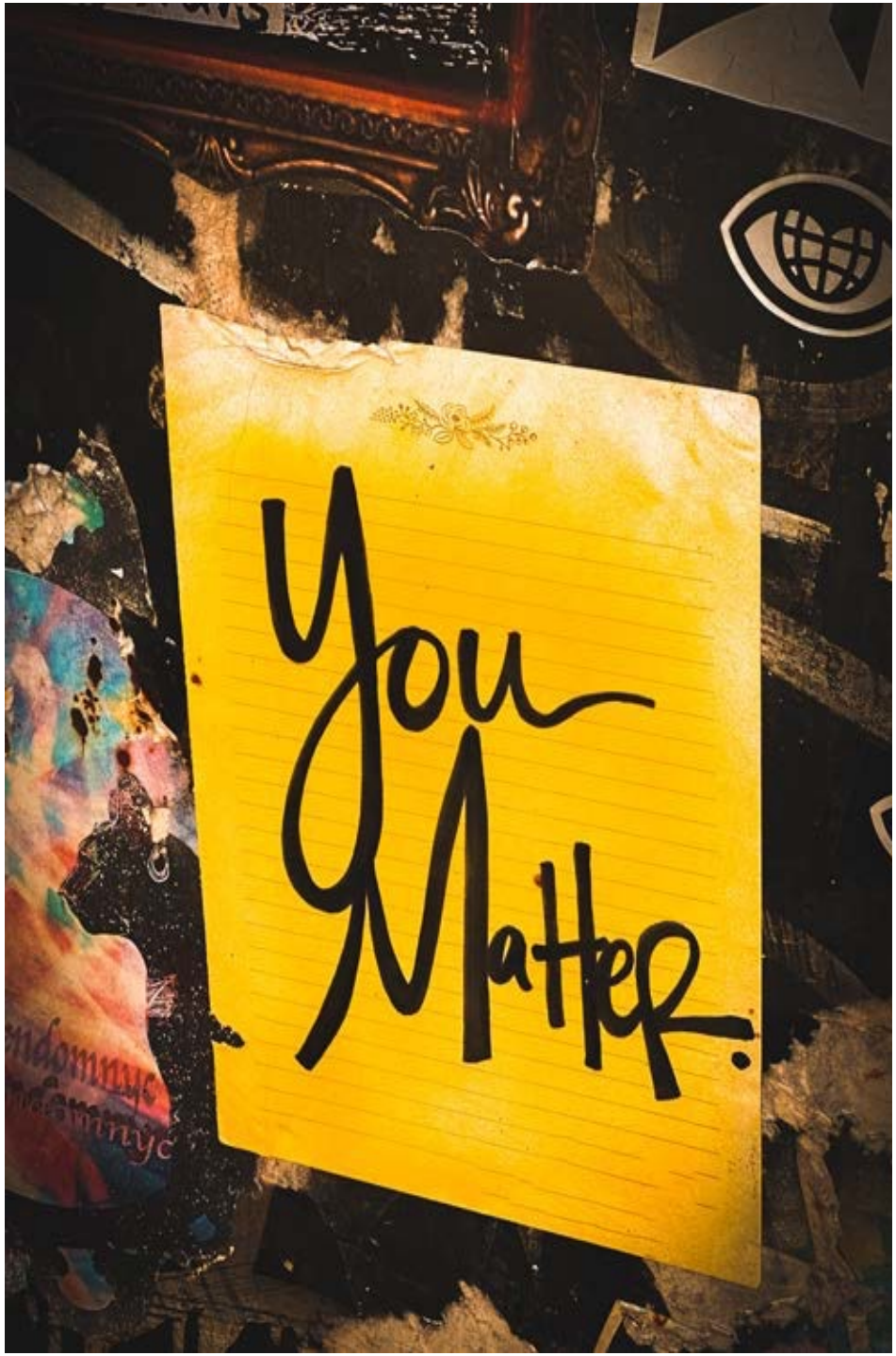
What you have in this module is a translation of these dialogues into both food for thought and reflection as we introduce some key ideas, as well as practical educational resources.



Topic 1: The Story of the Module – What Really Matters

Let's start with what mattered to everyone.

- The importance of sensitivity to context and history: no one size fits all.
- Commitment to dialogue and cultivating the art of listening even when someone is too 'full' or 'certain' of their position to hear you.
- Silence is already taking a position – educators must address in public things said in public.
- Don't react with extreme responses when you come across extremism, but don't ignore extremism.
- Pay attention to affect or feelings/emotions and how ideas move us, attract us, repel us or help us keep going..
- Value of pluralism and epistemic diversity: Face the fact of difference and don't try to erase it! See the value in it.
- Listen to the expertise of practitioners and young people in developing ideas.
- Give people time to think and reflect together in communities of practice.
- Support the voice and agency of young people in dreaming and imagining new futures.



Topic 1: The Story of the Module – Six Key Pedagogical Themes

We have described what really matters for practitioners, policymakers, and young people and given a brief overview of how we are thinking about 'extremism'. Out of our European dialogues six key themes arose. They map the different dimensions of 'sharing the world' and 'unpacking extremism' as well as creating 'time to think'.

- Supporting critical thinking and critical dialogue, including conflict resolution and engaging in difficult conversations.
- Exploring the affective lives of young people, including what belonging means and how it feels to belong or not belong with young people.
- Engaging with difference, including complicating the stories of history and 'identitarian' narratives.
- Cultivating democratic life and democratic culture, alongside a socio-ecological understanding of resilience and positive school climates with warm and loving relationships.
- Developing youth work and educational approaches to critically and imaginatively engage with the digital world and online life.
- Creating communities of practice and opportunities for self and co-enquiry, learning, and sharing for practitioners involved in education, in particular when engaging with issues relating to both extremism and violence.

Unit 1, Topic 2

Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

Topic 2: Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

The sharing of practice and ideas between practitioners has been hugely valuable, One of the best things about the EDURAD project has been our Expert Youth Advisory Group. Here is some of the guidance that they shared with us. We hope as educators and policymakers, you find it useful.

Lots of their ideas, words, suggestions, and pedagogical strategies are woven through the text as well so you'll read their words throughout, as well as those of educators. So, remember what young people say about what they'd like from their teachers, youth workers and wider policy spaces next time you are wondering what to do.

Advice from Young People to Educators

- If someone says an 'ism' (racism, sexism..) don't ignore it. To do so makes young people think you don't care, and it makes the rest of the group think it's ok to say these things.
- If a young person makes a hateful comment in public, it needs to be responded to in public. This doesn't mean you have to shut it down, but the rest of the group/class need to know that you understand the harm this does. You can ask them questions about why they said it, and what reactions they were hoping for.
- Use Socratic questioning.
- Look at your curriculum and what is on it and not on it. Just because a classic text has offensive language, you don't have to read it. That kind of language is hugely painful and hurtful, and for some white young people, they may then think it's acceptable.
- If you aren't sure how names are pronounced, someone in the school or youth project can quietly ask the students before you all meet as a group and write them phonetically so that they are pronounced correctly.

Topic 2: Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

- Plus, find out in advance what young people's heritages are without assuming you know. Imposing a single (usually non-Irish) identity (without even knowing where someone is from). It sends a message they are not fully Irish.
- It's ok to say Black, Brown, White..
- Don't refer to students and their families as 'non-nationals'.
- Do you only ask certain young people the question 'Where are you from?'. You may have no idea whether young people in your class have French, Portuguese, English, American or Scottish parents because you don't ask. So, either ask all students, or none.
- Get a more evolved idea of Irishness. It's not a fixed idea. Understand what Irishness is today and it's not about being White, Heterosexual, Cis and Catholic.
- Big gestures 'celebrating diversity' can make young people feel really singled out. Small gestures are often better; take care of the small things and the culture of the space will change
- Do simple things like ask everyone to say their preferred pronouns and use gender neutral language. It becomes normal and not a big deal.
- As a general rule, mind your language (!) [Ideas for what you might need to look out for are interwoven through this module].
- Make sure that young people get a chance to be heard and participate when rules and regulations are being made that affect their lives.
- Bring teachers and youth workers together more to learn about building relationships with young people.
- Young people will appreciate it if you are honest with them in advance and talk with them about how to address difficult issues together.

Topic 2: Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

- Sometimes, you need to be the first person to 'call something out' (and call someone in). That will give others the confidence.
- The word 'extremism' is a bit taboo!
- Certain kinds of Irishness that seek purity and fixity can be 'extremist': In Irish society, it is a very diverse country, but there is the idea "This is the Irish" and anything that isn't traditionally Irish is outside and it's a private thing, a personal thing, and not the group's problem.
- For a country that prides itself on its diversity, there is Irish culture and there is foreign culture. It's either Irish or not and that is a pretty extreme ideology in comparison to other countries that are diverse as Ireland or more so.
- "Ask yourself, are your questions making young people feel uncomfortable about not 'being the norm'." If they are, then why ask them?
- When you are making sure someone is publicly responsible for something they have said publicly, they may not like it, but you can also follow up afterwards with them and see what is going on. Otherwise the perpetrator will learn nothing and the group will think it's ok. Sometimes, things get uncomfortable and that's ok. The person needs to know how uncomfortable others feel too because of their statements. You don't have to shout or be mean, though.
- Othering is impossible to fix. The only way to lessen its harm is to shift the centre to be more inclusive. For example, in Ireland, we need to stop only making people whose ancestors have been here for millennia Irish. The term Irish must include anyone who is born here. In short, the centre needs to be more inclusive.
- People will feel a sense of belonging to wherever they are accepted.
- What is 'on the table' or 'off the table'? Asking whether a human being deserves rights is always off the table.
- Conversations about disenfranchised demographics should only happen if they those groups are present in the discussion and if they are willing to partake.

Topic 2: Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

- Being Defensive and Denial: Being in denial of oppression is in many ways a conscious act.
- If a person is in denial the only action that can be taken is to not give the person a chance to ignore reality. We need to stop acting like it is just because “they don’t know” and that is a sign that we need to baby them.
- If someone has chosen to oppress another person then we should acknowledge that it was a choice with consequences and it is right to hold them accountable.
- Don't immediately react by shutting things down when they get controversial. Sometimes you will need to if it's completely intolerant, at least at that moment. If you are a teacher, explore with young people "But then why do you believe in that?" And then "Do you not see this?"
- People need to get to explain their side. The more people talk, the better they are able to change their views or keep them. If you don't know the opinion, then you can't open up the conversation that might change it.
- In maths class if you don't understand something, your teacher wants you to ask the question. Even if you're wrong, you say it. You know you'll get better and then next time hopefully you won't get the answer wrong. But if you never do that with racism, sexism, or homophobia that will never change.
- Be consistent: if you organise together to talk about how to make things better for one minority group, do the same for other groups too.
- Even if everyone is afraid of talking about issues like racism, don't let that get in the way. Don't make it hush-hush. As with other minority groups, create a culture of being respectful and compassionate.

Topic 2: Advice to Educators and Policy Makers from Young People

- It's not good enough to say that we can't talk about racism, or for parents to resist this because they are worried their children will realise they have been racist.
- Allies are important. It's hard when you are from a minority group and you want to talk about something that you know some people might find offensive. You need allies with you to support you as you talk about these things.
- It's so important to make a difference between hate speech and bullying. Not everything can be lumped under 'bullying' and it means racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and so on are not taken seriously for what they are. If someone is racist, that can't go down just as bullying.
- The Government needs to recognise this with Hate Speech Legislation.
- Think about Socratic Questioning: Sometimes, if you can argue enough, you can get down to core ideas and values. Discussing something in school could go like this "OK, so racism is bad. Why is racism bad? Cos racism makes you feel it's a certain type of way. Why is that bad? Like letting people feel a certain type of way? And so on until what is the final thing we can take away from the situation?"
- Young people need to have space to hold multiple heritages and identities. Don't assume that you know what these identities and heritages are in advance of talking with all young people in the group.
- Help young people to understand online spaces and look at issues like fake news, disinformation, how algorithms work and so on.

Unit 1, Topic 3

Module as Toolbox

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - What You Will Learn and How?

So, some of you will have looked at the module and panicked at how much material there is. You'll wonder what how on earth you can get through it all. We invite you to find whatever it is that draws you in. Some involves reading and learning, some reflecting and dialogue, and some pedagogical strategies. Engage with units or topics that help you. Dip your toes in. For those who prefer to have a sequence, there is a logical sequence through this. In many ways this is a companion to a reflective journal, if you would like to start one.

Overview

1. We begin with giving an overview of 'extremism' and the question of education. This involves a bit of reading but should give you a good context for the rest.
2. We then offer some ideas for how to become more aware of yourself, and also ideas around how to listen and open up dialogue, including around difficult issues.
3. Next we go in more deeply to the question of 'extremism' and think about what it would mean to 'unpack' it and open it up.
4. Finally, we offer some creative pedagogical ideas for you and for young people to 'read the world' differently and to imagine.

Are there any **learning outcomes?** This will depend on you and what you would like to get out of this, and it will take time. Here is what we hope.

- You will learn more about the question of 'extremism' and also about 'online extremism', and also about 'inclusion', 'belonging' and 'othering', alongside 'prevention'.
- You'll reflect more deeply on your own position and your own 'baggage'. We can be 'well-meaning' at the same time as being thoughtless and harmful.
- You'll learn how to listen and ask questions in ways that open things up, and you'll also think about when you might need to (temporarily) shut things down.
- You'll be able to imagine different positions with the different voices woven through the text, and this will develop your ethical sensitivity and imagination.
- You'll be able to navigate complexity and ambiguity, including questions of conflict.
- You will hopefully gain more confidence in knowing that you are part of a community of people trying to develop your capacities, and that young people want you to do this.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - What You Will Learn and How? (continued)

We hope that you'll take up this invitation to explore your own position, beliefs and values, and think about where your blind-spots lie, particularly if you come from the dominant culture in a society.

Notice your embodied reactions. Are you afraid of 'cancel culture'? Of saying the 'wrong thing'? Listen to what young people say and then work with them to experiment and imagine new ways of approaching these questions. With this module, we invite you to take 'time to think' by yourself, with others, and with young people.

We know there is quite a lot of text, so think about reading this in terms of listening to the different voices of the participants, as well as other experts who have been thinking about these questions for a long time. It's not just information. It's for reflection. Every so often, we have dotted moments of reflections, questions, alongside lots of activities for both you and for you to do with peers.

Because most of you will first read this on your own, we haven't provided worked out case studies or scenarios. Those are really useful when you have the chance to talk them through with others.

What we have found is that if you can come up with moments of 'stuckness and perplexity' to discuss with others, this is more meaningful. Our participants discussed racist comments, sexist comments, alt-right provocation and anti-migration stances (of young people, educators and others). They tried to navigate the ways sometimes people have a very reductive idea of who counts as Irish, insisting on 'othering' young people, their families and colleagues who don't fit the stereotype.

This way of working seemed most helpful. We provide a theoretical frame and some practices to help critical thinking and openness that is needed to unpack real issues that real people are tackling. The exercises here aim to help to engage with these.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - Module Overview

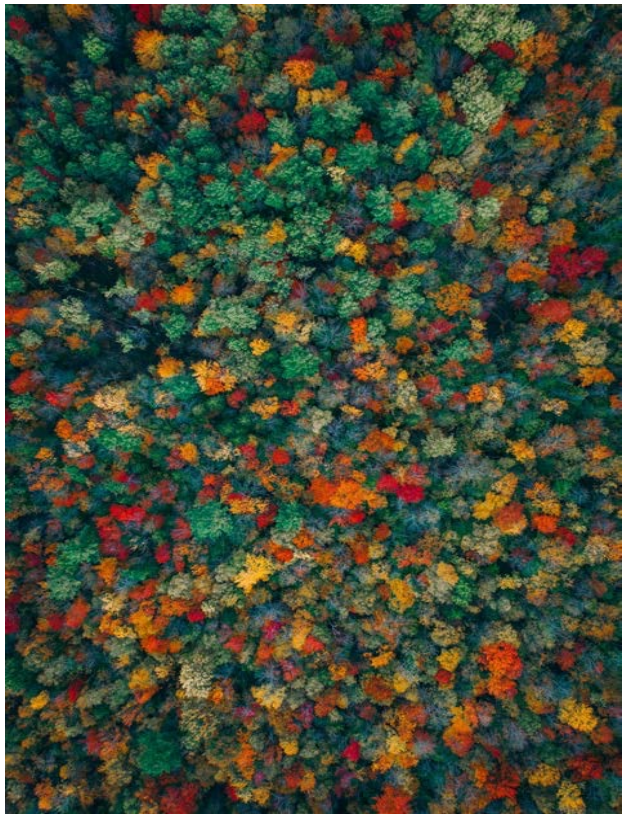
This first unit introduces some of the central research literature about extremism and educational responses to extremism, and well as the ideas of practitioners. This module shares the learning from our workshops with practitioners and outlining key elements the theoretical framework for this project which you can find here http://edurad.eu/

It involves quite a lot of reading, but it also distills some of the key ideas from the literature and research and helps to contextualise the more practical units that follow.

Key earning from this literature and from our workshops with policy makers and practitioners was that an educational response needs to engage with affect and feelings, with meaning, with purpose, and with complex identities. Extremist positions are not necessarily those at the margins but can become part of the mainstream in a society.

As practitioners to do this work, we need to be open to reflecting, entering dialogue, and listening without defensiveness. The power of listening and the art of listening were seen as key, alongside honest reflection. Unit 2 shares some practices and ideas to support listening, reflection, and dialogue. This includes engaging in what might, at times, be seen as 'impossible conversations'.

The themes in the modules center on the art of listening, belonging, dialogue, and staying with the difficult conversations. But it also means dreaming, imagining and creating with young people the supportive conditions for their voices, dreams and ideas. It's been created for practitioners to reflect on their practice and to engage with other practitioners and stakeholders, as well as young people. The voices of participants in our workshops have shaped the content and the critical responses of our youth advisory group is an ongoing part of this project.



Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - Module Overview (continued)

As mentioned earlier, what also emerged from our conversations was the need for far greater sensitivity to the impact of a range of practices, often not acknowledged by majority communities, that compound the effects of persistent 'othering' and importantly of the impact of racism. Even a single incident can mark individuals, families and communities.

So, a good deal of what follows in terms of thinking about extremism is directed towards members of majority communities, who too often explicitly or implicitly, privilege sameness, assimilation, and inclusion into dominant identities, rather than making space for complex heritages and ways of being, as would be expected in pluralistic societies. Or they don't let some people claim their identity, for example, as Irish.

In our conversations, some people wondered how much they needed to do and how long, indeed how many generations, one needs to be in a place in order to belong. They underlined the damage that persistent exclusion causes, including in quite subtle ways. An idea that emerged from this was the need for 'two-way reciprocal inclusion/exchange' – not just one-way welcoming others into the 'mainstream' but of also welcoming the corresponding invitation to be invited into another's world.

The problem with belonging as 'one way inclusion' or welcome is that people are asked to lose too much of themselves or are asked to commit to one single identity rather than being able to hold onto many heritages. Indeed, the Irish government says in its own citizenship ceremonies that all that people bring in terms of their heritages and differences is enriching and must not be lost.

On the other hand, we encourage you to think through motivation and intention as well as complexity, including when discussing questions of war and violent conflict. In certain conflicts, pro-extremist and anti-extremist positions can end up fighting on the same side, even if their aims are different. In Europe and beyond at the moment, far right, white supremacist movements can be attractive to people, including those seeking violence or adventure. This does not mean being 'neutral' or partisan, but attuning students to complexity whilst striving for an ethical position.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - Dealing with Difficult Topics

We are interested in understanding how to address extremism in our schools, communities and societies, and in how to explore *educational* responses to extremism, rather than just using education as a tool to address wider political or security concerns, or only focusing on violent extremism or radicalisation to violence.

This has meant thinking about some of the familiar words like 'prevention', 'security' and 'resilience' in the context of education, and reflecting, paradoxically perhaps, on 'everyday extremism'. And it means seeing, for example, racism and sexism as forms of extremism.

We all know that certain issues are challenging to engage with and are sometimes avoided or not addressed in educational spaces.

Our Youth Advisory Group and our wider group of practitioners have asked that educators stop pretending hateful and/or hurtful comments haven't happened when they have, and they have explained the harm they cause.

Of course, some topics like 'extremism' because of their association with hatred and exclusion, with violence, terrorism and radicalisation, as well as political polarisation make them particularly challenging to discuss with care.

Moreover, often the question of extremism is addressed through a 'security' framework or lens rather than educational lens. This is why unpack this concept of 'extremism' throughout the module.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox – The Many Kinds of Extremism

Our dialogues brought out the importance of commitment to fostering a society that is anti-racist, that does not deny the existence of racism, misogyny, etc, and that values pluralism: the simple fact of difference. Denying difference is not the right approach. It bolsters the *status quo.*

So too only focusing on commonality and saying our differences don't matter isn't helpful for young people and they don't want us to do that.

Both young people and practitioners have told us how practices of 'othering' and 'exclusion are painful, and often traumatic, such as when one is told by others when in one's home, one's own country, to 'go home'. Even if those practices are not often seen as being at the 'extremes of extremism', they operate like a 'death by a thousand cuts' with constant messages that one does not belong.

Those comments alienate people, young and old, who may come to feel that *if* this place, a place where they have lived their whole lives, is a place to which they are told they don't belong, then where can they belong? This is further intensified when subjected to overt racism. But these issues also arise for young trans and queer people too.

'Extremism' is not just about those seen as outliers in society. When society, including spaces for education and youth work, involves 'othering' some members of the society suggesting they are not being fully of that society, this is painful. Cultures are constantly evolving and never fixed, so we need to open up to this fact, and re-imagine, for instance, Irishness.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - The Many Kinds of Extremism (continued)

A further (and sometimes related) issue raised was 'toxic masculinity'. This is evident in a variety of commitments to patriarchal and misogynistic practices. Look at some of the ways that the alt-right (incels – or involuntary celibates) talk about women, but also reflect on how sexist attitudes may be held by young people and older people.

Therefore, whilst it's important to look at more familiar kinds of (violent) extremism, we also need to reflect on more honestly is what our participants called an 'extremism of the centre or the middle'. This is a *de facto* assimilationist approach that privileges sameness and dominant forms and forms of identity in a society, viewing inclusion as inclusion into *those* norms and values; for example, there is only one way of being Irish, of thinking about gender or sexuality, etc. It is also important to be attuned to those discourses, for example, the far right, that do not want assimilation but want segregation, for example 'culturally' (read racially), or elimination. These treat the dominant (white) culture as a group under (existential) threat.

Extremism of the middle may not, at first glance look the same as some of the other kinds of extremism with which we may be more familiar, but it is particularly problematic in spaces like schools, youth clubs and community centres, which need to be spaces of 'belonging in difference', reciprocal exchange, and solidarity. Persistent 'othering' such as subjection to racism and sexism, brings with it its own traumas, violence and alienation. But it is important to be alert to the extremes of this, when the othering is not only symbolic but the aim is to have purity and dominance of one group alone.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - The Many Kinds of Extremism (continued)

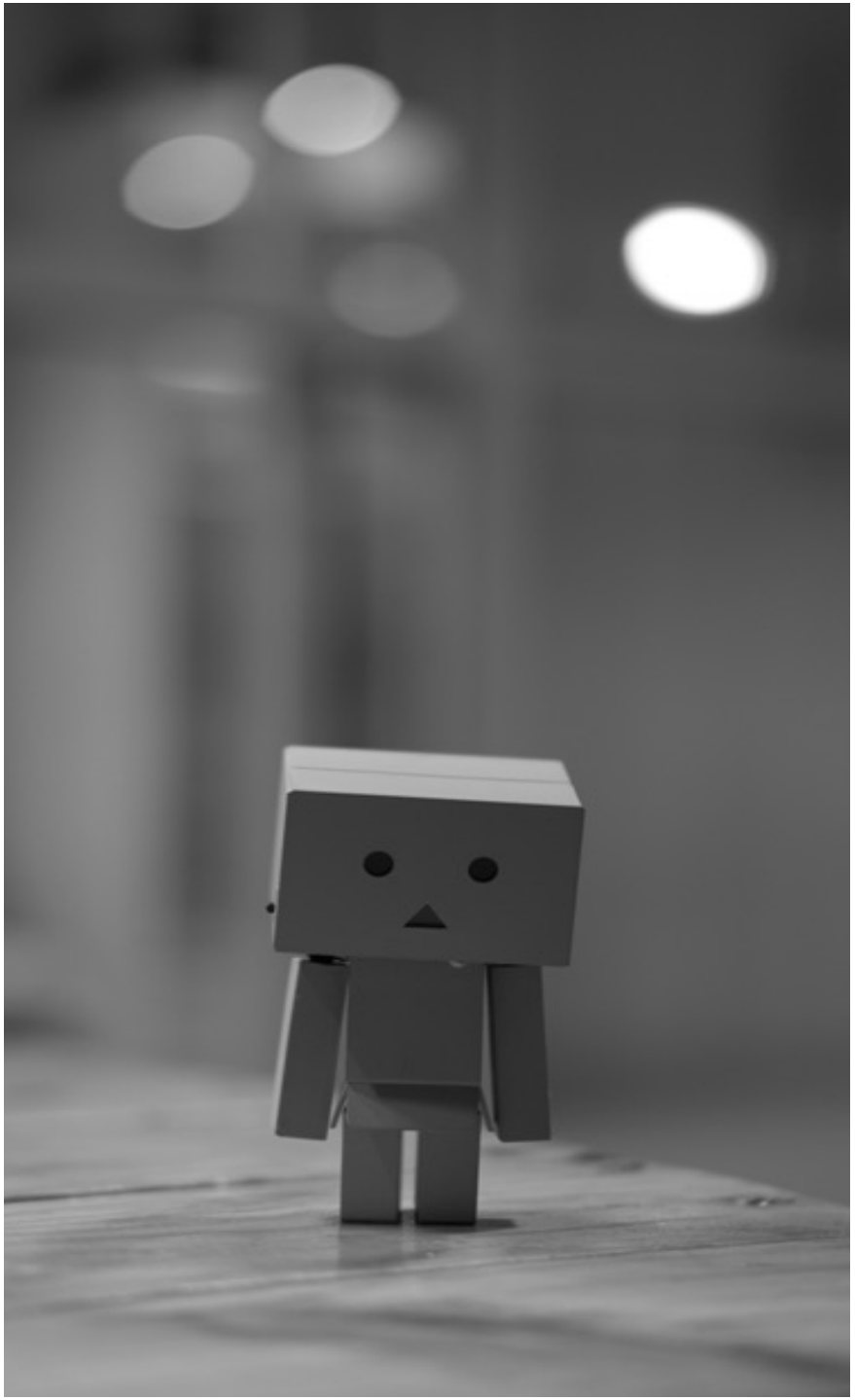
Continuously asking ourselves how and why we have come to hold the ideas, beliefs, values and feelings that we have is at the heart of the module.

These don't fall from the sky, even if they shape most 'viscerally' who feel we we are.

We are shaped by structures of patriarchy, racism, nationalism, masculinity and so on. Our desires and expectations are mediated by these norms and values. These are generally most invisible to those most comfortable with them, and their harm is felt most acutely by those excluded, silenced and marginalised by them.

Although sharing knowledge and information about how we have come to be 'who we are' is important, in this module we will also learn how to unpack individually and collectively 'feelings' and ideas, exploring the ways that statements can be driven by all sorts of affects or emotions. We will find creative pathways for transformation, whilst taking a principled stance against injustice and in solidarity with those affected by injustice as professionals policymakers, and practitioners.

This involves being able to engage in difficult conversations as well as dreaming together. It means seeing that identities are fluid, and one can belong in multiple ways, and hold together different heritages.



Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - How Ideas *Feel*

Let's look at one of the key learning points from the project.

Critical thinking is important but it's not enough. Sometimes when we talk about 'extremism' we think of 'challenging ideas', but here we'd like to explore first 'how ideas feel'.

Part of this involves exploring how we listen, how we talk to one another, what happens with our bodies and breath? Rather than 'you' having an idea or value, explore how ideas or values 'have' you, how they sweep you along.

Throughout the module we aim to approach ideas and values through different lenses, sometimes encouraging deep reflection and sometimes 'personifying' values and ideas and using creative exercises to help to look at them differently.

For example, we may ask, what values, beliefs and ideas do we hold, and indeed how do they 'hold us'? Part of the work of this project about educational responses to extremism is coming to reflect on where (our) values come from, how values, ideas, and beliefs are expressed (or not) in our practice, and supporting young people to explore their own values, ideas and beliefs.

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - How Ideas *Feel* (continued)

So how do our ideas, beliefs and values feel?

When we are committed to a cause, whatever that cause is, we tend to believe that we are committed to *justice*. Few people would see themselves, no matter how unjust or hateful their causes are to an outsider, as being actively committed to *injustice*.

What energy does this feeling of justice involve? What does the body do, what gestures do we make when talking about justice? What happens if we drill down a little further..?

What constellation of concepts accompany justice? Purity, hierarchy, kindness, equality, or diversity? Which of this may also become'sacred values'.

We encourage you throughout this module to 'check in' every so often. Indeed, do this in your everyday life too –

- What happens when you see certain social media posts or newspaper headlines?
- When do you get a rush of energy, feeling of connection, feeling of frustration or anger?
- What is going on in your body, your emotions, and your mind?
- Where do your thoughts go?
- What words or language do you connect with?
- What differences do different contexts make?
- What about the spaces you are in?
- Or different times of your life?
- Or other issues that might be occupying you?

Topic 3: Module as Toolbox - Educational Responses to Extremism

In our dialogues, we discussed how there are potentially reactionary dynamics between 'extremism of the middle' that insists on sameness and is blind to and denies its own practices of othering, its microaggressions, and indeed its racism, and the 'extremism of the margins' whereby some young people feel alienated by being told that they do not fully belong to the society that is their home. However, it is important to be attuned to how these discourses may operate between minority groups too, for example, racism.

For this reason, it is important to make distinctions between radicalism and extremism. It is often helpful to avoid the language of *radicalism* or *radical* when talking about (violent) *radicalisation* and (violent) *extremism*. Radical, for many, involves fighting injustice and can involve all kinds of positions that can be either good or bad, but (violent) extremism is something different from this. We've outlined some of its characteristics already and will describe them in more detail in Topic 4.

However this does not mean that those who have extremist positions or who are extremists can no longer be part of our conversations.

In our discussions with practitioners, it was underlined how important it is to speak with perpetrators of extremist positions and not just with those who are being victimised. It means humanising the person who is the perpetrator and seeing that they are being harmed by their actions and words as well as harming others. Transformation can't come without transformation of the dominant group or the dominant culture. This means creating spaces for existential questioning, for disagreement, and to open up other ways of relating to themselves and others.

Young people also felt that these issues need to be unpacked, but insisted that these be done in public ways as well. Otherwise, the rest of the group of young people may think that educators agree with, for example, hateful comments, or are not concerned about the harm it does. If something is said in public, it must also be addressed in public. This provides an educational moment for everyone.

See also: *The Enquiring Classroom* http://www.enquiring-project.eu/

Unit 1, Topic 4

Learning to “Unpack”

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” – The Question of Extremism

Extremism is a powerful word, often with negative connotations or associated with violence, radicalisation, hatred, and even terrorism.

This is why we need to take care when using the termand think about how it can be used and misused.

For example, States that want to stop dissent or crush opposition, or even democracy, may claim critics and those in opposition are ‘extremist’.

On the other hand, we also witness different extremist movements that are intolerant of difference.

Sometimes extremism is seen to mean a position outside the dominant norms of a society, norms which are presumed to be moderate.

In political terms, this can be expressed as a distance ‘far right’ or ‘far left’. Sometimes it’s seen as an excessive response or use of methods or tactics to achieve a goal.

Sometimes it’s seen as a particular way of thinking that looks for purity or hierarchy, is intolerant of difference, may be driven by resentment or grievance, and/or refuses to compromise.

Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack" – The Question of Extremism

Quassim Cassam has described some of these traits as 'mindset' or 'psychological extremism' in his book *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis.*

Often extremism is not couched in the language of hate, but the language of 'love'. But it is a particular kind of love – love of the nation, love of white people..

Paraphrasing Hannah Arendt who once said that one cannot love 'a people', only people, we need to reflect on what else is at play when the language of love is generalised to a particular monocultural group, or a particular group is seen as 'losing' as in Great Replacement or Great Reset conspiracies. Certain kinds of extremism are harmful to education and undermine the commitments of pluralistic societies.

As we described earlier, these kinds of extremism tend to be closed off, dogmatic, refuse to listen to other perspectives, are intolerant of difference, see identity as fixed and immutable, harbour ressentiment, have a perception of being wronged, refuse to compromise on any issue, espouse hatred of other groups, and/or claim superiority of the in-group.

Source: Cassam, Q. (2021) *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis.* London: Routledge.

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - The Language of Love

When we think about extremism, we might initially think about different ideological positions – positions that seem ‘extreme’ on a spectrum, or we might think about the different methods that people use. We might also associate extremism with violence.

But one can engage in political violence as an act of resistance, or have a political position, like the Suffragettes or Extinction Rebellion at the margins of the mainstream. These don’t necessarily involve the ‘extremist mindset’ with which we are concerned here. Thus, it should be noted that not all ‘extreme’ positions are extremist; many are better called radical positions.

An extreme position involves monologue, monoculture, and monologic – it is too "full of itself" to listen to anyone else.

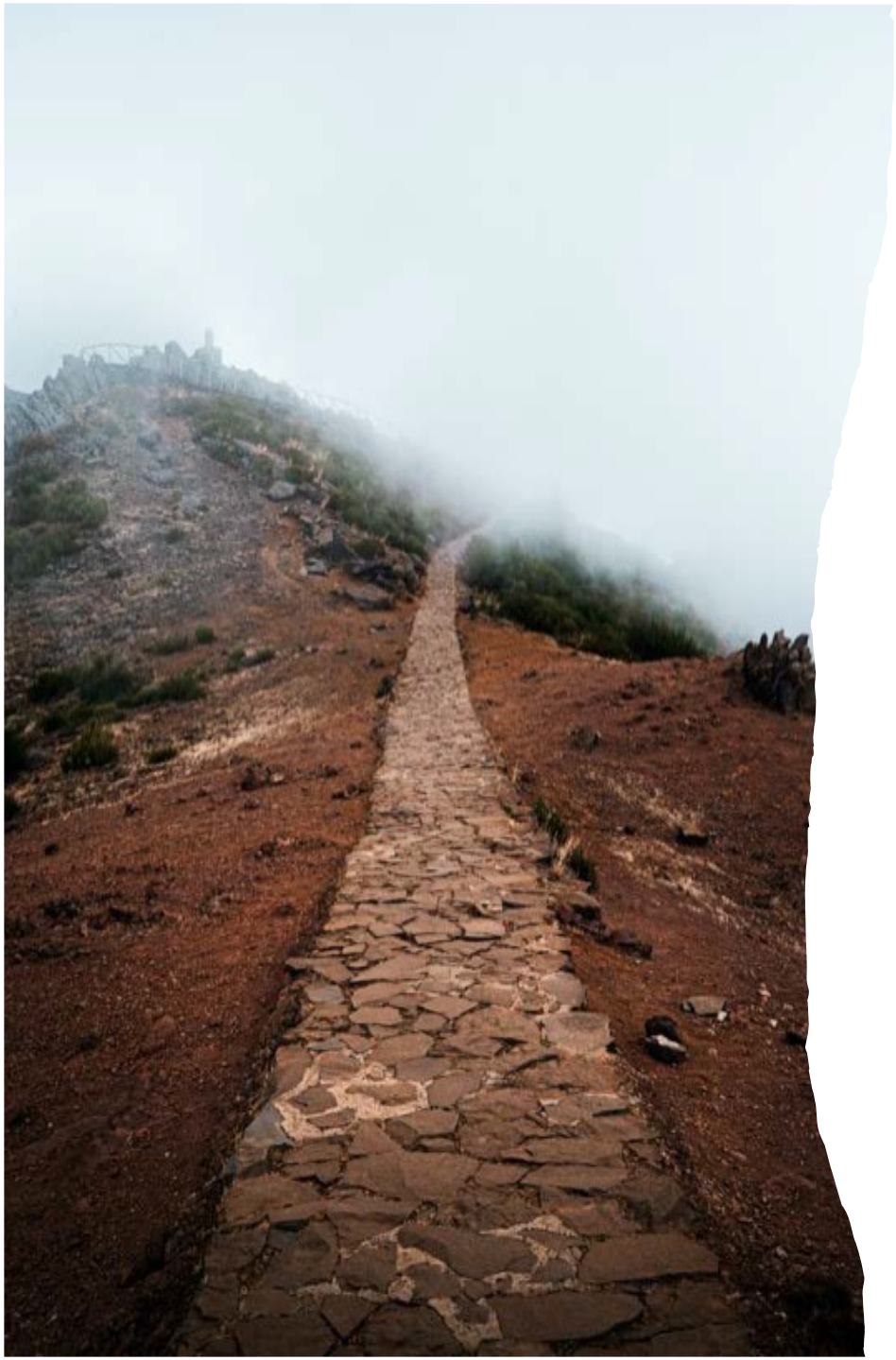
This is why it’s more difficult than saying we ought to explore all sides of an issue if one side’s claim is that you should not exist in the place that is your home, or even that you have no place on this earth. The pain that arises then is not because of disagreement or difference of view.

It is because someone is telling you that you are not welcome and that you should not exist, at least not here. This is a profound injustice and hurt, and it breaks down trust. This is why in this module, we’ll explore how features of extremist mindsets can also exist at the centre and how they share some features of those mindsets more readily identified as ‘extremist’.

What we’ll be exploring in this module partly involves reflecting together to unpack what is meant by ‘extremism’, in particular the desire for sameness, purity, and intolerance of difference.

It involves exploring how extremist positions *feel* whilst at the same time understanding how *extremist* feelings can emerge for different reasons, at different times, and in different contexts. It’s important not to assume that because a young person makes an extremist statement that this means that they are committed to an extremist identity.

A young person might make extremist statements might stem from fear, desire to belong, from a desire for provocation or trolling, for resistance, to feel safe and secure, and so on. This is why it’s helpful to explore the *feelings and desires* of extremism and the feelings and desires motivating *extreme statements* or belonging to *extremist groups,* and the societal structures that support these.



Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - Trauma, ‘Othering’ and Extremism of the Centre

Throughout our dialogues, we heard of experiences of racism, trans- and homophobia, and xenophobia, in particular the traumatic and painful experience of being ‘othered’.

This is why we repeat it a number of times here.

This involves consistently made to feel that one does not belong in a place in which one was born and/or one thinks of as home, alongside the (post)-traumatic experience of witnessing this happening to others about whom one cares. This is particular kind of pain.

For example, children and parents/grandparents, experience pain as each witnesses how one another are treated in their home. This can lead to not only trauma and but a lack of trust in one’s fellow human beings.

Statements like ‘you are not really Irish/English/French/Dutch’ to a child or parent born, who have lived many years, in a country is painful.

To assume that an accent means that someone has not been here long or do not not understand or know the country in which they live is frustrating, in particular when it keeps happening.

"Good intentions" don't mean that harm isn't being done.

Even small gestures and words can cut deep and alienate people. They are called ‘micro-aggressions’.

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - Trauma, ‘Othering’ and Extremism of the Centre (continued)

Overt instances of racism, hate speech and discrimination compound pain, especially when ignored in educational spaces.

Part of the work of this module, involves developing awareness and sensitivity to the impact of both careless and thoughtless language, and to the impact of racist language, sexist language, and hate speech in terms of the enduring harm across generations.

Our participants described how each time this happens it is a traumatic moment that shakes a person to the core, intensifying the feeling of accumulation of these lived experience.

A further issue raised in terms of ‘othering’ was the impact of what we are calling ‘the extremism of the centre or middle’, a centre that insists on sameness.

Whilst the ‘centre’ might not see itself as as 'the centre', there are lots of ways in which people called ‘different’ by the centre feel ‘othered’, alienated and outside. Indeed, they can be made to feel apart from wider society, diminished, alienated, and sometimes angry and powerlessness.

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - Belonging and Listening

It is not surprising that (young) people might feel disaffected when society does not welcome them or see them as belonging? How can one relate to such a society that polarises ‘us’ and ‘them’?

Young people may to ask “What is there for me?” “Show me there is something for me?” “Or will it be the case that no matter what, I am still never good enough?”.

Tools and policies have a role in supporting inclusion, as do provision of different resources, but these questions “What is there for me?”, “Will I ever be ‘good enough’ for this society”, if compounded by daily micro-aggressions, negative behaviours or lack of investment in young people can make life difficult, and indeed create a feeling of being constantly unsafe.

As a society we then need to ask who invests, who spends time on these young people? In the context of some neighbourhoods and online spaces, it is those that groom the young into criminality; in others it might be into (violent) extremism.

A further difficulty is when there is unwillingness to listen to lived experiences of these issues.

Our participants spoke of how some people, including colleagues, do not want to hear the reality of one’s experience; they want to dismiss, deny, or minimise them. They spoke how the need to commit to developing awareness of reactions (and perhaps defensiveness) when certain topics like someone’s experience of racism are raised, or their thoughtlessness in making assumptions about who belongs and who does not belong.

They also spoke of the visceral impact of racism or being othered. This impact is not just a physical reaction; it is emotional and mental.

The impact on young people is significant – they carry it right through their education and their lives, this sense of not-belonging.

It is important to work with young people with compassion and understanding, including perpetrators, in order to open spaces for transformation. Educators need to then create the spaces with the young people so that they can question themselves and wonder "who am I?".

Activity 1

Moment for Reflection

1. What in your view and experience motivates or drives negative attitudes to difference, or refusals to acknowledge difference?
2. Reflecting on your life, when do you see yourself at the 'centre' and when at the 'margins' of society? Would others agree with you?
3. When have you witnessed 'microaggressions' and when might you have been responsible for a 'microaggression'?
4. Do you create spaces for young people to ask 'who am I?' without imposing identities on them in advance?

One of the challenges in schools is that there are always relations of power between students and teachers. It is similar in other educational spaces. So it is important for schools and youth work projects is undertake to unpack and explore, for example, racialised micro-aggressions from educators.

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” – Claims to Victimhood

Philosophies of Loss

A significant challenge is that the sense of lack of belonging can also be felt by those who are, in many respects, from the majority community but who feel excluded or disenfranchised.

Issues can become particularly acute when there is a ‘gospel’ or ‘philosophy of loss’ whereby certain groups feel aggrieved by the very existence of others and feel that the presence of others in society has led to their personal suffering or their personal loss as an individual or community.

The alt-right, far-right and certain kinds of (white) nationalism are examples of this. This often also involves toxic masculinity and hostility directed toward girls or women, anyone gender non-conforming, and anyone perceived as ‘migrants’.

If (young) people are motivated by ‘philosophies of (perceived) loss’, it’s important to engage with them to unpack their positions and explore them with them. So this is a challenge and involves a delicate balance.

Part of this may at times involve understanding what drives and motivates violence, including understanding the susceptibility of young people to influential adults. It may mean unpacking the spread of ‘’philosophies of loss” that suggest that somehow they are losing out.

Where young people feel they have no future, purpose or agency, these identities might be attractive as they offer a simple explanation for their life situation. It may also be the case that there is simply a loss of power given greater pluralism, equality, and the rights of others being upheld, so that one group can no longer dominate as it did before.

Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack" - Claims to Victimhood (continued)

Paul Gilroy is an important theorist of race and racism who has looked at the ways some of those who are dominant and privileged in a society relative to others, claim victimhood. He also looks at wider tendencies of denying or minimising racism.

He said in a lecture in 2006:

"That role of victim gets monopolised in order to deny immigrants, denizens, foreigners, – infrahuman beings – any access to the moral authority associated with their victimisation. Keeping victimhood exclusively for oneself has another benefit. It takes away any legitimacy from the wounded less-than-people who strive to draw attention to their victimisation at the hands of Europe and to its colonial crimes. White Europe stands as the only victim worthy of acknowledgement.

This pattern has become common in the contemporary situation. It is something that it will be very important for us to try and discuss. The same melancholic way of not dealing with the problems represented by colonial history is also, I think, revealed in the idea that the European, social-democratic countries can't really respond to the presence of racism in a political way.

What happens is that where racism and xenophobia and white supremacy and neo-fascism and ultra-nationalism are manifested, denial gets compounded. People can't really face those developments or address them politically as part of what it means to manage a habitable democracy.

Instead, though they may not like the foreigners, denizens and strangers and they certainly don't like dilution of national purity, they don't like the intrusion of people from the outside, they are also deeply and acutely uncomfortable at what they discover about themselves in the process of seeing how deep their own feelings of hostility run".

He continues,

"In my work, I have tried to develop some different concepts and ideas. The central theme, the alternative to melancholia, has been a concept of conviviality. Conviviality, convivencia, living together in real time. What is it to live together? I had begun to feel that, although racism was clearly and destructively at work in England where I lived, racism was not always the main problem.

Very often, it was the denial of the racism that was a bigger problem. In some cases this was a bigger problem that the actual racism in itself. The structural character of that racism was something, which only changed slowly over a long period of time, but the denial of that racism was a bigger issue."

Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack" - Conviviality

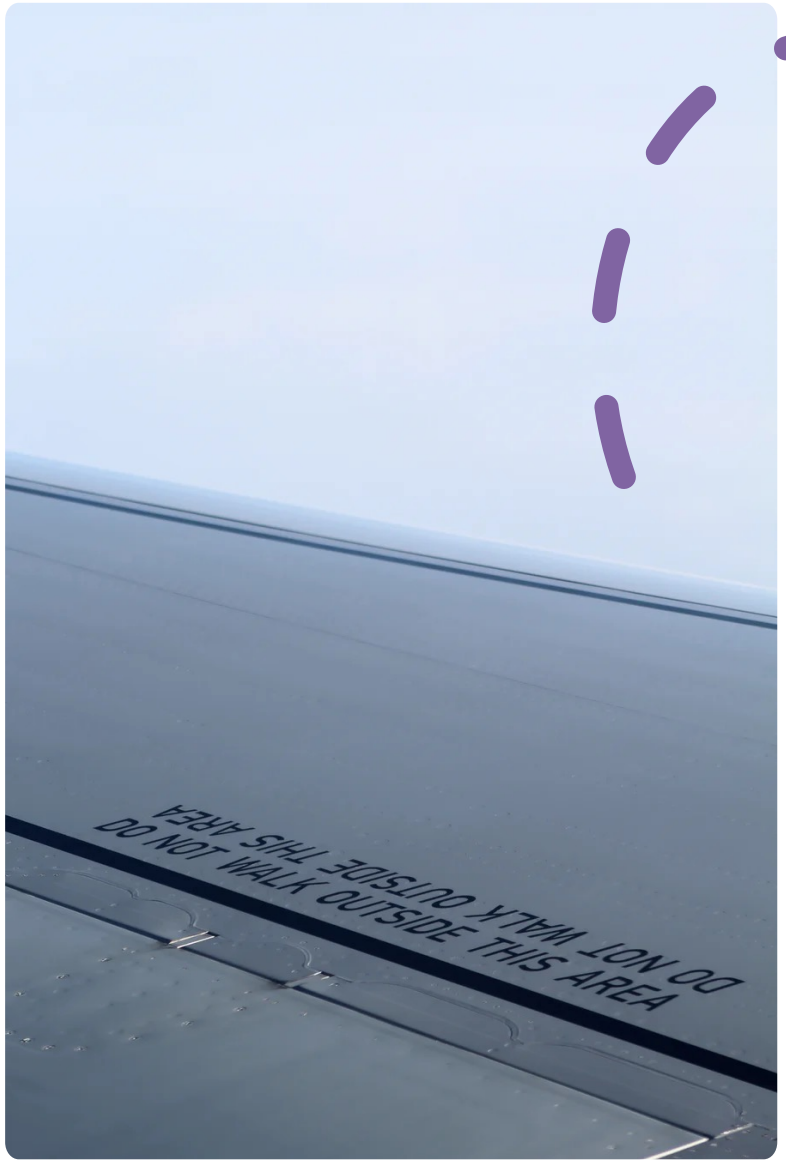
"Alongside racism, resources for the undoing of racism had evolved spontaneously, unseen, unlooked for, unwanted. It seemed to me that very often, at the interpersonal level rather than structural level, the consequences of racism were banal and ordinary. There were conflicts, but people resolved them. They didn't always get along with their neighbours, but they overcame those difficulties. I wanted to give the fact of that kind of creative and intuitive capacity among ordinary people, who manage those tensions, some sort of significance. I wanted to give it overdue recognition.

I didn't want to do that because I though the problems of racism were over or because I believed that somehow just seeing that these things could be worked over, worked around, worked through, meant that there was nothing more to do. It was more that in our conversations about these matters we had to start taking note of the fact that there were spontaneous ways in which many of these problems, the problems that we're now told are inevitable features of a clash of civilisations, cultures and outlooks, that those same problems melted away in the face of a kind of clankingly obvious sense of human sameness. This could not be grasped in the context of debates, which think culture in crude terms and say, "either you integrate immigrants, or they stay separate". I wanted to name that alternative possibility "conviviality". I didn't want to call it multiculturalism; I want to call it conviviality – just living together."

http://rethinking-nordic colonialism.org/files/pdf/ACT2/ESSAYS/Gilroy.pdf

Moment for Reflection

- What are your thoughts about what Gilroy says? Do you recognise this in your own context?
- How might ordinary forms of conviviality be fostered in your context?
- Does your site of practice have a clear anti-racist position? How is this embodied in practice, in language, and in the space?



Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack" - Being Defensive and Denial (continued)

Reflecting on Gilroy, what kinds of sameness might be positive, and which negative? What kinds of denial persist in your society? The 'centre' or 'dominant society' can sometimes operate with an idea of equality as sameness rather than equity, denying its racism, sexism etc. But so too, despite it all, are there many kinds of relationships that express a 'shared humanity', beyond an idea of sameness as sharing fixed identity?

Dealing with Denial, Refusal and Defensiveness: Gilroy describes as a serious problem the denial of racism (not just racism itself). This can be expressed as unwillingness to listen and explore these issues with those who are experiencing them, be it colleagues or staff. Sometimes people do not want to hear the reality of a person's experience and want to dismiss or minimise it. One example of this is the issue of 'white privilege' or even 'anti-racism' and the challenges of raising this as a topic, including with colleagues. In contexts like Ireland, another form of denied racism is anti-Traveller racism.

It can be particularly difficult in contexts where young people are facing a range of challenges in their lives and the lives of their communities. As educators, it is important to commit to developing awareness of one's reactions (and perhaps defensiveness/denial) when certain topics like someone's experience of racism are raised, and to avoid making assumptions about who belongs and who does not belong in a society.

It is important that young people are not put in a position where they feel they have to 'justify' their existence, but neither can we allow extremist or hateful views to fester in young people.

Question: Do you think your society/school/youth workspace denies racism/ sexism?

Tip: It might help to discuss this in the context of a range of different kinds of privilege or lack of privilege. It is hard for many young people to imagine they have any kind of privilege given their situation, and they may be unwilling to discuss patriarchy and racialised institutions.

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - How to Listen

Unpacking Together: When a young person (or a fellow practitioner) says something offensive, it can be helpful avoid the language of challenging and use instead the language of ‘unpacking’, inviting the person to unpack the statement with them.

Rather than saying ‘that’s offensive’ or ‘that’s not how we talk here’, or ‘that is not acceptable’, unpacking involves listening to the young person, coming from a place of understanding and compassion so that they are not defensive, don’t feel judged and are open to having a conversation, without suggesting that what they have said or done is ok, or pretending it does not do harm.

Sometimes as an educator, it is not about first revealing one’s own identity, including when the slur or comment is against one’s own community or religion, but rather involves opening up the conversation and helping views to be unpacked and showing where contradictions lie.

It means publicly responding to public statements.

Setting up in advance the culture and parameters for this as outlined in Unit 2 makes this easier.

Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack"- How to Listen

Voices and Thoughts of Educators:

Aesthetic Expression and Pedagogical Strategies: Strategies to broach these issues with young people should connect with their interests and should seek to put them at the centre. For example, drama, film, and music connected with their lives can be ways to open up the conversation, but scenarios in drama can also serve to close these down if not driven by the interests and concerns of young people. Sometimes it helps to use something as a medium that is safe enough to allow everyone to connect back into and bring their different lenses and responses.

Experiential Learning: Approaches that enable young people to explore their own experiences are important, so that they can participate in meaningful ways without feeling judged or shamed. Understanding that change takes time should be part of the process. Encountering and listening to the lived experiences can also move young people (and fellow professionals) to imagine the lives of others from a place of understanding and compassion.

How to do Dialogue: Teachers sometimes set up debates but don't know how to come out of them, which is very damaging to young people. Perhaps debate should be abolished in favour of dialogue. Deeper dialogue and listening and being open to diverse opinions is very important because it allows for diversity of opinion to be elicited and to go deeper into those opinions. From a Freirean perspective, this also means *solidarity* so that young people, no matter what their opinions are, know that you are on their side. It means you understand the challenges and injustices of the system and you understand their experiences.

Engaging with Hurtful Words: There is further complexity in terms of putting a young person in the spotlight who does not want to be highlighted as different, and who wants to fit in and belong. For example, this might involve the challenge of young people putting up with pejorative nicknames just to belong. It's important not to ignore these and to 'call in' (rather than 'call out') those colleagues and other adults who use these terms as well as the peers of the young person.

Topic 4: Learning to "Unpack" - Embodying Inclusion

Restoration and Healing: The aim is not to *impose* change on young people, but to create safe spaces where they have the freedom to transform and can talk through the issues that are of concern to them, and know that there are people there to support them. The hope underpinning this is to create the conditions where they begin to question themselves, but the role of the educator is not to 'challenge' them, but rather to 'unpack' these issues with them.

A restorative space might be understood as a nourishing space if it nourishes young people, broadening their minds, and enabling them to see beyond themselves.

In this way, the focus of conversation and discussion can be rooted in something that is restorative, rooted in principles of kindness and respect, as well as encouraging a level of responsibility around the viewpoints of young people. This begins with where 'people are at'.

To begin this work, it is important to have a conversation about what safety means and where young people feel safe or unsafe. Being in a safe space is a condition for learning and for engagement.

But a safe space can also be an uncomfortable space – there is often discomfort in the process of change and learning. Alongside this the discourse of belonging and inclusion need to be visible in schools and other educational spaces, or young people and their families can't feel safe.

Moment for Reflection:

- Are the educational spaces in which you work nourishing for young people and for practitioners? How can you tell?
- Are they safe? (Or too safe because you are trying to eliminate risk of any difficult issues arising?)

Activity 2

Key to exploring these issues with young people requires a willingness to 'unpack' them *with* them rather than just 'challenging' the person which can alienate the young person. This means creating spaces that are safe for dialogue and questioning without refusing to engage with difficult issues.

Embodying Inclusion: The language of inclusion is not sufficient. We will explore this further in Unit 3. To investigate whether inclusion is 'lip service' or 'embodied' and supports difference, becoming and exchange, it can help to do an 'audit' of spaces.

Ask yourself:

- How does the space work? Who sits beside whom? What images are on the walls?
- What languages are represented? How is Irishness/your nationality presented?
- Who is included?
- Do you engage with white young people who might feel those spaces are 'their spaces' alone and thusexclude those of migrant heritage?
- Are there outreach activities to those who may not be entering youth work spaces or school spaces?
- Are relationships built with parents and the wider community inviting them into the space and helping them to feel like they belong?
- Are diverse cultures valued and welcomed into school spaces?
- When you enter your site of practice, what is the intentionality that you bring?
- If it is inclusion, then how is that embodied and realised?

Ideas: You might include artworks made by young people. This can be a way of creating spaces for expression and also opening up conversations about questions that can be otherwise be divisive. Since these artworks will be connected in different ways to lived experience, they can open up conversations in unexpected ways.

Question: Do schools and youthwork spaces privilege sameness (intentionally or not?)

Topic 4: Learning to “Unpack” - Embodying Inclusion

Seeing through the Eyes of a Stranger: In every context, it can be easier to see the issues and problems with societies or communities other than one’s own.

To take the example of sectarianism in Northern Ireland, it is often easier for young people from the Republic of Ireland to see how the structures that separate people operate. It is more difficult to see how structures of separation, segregation and exclusion work in one’s own context.

Embodying inclusion involves listening to people and asking them what would be involved to make them feel welcomed and included.

It means asking what we need to let go of in order to embody inclusion without insisting on sameness or assimilation. It involves being proactive in reaching out – in the case of both youth work and schools to wider communities to ‘invite the world in’.

This might mean parents reading stories in their mother tongues to the wider class, it might mean outreach to invite young people of migrant heritages to join youth clubs, or interfaith world cafes to share different beliefs and faiths.

Sometimes young people can claim spaces as their own, and exclude other young people, questioning why they should be in ‘their space’.

Educational work involves opening their eyes and helping them to talk about these issues. Sometimes work needs to be first be done with the dominant group that is excluding others.

Unit 1, Topic 5

Understanding Extremism

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism

In this module, we offer one way of understanding some of the key features of extremism and approach this question as educators. This means you won't find the language of 'countering' or 'challenging' extremism, but rather 'unpacking' extremism. We distinguish this from radicalism (which is not the same as radicalisation, a term often used in counter-terrorism policies). Whilst critical thinking is valuable, it doesn't necessarily get to the root of why someone holds, or is held by, particular ideas. It doesn't deal sufficiently with affect (feelings and emotions) and the ways in which norms and values are lived out.

What might seem to be a personal point of view, for example about the role of women, is often better understood if one understands structures like patriarchy.

Brilliantly destroying an argument that relates to someone's identity or sense of belonging tends to serve not to persuade but to further entrench someone into a fixed position and alienate them.

This is why in this module our main focus is on affect and feeling, creating spaces for dialogue, reflection, and listening, and relationships.

The idea of 'extremism of the middle or the centre' which persists in practices of 'othering' by relying on an 'us' or 'we' who are the same, and others who are 'different' is important in developing a more careful understanding of how some of the characteristics of extremism can be present in the mainstream.

It means asking who is expected to assimilate (and perhaps lose other dimensions of their identities in order to belong) and who is positioned consistently as 'different'.

This is not about blame. It's about looking with fresh eyes as a society together, at ourselves, our practices, our institutions, and imagining the world we want together.

It means asking ourselves whether difference is tolerated, whether we value pluralism or whether we want sameness. It can be too easy to view 'extremists' as those engaged in hateful and violent activities, but not see the 'extremes' in mainstream society. We have seen this with the mainstreaming of what were fringe conspiracy theories or extremist ideological narratives.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Belonging and Extremism

Training young people in skills of analysis, media literacy argumentation or discussion of controversial issues is important educationally, but is not sufficient. Moreover, for those more deeply entrenched, it may not shift feelings of connection to extremist identity positions which run deeper, and the feelings of belonging, connection, identity and purpose they offer.

Valuing belonging-in-difference that see belonging as taking many diverse forms can help to build resilience against the kinds of ideas, movements and groups that seek segregation, have a preoccupation with purity, or promote hatred of different ways of being other than their own.

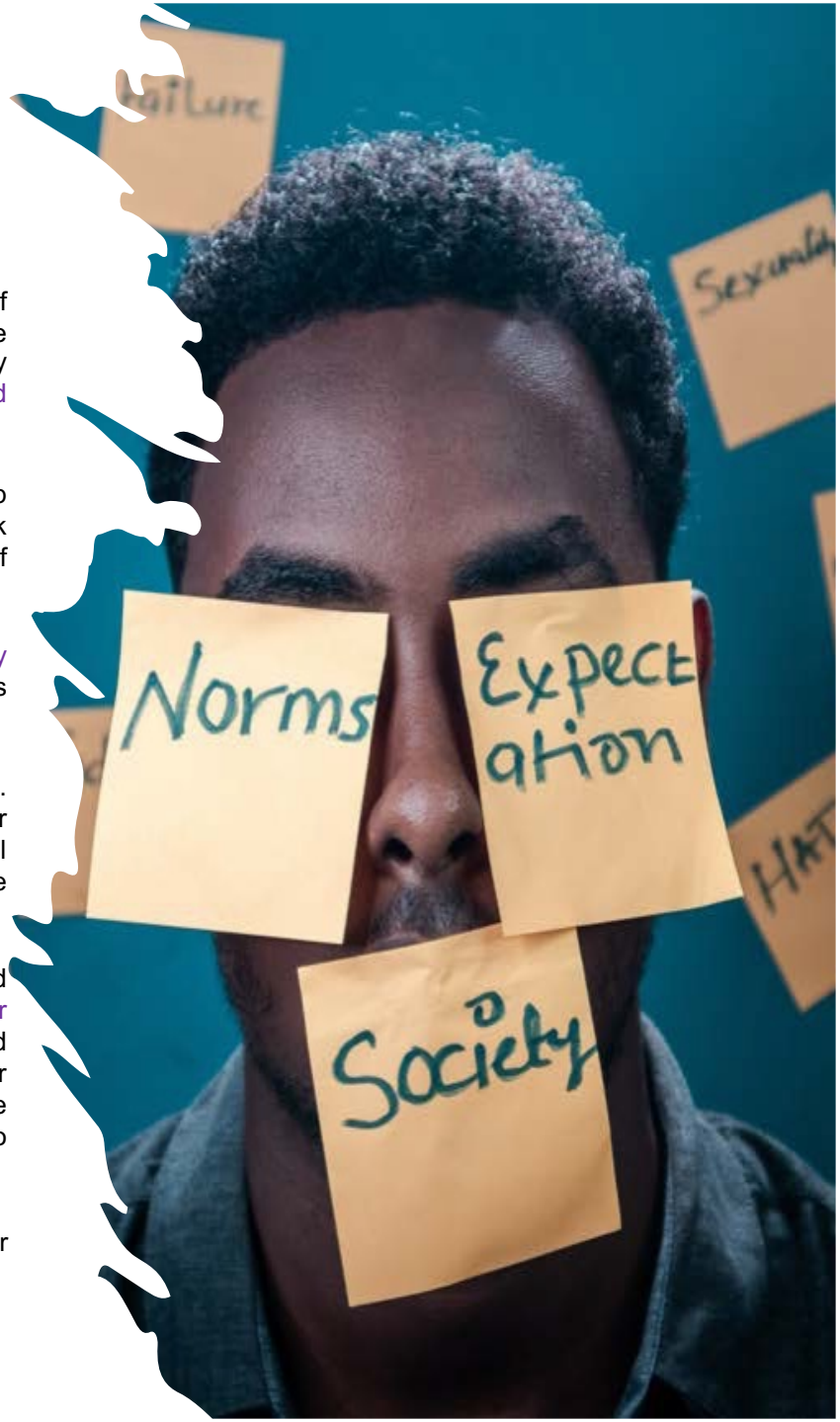
This might mean looking at different forms of belonging and the degrees of intensity associated with them, in particular those stories about belonging that can act as triggers for moving into more 'extremist' positions.

One powerful story is that a certain group is losing something due to another group. This might be losing out economically, symbolically, in terms of power or status or culture. This involves a sense of disenfranchisement or dispossession. In virtual communities that younger (and indeed older) generations are immersed in, these identities are more transient, with risks of being dropped or 'unliked'.

Part of the work in schools and youth clubs is to foster belonging-in-difference and acceptance. It's unsurprising that people seek belonging in groups that are extremist or radicalising, if they are constantly being given a message that "you are not good enough", or "you will never be as good as.." or "you don't belong or fit in", no matter what part of society you come from. This is what is preyed on when someone else says 'You are important to this group or this section of society', a young person wants to believe that and believe they belong somewhere and are valued and they matter.

Moment for Reflection

1. In your site of practice, how do you support young people feeling valued and foster belonging?
2. Do you talk about 'philosophies of loss'?



Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Belonging and Extremism

When choosing whether or not to join any group, it matters who one can talk to. Youthwork and school settings can provide spaces to talk about anger and injustice without engaging in violence. Sometimes, however, schools and youth spaces do not want to touch these issues.

This felt sense of injustice is correct when a society tells a story about itself in which young people do not find themselves recognised or it does not reflect their experience.

For instance, consider the selection processes in societies that claim they are meritocratic. Young people may experience primarily competition, inequality, and hierarchy in education systems.

Some groups target certain young people by making them feel like victims and giving them an easy answer. Giving a message of simplicity and certainty is attractive. Learning about the pathways to extremism in different countries can help to understand different motivations for engagement.

One such story is how opportunities are being reduced and this can attract young boys and men, for example, to the far right.

Moment for Reflection:

Common to many of these stories is a narrative that is zero sum and hierarchical – someone is winning and someone losing, or someone wants to annihilate a group's identity – existential threat.

- Are there other stories not based on winning/losing?
- Or ways of exploring the feelings of existential threat and what belonging to an extremist group gives?
- What are the images and assumptions underpinning these stories?

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Thinking about Justice and Violence

- Sometimes what is needed is to give young people something to fight for: this is not easy but not impossible.
- This has to involve the ability to live with complexity.
- You might find there are different groupings – those with no power who are disenfranchised but do not seek change.
- But there are also those who are powerless and want change.
- The quest for justice is also one of driving young people in wanting to make a difference and seek positive change.
- Later we will look at the question of 'sacred values'.
- Even if from the outside, extremist positions and movements seem hateful, from the inside they can often tap into what matters to (young) people and offer a feeling of care and belonging or excitement and rebellion, where their voices are heard.

Activity 3

Questions:

- In your cultural context, what are the reasons for (young) people becoming involved in (political) violence?
- Are there any circumstances in which you see political violence as justified?
- Do you discuss these issues of political violence, conflict and war with young people? (This is important when exploring the question of foreign fighters, for example.)
- What are the key (potential) drivers of (political) violence in your community and society?
- Draw a map of key concepts that motivate political violence (equality, purity, justice, defence, identity..) and align different movements with these (e.g. what is the key concept for the far right?).
- What is the relation of each group to pluralism and difference, to in-group and out-groups?
- What are the characteristics that make some groups committed to political violence *extremist* and why are some seen as seeking justice?
- What opportunities exist for young people tap into the desire to make a positive difference and transform situations of injustice, even in the smallest of ways?
- What opportunities exist for young people to rebel or seek adventure?

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - What is an Extremist Mindset?

Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis:

Quassim Cassam offers some ways of thinking about this question of extremism in his book *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis (2021).* These offer a useful tool to begin to make some distinctions between radicalism and extremism.

His concern is with the 'extremist mindset'. Whilst this does not necessarily help us to understand the complex reasons young people may have for adopting extremist positions, it does help us to reflect on how to notice and address some of the features of these pedagogically. The following sections outline some of the key characteristics of 'psychological extremism' or 'extremist mindset' that Cassam presents.

What are Extremist Preoccupations?

Characteristic of the extremist mindset is a 'purity' preoccupation, or perhaps more precisely a concern with impurity. This can be a preoccupation with racial purity, with ideological purity, or with religious purity. In all cases, the concern is with eliminating 'impurity'.

This is often bound up with a concern with virtue which views its own position as the only position that is right or can be right, and often is tied to a sense of perceived victimhood, perceived humiliation and perceived persecution. We might also add perceived existential threat.

This does not mean that all those who are victims, humiliated or persecuted are extremists. Rather in the case of the extremist mindset, this involves imaginary persecution or a disproportionate or inappropriate response. A further preoccupation, for some, involves a sense of nostalgia and mythologising the past.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - What is Extremism?

Emotions and Extremism

Cassam draws on British empiricist philosopher David Hume's argument that people are motivated to act by their emotions or passions. He invokes Bernard Williams to suggest that emotions involve a way of seeing, noting that often when an object is viewed in a different light this can displace the emotion, however certain emotions can be particularly recalcitrant, and indeed, 'violent passions'.

The emotions associated with the extremist mindset include humiliation and self-pity alongside resentment and anger, but these are often inappropriate, disproportionate and recalcitrant responses.

Cassam offers as an example the difference between the ANC under Apartheid and the Men's Rights Movement (MRM). The latter, as Kimmel argues, involves white men's anger characterised by 'the potent fusion of two sentiments: entitlement and a sense of victimization' (2017: cited in Cassam).

A further violent passion is that of *ressentiment,* for Nietzsche the mixture of hatred and envy. These emotions express extremist preoccupations, and also express the attitudes of the extremist mindset.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - What is Extremism?

Violence and Extremism

Cassam separates the issue of violence from that of extremism because whether violence is to be used will depend on context and on the alternatives on offer. One may be militant and even pro-violence without being an extremist. An extremist is, on this definition, totally uncompromising, in that their attitude to compromise is often both implicitly and explicitly hostile.

He notes that a principled person may also be uncompromising and draws on Avishai's Margalit writings on compromise to argue that the *principled* person is hostile to rotten compromises such as upholding an inhuman or cruel regime.

Margalit also links hostility to all compromise with an obsession with purity. The 'non-extremist person of principle' is one willing to compromise, but the extremist 'regards all compromises as rotten'.

Characteristics of the Extremist Mindset

This expands the argument that the extremist mindset is simply about 'how one believes' by showing that it may also be about 'what one believes'. This 'negative attitude to compromise is closely related to three other attitudinal elements of the extremist mindset: indifference, intolerance and anti-pluralism'.

The extremist is concerned about putting principles into practice but is indifferent to the repercussions of these principles.

The form that intolerance takes is Manicheistic, premised on logics of 'us and them', vilifying out-groups and preoccupied with the purity of the in-group. Similarly, the extremist mindset is often hostile to pluralism and tied to '*impositionism*' – the idea that 'those with different ends must be re-educated or crushed'. One may not be anti-pluralist if one is a methods extremist, but an extremist mindset will tend to involve a number of these characteristic attitudes.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Summary of the Extremist Mindset

There are core and peripheral elements to the extremist mindset, and perhaps surprisingly, says Cassam, a more compelling argument can be made for attitudes to be viewed as core elements of the extremist mindset with thinking styles appearing more peripheral.

This concept of the 'extremist mindset' as an analytic tool has limitations, in particular in its application to the lives and worlds of young people who may be exploring identities, beliefs, values, and even mindsets, or even older generations.

Yet elements of his analysis are insightful, including for educational spaces, in particular when he writes,`*'When it comes to psychological extremism, intolerance, indifference as understood here and hostility to compromise are hard to view as optional extras. They are, in some sense, constitutive of an extremist mindset. Emotions like anger and resentment have a less strong, but still respectable claim to core status. Preoccupations are more of a mixed bag. Virtue and purity are common enough extremist preoccupations, but not clearly essential. On the other hand, a preoccupation with victimization is closer to the core, though there is room for debate about this."*

By separating the extremist mindset from ideological positioning, methods, or a sole focus on the content of beliefs, it becomes easier to reflect on ways of developing educational responses to extremism that can work with young people as they *are*.

The concept of the 'extremist mindset' offers, in some respects, a promising diagnostic tool to see how and where dialogue may break down, because it provides a nuanced typology of characteristics of the Extremist Mindset that is sensitive to context and to "clusters" of characteristics.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Limitations of "Extremist Mindset": The Question of Adolescence

As noted, the concept of the 'extremist mindset' is limited, however. It offers a philosophical analysis of a concept that focuses on key characteristics involved in psychological extremism but is not sufficient for the purpose of developing educational responses to extremism.

Young people may be involved in extremist movements, without having an extremist mindset, and may attracted by certain dimensions of extremism and extremist cultures. These can involve a sense of belonging, of excitement, of rebellion, of risk, and of adventure.

There is much to learn from social and youth work, in particular those practitioners who are directly engaging with young people in these areas. In education and youth work, it is more likely that *tendencies* toward an extremist mindset will be present rather than a fixed position, and it's important that listening to young people's motivations, feelings, their perspectives and their experiences are taken into account when responding.

In short, questions of age matter in respect of both extremism and violent extremism. Adolescence is a time that involves quite specific vulnerabilities and needs, but it is also as a phase that is characterised by openness and fluidity of orientation, in comparison to the concept of "mind-set". This also includes the attractiveness and dynamic nature of extremist (youth) scenes as youth cultures.

These motivations of attraction, adventure, status and excitement, extend beyond Scott Atran's idea of sacred values and are not sufficiently addressed by Cassam's philosophical concept of 'psychological extremism' which is concerned with offering an analysis of the concept of extremism, rather than outlining diverse motivations for engagement in extremist and even violent extremist movements.

Whilst Cassam's analysis of characteristics of the extremist mindset may be of educational and pedagogical value, in the case of young people, understanding extremist cultures as sub-cultures can also help to understand the attraction to these scenes to young people.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - The Question of Adolescence

Young people's identities and positions are evolving, and part of that process of evolution and change involves resistance.

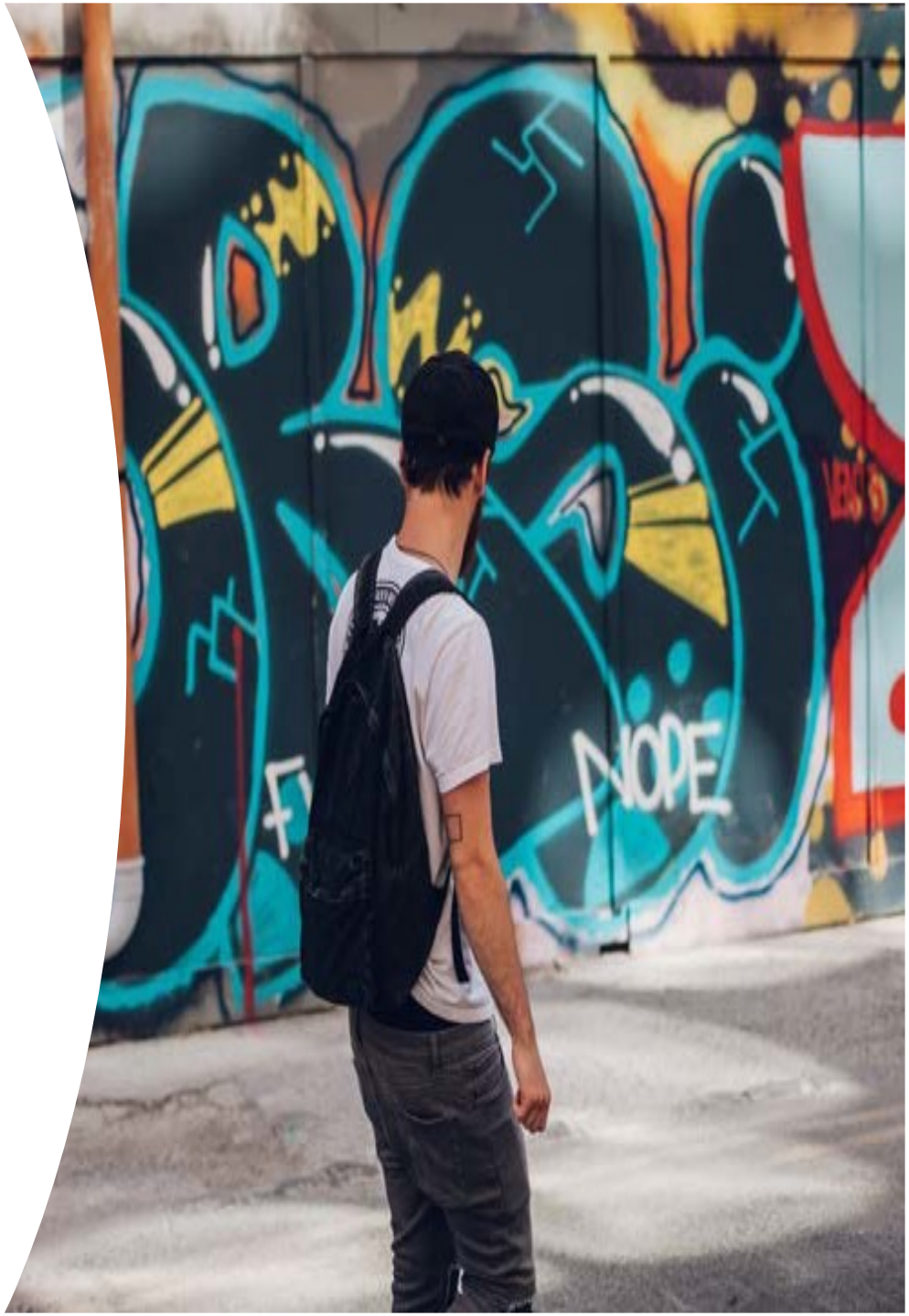
The aim of education should not be one of simply conforming to dominant norms and values but involves creating spaces where young people can engage with, critique, and re-imagine the traditions that they have inherited, and imagine a world of the future.

Education requires different kinds of responses, including different responses to what may be seen as tendencies toward an extremist mindset, for example, unwillingness to compromise or a desire for purity or identity.

These should take into account adolescent identity formation, and the ways in which young people seek purpose, agency, belonging, and meaning.

This means exploring these issues with young people in an open way that seeks to build relations, allows for vulnerability, in an atmosphere of safety, and that rests on a respect for their lives and their singular being beyond whatever identity positions they may adopt, and understands desires for rebellion, adventure and even violence (without supporting violence).

Young people must know that they matter more than their ideas and have a chance to explore their positive motivations and needs, and the functionality of engagement, as well as the non-functionality of other spheres of their lives.



Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Education, Conspiracy, Disinformation, and Hate

Even if education involves a beautiful risk, there is also a need to create spaces of safety, stability, and security in particular in these times of global anxiety and uncertainty. Creating further turbulence or underlining the importance of living with existential uncertainty may not always be what is most helpful in young people's lives, in particular at times of wider social anxiety and instability. It is important to also develop opportunities for safety, security, trust and stability.

From an educational perspective, understanding why people may become attached to dogmatic positions, including Conspiracy Theories, is needed in order to explore those positions that may serve, even unwittingly, another agenda, such as far-right extremism, or that operate as self-sealing, monological belief systems. These theories offer explanations, simplicity, "us and them" binary logics, and clear causality. They are particularly resistant to fact-checking. The hermeneutics of suspicion mobilised against beliefs with which they disagree is unfortunately not applied to their own beliefs.

The convergence between Conspiracy Theories, such as QAnon, anti-vaxx and anti-5g propaganda, and extremist agendas, in particular far-right or ultra-nationalist positions, is one gaining increasing attention at the time of writing. Alongside this are other intersections like certain elements of the holistic health community where racism and bodily purity converge.

However, it is important to not over-state these issues. It is important to avoid fuelling discourses of (reciprocal) polarisation, and instead to provide educational opportunities for exploration of different claims to knowledge, as well as misinformation and disinformation.

Engaging with these issues involves supporting critical thinking and analysis whilst also developing greater awareness of 'how ideas feel' and encounters with practices of compassionate listening.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Conspiracy Thinking and Feeling

Conspiracy Theory: Cassam's book *Conspiracy Theories* (2019) offers further distinctions that are helpful in understanding some elements of the relationship between Conspiracy Theories and extremism that gained momentum during the global pandemic.

Cassam is clear that Conspiracy Theories (capitalised) are not the same as conspiracy theories – Watergate was a conspiracy theory – and whilst some kind of Conspiracy Theories may be relatively harmless, such as doubting the moon landing, others, like denying the Sandy Hook massacre, are harmful and hurtful.

Conspiracy Theories are speculative, based on conjecture rather than knowledge, generally amateurish, often convoluted, and implausible by design (Cassam, 2019). He argues that Conspiracy Theories should be understood in terms of their ideological functions – what political or ideological objectives are served by the Conspiracy Theories?, regardless of intent. We might also add what personal, social, and existential needs do they fulfi?

Conspiracy Theory Produces is big business, and is supported by the circulation of content by Conspiracy Theory Consumers. Cassam then asks why, given so many of these Conspiracy Theories have been comprehensively refuted, do people continue to believe them?

He writes, 'When psychologists talk about our brain's 'quirks and foibles', they're usually talking about a range of so-called cognitive biases. Here are three of them:

1) **intentionality bias** – the tendency to assume that things happen because they were intended rather than accidental;
2) **confirmation bias** – the tendency to look only for evidence that supports what one already believes while ignoring contrary evidence;
3) **proportionality bias** – the tendency to assume that the scale of an event's cause must match the scale of the event itself (2019a: 40-41).

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Finding the Conspiracy Theory You Were Looking For?

However, he argues that these biases cannot explain Conspiracy Theories because we are all affected by bias.

Another explanation that has been offered is that these beliefs are caused by personality traits or by an attraction to conspiracist ideologies.

However, Cassam maintains that the different explanations don't manage to explain why some people believe Conspiracy Theories.

Rather, '[t]he Conspiracy Theories they devise and promote are those that match their particular political or ideological commitments. To this extent ideology is both the cause and the effect of many Conspiracy Theories' (2019: 49): in short, people are drawn to Conspiracy Theories that fit with their political outlook, or ideology.

Bartlett and Miller's study (2010) showed that Conspiracy Theories are prevalent across the extremist spectrum. However, it is important to note that there are other good reasons for being conspiracy minded, such as marginalised populations who have been subjected to conspiracies and have good reason to be suspicious. Or simply because these are the dominant ideas that one is exposed to in one's filter bubble or social circle and they serve to forge a sense of belonging and agency.

Thinking Styles and Extremism

Drawing on Jonathan Baron's work, Cassam says that thinking is a 'method of choosing between possibilities'. The ways of thinking associated with the extremist mindset include 'conspiracy thinking, utopian thinking, apocalyptic thinking, and catastrophic thinking'. However one may have an extremist mindset, without any of these thinking styles.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Filter Bubbles

Cassam describes how belief bubbles are formed that reinforce shared opinions and exclude (unfriend/) those who question or disagree. In this way, Conspiracy Theories are 'self-sealing' (Sunstein and Vermeule cited in Cassam, 2019), rejecting 'establishment' sources or experts and viewing 'fake news' as part of the conspiracy. He argues that correcting such views or using 'cognitive infiltration' can result in a backfire effect whereby people become even more committed at a deep level to their worldviews.

Conspiracy Theory Producers benefit ideologically and financially from their circulation but there may be some hope of engagement with those who are less committed, for example, young people.

"A political response to Conspiracy Theories will need to do at least three things: make the case that many Conspiracy Theories are forms of political propaganda rather than serious attempts to tell the truth; show that one can criticise Conspiracy Theories without being an apologist for government misconduct; and be careful to respect the distinction between Conspiracy Theories and conspiracy theories" (Cassam, 2019a: 73). They are part of a wider theory about how the world works.

Yet, perhaps this does not tell the full story. It's important to explore with people what the conspiracy gives them or how it helps them to live and make sense of their lives. Or if they are more actively engaged with extremist groups that promote conspiracies, to look at these factors alongside other motivations such as desire for excitement, adventure, rebellion, or even opportunities to be violent.

For example, the rise of conspiracy theories during the pandemic has given people a simple explanation for complex events, a sense of stability and security, a way of managing fear, a sense of agency, purpose and resistance, a sense of community and belonging. An extreme response to this can lead to further marginalisation.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - The Role of Affect and Emotion

Cassam describes critical thinking and discernment as important, though insufficient, in seeking to respond to Conspiracy Theories. He says, *"This educational response to the spread of Conspiracy Theories clearly has a lot going for it. It connects with philosophical ideas about so-called intellectual virtues like open-mindedness, critical thinking, respect for evidence and curiosity. Intellectual virtues are personal qualities that help us in our pursuit of knowledge and understanding. The hope is that by developing such virtues at an early age, people can be immunised against Conspiracy Theories by learning to see for themselves what is wrong with them"* (2019: 81).

Nonetheless, he argues that responding to Conspiracy Theories and the extremist worldviews that can accompany them needs to involve more than a cognitive response. Educational responses should also engage the affects, values, and emotions. Indeed, as Cassam notes, some of the most compelling elements of Conspiracy Theories is that they are good stories, they involve a 'who dunnit', and they are morality tales.

In the context of this global pandemic, movements like QAnon that flexibly respond to, and create, people's fears, can offer a feeling of belonging and connection, and a sense of purpose and meaning. In the case of Qanon, it enables people to deny and face the realities of a global pandemic by claiming that COVID-19 is not real but a cover for global child sex trafficking run by a secret cabal.

Question: What do conspiracy theories and/or extremist positions and groups *give* (young) people? Certainty, stability clarity, simplicity, belonging, adventure, drama...?

Source: Cassam, Q. (2019) *Conspiracy Theories.* London: Wiley.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Social Media and Extremism

Another important issue is social media and the impact of different technological platforms. It is helpful to explore the ways in which different methods, techniques and communication tools operate in terms of different kinds of community building, including creating visual and sound cultures, and online sociality.

Learning how to analyse social media, looking at how algorithms operate or practices of trolling, as well as understanding algorithmic bias (Zuboff, 2019; Rouvroy, 2016) are important educational tasks. This also involves learning about confirmation bias, and understanding how propaganda works (Stanley, 2018; 2015). It might even involve an exploration of epistemology or ideas about knowledge, including scepticism. Critical media literacy offers an important educational lens.

Understanding how these methods and tools operate in a wider 'assemblage', including the ways in which Conspiracy Theories are generally monetised in online spaces, can enable young people to discuss the implications of and motivations for these approaches.

In Units 3 and 4, we will explore different ways of building community, belonging, and connection, and methods of communication that are centred on exchange and pluralism. These support both agency and a sense of belonging, and invite young people to unpack these complex questions together.

Sources: Rouvroy, A. (2016) '"Of Data and Men": Fundamental rights and freedoms in a world of Big Data', T-PD-BUR(2015) 09REV, Council of Europe; Stanley, J. (2018) *How Fascism Works:The Politics of Us and Them.* New York: Random; Zuboff, S. (2019*) The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. London: Profile Books.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Deeper Reasons?

Remember, sometimes the positions espoused by a young person are a symptom of other issues that they may be struggling with, and sometimes they involve 'testing' boundaries and exploring and trying on different positions and ideas.

Educators need to be able to make judgements *in situ* in terms of the response appropriate to the situation. It even may be necessary to temporarily suspend the conversation in order to come back to it later (O'Donnell et al, 2019).

At times, 'indirect pedagogies' that refuse oppositional logics and allow for 'surprise', can disrupt antagonistic dynamics. If you find yourself getting stuck in a binary, it might be time to do something different.

Sometimes approaching these issues at a meta-level and indirectly (talking about the characteristics of conspiracy theories generally, for example, rather than a specific conspiracy) that draws on resources from epistemology (how confirmation bias works) can allow some distance from controversial content in order to explore ideas and belief formation more dispassionately, however not all topics can or should be approached in this way. The educator will have to make judgements as to whether a pastoral response is called for or whether a pedagogical response can be pursued (O'Donnell, 2020).

At the heart of this is listening.

Source: O'Donnell, A. (2020) 'What is an educational response to extreme and radical ideas and why does it matter?' in *Encountering Extremism*, eds, Martini, A., Ford, K. and Jackson, R. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Topic 5: Understanding Extremism - Challenges

There are nonetheless additional challenges in terms of the rise of violent far-right extremist movements that are led by young people, and supported with active recruitment and grooming by older adults.

It's also important to note that these are small groups and are not replicated across all jurisdictions. *Hope not Hate's* recent report "Hitler Youths: The Rise of Teen-Age Far Right Terrorists" describes the emergence of some of these movements in the UK and notes the virulent racism, glorification of terrorism and direct calls for violence that motivate them.

The report cites Cynthia Miller-Idriss who has studied far-right youth culture. She argues that expressing far-right ideas and taking on its imagery and language "may provide agency for youth who feel constrained or let down by the adult world" and that "far-right engagement may thus be thought of as a mode of resistance and cultural subversion" for young people' (2020: 6).

Social media platforms like Telegram support and drive racist and violent content through the use of 'jokes', and gaming which enables younger users who are interested in extremism to connect with older users who can guide them in this sphere.

Eco-fascism, 'a loose and intensely antisemitic far-right scene that emphasises a mystical connection to the land, the violent enforcement of animal rights, and often genocidal solutions to the issue of overpopulation' (2020: 15) is another movement enabled by the platform Telegram.

Question: What are the primary ways that hateful speech circulates in your site of practice and community?

Source: Hermansson, P. with Lawrence, D. (2020) *Hitler Youths: The Rise of Teenage Far- Right Terrorists*. London: Hope not Hate.

Unit 1, Topic 6

Educational Responses to Extremism

Topic 6: Educational Responses to Extremism

The units that follow outline key principles and pedagogical strategies that were shared in our workshops.

There was a strong focus on how to listen.

This is at the heart of this module – learning the art of listening.

It's important to create spaces to explore how young people really feel about belonging, what they think it is about, talk through difficult issues, and to explore issues about belonging together and the language we use.

This means avoiding listing words that are forbidden or assuming we know what belonging and inclusion mean to young people, their families and communities.

It means opening a space for their questions, and exploring and unpacking these together. This is the space for learning, otherwise ideas get driven underground.

It means building enough trust to talk about issues that people disagree on, giving them language and communication skills to unpack these issues.

Activity 4: Double Consciousness

Question: There is a tendency to ask those who are most hurt by, for example, racism or sexism to explain it, or to identify themselves and tell their personal stories. What effects does this have on the person?

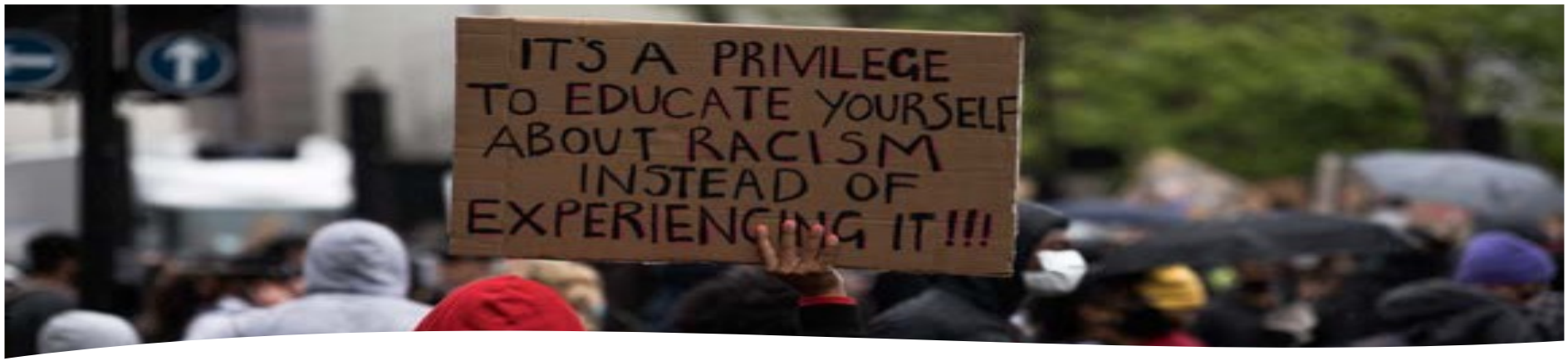
Reflect on common practices in your educational setting. Who is constantly asked to explain these issues to others?

Task: Spend 5 minutes free writing (put down whatever comes to mind without putting down your pen) in response to each of the following paragraphs.

W.E.B du Bois famously described the experience of 'double consciousness':

"*Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say [..] It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.*"

Activity 4: Double Consciousness (continued)



"There is something very corrosive about these imposed identities and derogatory slurs that can come at you at any time. Just a word can make someone feel a foot tall, with all the assumptions that word brings in its trail. It creates social anxiety and this difficulty of having to always be so honest, so upfront about identity, overly proving oneself, in order to battle against the conceptions of the mainstream community and the education system.

It means straddling two worlds, and never being able to simply be a professional but rather having to think about one's own identity, and this means questioning whether one belongs.

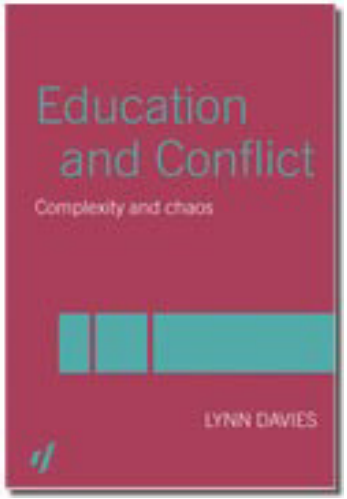
It's hard then to ever truly belong to spaces that have been so hostile.

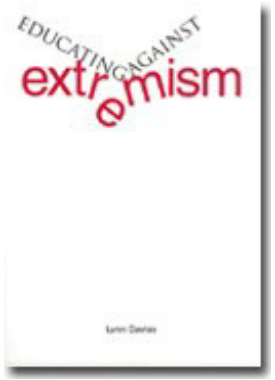
There can be a feeling that a sense of belonging can be taken away at any time. Even where one has 'white privilege', for instance, hiding behind one's skin as a Traveller, this is ultimately damaging for mental health, even if it helps survival in the short term." **(Workshop Participant)**

Topic 6: Educational Responses to Extremism - Perspectives from the Literature on PVE-E

Lynn Davies outlines the following principles, stating that PVE (preventing violent extremism) 'should focus less on what students should not become and more on what they actively become' (2018: 49). She argues that what appears to work most effectively are not those approaches premised on an intervention, but rather non-prescriptive approaches that are based on listening and embedded within the culture of the school or youth project.

- When a strategy is firmly embedded into a school in its permanent safeguarding policy, in its ways of thinking (e.g. rights, integrative complexity, philosophy for children) and in its curriculum (e.g. multiple perspective history).
- When teachers have had good (i.e. more than superficial) preparation to be able to discuss controversial issues, react to an immediate terrorist event and/or safely and sensibly identify children at risk.
- When a programme is non-prescriptive, not moralising, but leads to independent thinking and reflection on ethical dilemmas and concerns; when learners are listened to.
- When a holistic set of 'recipients' is envisaged and targeted – students, teachers, family and community, acknowledging the networks of interaction that surround learners.





Topic 6: Educational Responses to Extremism - Perspectives from the Literature on PVE-E

- When a wider range of actors is involved and consulted on the programme – local police, religious leaders, community actors, social workers
- When a multitude of 'drivers' of extremism is acknowledged and a programme does not just target one (e.g. poverty, or ideology)
- When a programme is not just learning about 'other' faiths but provides a political understanding of conflict.
- When a practical and visible outcome is achieved: civic engagement, campaigns, production of counter-narrative materials, i.e. that learners are not just recipients of 'interventions' but become active in anti-extremism work themselves. (2019: 49).

Source: Davies, L. (2018) *Review of Educational Initiatives in Counter-Extremism Internationally: What Works?* Gothenberg: The Segerstedt Institute.

Topic 6: Educational Responses to Extremism - Perspectives from the Literature on PVE-E

In his review, *Students as suspects?: The challenges of developing counter-radicalisation policies in education in Council of Europe member states,* Ragazzi asks whether policies aimed at countering radicalisation (PVE and CVE) might have the opposite effect in the education sector, serving to create suspect communities, securitising education, and undermining human rights. He suggests that the Council of Europe principles of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC), Human Rights Education (HRE), and Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) conflict with counter-radicalisation policies.

He describes these educational principles as follows:

- **Education as a transformative process:** Criticising the status quo and questioning established values can be a key principle of education for democratic life, grounded in valuing human dignity and rights as well as the development of critical skills.
- **Schools as safe and free learning environments:** Providing quality education means that schools should be spaces for experiencing democracy and freedom of expression in a critical fashion.
- **Education based on diversity:** Promoting intercultural dialogue against racism and discrimination and sharing knowledge about all cultures, which allows pupils to learn to value cultural diversity, openness to cultural otherness and respect, cannot take place in an environment that considers a section of the population a priori suspect.
- **Teachers as role models:** Teachers cannot be considered as role models for democratic education if they are perceived to be discriminating against a category of students.' (2017: 5)

Source: Ragazzi, F. (2018) *Students as suspects?:The challenges of developing counter-radicalisation policies in education in Council of Europe member states*. DGII/EDU/CCY-2017-8, Interim Report.

Topic 6: Educational Responses to Extremism - Perspectives from the Literature on PVE-E

In their review of the literature, Stephens et al (2019) note the difficulty of mobilising the P/CVE framework. CVE has tended to be driven by a security agenda, and slippage between methods, behaviour and ideas is prevalent in that literature. They identify four themes and outline the sub-sets of approaches that are related to those themes in their review of the literature that has sought to respond to critiques of security-driven prevention.

Theme: The Resilient Individual. Approaches: a. Developing cognitive resources; b. Fostering character traits; c. Promoting or strengthening values.

Theme: Identity and Identities. Approaches: a. Adolescence as a period of identity search; b. Identity threat and belonging; c. Creating space to explore identities; d. Strengthening and validating identities.

Theme: Dialogue and Action. Approaches: a. Create space for exploration and critique of controversial issues; b. Create space for airing of frustrations and grievances in relation to power; c. Provide opportunities for engagement in action.

Theme: Engaged Resilient Communities. Approaches: a. Community engagement; b. Community Resilience.

They suggest that this approach to resilience and prevention *"can shift the focus from protecting youth from extremist ideas, to providing the resources which enable youth in divisive and polarizing environments to address positively the questions of their values, where they stand in relation to others and society, and what realms of choice and action are available to them"* (2019: 11).

Source: Stephens, W., Sieckelinck, S and Boutellier, H. (2019) 'Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, DOI: 10.1080/1057610X.2018.1543144

Unit 2

The Art of Listening

Unit 2, Topic 1

Dialogue

Topic 1: Introduction to the Art of Listening

The purpose of this unit is to explore the conditions that allow the educational work of 'unpacking' extremism to happen, and more importantly, support young people and practitioners in finding their voice and listening to others.

At the heart of all of these elements is the 'art of listening'.

- To engage in a real dialogue, we must listen to others without just trying to react or preempt them. This involves a certain kind of listening that is responsive, open and reflective.
- We must also listen to ourselves and support our own inner dialogue (a strange idea perhaps!) and become more aware of our own assumptions and commitments.
- Listening is a practice and an art, and it has many forms.
- Sometimes listening and dialogue aren't easy. It can be hard to know what to do and how to respond when engaging with hate speech, hurtful comments, and hateful, even violent, behaviour.
- Part of the work in this module involves working with young people, colleagues and communities to create the conditions to be able to deal with these issues, including conflict.
- As practitioners we also bring 'baggage' which we need to unpack by engaging in self-reflection to understand our own assumptions and committing to developing awareness of our reactions (and perhaps defensiveness) when, for example, an instance of racism occurs.
- Do we listen? Do we shut it down? Explain away? Give advice? Do we feel listened to at those moments? What would we need to happen to feel listened to? Listening also involves staying with discomfort.
- Sometimes just listening allows for transformation to happen on its own terms, and sometimes it can make clear what change needs to happen at an organisational and structural level.
- This unit will outline activities and exercises to support self-reflection, to support practitioners to listen to themselves and to others, and to help young people to do the same. The key themes are dialogue, listening, reflecting, developing awareness, and engaging in difficult conversations.

Topic 1: Introduction to the Art of Listening - Creating Conditions for the "Art of Listening"

No assumptions, except for best intentions: People should not assume other people's experiences or anything else. The only assumption people should make is that when other participants speak, they are speaking with the best intentions and do not mean to offend anyone.

Correct gently, but *do correct*: If participants say something that is incorrect or offensive, politely address what was said. Letting comments slip by only makes the space less safe and increases the difficulty of building successful partnerships.

Don't Yuck my Yum: When group members share their likes and dislikes, respect their personal opinions and preferences.

Use "I" Statements: Everyone should speak from his/her/hir/their own experiences.

Avoid making generalisations: Don't make blanket statements about any *groups* of people. If you're not sure that something you want to say is factually correct, phrase it as a question. Having a set of agreements will help ensure that your meetings are respectful and provide a safe place for everyone.

One mic, one voice: Only one person should speak at a time.

Make space, take space: Participants should be aware of how much they are speaking. If they feel they are speaking a lot, they should let others speak, and if they find themselves not talking, they should try to contribute some comments, ideas or suggestions.

Respect confidentiality: Assume that stories and comments shared in discussions should remain private. Ask for consent before you share someone's story or comment.

Lean into discomfort: Meetings and topics can sometimes be challenging. Be willing to experience some discomfort in discussions, and learn from it

Personalise your agreed 'group contract': Have one of the first meetings of the year be focused on creating a list like this or adding to this list to set your group's agreement. Revisit your agreements as reminders for the space you are creating and in case any agreements need to be updated.

Adapted from GLSEN https://www.glsen.org/activity/guidelines-respectful-gsa-spaces.

Topic 1: Introduction to the Art of Listening - Dialogue

In this section, we will explore listening and dialogue.

Sharing, learning how to listen, and learning how to engage in dialogue have been key themes in thinking about educational response to extremism.

This topic is designed as an invitation to reflect on the nature and role of dialogue in your practice. It explores how to create spaces that avoid slipping into the often harmful effects of silencing.

Before we start, we invite you to engage in a short Padlet activity. Using the QR code, post your thoughts on the following "Good Dialogue happens when …"

Afterwards: Moment for Reflection
Take a moment to reflect on what others have written. Note any new insights and feel free to "like" those views that resonate with you.

Keep these thoughts in mind as we move through this section.

lhdwubn3f7dq2w9m

padlet

Topic 1: Introduction to the Art of Listening - Dialogue and Democracy

Source: Johannesburg City Hall, Bayers Naude Square, 2015
Sculptor: Lawrence Lemaoana

This statue honours the heroines of South Africa's struggle and is dedicated to all women who have been at the forefront of social and political change. The work depicts a woman protester with a baby strapped to her back. She holds a protest placard in one hand and a candle in the other to light her way.

Part of our reflections through this unit involve keeping in mind the role of dialogue in democracy, and the idea that democracy always involves dialogue. This includes engaging with challenging and sometimes even hateful positions. It has been said that productive dialogic engagement is the critical means by which individuals build inter-subjective capacities and democratic cultures (Pruitt and Thomas, 2007).

Dialogue does not assume that people are the same, speak the same way, or are interested in the same issues.

It only assumes that people are committed to a process of communication directed toward interpersonal understanding and that they hold, or are willing to develop, some degree of concern for, interest in, and respect toward one another (Burbules, 1993: 25).

But of course there are those who do not want this. There are both those who are silenced and those who wish to silence others. As educators, our own silence about these issues is already a position.

Source: Pruitt, B. and Thomas, P. (2007) *Democratic Dialogue: A Handbook for Practitioners.* UNDP.
http://www.oas.org/es/sap/dsdme/pubs/DIAL_%20DEMO_e.pdf

Topic 1: Introduction to the Art of Listening - What does Dialogue Involve?

The practitioners and policy makers who took part in our workshops were committed to creating cultures that are open, invitational and tolerant. They say the problem is with cultures that impose silence, are intolerant, or that closed down discussion.

They saw the careful creation of such invitational cultures, including surfacing polarised viewpoints, as real and important pedagogic opportunities for growth and community building.

Here we might recall Paulo Freire's persistent refusal to speak for others and his insistence on dialogic engagement and encouraging the voices of those often silenced.

He felt that if we do not commit to the 'art of listening' in dialogue we risk slipping into dogmatism, imposing our views, or monologue. But how in practice can authentic dialogue happen? What are its ingredients?

Key ingredients include listening, self-awareness, reflection and attention to context.

Referring to professional youth work practice, Collander-Brown (2010) also refers to the metaphors of 'uncovering' and 'making space in the mind' as processes that support meaningful relationships with young people.

Here are some principles that can guide dialogue.

- Don't "square off"
- Keep everyone's dignity
- Respect what matters to (young) people
- Build relationships and connections

Activity 1: Photovoice - An Audit of Lived Experience

- Each member of the group is invited to identify and take a photo/ image which captures aspects of their lived experience and the environment they share with others.
- The choice of topic is wide ranging for example, “voice” or “inclusion”, etc. (Alternatively, they can be asked to capture images of their lives over a period of time.)
- Participants are then asked take a photo that captures the most important elements relevant to the theme and to share this with others in the class group.
- They can choose to include a caption should they wish.

Working in this way provides opportunity for discussion on the lived world as experienced and on power relations.

As a methodology, it emphasises the importance of voice and discussion as a means by which to capture a view and co-develop an audit of the lived reality of participants.

Activity 2: Writing the Story Circle #1

This variation on story circle is an activity that supports collaborative dialogue.

- This can be done with other educators or with young people.
- If it is a large group, the group is asked to form smaller groups of 5-8.
- Each person in the group should have a blank piece of paper in front of them.
- The educator/facilitator dictates a sentence about a topic, for example, a common experience such as being silenced, or in advance asks a young person to bring a sentence that they think describes a common experience.
- Each person in the group writes this sentence at the top of their piece of paper and then writes the next sentence in 1 minute.
- When all the group members have done this, they pass their piece of paper to the person on their left.
- Group members now write the next sentence of the story, which has just been passed to them.
- When they have finished, the teacher/facilitator asks everyone to pass their paper to the person on their left. They all now should write the next sentence of the story on the piece of paper in front of them.
- The procedure continues until the piece of paper is returned to the original owners.
- At this point the teacher tells everyone to write a sentence to finish the story off.
- Lastly, participants are encouraged to read out loud the stories they have just finished.

The story circle provides an opportunity to see that stories are written and can be re-written, and to notice how the stories we might tell might be told differently by others. It allows for voices often marginalised to be heard.

Activity 3: Fishbowl

This strategy enables young people to practice discussion in turns, to garner observations and feedback from their peers and to listen to discussion. It provides opportunity to also reflect on what makes a good discussion.

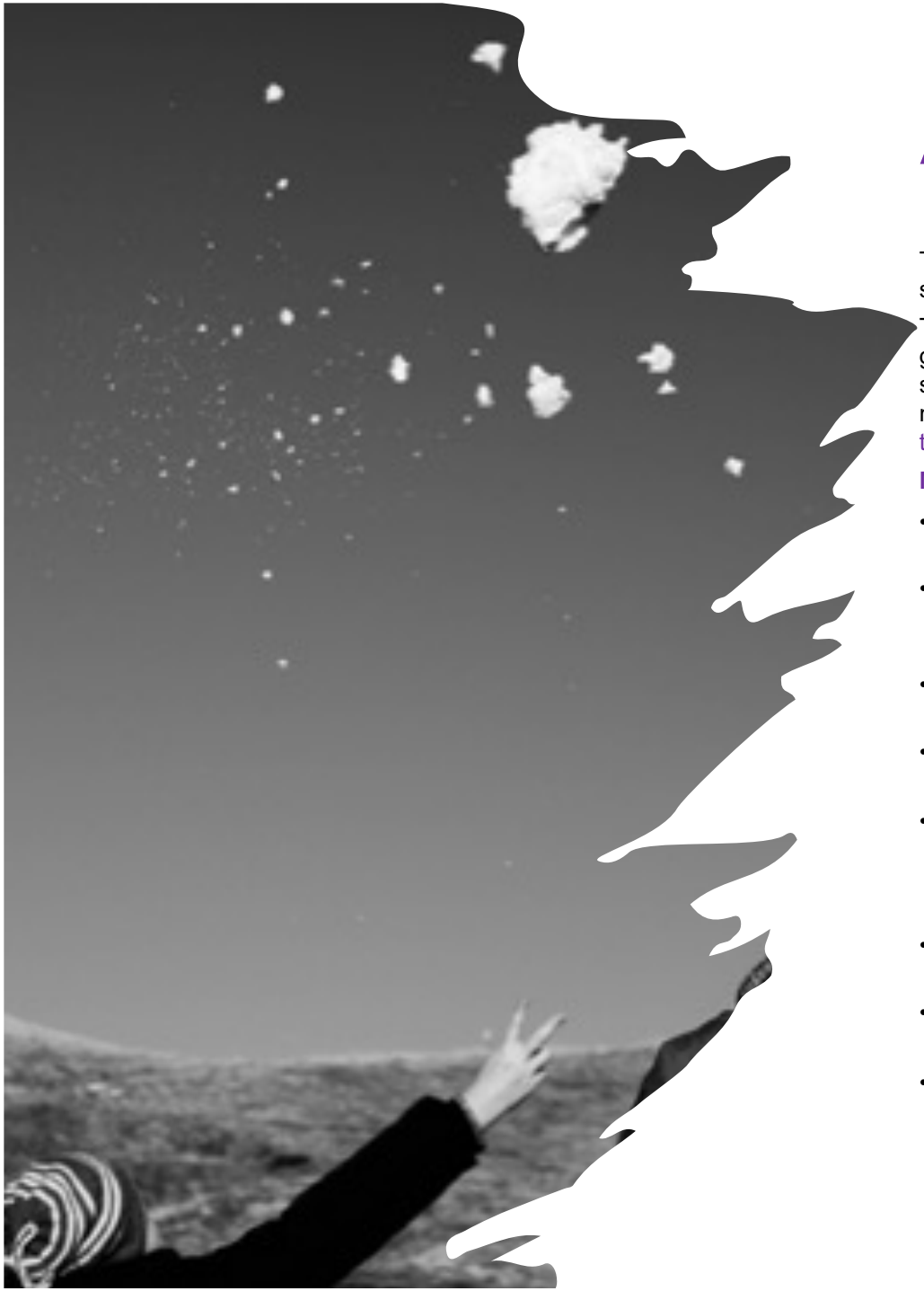
It also provides useful structure for discussing sensitive or controversial topics, as different perspectives can be listened to in depth before any direct discussion. It can prepare students well for written work, as it enables students to deepen their questions and ideas about a topic.

The basic strategy

- Participants are given a topic that is open to different perspectives and does not have a simple, closed answer. For example, topics relevant to racism or peace and conflict.
- The 'fishbowl' is created by making a circle of chairs around a cluster of 5-6 chairs (depending on your overall group size). The 5-6 chairs are for those who will engage with the discussion. The outside circle is for those who will listen to the topic and the quality of the discussion.
- The participants in the centre have a period of time (perhaps 10-15 minutes) to discuss the topic.
- Young people around the outside are asked to listen for the content and quality of the discussion.
- You need to agree together the criteria for evaluating this before you start. (Criteria could include: use of verifiable evidence and/or use of respectful language and gestures and/or everyone having a chance to speak.)
- After the period of time is up, those on the inside switch places with those on the outside and become listeners, with the new participants now 'fish'. The process is repeated.

Teacher/facilitator questioning to deepen thinking:
Summative questioning should focus on enabling reflection by the group and facilitator.

It should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the discussion and what was learnt from it; both in terms of how to conduct effective discussion as well as about the substance of the discussion itself.



Activity 4: Snowball

This is a variation on the Jigsaw method where different groups are assigned a specific aspect of a topic.

The task here provides opportunity for individuals to work as part of a small group at first and then discuss and share their thoughts and viewpoints with other small groups while also gathering thoughts and viewpoints from them. This method guides young people towards producing knowledge and developing thoughts through discussion with others.

Method

- Small groups of 4 to 6 should be formed. These are seated in a circle (if possible).
- The teacher/facilitator assigns a theme to the group. To add a level of complexity to the task, different groups can be assigned different aspects of the same topic.
- Each group discusses their thoughts on the theme and one person takes responsibility for noting down key points of the discussion.
- After 10 minutes that one person who was assigned as scribe is invited to get up and move to the group to the right of them.
- The group they move to set out the key points of their discussion. The original scribe makes notes as they speak, noting areas of similarity or difference. After five minutes the scribe is invited to get up and move to the group on the right. The process is repeated until the scribe returns to their original group.
- Once back, they provide a summary account of points of similarity and difference across the groups visited.
- The group is invited then to discuss this feedback and revise their views should they wish. The group is given 10 minutes for this.
- Once completed the teacher/facilitator opens up a wider discussion on key learning.

Unit 2, Topic 2

Listening

Topic 2: Listening

Introduction

As we have explained the purpose of this module is to outline the foundational elements that allow the educational work of 'unpacking' extremism to happen.

These elements include listening, reflective practice and self-awareness and together they allow the practitioner to develop a learning space for dialogue.

While listening implies listening to others, it also requires that we listen to ourselves as practitioners.

Our dialogues with practitioners underlined that engaging with hate speech and behaviour is affective or emotional in nature, and if not engaged with acknowledged emotion/s, like denial or defensiveness, can impact on practice.

This is why it was seen as essential for practitioners to engage in self-reflection to understand our own assumptions and commit to developing awareness of our reactions (and perhaps defensiveness) when certain topics like someone's experience of racism are raised.

The topic will outline theory and activities to promote self-reflection and support practitioners to listen to themselves and others.

Topic 2: Listening

Introduction:

In this section we will cover the following elements:

1. What is Reflective Listening?
2. Why Is Reflective Listening Important?
3. Influences on Reflective Listening
4. Activities to Develop Reflective Listening

Topic 2: Listening - What is Reflective Listening?

Egan (1994) distinguishes between ***'listening' and 'attending'***. While listening refers to a practitioner's capacity to hear, understand and respond to verbal and non verbal communication, attending is more active in nature and is linked to the capacity of practitioners to build empathetic relationships with young people.

To understand young people, practitioners are required to be open and curious about the social and psychological experiences of young people, and their quest for meaning, existence, so they can come to answer the big existential question 'who are you?'.

For Egan, it is important for practitioners to physically (physical attending) communicate and embody this understanding.

An example of 'physical attending' is when a practitioner displays open, collaborative and relaxed body language. This can help to alleviate anxiety and present a message to (young) people that you want to listen to their experience.

To understand and communicate the perspectives of young people, practitioners need to listen to both the young person and to themselves. This reflective quality to listening is captured in the following definition from 'Training for Transformation' (Hope and Timmel, 2001)

"Listening is an art, a skill, and a discipline. As in the case of other skills, it needs self control. The individual needs to understand what is involved in listening and develop the necessary self-control to be silent and listen, keeping down their own needs and concentrating attention on the other with a spirit of humility".

Topic 2: Listening - Why is Reflective Listening So Important?

Reflective listening supports practitioners to build relationships with young people that allow the work of, for example, unpacking extremism to happen.

The importance of reflective listening for practice is outlined in *Transforming Hate in Youth Settings* (2018) https://www.youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings/

"Working on recognising, tackling and transforming hateful behaviour involves a lot of personal emotions. Youth workers – and trainers – cannot stand apart from their own identity, and as such have to develop competencies around tackling their own emotions when faced with instances of hateful speech and behaviour. When emotions are not acknowledged, they can cause resistance so it is important to address them".

Developing the capacity to listen in a reflective manner can seem daunting.

Take heart. It takes practice and acceptance that as practitioners, our role is to work *with* young people to unpack ideas, beliefs, feelings and values, including, in this case, extremism.

This short quiz from 'MindTools' is a creative way to reflect on your listening skills

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/listening-quiz.htm

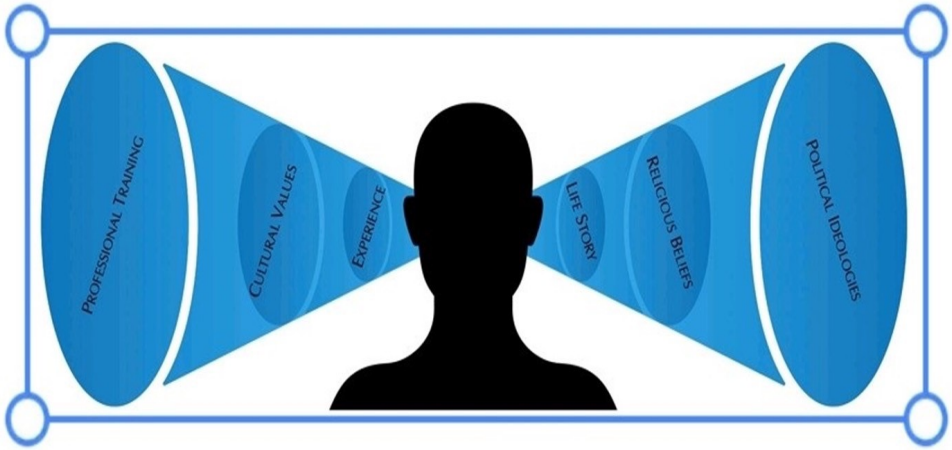
Topic 2: Listening - Influences on Reflective Listening

Practitioners are not 'blank slates'. We bring our feelings, assumptions and beliefs to practice. The DEPAL project (2019) employs the helpful metaphor of 'filter' to highlight how personal and professional experience influence our capacity to listen.

"Our life story, attitudes, cultural values, political ideologies, religious beliefs, professional training etc. can all influence what we actually hear. These act as filters through which we hear the other person. When we are listening to other people we are generally listening through the filter of our own experience"

Who we are determines **what** we hear or don't hear. Oftentimes we hear what we want to hear.

Influences on Listening:



Source: DEPAL Project (2019) Understanding Participatory and Digital Learning: A Guide for Adult Educators
https://www.depalproject.eu/

Topic 2: Listening - Influences on Reflective Listening

In essence, reflective listening is the capacity to understand the influence of our 'life story' on our practice with young people. It requires practitioners to reflect on the experiences we bring to practice and how these 'filters' have the potential to 'trigger' emotional and behavioural responses in both parties. The activity explored later in this module, 'The Practitioner in Context' is a tool to identify the personal, professional and wider system experiences we bring to practice.

Remember the purpose of reflective listening is not to engage in 'filter-less' listening; as some filters are unconscious, this is not possible.

The DEPAL Project (2019) offers some helpful guidance:

"What is possible, is to become aware of one's own filters and the impact they are having on one's listening. I can then decide if the filter is helping or hindering the conversation.

I can choose to engage in the dialogical practice of suspending judgement.

Our filters often invite us to make value judgments quickly: we make assessments that what someone said is good or bad, right or wrong.

Suspension of judgment isn't about ceasing to exercise judgement.

Rather, it's about noticing what our judgments are - and then holding them lightly so that we can still hear what others are saying, even when it may contradict our own judgments".

Topic 2: Listening - Influences on Reflective Listening

In our EDURAD project, our workshops with practitioners highlighted how language, in particular hate speech, micro-aggressions and 'othering' someone, triggers emotion.

This was the experience of both practitioners (and young people). When presented with hate speech, for example with racism, practitioners are faced with a decision to either 'close things down, or open things up'.

The decision to 'close' conversation can be linked to concerns about, for example, young people getting hurt.

But the act of closing conversation may hurt rather than protect young people who experience this as 'being silenced' or shut down if hateful speech by others is not addressed.

The dilemma of whether to 'close things down' or 'open things up', and unpack the meaning of language with young people, is an example of 'Red flag listening – words that cause emotional reaction' (Hope & Timmel, 2001).

Such words are like a 'red rag to a bull' and we often react automatically.

Words triggers the 'filters' of the listener, for example, 'I do not have the experience to deal with this' (competence), 'somebody will get hurt' (risk/harm), 'this racist remark could be directed at me' (resonance with own experience).

In terms of behaviour, we stop listening to the speaker and take defensive steps to manage the impact of the trigger on self.

The next slide offers steps to support practitioners to remain in reflective listening mode.

Topic 2: Listening - Influences on Reflective Listening

REMEMBER

To approach any situation with empathy and compassion:

Step 1: Check in with yourself. Be aware of your perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and expectations and the impact they could have on your response to the situation. If there is anything that you need to park in order to be as present, neutral and fair as possible: do it.

STEP 2: Check that the language you are using (with a group or an individual) is connecting and be aware of others using disconnecting language around you. When you note that you have been disconnected you can re-connect.

STEP 3: Check that when the person/group are addressing you, you are listening in an empathic way. Be aware of your responses or how you engage with what is being said...the time for an intervention can be later, for the moment they just need to be heard; it will give you time to assess how they are feeling and what needs are not being met.

STEP 4: Check that what you are addressing is what you have observed only and not your interpretation of the events or your judgement of what happened.

Source: National Youth Council of Ireland (2018) *Transforming Hate in Youth Settings An Educational Tool and Practice Manual for those working with young people*, Dublin: NYCI.

Available at https://www.youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in- youth-work-settings/

Activity 5: Reflecting on Listening

The exercise can be completed by an individual to support reflection. It can also be competed and shared as part of group development. You could revise it to explore other issues like talking or preferred feedback.

Please complete these sentences:

1. I find it easy to listen when …
2. I find it hard to listen when…
3. The people I find it hard to listen to are ……
4. I really like listening to people who …
5. I never listen when...
6. I get excited when I listen to...
7. My heart sinks when I listen to...
8. Don't ask me to listen when...
9. I listen best when…
10. I react when I hear..

Source: Adapted from DEPAL Project (2019) *Understanding Participatory and Digital Learning: A Guide for Adult Educators.* https://www.depalproject.eu/

Activity 6: Listening as an Ethical Practice

Thinking about listening as an ethical practice reminds us of the complexity of listening.

Julie Tilsen (2018: 65) describes different kinds of listening, and says we should move beyond 'active listening' and we should listen for what is 'absent' or unspoken. Here are some examples. You may have more.

She asks us to think about what listening does, what is its purpose and value is, and what it makes possible. What ways of listening inspire you?

- **Engaged** - **Curious** - **Attuned**	- **Thoughtful** - **Deep** - **Reflective** - **Mindful**	- **Attentive** - **Generous** - **Affirmative.**

1. Digging back into your memory and experience, describe concretely a moment where you felt listened to. Try to remember all the details of it as though you were painting a landscape – the time, your body posture, the other person, the specific quality of being listened to. Does an image come to mind? Speak/write in the present tense.
2. Now, digging back into your memory, describe concretely a moment of feeling that you were not being listened to. Again provide a rich concrete description. You can also do this with another person, preferably sitting side by side, or through writing. If speaking take 3-5 minutes, if writing take 10 minutes.
3. Can you identify what the other person did (or did not do) in each case to leave you with that experience?
4. How can you listen in a way that helps someone else feel that they have been listened to?
5. Describe other different kinds of listening that might be needed in different situations and contexts.

Activity 7: Varieties of Listening

Practice listening in everyday life to everyday sounds, from voices and accents, the sound of the wind or scratching surfaces, to sacred sounds. Sounds are experienced directly by the body and can be the cause of bringing together or of dividing us from one another ("they're too loud"). Bring awareness and curiosity to responses to different kinds of sounds can support listening.

1.Silence: John Cage's composition 4"33' involved listening to the sounds of silence with an open and attentive attitude. https://youtu.be/AWVUp12XPpU Try this yourself and with young people.

2. Embodiment: Listen to sounds in faith and cultural traditions from mantras to sacred song.

- Become aware of the feeling of them in the body, and the feelings that emerge from listening.
- You might invite young people to do blind drawing exercises while listening.
- Explore philosophically/imaginatively why sound, music, song, and chanting is so important in different traditions. What does it do? You might imagine explaining the significance of sound to a Martian Anthropologist without that sense.
- This might also help greater awareness of how affects or emotions are experienced in the body.

3. Mapping: Map the soundscape of your life. Perhaps try recording different sounds that are features of your life, or listen out for surprising sounds. Perhaps create recordings on your phone, or try to take images that express certain sounds.

4. Assemblage/Map: Create an 'assemblage' or multi-modal collage: What sounds relate to which gestures, rituals or practices? This might be dance, prayer, touch.. It could be the ritual of waiting for a bus..

5. Love: Ask each person to bring and share a sound that they love.

Unit 2, Topic 3

Reflecting

Topic 3: Reflecting

Overview: In this section we will explore what it means to reflect and how reflection relates to listening and dialogue.

Over the course of our engagements with practitioners and stakeholders as part of the EDURAD project, this has emerged as an important practice that allows people to take an 'intimate distance' from that which is most familiar, including from ourselves. This allows us to listen to other perspectives, to take other perspectives on the self, and to notice our assumptions, the baggage we carry, or the structures that shape our own lives and the most personal aspects of our experience. Then make sure you ask the other person or group about their preferred styles of communication. This can be very important when you need to unpack a difficult issue in a pastoral setting, one on one.

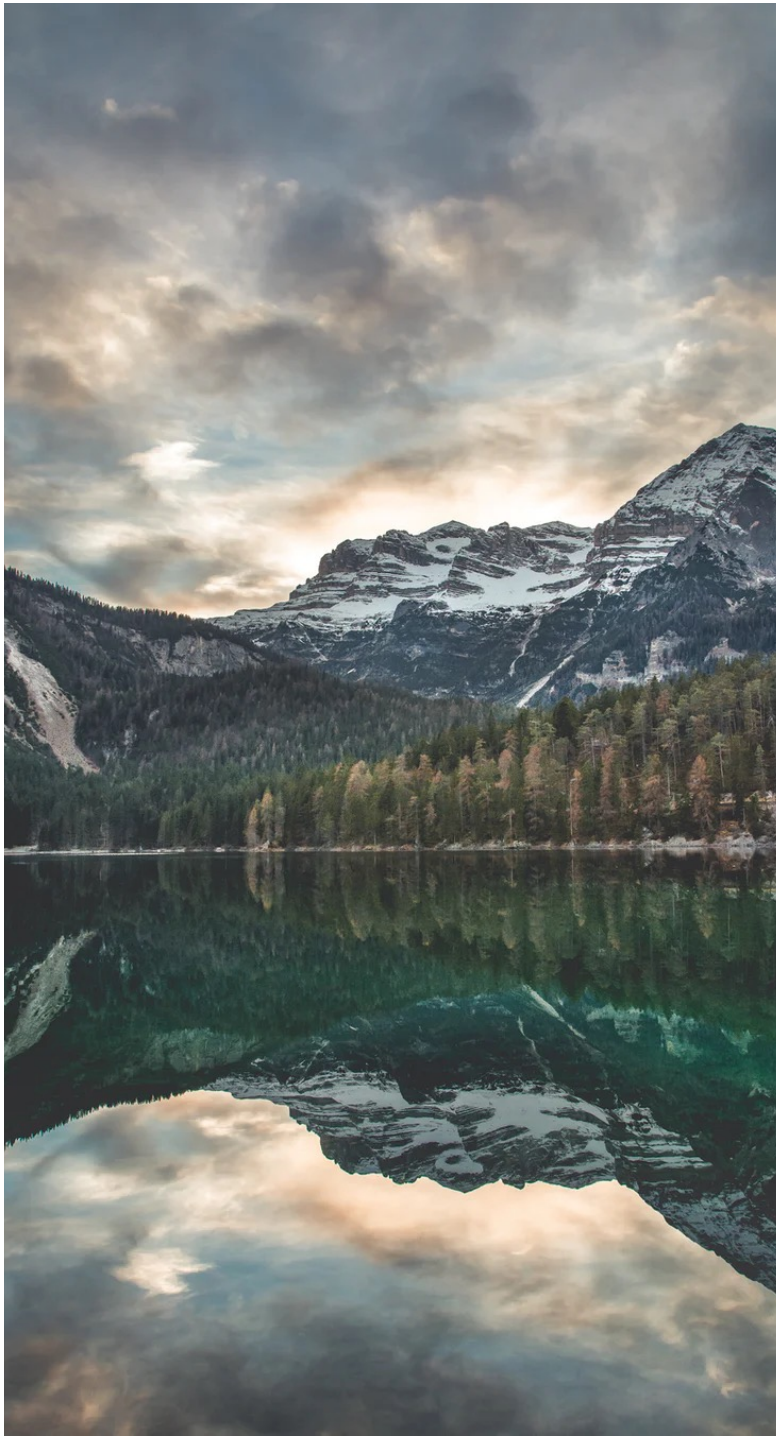
First, we invite you to engage in a short Mentimeter activity. Using the QR code you post three words you associate with reflection. You might also do this with your professional peers, communities, and/or young people.

Moment for Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on what others have written. Note any new insights and keep in mind those terms in mind as we move through this section.

https://www.menti.com/eajuix6de4

Results can be viewed at the following link:
https://www.mentimeter.com/s/27465cf6fd2657f0f019d003f7770cba/1a476a3a9b8c



Topic 3: Reflecting - What is Reflection?

Reflection stems from the Latin verb *reflectere*, meaning "to bend" or "to turn back on the self."

Self-reflection involves making sense through sustained committed reflection to looking at oneself in an open and honest way.

Reflecting allows us to take some distance from what we experience. Whilst not losing the feeling and quality of the experience, we don't become lost in the experience or completely identify with it. Reflecting means finding a 'little gap', a little fresh air, to allow other perspectives to enter.

Sometimes reflection is imagined as a mirror but at other times it is imagined as de-centering the habitual self in order to look at something through fresh eyes.

In many ways, reflection allows for renewal. It means that that we don't get stuck in one way of being, feeling, perceiving, sensing, thinking or engaging in our practice and in our lives. But it can also clarify our commitments and our values and allow us to see whether these are being lived out in practice.

Moment for Reflection :

- Describe your **core values** using image and text. Respond intuitively.
- Name the different aspects of your life where you feel you most **embody** those values.
- Locate any **gaps** between your values and your everyday practices of living and/or your professional practice and explore ways to embody your core values. This can be done in pairs or groups.

Activity 8: Reflecting - ‘Reflecting on reflection..’

Moment for Reflection : Here is a reflective exercise about reflection. You could do this for other practices like listening, feedback, dialogue etc.

- Notice what happens when you say to yourself "I intend to reflect on this idea of reflection".
- What image of reflection arises?
- What are the feelings in your body, the emotions that rise up, what is your posture like? Sit with all of this.
- Explore then what happens when you say to yourself, I will reflect on reflection in a spirit of.. justice, generosity, anger, kindness, openness, dispassion, curiosity, hopefulness, certainty, objectivity, coolness, ambiguity, complexity.
- Don't worry too much about what arises. Just stay with it.
- Next choose something that you want to reflect on and do this exercise of noticing your body and emotions as you bring it to mind, reflect on the tools you may need in order to reflect (do you reach for a pen? Do you sit in a chair and gaze into the distance?).
- Then experiment with different styles of reflection you are going to adopt first about an issue, and then about yourself.

Topic 3: Reflecting - Models and Frameworks for Reflecting

Bassot 2020 → Metaphorical mirrors: the bathroom mirror (reflecting on self), the rear-view mirror (reflecting back), the wing or side view mirror (reflecting on feedback from others), the magnifying mirror (reflecting on detail), the funfair mirrors (reflection can be distorted), the shop window reflection (reflecting naturally while we are in practice).

Rolfe, Freshwater & Jasper (2001) → Reflexive Learning: What? – So What? – Now What?

Brookfield (1995) → Lens of their own autobiography as educators and learners - Lens of young people's eyes - Lens of colleagues' experiences – Theoretical Lens.

Greenway (1995) → 4 Fs Reflective Method – Fact, Feeling, Findings, Future

Topic 3: Reflecting - Metaphorical Mirrors

Bassot, B (2020) *The Reflective Journal*. London: MacMillan

Bathroom mirror (reflecting on self)	Observing ourselves in the present affords us choice - to leave things as they are or take actionto present ourselves differently.	Examining our practice may mean we are not always happy with what we find. Reflecting in this way offers a choice whether to take action or not.
Rear-view mirror (reflecting back)	When driving, we look in the rear-view mirror. Looking back offers us opportunity to look to the road ahead.	Reflective practice involves looking back on our past experiences so that we may understand the best way forward.
Wing or side view mirror (reflecting on feedback from others)	Helps us see places that are not usually visible.	Feedback from others plays a vital part in helping us to identify what might be a blind spot in our practice. It helps us understand ourselves and our practice from different angles or perspectives.

Topic 3: Reflecting - Metaphorical Mirrors

Bassot, B (2020) *The Reflective Journal*. London: MacMillan

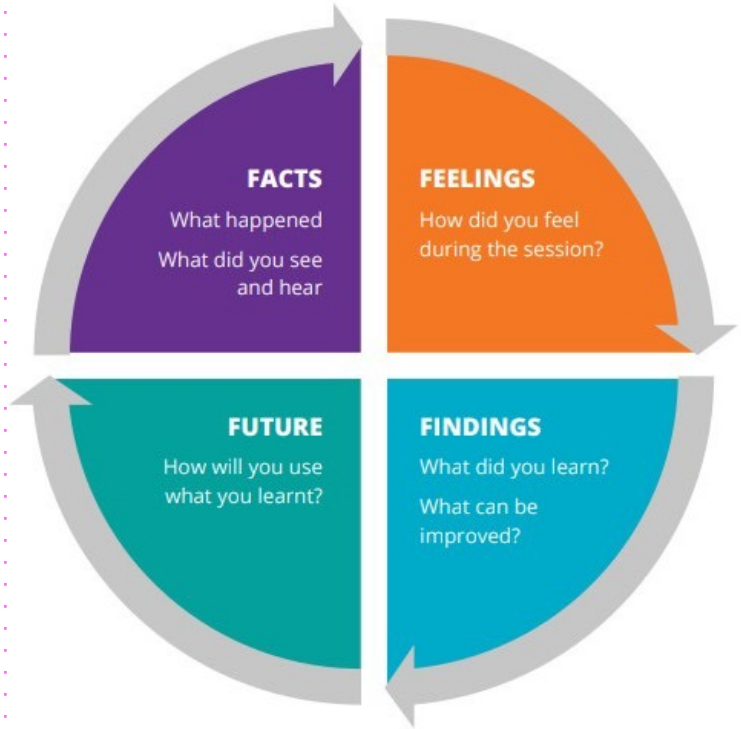
Magnifying mirror (reflecting on detail)	Helps us to see ourselves or an object closer and in more detail.	Close examination of an experience or ourselves in relation to an experience can guide future actions/decisions.
Funfair mirror (reflection can be distorted	Mirrors can distort what we see.	Reflections may not always be fully accurate – missing key blind spots or being overly critical. Seeking feedback from other perspectives is necessary in reflective practice.
Shop window reflection (reflecting in practice)	Not actual mirrors but we can see our own reflection as we walk by.	Reflecting as we go.

Topic 3: Reflecting - Reflective Lenses (Brookfield, 1995)

Autobiographical Lens	Consulting our autobiographies as learners puts us in the role of the 'other.' We see our practice from the other side of the mirror, and we become viscerally connected to what young people are experiencing. Through personal self-reflection, we become aware of the paradigmatic assumptions and instinctive reasonings that frame how we work. When we know what these are, we can start to test their accuracy and validity through conversations with young people, colleagues, and wider literature.
Young People's Eyes	Seeing ourselves as young people and children see us makes us aware of those actions and assumptions that either conform or challenge existing power relationships in our organisations. They also help us check whether young people take from our practice the meanings that we intend.
Our Colleagues' Experience	By inviting colleagues to watch what we do, or by engaging in critical conversations with them, we can notice aspects of our practice that are normally hidden from us. As they describe their readings of, and responses to, situations that we face, we see our practice in a new light.
Theoretical Literature	Theoretical literature can provide multiple interpretations of familiar but impenetrable situations. It can help us understand our experience by naming it in different ways, and by illuminating generic aspects of what we thought were idiosyncratic events and processes.

Source: Brookfield, S. (1995) *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. London: Wiley.

Topic 3: Reflecting – Greenway's 4 Fs Reflective Method



When reflection on activities (including this module) the 4 F´s debriefing method may be useful:

1. Fact – What did you hear during this session?
2. Feelings – How did you feel during the session?
3. Findings – What did you learn?
4. Future – How will you use what you have learned?

Source: Greenway, R. (1995) *Powerful learning experiences in management learning and development: a study of the experiences of managers attending residential development training courses at the Brathay Hall Trust* (1988-9). Doctoral dissertation, University of Lancaster.

Activity 9: Reflecting on Roles

The aim of this activity is to prompt educators to reflect on the more appropriate roles we can and should take up.

What is the most appropriate role for educators to take up when dealing with extremism in the classroom or youth work space. Reflect on roles when controversial topics emerges in:

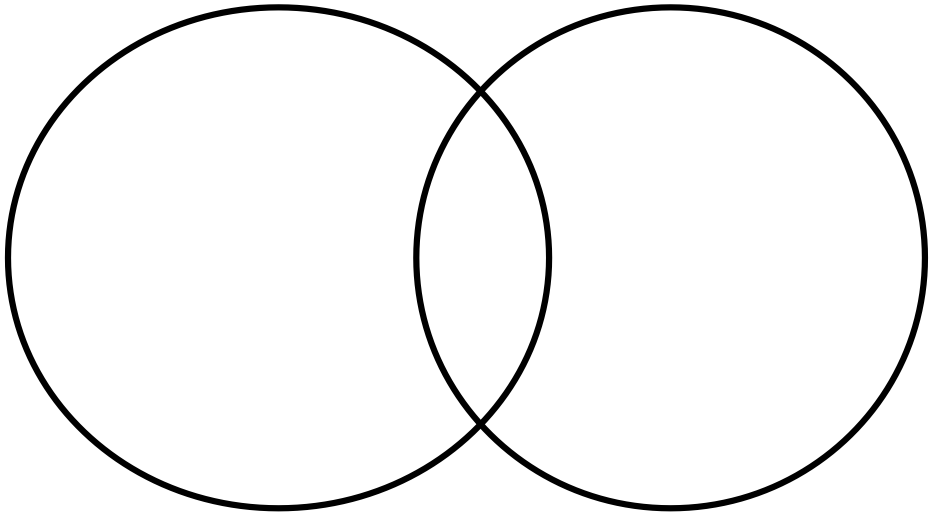
(A) Planned and intended ways (i.e., a topic you as educator planned for)

(B) Unplanned and unintended ways.

The task here is for group to complete a Venn diagram and seek areas of commonality in roles.

Moment for Reflection: Constructive confrontation – Is it to be avoided at all costs?

Planned / Prompted / Intended



Unplanned / Unprompted / Unintended

Activity 10: Placemat Activity

Our conversations and research as part of the EDURAD project highlighted differences n views of the kinds of roles educators should take up when dealing with controversial topics or difficult conversations.

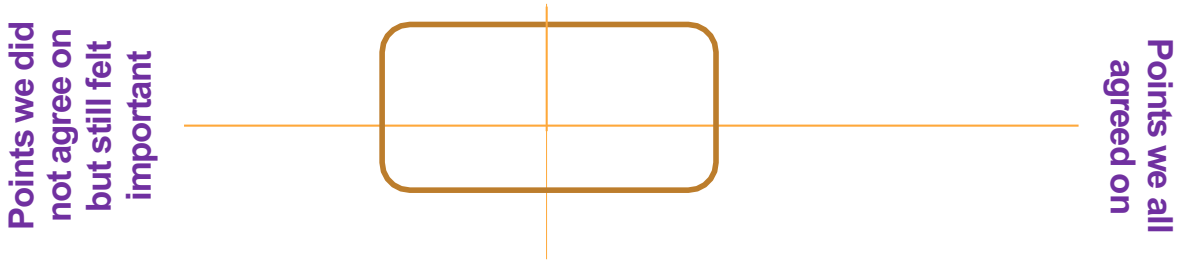
Some saw constructive confrontation as a valid pedagogic response. Others communicated a preference that sought consensus and a 'middle ground.' Young people said in all cases that these issues need to be addressed and not avoided.

Moments of Reflection

Using a placemat activity, reflect on the values, attitudes and roles which you think are needed by teachers/educators to support dialogue and authentic listening.

Here you are asked to reflect on your own at first and then share your thoughts and insights with three others in your group. You should write your personal thoughts in the section of paper allocated to you (see diagram below). When everyone has shared, you are asked to discuss these and note those points that you all agree on and points that you did not agree on but still believed to be important.

Then do this with the young people you work with.



Activity 11: Role(s) in Supporting Dialogue: Priority Pyramid

The next task provides an opportunity for individuals to first work on their own and then to share their thoughts through discussion with a small group.

Task

1) On your own, first identify aspects, supports, structures that need to be put in place to build and support a restorative culture within your organisation.

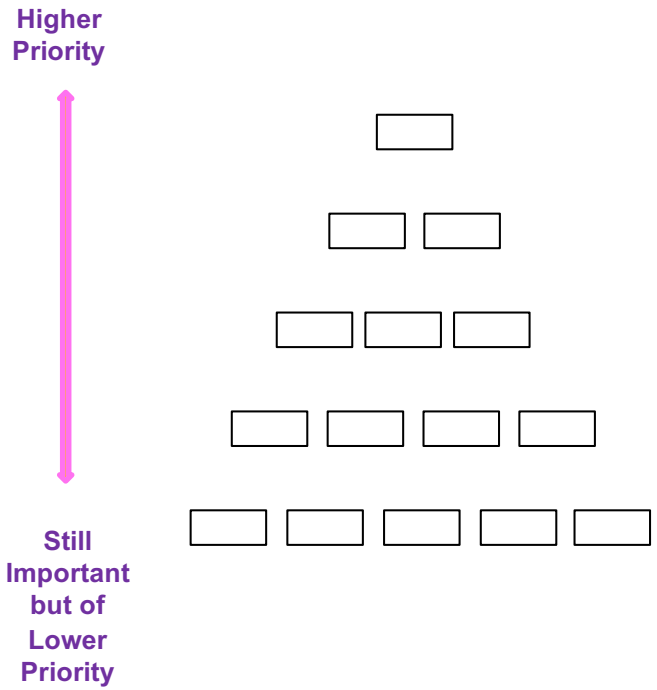
2) Take a moment to list these – aim to keep them short. For example, prioritise relationships rather than rules; authentically value student voice; create opportunities for collaboration, create space to share learning, etc.

3) When complete share these with others in your small group.

4) The task is to prioritise in order of importance what you as a group believe to be essential in terms of building restorative, dialogic cultures in our schools/youth groups. Complete these on the pyramid diagram on the next slide.

5) Now do this exercise with young people.

6) Reflect and Review



Unit 2, Topic 4
Developing Awareness

Topic 4: Developing Awareness

In this section we will address the following elements:

1. What is Self-Awareness?
2. Creating Cultures of Awareness
3. Activities to Develop Self-Awareness

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - What is Self-Awareness?

A theme that unites the various elements in this module is the importance of self-awareness, defined as 'conscious knowledge of one's own character, feelings, motives, and desires' (OED). From a practitioner perspective, the purpose is to develop an awareness of what you bring to your educational practice with young people.

The activities outlined in this module will support you to develop your self-awareness and to develop awareness of your organisational culture.

Julie Tilsen makes the point that the purpose of self-awareness is to develop **'Deliberate Practice'.** The aim is to improve practice with a focus on a specific area or skill.

Firstly, practitioners identify an area/skill they want to develop and create a plan to meet the identified goal.

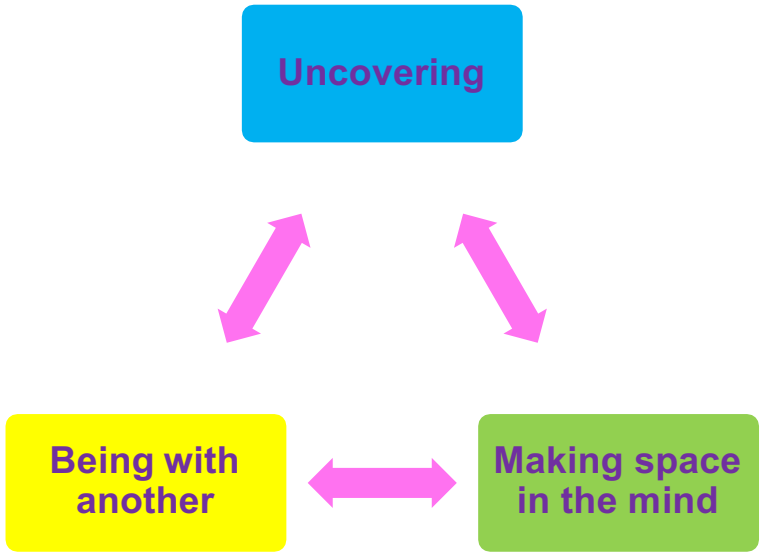
Secondly, practitioners 'repeat' the area/skill in practice until they achieve fluency.

Thirdly, feedback from colleague/s or a supervisor is helpful.

Finally, deliberate practice requires, motivation, commitment and indeed organisational support.

Tilsen J. (2018) *Narrative Approaches to Youth Work: Conversational Skills for a Critical Practice*. London: Routledge

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - What is Self Awareness?



For Collander-Brown (2010) self-awareness supports practitioners to establish meaningful relationships with young people. She draws on metaphors of 'uncovering' and 'making space' to allow a practitioner to create a relationship focused on 'being with another'.

- **Making space in the mind:** Coming to practice with an openness 'not filled up with anticipated issues'.
- **Uncovering:** A focus on the life experience we bring into practice, to allow us to manage the impact of self on professional role.
- **Being with another:** Allowing us to be fully present in practice. This includes working with facts and feelings and feeling comfortable to work with both what we know and what emerges in practice.

Source: Collander-Brown, K. (2010) 'Being with another as a professional practitioner' in Jeffs T. and Smith M. *Youth work practice.* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Creating Cultures of Awareness

We don't live and work in vacuums. Every context is different. Every organisation is different. And things changes moment by moment, inflected by an incident in someone's life to a geo-political event like a terrorist attack, a war, a flood, or a movement of solidarity or kindness.

Still, when we enter into different spaces, we can often sense or feel the distinctive atmosphere of the place. It's hard to put a finger on what causes this.

Developing cultures of awareness means being open to looking at the ways we both do, and don't do things. What we pay attention to, notice or privilege shapes the culture of our organisations and institutions.

So too does ignoring or silencing certain issues shape those cultures. For example, is sport privileged? Music? Certain (gendered/raced) voices?

This involves reflecting on how we listen, to whom do we listen, how we enter into dialogue, how we invite others to tell us how they prefer us to communicate with them, and with whom as individuals, as students, as young people, as practitioners.

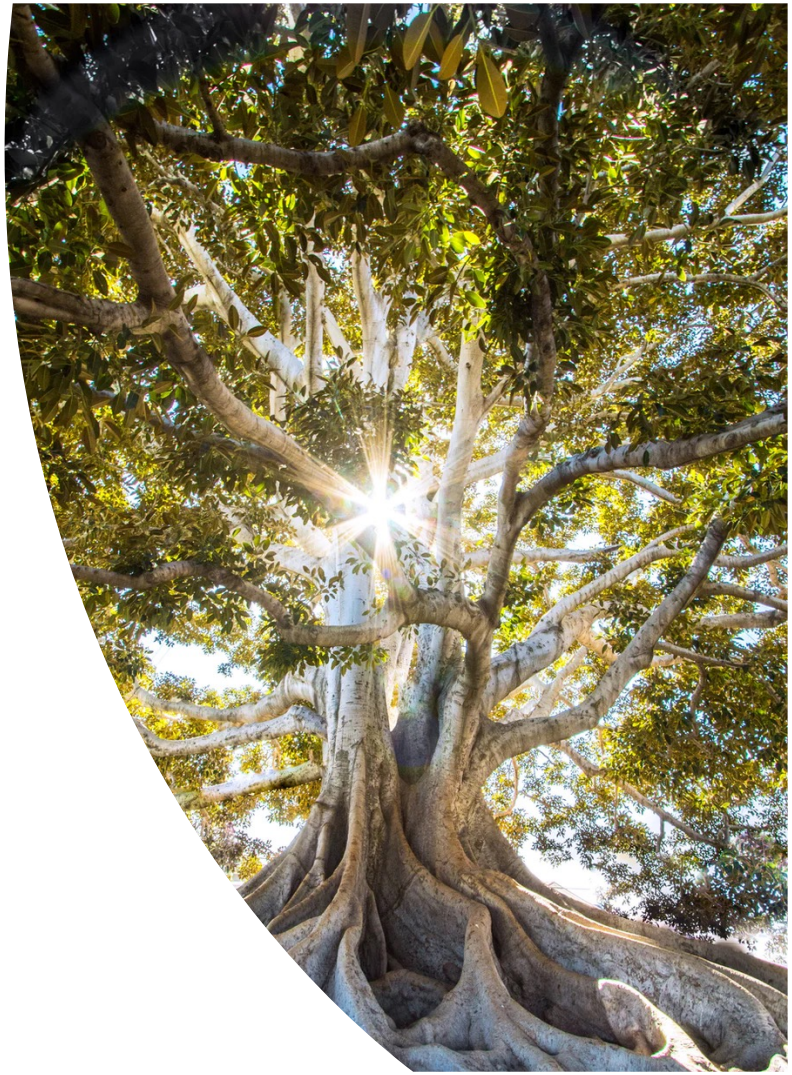
All of these practices shape the cultures of our educational spaces as they are lived and embodied. We can then see whether our values, beliefs and principles are really lived out.

One way of reflecting on organisational cultures involves the following.

Looking at Organisational Culture on Three Levels:

1. Living Values
2. Practices
3. "Unquestionable" Organisational Assumptions

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Creating Cultures of Awareness



Organisational Values

- What are the values stated as important to the organisation?
- Are these connected to and meaningful to all the different stakeholders?
- Is there space for different kinds of values to be held within the organisation whilst still supporting belonging?
- Are the values espoused by the organisation evident and embodied in lived practices and values?
- How do those values shape what is noticed and foregrounded and what is explored?

Organisational Practices

- What are the different kinds of practices in the organisation?
- Reflect on this through multiple angles.
- How are spaces organised?
- What kinds of participation are available to young people?
- What pedagogical practices are privileged?
- Are there tendencies to silence certain positions or groups?
- How is conflict negotiated and navigated?
- Are imagination and voice supported, and, if so, how?

Unquestionable Organisational Assumptions

Going more deeply, what are those elements that shape the culture but which are perhaps not visible? Are there any structures/practices in place that are never open to public questioning or reflection?

Other examples of difficult moments in practice might include being stopped by organisational management or boards from doing educational work that is based on principles of listening to all positions, or addressing misinformation and even forms of extremism in an open way.

Sometimes the work of bringing two sides into conversation is seen as problematic. However institutional cultures committed to engaging with these issues need to support listening to young people, even when they have problematic views, in order to assure them that they matter and belong and create a space so they might come to open up to different perspectives.

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Creating Cultures of Awareness

At times when there is a divisive issue in society, organisations prefer not to address it with young people.

Indirect methods of silencing include micro-managing the situation, insisting on knowing all facets of questions and topics that will be explored in advance, rather than being open to what may emerge and trusting in the process and the educator.

This kind of risk aversion can mean that conversations are shut down in what are often some of the only spaces that young people have to talk about these issues.

At times, when there is a dominant norm in society, even if liberal or progressive, there can be intolerance of other views.

As educators, bringing attention to questions of racism and discrimination, and what different contexts call for with the diversity of young people coming into educational spaces, is part of the work that needs to be done as an educator.

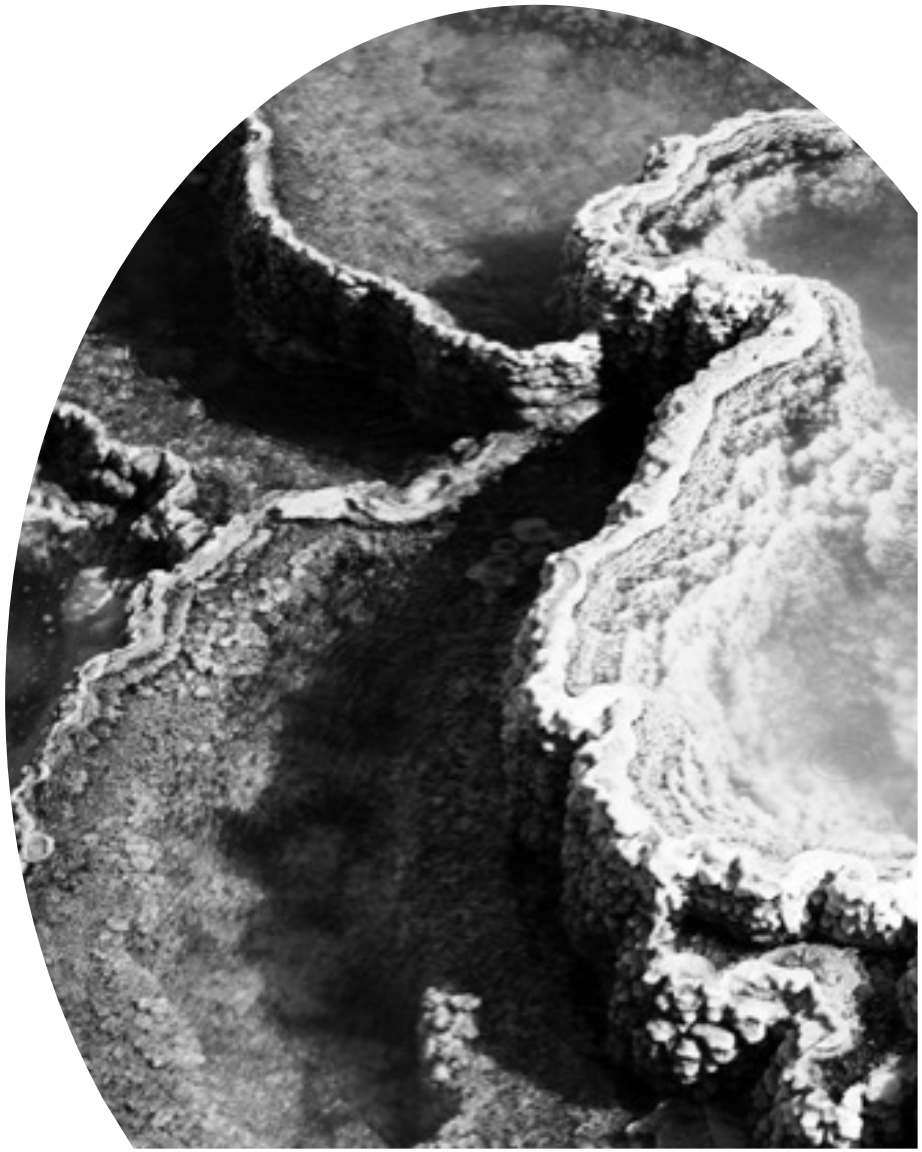
But it needs to be done without entrenching the young person in a counter position or encouraging them to source other spaces for belonging.

Activity 12: Creating Cultures of Awareness

Exercise: Creating Awareness

1. Within any organisational culture, reflective feedback loops are central. Where are they in yours? How do they work?
2. What would it be like to take one 'unquestionable' assumption and question it with others in your community?
3. How do you also listen out for the unexpected and surprising? Things you would not have thought about. How can you make these more audible?
4. Take a moment to reflect on the organisational culture in your classroom/site of practice. Reflect on the three aspects above. Perhaps reflect using one or more of the reflective lens outlined in previous slides. What emerges as significant?
5. Then do this exercise with the other colleagues and the young people that you work with.

In Unit 3, we will think more about some of the ways in which we can 'map cultures'.



Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Shifting Cultures: The Example of Restorative Practice

Question: Is there a 'code of behaviour' or is there a culture of punitiveness in your site of practice that prevents engagement with difficult issues?

Three Shifts Toward Restorative Schools and Classrooms	
From…	**To…**
1 Efforts to suppress misbehavior based on the view that misbehavior is evidence of failing students or classrooms.	Recognizing and using the inherent value of misbehavior as an opportunity for social and emotional learning.
2 Authority-driven disciplinary actions that focus only on the identified misbehaving students.	Restorative circles that bring together everyone who is most immediately affected by the incident.
3 Punishment and exclusion is used to control misbehavior and motivate positive behavior changes.	Dialogue leading to understanding and action to set things right and repair and restore relationships.

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Restorative Practices

Moment for Reflection: Take a moment to reflect on the nature of language and how we use language in our schools/youth groups / classrooms.

Reflect on tone, volume, gestures? Is it all about orders or invitations? Do they remind everyone of hierarchies of power, or invite voice? What words are invoked the most?

Restorative Conversations offer a means to reflect on our language. These:

1) Are solution focused, highly relational and non-blaming – emphasis on the "I."
2) Set high expectations.
3) Require empathetic and attentive listening.
4) Open ended and explorative – language of 'unpack.'
5) Allow for story telling.
6) Recognise the value of the affective.
7) Recognise each other's voice.
8) Hold each other to account.
9) Are principally focused on the who, the what and the how. For example:
   - What happened from your perspective?
   - What were you thinking about at the time?
   - What were you hoping would happen?
   - Who has been affected?
   - How might we move this forward?

"Can you unpack that a little bit for me?"
Participant: Workshop 1

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Reflecting on Power and Agency

Drawing ‘assemblages’ can help to imaginatively locate the inter-relation of complex elements in your life and your site of practice.

Part of this means becoming more open to understanding the structural issues that shape inequality and experiences of ‘othering’, exclusion, oppression, and isolation, such as racism, sexism, dogmatic belief systems, and ideas about national or cultural identities that privilege dominant norms or groups.

These 'invisible' forces can be very powerful.

Overt power tends to be more obvious than all the 'invisible baggage' that shapes our world.

Lukes (2005) in *Power: A Radical View* speaks of the necessity to reflect on power in three dimensions rather than two and says that we need to attend to those aspects of power that are least accessible to observation: Power is at its most effective when least observable.

Brené Brown offers another interesting lens through which to reflect on power. She speaks of approaches that seek power *over* and also power *with/to/within.*

Activity 13: Reflecting on Power and Agency #1

Moment for Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on how power and agency operate in your own classroom/site of practice.

Reflect on the kinds of power at play, how they 'other' and exclude as well as how they bring together in conviviality.

Think about the objects or practices that perhaps either divide or bring together both (a flag, an accent, the images in the space, particular words that circulate..).

Exercise:

1.Draw two maps, one of "how power over and power together operate in your organisation" and one showing "where agency is possible" in your site of practice.

2. Invite the young people you work with and your colleagues to do the same. Ensure it does not include personal comments about individual others or groups.

3. Put the images on tables/walls and compare and discuss.

Activity 14: Reflecting on Power and Agency #2

Moment for Reflection

1) Write/Record/Draw a Short Reflective Response to Each of These Reflections from our Workshops.
2) Which One Most Resonates with You?

1. *"If as a professional you are coming from a place of love and open conversation and communication, this is really what makes the difference and makes change possible."*
2. *"Creating spaces to have the discussion, and the word 'unpack' came up repeatedly – to unpack the conversation, the words behind, the message with the students. You must talk to the perpetrator because if we don't open up the conversation, we don't get the full story of it. This involves talking through transitions in schooling, opening up the conversation with young people, and allowing the conversation to happen. Young people might not use the terminology we would like them to use. But how much can we ask of educators? At least we can ask them, and schools and other educational spaces, to do no harm."*
3. *"Part of it is creating spaces, including with inter-faith groups, to have the conversation. This means managing expectations in the first instance, applying restorative practice and a restorative conversation, employing a Socratic method, asking questions, particularly when talking about discrimination and extremism."*
4. *"Here it is important to highlight that just because one is being oppressed, from say a faith perspective, doesn't exempt one from oppressing given their own positionality. It's important to talk through the nine grounds of discrimination, what symbolic violence is (for example the misuse of pronouns) and open up these issues to be teased through and developed."*

Activity 15: Will We Close Things Down or Open Things Up?

A recurrent theme through this project is the question of whether the/our dominant tendency is one of closing down topics for discussion, or opening them up in ways that listen to the voices of young people, despite the difficulty of the topic, their views, or challenging nature of content/form of presentation.

There can be a kind of 'counter-extremist' tendency in some organisations whereby, through risk aversion, the tendency is take a counter-extreme extreme position - shutting down opportunities for difficult conversations or to work through conflict.

Looking at controversial issues can be really challenging, for example looking at the hunger strikes in areas of Northern Ireland where this is a particular controversial issue, but these also offer really important learning opportunities to challenge perceptions as staff and for capacity building in educational contexts.

Reflect on this observation. What is your emotional reaction? What would you like to say to the person who said this or to the people about whom they are speaking? Would you take this approach?

"With Covid and anti-vaxxers, if we think about the sort of people who are working on 'countering' the extremist perspective, we can end up cutting down and shutting down discussion and debate.

To open up is not about giving oxygen. It is about saying 'Look, I am going to listen to you because most people won't. They just want to close the door'.

This is why these people say that others are being propagandised and don't want to hear the truth. It reinforces the sense of no one wants to listen and this is reinforced by other voices saying we are on the periphery.

Instead, we can say, talk about it, what makes you believe that, and engage in an open and philosophical way, using the Socratic method, exploring the 'how and why and where', and creating a space that allows them to think about it for themselves, with what are often nascent constructs."

Topic 4: Developing Awareness - Reflecting on Power and Agency

Admitting One is Wrong: Vulnerability and Power

Being sensitive to the significance of micro-aggressions that can be both frustrating and painful when persistently experienced by young people and professionals is part of the process of self-reflection without defensiveness.

What matters is to be able to admit when one has made a mistake and apologise, in particular as an educator. This is part of showing willingness to learn.

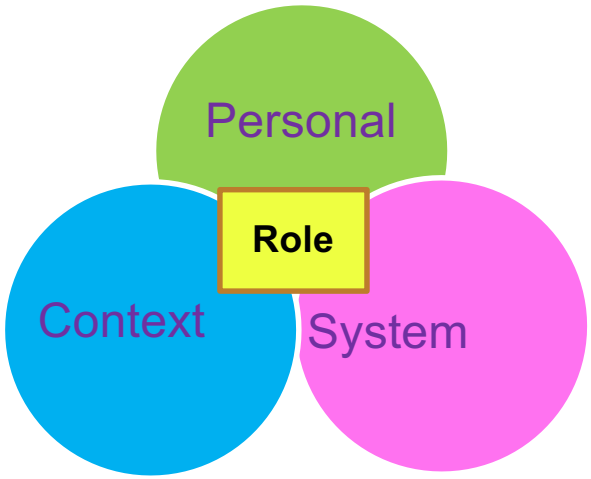
On the other hand, we need to create spaces for connection and belonging without shaming and humiliating those who may have been caught up in conspiracy theories or even extremist groups. They need to be able to say they were wrong without further shaming. Maintaining relationships keeps a door open to return when the time is right for the person, even if one can't get through for the moment.

From the perspective of practitioners, think more abstractly about how does power 'behave' were you to personify it as human, animal or other kind of being? What about Power over (*Potestas*) and power in relation (*potentia*)? Are they different? Do power/Power behave with vulnerability and willingness to learn and unlearn? Are they both sensitive to the power of language?

Imagine:

1. Write an autobiographic story of 'Power' unlearning itself and becoming vulnerable. (This involves writing in the first person as 'Power' and might involve thinking of a journey from control to re-imagining itself as inter-dependent. It could be personified (does it start out as a heavy weight and metamorphose). Then do this with power (small p) or power in relation.
2. How do Power/power live in your life? Which kind of power is dominant in your existence right now? What is your relation to it?

Activity 16: The Practitioner in Context



The 'Person-System-Role' framework is a tool to develop self-awareness. The aim is to support practitioners to consider how the interrelated elements of personal, system and context influence their current role. The framework originated from the work of the Tavistock Clinic and Grubb Institute in London.

In terms of application:

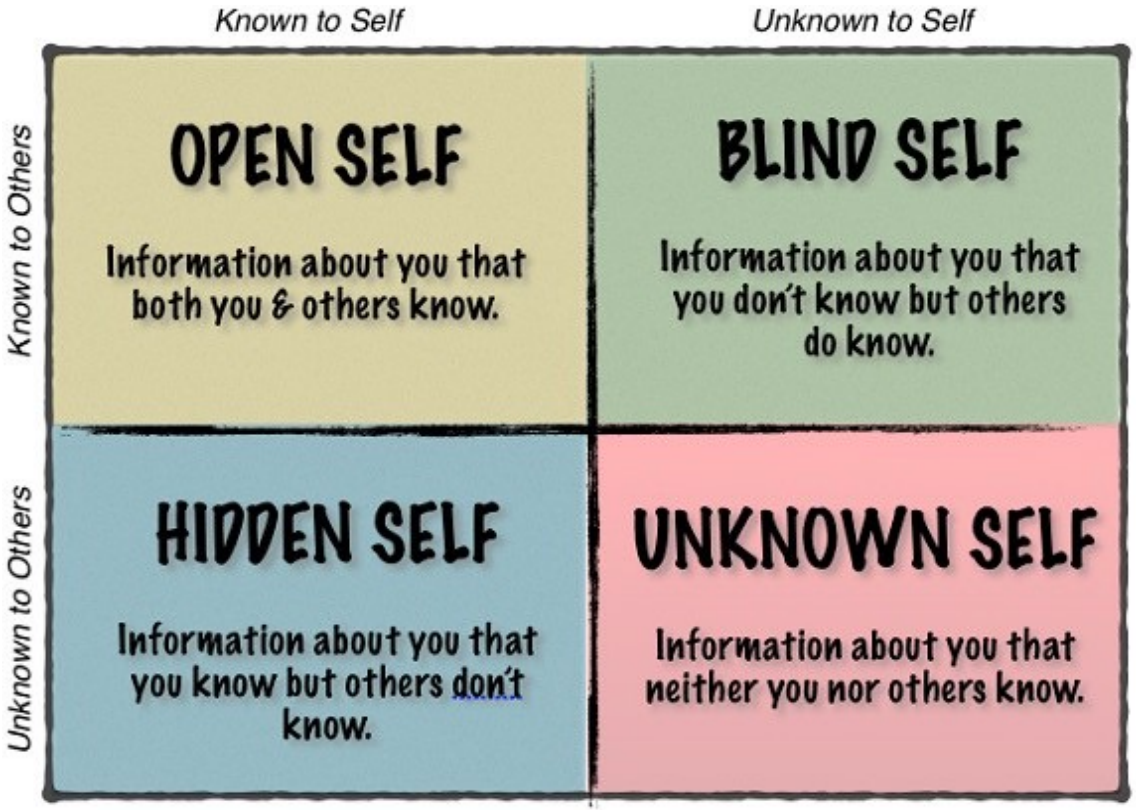
Open
In each of the three circles write/draw how you feel/think the **Personal** (what makes you the person you are), **System** (work organisation, young people you work with) and **Context** (legal requirements, attitudes of wider society/Government) act to support/constrain your current role.

The open approach is really just to raise awareness by bringing material 'into the mind'.

Specific
This can also be used as a framework to reflect on specific aspects of practice. If a practice went well the aim is adopt an 'Appreciative' approach and if something did not work you are encouraged to adopt a 'Critical' approach.

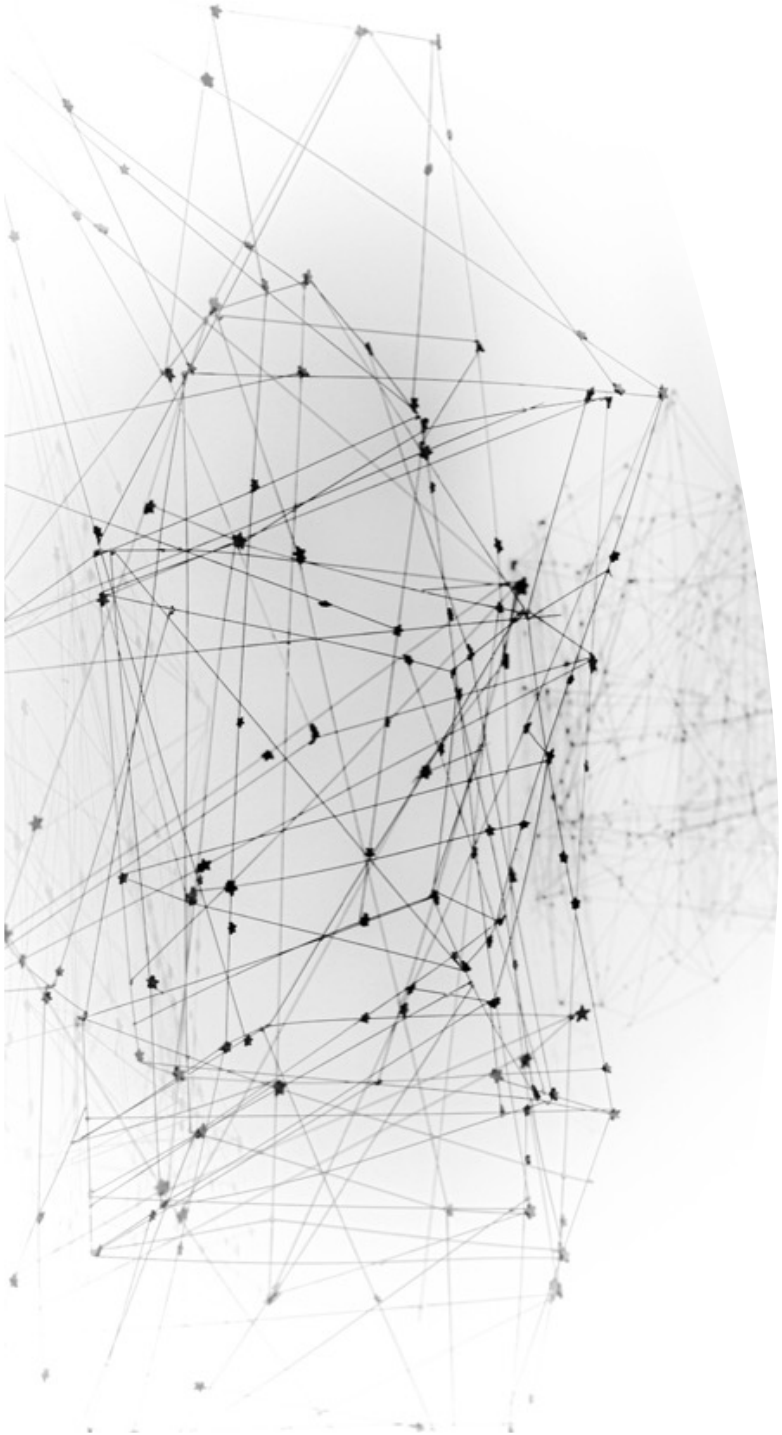
As a method you place the example of practice in the role box and make associations with the personal, system and context to understand how these influenced what happened. The aim of the approach is to support the practitioner role by consolidating practice. It can also identify personal and or system elements that need adaptation to improve practice.

Activity 17: Johari window



The Johari Window is a well known framework for developing self-awareness about ourselves and the relationships we have with others.

Follow the link to find out how to use the framework https://youtu.be/XKkK6x5rchg



Activity 18: Mapping Assemblages

Deleuze and Guattari write about the idea of an assemblage as a kind of cartography or map comprised of lots of different kind of heterogeneous (different) elements all in relation with one another.

To map an assemblage, we make a diagram including all sorts of things that we might not normally think of as coming together but which allow certain things to happen and create certain cultures, possibilities and atmospheres.

They imagine this as 'transversal': relations that are real and have real effects but that are complex and can't be reduced to a single element. This might be something quite small that leads to huge changes, for example the stirrup or the wheel.

One example from our contemporary time is the COVID-19 virus. This virus has transformed global movements, health systems, relationship to bodies, touch and feeling, chemicals and sanitisation, masks, feelings of safety, consumption of vitamin D, propagation of conspiracy theories, landfills, trust and so on. But we could be much more specific in making a diagram of all these very different interconnecting elements in our different contexts, for example, looking at the impact on young people in urban areas or rural areas..

It's the same thing with schools and youth clubs. Sometimes light falling in a particular way, a warm summer's day, anxiety about exams, job loss, nutritious food, a meme, and so on will all come together to create a particular atmosphere or culture. There are usually patterns over time, but these can shift, sometimes dramatically, when a new element is introduced.

Sometimes some ideas over-code others, like what it is to be a boy or girl (what are the dominant images of masculinity or femininity and what space is there for other gender identities?), ask yourself, what and who is attended to as being most important in a school (maths, football?); this shapes everyone's experiences in different ways.

Activity 18: Mapping Assemblages (Continued)

Making an Assemblage

- Draw a diagram of your professional life with all these different complex elements that make it up. Use text and image. Which ones 'over-code' others?
- Draw a diagram of the space and time of your site of practice. You might want to foreground those elements that seem to dominate, and those that interrupt from the margins.
- Imagine introducing a new element that would change the relations and the culture(s) in your professional life and site of practice. Explore different possible elements.
- Invite the young people you work with to do this exercise and share the different images.

Unit 2, Topic 5
Having Difficult Conversations

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations

As part of a series of responses called “The Impossible Conversation” to Jonathan Cummins’ exhibition *When I leave these landings,* Sharon Todd wrote the following.

“The pedagogical intent here cannot simply be reframed into a question about ‘us’ versus ‘them’ but how the very encounter between us stages a conversational space whereby the difficulty of witnessing – hearing things we don’t want to hear, confronting things about myself I cannot bear – can turn into the conditions for listening. Such spaces are never only about a ‘them’ who ‘we’ have to ‘tolerate’ , instead the space itself creates a ‘we’, a community that resists easy categorization and makes us all participants in a common project.

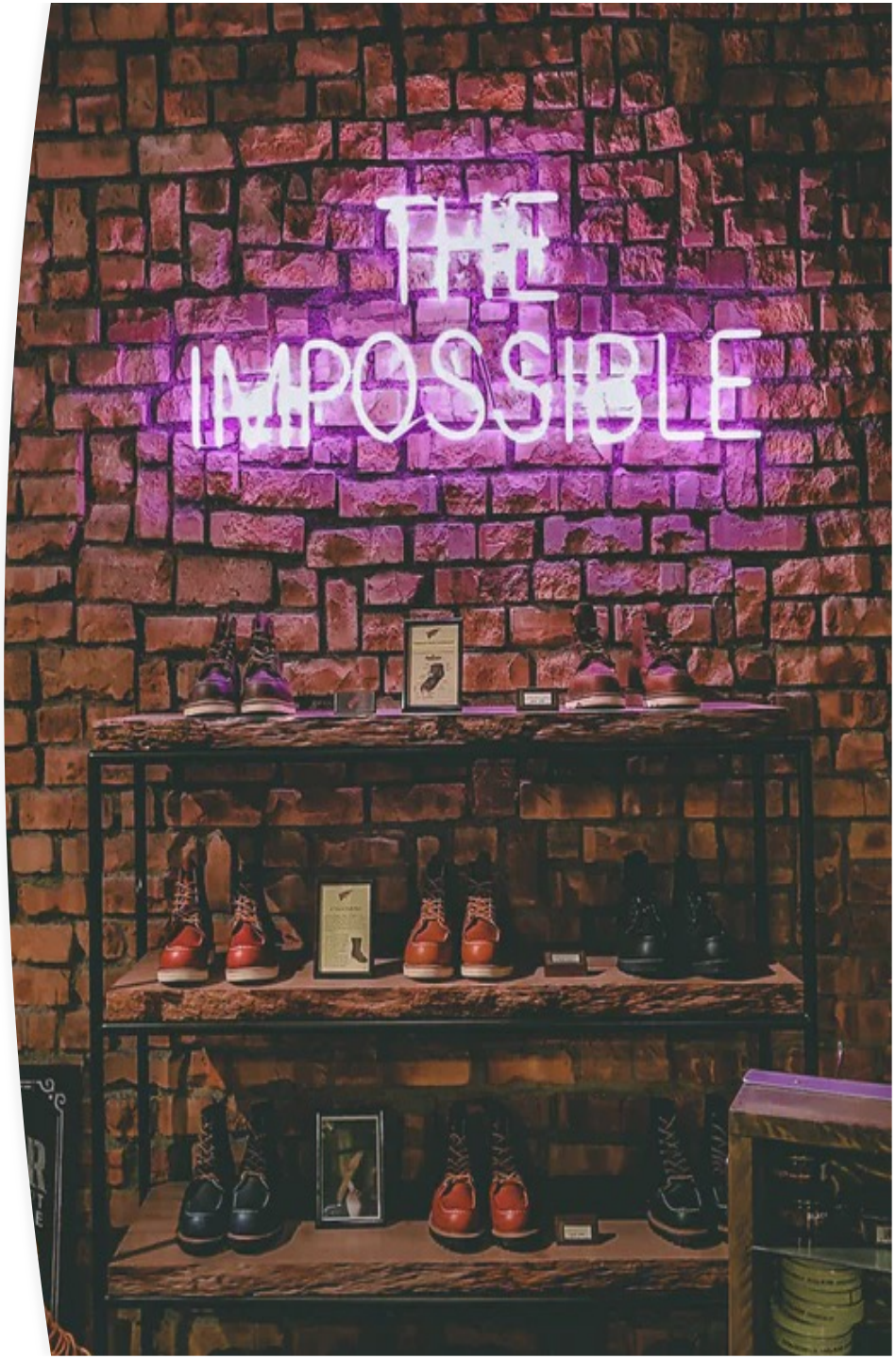
Conversations are not just about people speaking to each other, but about the nature of listening, of receiving, of being open to something or someone outside of myself.

A conversation, in this way of thinking, does not begin with an aim of consensus, healing, resolution, mutual understanding or even empathy, although such outcomes may emerge. Rather, the commitment is to being with the other, staying with the other and sustaining a conversation through its ambivalences, misunderstandings, disagreements and silences.

It is, perhaps, this perplexity, ambivalence and difficulty that is of most value in undoing our assumptions, and in some ways undoing ourselves.

How can any conversation ever be guaranteed to lead to a predetermined outcome – does this not rub against the grain of having a conversation in the first place?

Do we always need a specific goal for having conversations – do conversations always have to be about making decisions or coming to agreement, can they not just be about confronting each other?



Topic 5: Difficult Conversations (continued)

It is precisely this latter aspect of conversation, confronting each other face-to-face, that Cummins's work focuses on. In this, the pedagogical space of transformation, the space through which we learn to become witnesses and listeners, is a difficult if not at times unbearable space.

And this is where our conversations begin, in this space of proximity, where there is an ever-present threat of violence. No wonder conversations are difficult or impossible, for they demand that huge risks be taken, without the assurance that everything will be just fine in the end. And even if we think we fail to communicate and understand one another, are not failures of communication and understanding also starting points for other things to happen – ethically, aesthetically, politically?"

https://www.hughlane.ie/past/882-jonathan-cummins-when-i-leave-these-landings

Moment for Reflection

1. Are there any conversations that you think are impossible in your site of practice, your relationships, in your community or your country?
2. What kind of relationship might we have to the 'other' in an impossible conversation?
3. What is the difference between a 'difficult conversation' and an 'impossible conversation'?

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - Framing: What Makes Difficult Conversations Difficult?

With huge thanks to Sean Henry for developing the exercises in this topic.

There are different reasons that a conversation is difficult and these are often inter-related. Three key ones are:

- **Content**
- **Context**
- **Relationships**

Why focus on conversation as a 'form' for experiencing such difficulties?

It is a more fluid and unpredictable form of engagement than debate.

Conversation forms but also deforms and dissolves identity, putting it always on the move. To find oneself in conversation is also to lose oneself in conversation' (Bojesen, 2019, 652).

Source: Bojeson, E. (2019) 'Conversation as educational research', *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 51(6), pp.650-659

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - What Makes Difficult Conversations *Difficult*?

The difficulty of difficult conversations can present itself through the *specific content* being explored throughout such conversations, as well as through the *relational dynamics* at play during these.

On the level of content, the difficulty of difficult conversations often arises when the material being explored highlights our relationship to social injustices of varying kinds.

On this meaning, difficult conversations are difficult in how they expose our shared implication in the suffering of others, with all the potential experiences of guilt, anxiety, discomfort, and denial that this can bring (Britzman, 1998; Britzman and Pitt, 2004).

The content of difficult conversations can also pose difficulties in relation to their intelligibility, where practitioners and young people may feel wary of engaging with, and responding to, such issues on the grounds of their complexity and enormity (Boler, 2003).

Sources: Britzman (1998) *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning.* Albany: SUNY; Britzman, D., & Pitt, A. (2004) 'Pedagogy and Clinical Knowledge: Some Psychoanalytic Observations on Losing and Refinding Significance', JA iC, 24(2), 353-374; Boler, M. and Zembylas, M. (2003) 'Discomforting Truths: The emotional terrain of understanding difference' in *Pedagogies of Difference* (ed. P. Trifonas) London: Routledge.

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - Relational Dynamics

At other times, however, the difficulty of difficult conversations lies not only in the nature of the content itself, but also in the relational **dynamics** at play during these.

For example, a young person who has experienced years of racial abuse may not find the realities of racism particularly difficult to understand or surprising to hear about.

What they may find difficult, however, are the responses of peers and practitioners to this content, particularly if these responses are characterised by derision, denial, moral superiority, or infallibility.

Given the realities of pluralism and difference, it is unsurprising to expect that difficult conversations will inevitably expose these challenges.

The key is to engage with difficulty in *forms* that do not demur from the deeply divisive but nonetheless build relationships of belonging across such differences. Below we indicate the benefits of a specifically conversational approach for achieving this.

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - Why not Debate?

Debate can be a useful form for engaging with difficulty. However, it is not without its limits, especially when we consider how debates often proceed from a relatively fixed set of assumptions, positions, or identities that interlocutors need to 'defend' or 'reject'.

Framing young people's engagements with difficulty solely in terms of debate risks eroding young people's sense of belonging to a collective. It achieves this by limiting opportunities for young people to meaningfully listen to the experiences of others; through debate, the experiences of another risk being listened to only to the extent that they can be rebutted. In this sense, difficulty becomes something to be streamlined and contained.

Educators sometimes set up debates but don't know how to come out of them which is very damaging to young people

Perhaps debate should be abolished in favour of dialogue. Deeper dialogue and listening and being open to diverse opinions is very important because it allows for diversity of opinion to be elicited and to go deeper into those opinions.

From a Freirean perspective, this also means solidarity so that young people, no matter what their opinions are, know that you are on their side. It means you understand the challenges and injustices of the system and you understand their experiences.

Conversation involves dialogue and listening, but it has an open and meandering path that can go all sorts of places.

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - Why Conversation?

Debate is a useful form for engaging with difficulty. However, it is not without its limits, especially when we consider how debates often proceed from a relatively fixed set of assumptions, positions, or identities that interlocutors need to 'defend' or 'reject'.

For us, framing young peoples' engagements with difficulty solely in terms of debate risks eroding young peoples' sense of belonging to a collective. It achieves this by limiting opportunities for young people to meaningfully listen to the experiences of others; through debate, the experiences of another risk being listened to only to the extent that they can be rebutted. In this sense, difficulty becomes something to be streamlined and contained.

Conversation, by contrast, is a more fluid and unpredictable form of engagement with others, where thoughts and ideas unfold in a move that is more intuitive and responsive (Bojesen 2019). Read in this way, conversations are less about asserting a fixed set of assumptions, positions, or identities, and more about exposing those realities to a shared sense of 'being together'. Bojesen writes the following in this regard: 'Conversation forms but also deforms and dissolves identity, putting it always on the move. To find oneself in conversation is also to lose oneself in conversation (2019, 652).'

In terms of encountering and experiencing difficulty, we feel a conversational approach is an appropriate form for this work as conversation, in its unpredictability, necessarily moves on from a resistance to safeguarding a purity of identity, as well as from a resistance to infallibility.

Furthermore, the 'unfolding' nature of conversation renders the complexity and enormity of difficulty more intelligible and bearable for young people, for it exposes the fact that current challenges (and, indeed, responses to these) are never 'fixed' in time but are instead always open to reinterpretation and renewed response.

Topic 5: Difficult Conversations - How to Have Conversations

Taking the ‘conversational’ dimension to this theme seriously, the exercises outlined below aim to showcase possible approaches for reflecting on, and engaging in, difficult conversations in practice. These are:

1) Mapping difficult conversations

2) Embodying difficult conversations

3) Writing difficult conversations

4) Sustaining difficult conversations

Activity 19: Mapping Difficult Conversations

1. Divide the group into small groups of three or four. You can also do this exercise on your own or with a small group.

2. Ask each person to recall an example of a difficult conversation that they have had in their lives as a practitioner. Invite each participant to write about this in a paragraph for themselves, before sharing in their groups.

3. Provide each group with a large piece of paper divided into four sections: 'Social', 'Cultural', 'Political', and 'Professional'.

4. Encourage each group to identify and reflect on the social, cultural, political, and professional factors that rendered each of their recounted conversations 'difficult'. Encourage one member of each group to take notes under the appropriate sections on the page, to which the remaining group members can also contribute if they wish.

5. Using these notes as a guide, invite each group to produce two to three minute video clips (recorded on a mobile phone or laptop), where each group member provides an individual response to the theme of 'Difficult conversations.' If recording is not possible, this could alternatively take the form of short individual/group presentations to the entire group (presented through PowerPoint, or through more creative means, e.g. a roleplay 'talk show').

6. **Tip:** You might like to reflect on how to change the themes when working with young people.

Activity 20: Embodying Difficult Conversations

1) Divide the group into groups of four (different groups from Exercise 1 if possible).

2) Invite each group member to recount the difficult conversation they have had in a classroom/youth work setting again. Having listened to each member's story, invite the group to focus on one that they found to be collectively provocative or engaging.

3) With this story in mind, ask three group members to take on one of the following roles: 'Myself', 'The Topic', or 'The Environment'. Through their bodies, ask these group members to physically represent the relations between each in response to the question 'What made this difficult conversation difficult for you?'. The fourth group member will be tasked with articulating the reasoning behind their 'embodied reflection' with the wider group.

4) Having spoken to and showcased their embodied reflections, each participant will then be asked to return to their groups and reconsider their previous arrangement in light of the discussions that proceeded at Step 3. They may also like to assign alternative labels to the roles, depending on their thinking.

5) The groups will showcase their embodied reflections again, with the fourth group member speaking to the changes that were made and why.

6) The exercise will conclude with a final, whole-group conversation around the question "What makes difficult conversations difficult?"

7) You can adapt this to work with young people and also to support your own self-reflection and reflection with colleagues

Activity 21: Writing Difficult Conversations

1) Divide the group into groups of three or four. Provide each group with a large piece of paper (A0 or similar) and markers/pens.
2) Give the groups a question prompt pertaining to a 'difficult' issue (e.g. 'Is masculinity toxic?', etc.) You may also like the group to collectively generate and vote for their own question in response to a stimulus, or to choose from a series of optional questions.
3) Ask one member of each group to write the question prompt onto the large piece of paper.
4) With this question as a springboard, invite each group to engage in a 'written' conversation with each other on the page, where each group member responds in writing to the comments of the others. Encourage group members to respond in as casual a way as possible – participants can 'circle back' to points written at a previous point in the exercise, cross-out and rephrase their earlier contributions if they wish, etc.
5) Conclude the exercise by inviting participants to compose an anonymous letter to their group members. In this letter, participants should reflect on the experience of engaging in the written conversations. They should identify ideas that were important to them, thoughts on what they found 'difficult' to think and write about, and any further questions the written conversation raised for them.
6) Place these letters in a 'letterbox' assigned to each group (a regular shoebox will do). Ask each participant to read aloud to their group a letter other than their own. You may like to do this immediately after the exercise, or a few days/weeks later, depending on the nature/topic of the conversations had.

Activity 22: Sustaining Difficult Conversations

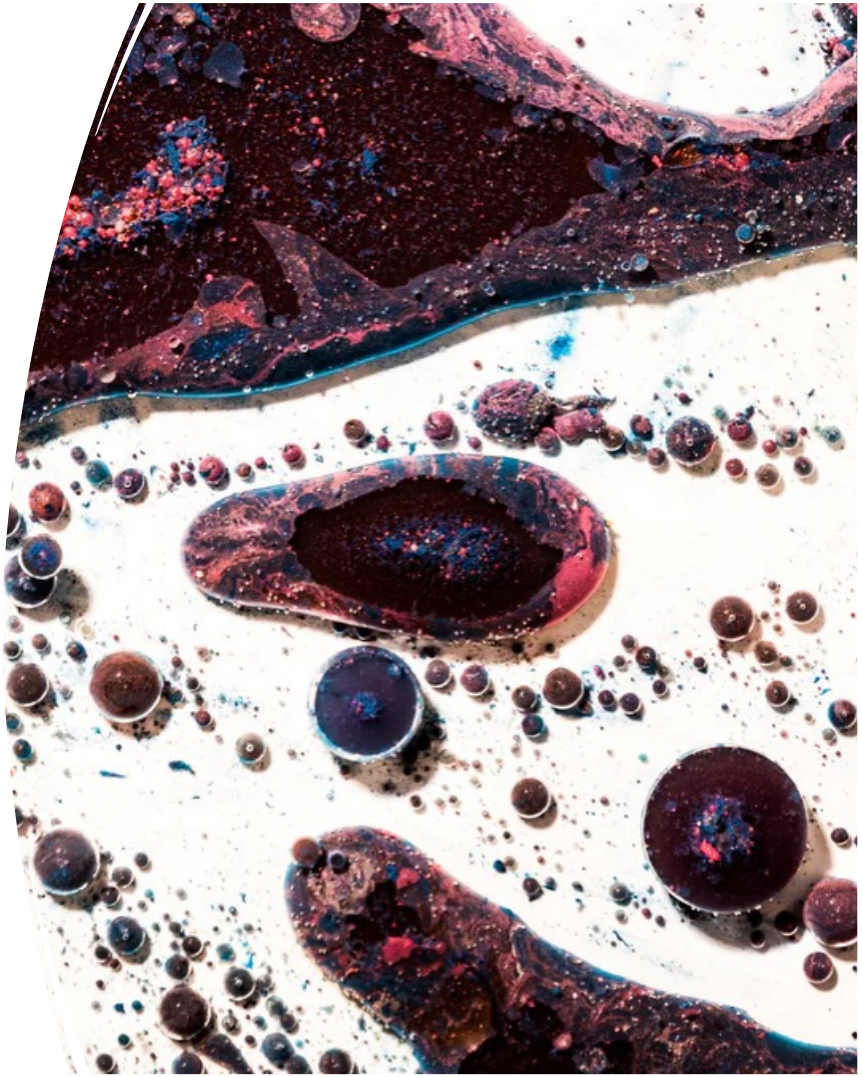
1) Divide the group into groups of three or four. Provide each group with a large piece of paper (A0 or similar), along with various art and stationery supplies (pencils, pens, colours, paints, etc.)
2) Invite the group to depict an outline of a human body on the page.

   Alternatively, this could be included on the page in advance of the activity.

   Ask each group to consider the following questions:

   - If this body were a representation of a professional setting that sustained productive, difficult conversations, what would some of the different organs, limbs, and body parts stand for?
   - What would the 'blood' be? The skeleton? What kind of 'food' would this 'body' need?
   - What kinds of 'physical exercise' would it require?
   - What 'immune defences' would it need to cultivate, and against what kinds of disease?

Invite each group to artistically depict their responses to these question on the page. You might also encourage the participants to accompany the page with a written narrative if they prefer.



Unit 3, Topic 1

Unpacking Extremism and Belonging

Topic 1: Why Unpacking Extremism and Belonging

So far we have mentioned this idea of 'unpacking extremism' a number of times. In this unit, we are going to explore this in more detail and building on Unit 2, discuss some ways of unpacking extremism with colleagues and with young people.

In much of the literature and policy in this space, we hear the language of 'challenging' and 'countering', but what does this suggest?

It suggests that the person countering or challenging already has the answers, already is in the right, and is aiming to bring the other person around to their point of view. This is a very tempting position but generally is counter-productive because it closes down dialogue, it alienates the other person, and it means listening doesn't happen.

Still it is delicate and complex. How can I as a practitioner deal with hateful positions or indeed positions that promote violence? There is no one size fits all answer here, but there are some principles that can guide how we respond.

This will mean using professional judgement in terms of whether we engage in discussion as a whole group, when we talk through the issue individually with someone, or how we might decide together as a group how to respond.

When practitioners are fearful of 'cancel culture' or 'getting it wrong', this can shut down opportunities for learning and also leave young people or colleagues feeling alone. As Freire said, education is never neutral. By choosing to ignore what has been said, or by simply enforcing a rule, we already take a stance.

So part of this module is about acknowledging these challenges but underlining the importance of responding as well as pre-emptively engaging with not only difficult topics but topics relating to purpose and identity.

This is why we suggest that the language of 'unpacking' is helpful here. Unpacking also suggests approaching a young person (or a colleague) in a spirit of compassion and understanding that tries to pre-empt the defensiveness that difficult conversations can provoke. Let's think some more about unpacking..

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Before Starting Conversations

1) If we want to think about prevention and security with an educational lens rather than a security lens, this means perhaps a re-framing from 'prevention' to 'unpacking', 'opening out', and from 'security' to understanding the need for safety, stability, agency and indeed safe spaces.

2) Learning from Unit 2, begin to make regular space and time for reflection to unpack your own position. What are your own triggers, filters, biography and what ready made stories do you tell about yourself? What are you worried about when it comes to difficult conversations or engaging with hateful or extremist positions?

3) Imagine laying these different elements before you. What is the worst case scenario? You might spend a minute mapping or diagramming your own journey and position. Thinking of the worst case scenario can help face fear.

3) Think about the kinds of issues you might like to pre-emptively address with colleagues or with the group but also invite them to share their own concerns and the things they feel need discussing. (You can have a question/suggestion box) .

4) Engage in Self-Reflection. It's important to understand our own assumptions as practitioners. To take the example of 'belonging' which practitioners often see as important, we might ask whether we have assumed that this is a key concept. Do we need young people to belong? Is it us who value it rather than them? But in assuming a position, have we taken away their voice? Do we think of it as a need we push for rather than exploring it with them.

3) Listening to young people, parents and other colleagues will support us in opening to self reflection.

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging Before Starting Conversations

When I use a word, it just means what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less!" (said Humpty Dumpty to Alice…)

Something you need to be alert to is 'humpty-dumptying' or meaning-hijacking.

Sometimes people like to troll or refuse to use words in their conventional sense as a provocation.

In order to unpack, we need to resist reacting. Sometimes we may make a judgement that sometimes it is not the right time to engage.

At times, it can be helpful to use philosophical enquiry to begin to unpack meanings, as it requires that people look at an issue from a range of different perspectives.

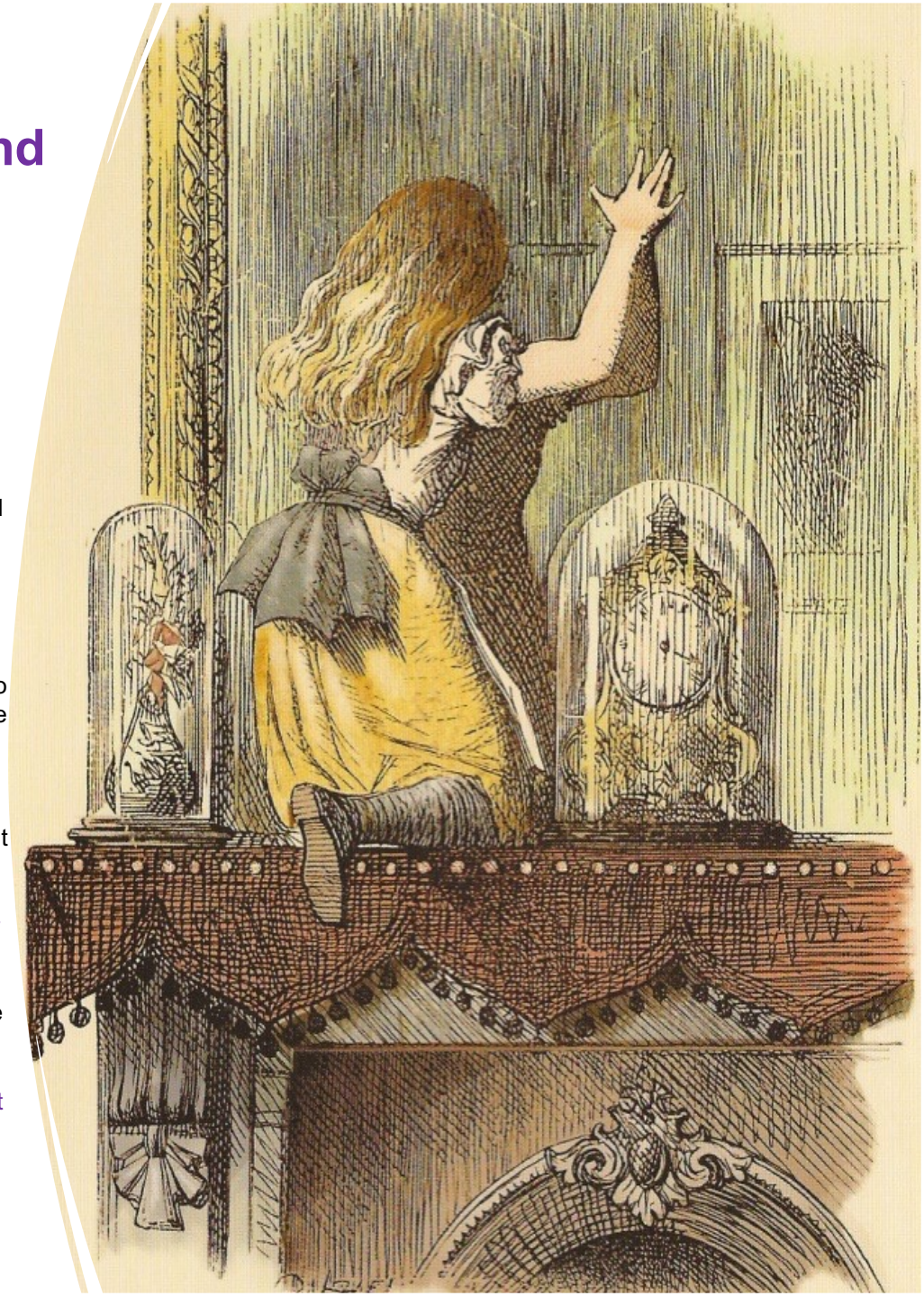
Difficult Issue Tips:

1) Attend to your own response: hold steady, breathe deeply, don't personalize.

2) Understand the situation: be sensitive to multiple perspectives, mirror back

3) Short term response: If it's causing someone direct pain to someone (not just offence) then intervene.

4) If the option is there to hold to space educationally, do so. Don't pretend it hasn't happened.



Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Avoiding Extreme Responses to Extremism

One of the challenges of engaging with extremism is to avoid an extremist response and an anti-pluralist response that fails to understand that people will have different positions and instead tries to put everyone on the same side on the same playing field – making everyone the same and trying to eliminate risk completely, including through using 'preventative' methods.

This might mean looking at how you respond to those different positions.

1. Do you respond like a heavy weight that 'clamps' down on a young person when they say something offensive or hateful?

2. Are there certain policies that 'kick in' as soon as certain events happen?

3. Is there so much worry about the consequence of missing signs of radicalisation (catastrophic risk) that practitioners 'refer' to the relevant authorities, just in case..?

4. When does prevention risk becoming authoritarian, silencing, censoring and trying to eliminate risk (of protests, dissent etc). This can be at individual, organisational, community and/or State level.

Let's think about what non-extreme educational responses to extremism look like.

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Existential Needs and Epistemic Needs

Educationally, not to mention for society, there are of course problems when people are closed-minded (about most things), when they are intolerant of different or other perspectives, or always certain and dogmatic about their own position.

As educators, we tend to strive to cultivate virtues of open-mindedness, intellectual humility, tolerance of ambiguity, ability to cope with complexity, and fallibility (I might be wrong..). This means creating environments where young people are not shamed and humiliated.

But it might be worth thinking about why someone might lack cognitive flexibility or curiosity, in particular when their stability, safety or security is threatened and if levels of trust and control are low and powerlessness and anomie high.

Psychological factors are sometimes bound up with epistemic needs (needs of knowledge) as well as existential needs.

Epistemic needs include clear understanding, no ambiguity, desire for certainty, cognitive closure, and sense making.

Perhaps turning to positions like conspiracist thinking or extremism can give that sense of security, purpose and agency that people are looking for, in particular in times of crisis.

That's where we may have to start.

Source: Rottweiler, B & Gill, P (2020) 'Conspiracy Beliefs and Violent Extremist Intentions: The Contingent Effects of Self-efficacy, Self-control and Law-related Morality', Terrorism and Political Violence, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2020.1803288

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Unpacking the Invisible Backpack

In a famous article on white privilege, Peggy Mcintosh, wrote about unpacking the invisible knapsack. Unpacking is a more thorough, careful and gentle process than challenging or countering. It involves looking carefully and honestly at each item and trying to understand it – in her case it was a careful examination of her white privilege.

This does not mean trying to excuse, ignore, justify or explain away. It involves trying to understand context, motivation, intent, and also other factors like how words and ideas circulate or other issues that might be at play. If we think of 'unpacking extremism', this means not assuming we know from the outset what is going on when someone makes an 'extremist statement' or has an 'extremist position'.

In using the word 'extremism' by this we mean a particular definition and constellation of ideas where the (young) person is committed to a 'totalising description', one of purity, identity, sameness and hierarchy. It's not the same as a 'radical' position. Think about some of the language around far right or white supremacist movements in Europe and beyond, or movements like ISIS.

Sometimes this is couched in other ways, like white supremacists or the Aryan nation, saying we love difference: We want to have 'our culture' and they can have theirs. This may look like embracing diversity but it's still really about racism, hierarchy, and exclusion toward others, even if the experience is of love, care and belonging for the in group. Quite quickly though, out-groups can be positioned as existential threats – Q-Anon fabricates stories about threats to children to provoke this.

It's also important to remember that young people often are attracted to movements or identities because they tap into what Scott Atran calls 'sacred values' and meet existential needs and desires. They offer meaning, purpose and agency, no matter how hateful they may appear from the outside.

This image of 'unpacking' might seem too soft to some, but the danger with the language of extremism is that it can provoke extremist responses that further entrench and polarise, blocking opportunities for transformation and dialogue.

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Unpacking the Invisible Backpack

Unpacking is particularly important when one comes from a different perspective.

It is important to create spaces as educators and people in positions of authority who realise there is a power differential but also an opportunity to influence these spaces. When a backpack is on our back, we will feel the weight of it, but we then need to take it off us and have a look inside in order to understand what makes it 'heavy'.

It might be the weight of tradition or the burden of assumptions. It might contain what is most precious and important in our lives. But backpacks also allow us to move and travel; they give us the things we need.

Unpacking in this context means having conversations and being open. It means to debunk oneself of stereotypes, to do this work with others, and engage with love and hope as well as hopes and fears.

One powerful coupling of polarised ideas is the one of love and fear.

To unpack one another's backpacks together starts with humanising one another.

From, for instance, an inter-faith perspective it would mean working with disagreement or adversity as an opportunity for learning and building solidarity and coalition building. Such dialogues provide an opportunity to engage in conversation and dialogue and not shut down debate. Sometimes it's only after you go through a crisis that there comes a cathartic moment where people try to understand one another.

At the heart of this, it's about getting to know the person, whoever they are, in particular those who others don't want to have the conversation, whatever the topic.

Taking up the idea of unpacking the backpack, we can approach a range of difficult conversations with it as our main image.

Activity 1: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack

Circle Time

One strategy we can use is circle time, in particular when engaging in 'unpacking' is challenging or difficult.

1. Explain that the space is confidential and that they should only speak about the things they are comfortable in speaking about.
2. Ask young people (and/or colleagues and/or parents) to bring a real or imaginary backpack with all the things that are important to them in it.
3. Invite them to open up the rucksack and share a story with one another.
4. As each person tells their story, the others listen until everyone has finished.
5. It can then open to 'cross-talk' or reflective discussion. After this, invite the group to participate in another round.
6. As a general rule, young people will tell a story.

Sometimes we do not try these methodologies with young people because we think they are adult methodologies, but they provide important opportunities to learn how to treat one another by listening and respecting one another – it's work that needs to be established.

Sometimes we are not willing to have awkward conversations and there is fear about risk of bringing up these topics, but often the 'awkward conversations' are not awkward at all but precisely what young people want to talk about. This means not leading the conversation but letting the young people unpack the issues and shape the direction of the conversations that they are having.

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - Bringing the World In

Schools and youth clubs can't do and know everything, and educators can't do and know everything. If these spaces are microcosms of community and the world, this means not sealing them off completely. Bringing in society, though in a way transformed by being in an educational space, can create a different space and atmosphere. If we want culturally sustaining pedagogies, there are lots of resources that communities have that are helpful.

To create inclusive educational spaces, it is important to 'bring the world in'. These spaces need alliances, lived experiences, diverse materials and stories. Lived experiences are very important because people engage empathetically with people's stories.

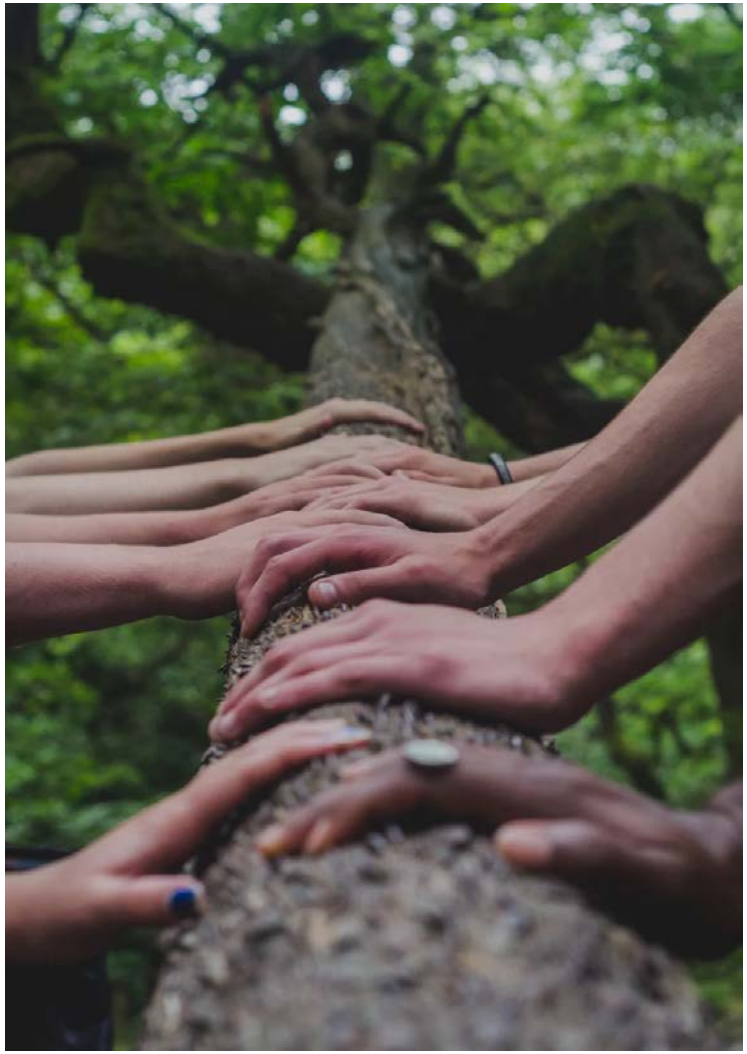
There are issues that educators need to be prepared to address, in particular when some people do not think that others have the right to exist as they are even though they are doing no harm to others.

This means that seeing people have a right to presence in a community. It's not enough to say that it is ok for one person to address another as someone they don't want in a conversation. At times, it is important to not be polite, to take a stance (with compassion and solidarity) and say, 'that is not right'.

If we are re-imagining education, it is not just that communities come to be allies in a dynamic educational system. We have a lot to learn from looking around and being more self-reflective. For example, as a former colony, Ireland knows a lot about being the migrant, about oppression, being subjugated, loss of language and culture, so when racism strikes, a person of migrant heritage might ask,"'Why is a nation that I thought would understand me, not for me, not my space, a space in which I thought I'd belong?"

Moment for Reflection

1. Thinking back to Unit 2, how, when and where in your site of practice do you 'bring the world in'?
2. How do you navigate the situation when some people want to silence others or denigrate their identities?



Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - What do Extremist Ideas and Positions *Give* to Someone?

So if we are to unpack together what is going on when someone is taking up an extremist position, this means listening both to the person making these statements and also to others who this statement affects.

The first question is what do these statements *give* the (young) person? Is it status, power (over), quest for justice, sense of empowerment, meaning or purpose, a sense of identity or belonging, security and way of coping with fear? Is it about trolling or provocation? Are they engaging in any other active ways with extremist groups? Are they involved in or committed to violence? And is that a motivator itself? Is it for fun, risk and adventure?

Questions:

1. Are there opportunities to talk about these issues in your site of practice and if so how do they work?
2. Is it dealt with through providing information, debunking, challenging, dialogue, debate?
3. What are the structures for feedback?

Reflect on these in terms of their wider opportunities for voice, engagement, participation and so on.

1. Are there spaces where young people's experiences are listened to on their own terms?
2. Are these supported in your organisation, school or community?
3. Are they tokenistic or are there opportunities for real change?

See below for more information about why young people might engage in violent extremism.

Source: SALTO (2016) *Young people and extremism: a resource for youth workers.* SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre. www.salto-youth.net/diversity

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - What do Extremist Ideas and Positions *Give* to Someone?

The Practice of Questioning: From the outset of this module, we have suggested that 'countering' and 'challenging' extremism is not sufficient, and that the language of preventing might be better replaced with the language of 'unpacking'.

We also introduced the idea of restorative practices in educational spaces. This means not just 'reacting' to the words or statement or 'preventing' by closing things down, but 'unpacking' and 'exploring' the motivation with the young person.

Learning to listen more deeply also involves asking different kinds of questions in a spirit of appreciative enquiry and compassion. Julie Tilsen (2018) offers some different ways of approaching questioning and describes practices of listening to help a young person to reframe their identity.

Questions can create curiosity, but they have to be part of a question driven practice that is ethically sensitive and politically critical. The following are quotes from her book *Narrative Approaches to Youth Work.* As you read them, ask yourself, What is the difference between what questions do and what statements do?

On Questions:

1. *"Language is productive—it does things, it doesn't simply describe things. As we move from a visual to a textual metaphor, where our interest moves from things to stories, our talk also shifts from monologue to dialogue. Questions help facilitate dialogue because questions help move conversations" (2011: 92).*
2. *Asking questions gives young people space to speak their identities into the world in meaningful and productive ways. Question-asking also serves to expose and challenge essentialist limitations and specifications often imposed on young people's identities. This helps youth bring forward and further their understandings of how their identities are in relationship with cultural discourses" (2018: 93).*

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging – A World of Questions

Questioning as Act of Resistance

When I was in Amsterdam, I visited the Dutch Resistance Museum. This museum houses a rich collection of artifacts that documents the Dutch resistance to the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during World War II. As a Jew, I had a powerful and provocative experience. The collection includes radio clips, doctor's notes, photos of hiding places, resistance newspapers, and much, much more. As you enter the exhibit, you see a quote on the wall from Remco Campert (a Dutch author and poet whose father died in a Nazi concentration camp): "Asking yourself a question, that's how resistance begins. And then ask that very question to someone else." [..]

And, it demonstrates the relational and productive qualities of questions: questions do things, and they do them when we're in relationship with others.

Asking questions of particular discourses, structures, or institutions, can itself be an act of resistance.

Questions:

- Do we de-center power when we question?
- Do we question with curiosity, care and interest or do we take power and control the questioning and disguise statements as questions?
- What are some discourses you have questioned in your life as an act of resistance?
- How did you question them?
- Who would you like to join you in your questioning?

(Tilsen, 2018: 93)

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - A World of Questions

What kinds of questions do you ask? (From Tilsen, 2018: 96-104)

Deconstructive: Questions that question the 'taken for granteds'. These help connect a young person's experience with wider cultural discourses.. *"What are the unspoken rules..?"*

Meaning-Making: These questions invite reflection on ideas, actions, preferences, and values in order to assign significance (meaning) to them. Giving meaning helps connect young people to new possibilities for identity constructions and ways of doing and being in the world.

"What is it you love about..?"

Re-authoring questions: These questions are most directly connected to identity as they invite youth to ascribe meaning to and claim ideas, actions, preferences, and values that uphold a preferred identity. They bring forward unique outcomes and lead to the development of alternative stories.

"When would you say you started to show up as this "new and improved" version of yourself?

Open and Closed: It's not that closed questions are bad and open questions are better. The important issue is context and whether a question is meaningful. Sometimes a 'yes/no' response to a closed question is very significant.

Questions that Make Stories: Ask questions that can help a young person make a story. Who, what, where, why, when, and how…

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - A World of Questions

Consultative questions: These questions access and validate youth expertise, enlisting young people as experts on their own lives. Consultative questions promote collaboration between youth worker and young person and thicken youths' stories of preferred identity.

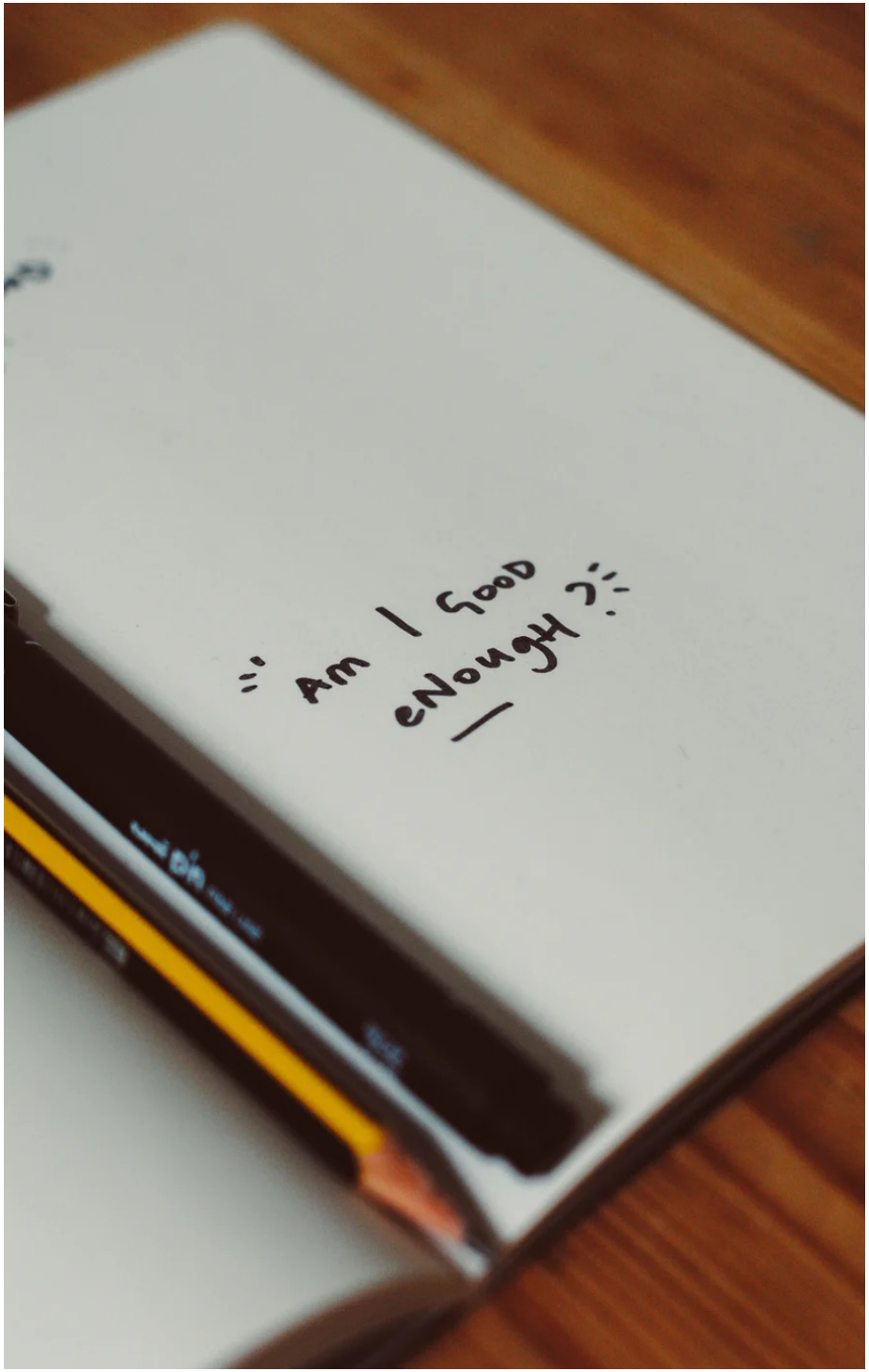
"What suggestions do you have for other young people who want to get their school to have discussions about racism?" "What are some of the challenges or barriers you'd tell others to look out for?"

Inoculation questions: These questions reinforce any changes that a youth has made and mobilize their determination to meet future challenges. Inoculation questions also help take inventory of skills, knowledges, and resources the young person has developed.
"What do you know now, that you didn't before…?"

Coping questions: These questions help youth claim what they are doing on their own behalf during difficult situations or when hopelessness is present. Coping questions open doors to alternative stories and encourage meaning making.

"How do you keep the frustration from being even worse than it is?" "What would it take for you to keep doing what you've been doing?", "Where did you learn to keep at it like this? Who inspired you?"

Scaling questions: These questions help youth articulate more specific and concrete descriptions of their experiences if they are having a hard time doing so. Scaling questions also encourage recognition that things aren't "all or nothing" and can make visible small but significant changes.



Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - A World of Questions

Exceptions or unique outcomes questions: These questions invite youth to notice and claim times when they've done (or thought or imagined) something that contradicts a dominating problem narrative about them.

Exceptions and unique outcomes questions help young people resist totalising accounts of their identities and open paths to alternative stories.

"What would you like to come from this new experience of feeling okay and proud about what you do?"

Time travelling questions: These questions invite young people to reflect on changes or future possible changes by using the temporal dimension as a frame of reference. Time travelling questions make visible small but significant changes that have happened and make possible changes that are yet to happen.

"What do you think you might be doing six months from now that today seems unbelievable?"

Multiple perspectives questions: These questions ask youth to reflect on something in their life through the eyes of an important figure. Inviting perspectives from those with whom young people are in meaningful relationships makes visible skills, knowledges, and exceptions that the young person may not see on their own.

"If you could see yourself through your best friend's eyes, what would you notice about how you are a friend that you don't see when you look through your own eyes?

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - A World of Questions: Curiosity and Ethics

Response-Based Questioning

Tilsen says "[young people's] responses are expressions of what matters to them, reflecting their values, intentions, hopes, and preferred ways of being in the world. Asking about youth's response to oppressive effects of power brings forward their stories of resistance. This involves a shift in language from:

- victim to agent;
- effects to response;
- single story to multiple stories
- professional knowledge to local/cultural knowledge (storytelling rights);
- individual to relational/contextual (2018: 101)

Effects-Based	*Response-Based*
What happened next?	What did you do next?
Why did you shut down?	What skills did you use to control your feelings?
What makes you so angry?	What is anger a protest against?
How long were you checked out?	How did you know it was safe enough to come back?
Who else got picked on?	What did you do to take care of your friends?
How is this affecting you now?	How are you taking care of yourself now?

Topic 1: Unpacking Extremism and Belonging - A World of Questions: Curiosity and Ethics

Key Terms

1) **Curiosity:** A desire to wonder beyond what we know by suspending assumptions, questioning taken-for-granted understandings, and staying open to multiple perspectives and meanings.
2) **Not-knowing approach:** This stance allows us to stay curious by avoiding quick conclusions or being "too quick to know." It does not mean that you don't know anything; it means you suspend your assumptions and strive to learn more through active curiosity.
3) **Response-based approach:** A response-based approach is based on the idea that people always respond and exercise agency, even in the face of oppression, violence, or other traumatic events.

   By asking response-based questions, we bring forward the responses youth make as meaningful acts of resistance and expressions of what matters to them. This is in contrast to conventional practices that feature effects-based questions. These questions focus on the effects on youth of oppressive events.

From a statement-driven practice to a question-driven practice

Questions	*Statements*
Bring forward	
Possibilities	Certainties
Multiple stories	Single story
Positioning	
Not-knowing	Knowing better than
Co-researcher	Expert
Decentered/influential	Centered/influential
Curiosity, wonder	Certitude
Attention to power and discourse	
Question assumptions	Maintain assumptions
Share discursive power	Hold discursive power

Source: Tilsen, J. (2018) *Narrative Approaches to Youth Work: Conversational Skills for a Critical Practice.* London: Routledge.

Activity 2: What is ‘on the table’ or ‘off the table’?

This image of a ‘table’ can help to imagine what we might want to put on the table, to make visible or audible. This might include problematic issues, difficult questions, genuine confusion, but it might also be about sharing rich cultural heritages, diverse political positions, and so on.

It helps to put things on the table as we might do when unpacking, but when we do this we need to agree how we will do this as a group and also take care in closing the dialogue.

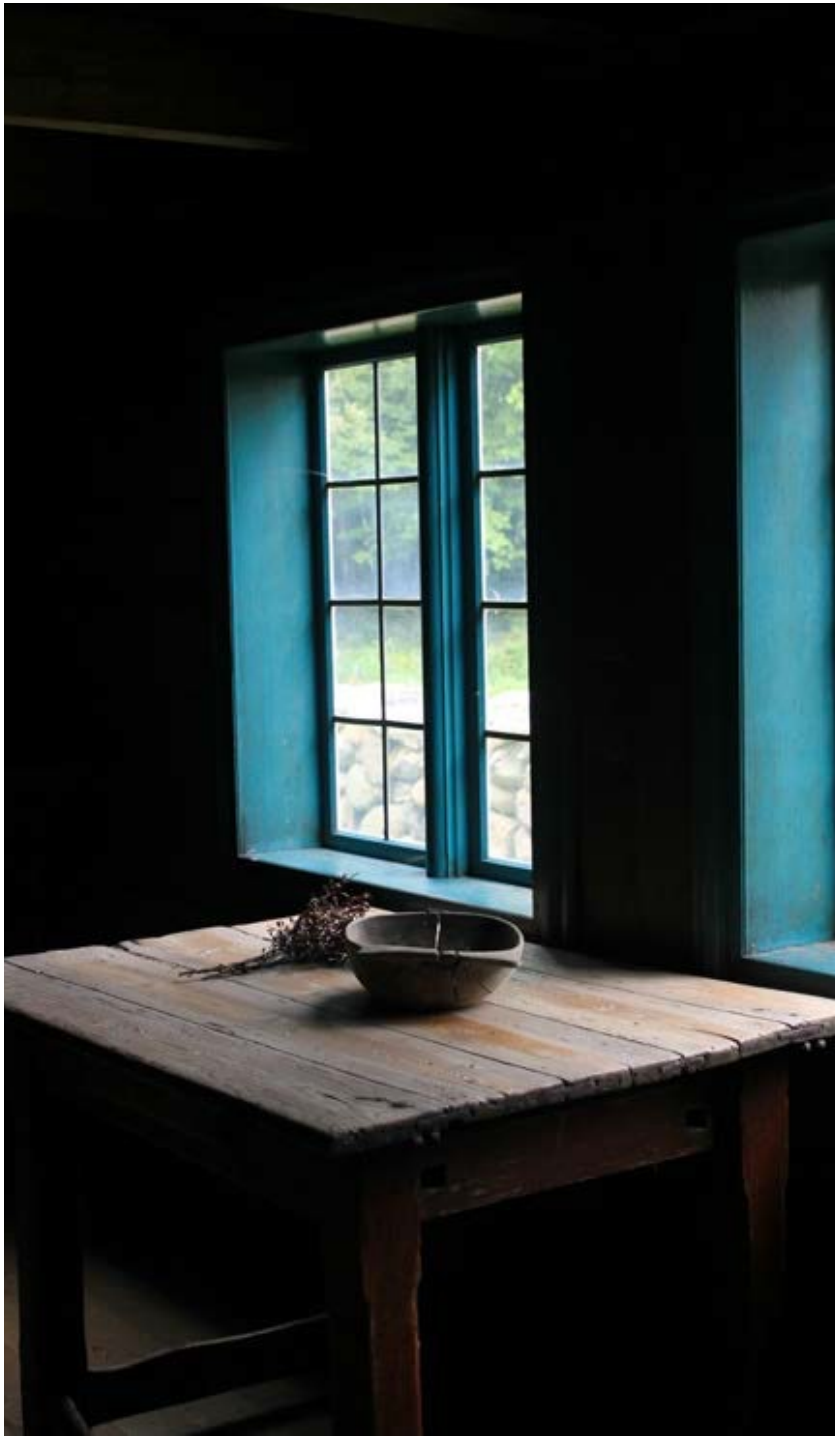
Questions:

- What things are never on the table in your site of practice?
- What things should never be taken off the table? (Discuss with colleagues and with young people – one suggestion from our youth advisory group was universal human rights should never be taken off the table.)

Exercise: Together with the group of young people, parents, community members, and/ or colleagues, map the spaces of youth work/education and community. Work quite intuitively here.

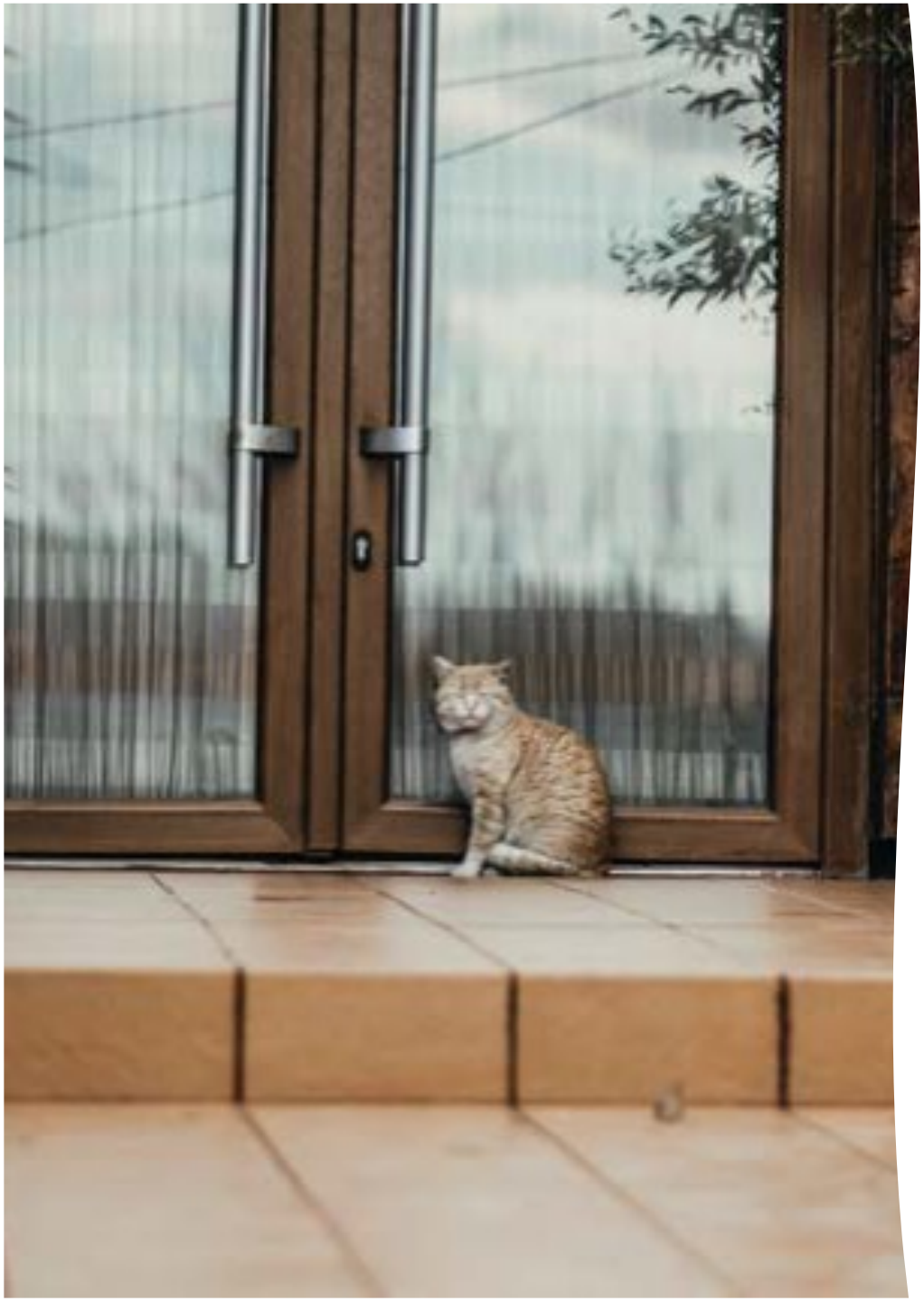
- Which issues are given most attention and foregrounded?
- Which issues are ignored or silenced?
- Which are buried?
- Which need wants to be placed on the table?

Variation: Create a “question box” with the questions they want to ask but are not sure how to. This is useful for debunking myths and also allows for some moderation, if needed..



Unit 3, Topic 2

Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion



Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion

Questioning (and) Belonging:

When we talk about belonging: from whose perspective are we discussing it?

Is it from the perspective of those who want to belong or those who want others to belong?

It is important to understand how people feel when we are looking at belonging, and explore whether it is valuable or of value for them, as we are all from different backgrounds. This means unpacking the idea of belonging rather than assuming it is good for all.

Who wants to belong to what? What are we belonging to? For some cultures, belonging may not be understood in the same way and they may not wish to engage with it.

For some there is too much to lose, too much to give up, in belonging if belonging means sameness and one identity. We will return to this idea when we reflect on two-way or reciprocal inclusion or exchange.

How can we then come to a dialogue so that we can understand what belonging means for one another?

Like many words, as we look more closely the more 'alien' it becomes. Perhaps it's felt most when one finds others believe that one doesn't belong.. Belonging (and not belonging) are very basic emotions.

Belonging and inclusion raise the question of difference.

Sometimes this issue is only revealed when someone learns that they don't belong.

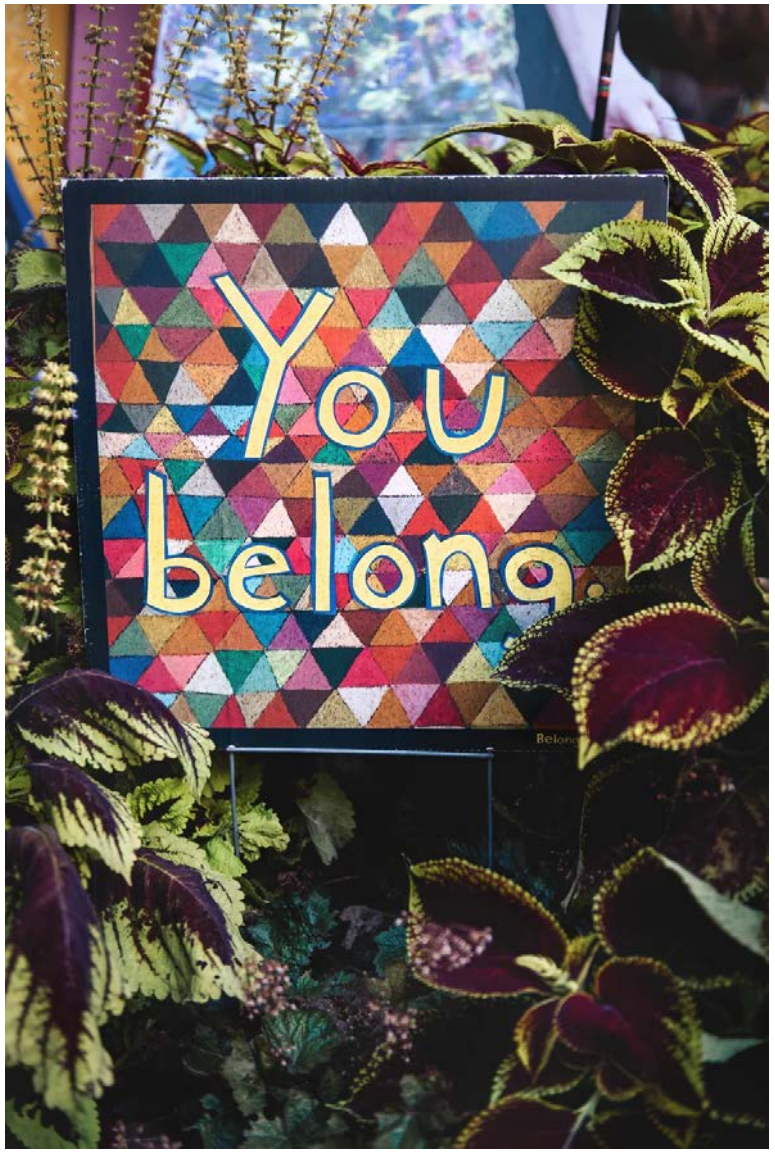
Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Why Belonging?

The reason that we are reflecting on belonging in the context of thinking about educational responses to extremism is because extremist positions mark out very clearly who belongs and who does not belong. As Quassim Cassam said, they have a purity, or rather impurity, occupation. This can be on political, ideological or religious grounds. Yet as they exclude they 'give' something too – a sense of belonging, purpose, care, love or identity to those who find the identity by excluding others.

Security, Belonging and Identity:

"This also means reflecting on complex dynamics. With migration, people seek security, comfort, familiarity. Yet, there are some who feel that inward migration impinges or undermines their identities. Perhaps, identity politics and identity cultures are confused with belonging. Must we share an identity in order to belong? Reflecting on what migrants need – security and comfort – there can be a belief that 'if I attain a home, employment etc, that I will be well settled', but then it becomes clear that class is not a protective factor against discrimination.

This is difficult because someone may think when you get to a certain level, you'll be protected from this, when you have been in a place two or three generations, and yet they still face discrimination. Why is this? Is it because people are visibly different? This is difficult for people whose class status might have made them feel that they belong, let alone those who are in minimum wage jobs. This can lead to a sense of disenchantment, a sense of not ever being what we imagined and thought we could be in this country. Feeling marginalised is not simply a socio-economic issue, it can also be a belonging issue. For example, the young person who despite all their other attributes is not allowed to belong because of the colour of their skin. This skin does not allow them to be seen like everyone else, and it stops them from being seen as a human being. The extremism of the system that others and marginalises is experienced by young people as something they feel subjected to, like a heavy weight". (Reflections from workshop participants)



Topic 2 Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Why Belonging? (continued)

It is not surprising that some young people might become disaffected and disenfranchised when they feel (often correctly) that society does not welcome them or see them as belonging? How can someone relate to such a society? However, this is not only a problem for young people.

A further difficulty discussed in our workshops is the unwillingness to listen and explore this with those who are experiencing this, be it colleagues or staff. People, including colleagues, often do not want to hear the reality of one's experience; they want to dismiss or minimise it.

People need to commit to developing awareness of their reactions (and perhaps defensiveness) when certain topics like someone's experience of racism are raised, or their thoughtlessness in making assumptions about who belongs and who does not belong.

If we can't listen to what we don't want to hear, what hope do we have?

Criticality and Belonging

Arguably when someone feels and knows they belong is when they are comfortable enough to be critical and where that criticism is accepted. *"When I do not have to try harder than others to be accepted but rather I am accepted as 'one of you' so I have every right for my voice to be heard".*

So perhaps part of reflecting on belonging involves people reflecting on whether they feel they can speak freely and also the wider society reflecting on their reactions and responses to this speaking freely.

This could be what acceptance means – everyone having their say and people gauging their own comfort and beginning to reflect more deeply on this.

Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Belonging without Losing Oneself: Assimilation and the Desire for Sameness

One of the difficulties with the language of 'belonging' is that, even when belonging is understood as 'welcoming in', it can presume there is a dominant society to which people are invited or welcome to belong (on its terms). This kind of approach can be disguised in more universal language like 'liberal values' or 'core values' and may not be as reflective about the relationship to difference as it needs to be. "This is how we do things here!".

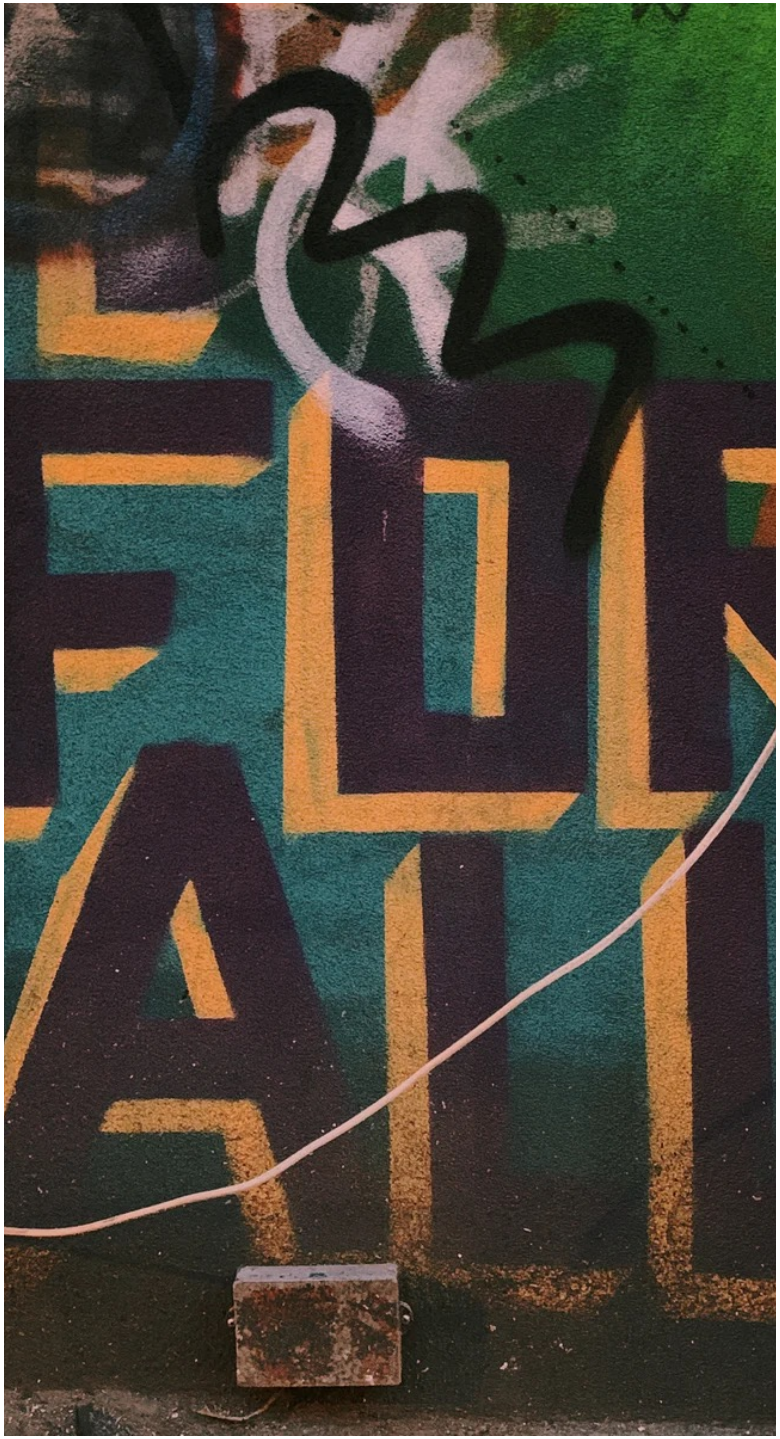
So, whilst becoming welcomed into a host society can be positive, as Richard Kearney says in his writings on (radical) hospitality, host and hostis (enemy) are inter-related. https://guestbookproject.org/

When the host insists on assimilation or sameness and refuses to enter into exchange, everything is on their terms. Host societies can behave like this, where inclusion means inclusion 'in', but not exchange or reciprocal inclusion. It can also involve insistence on loyalty to only one identity, rather than engaging with the richness of multiple heritages and the possibilities of learning and exchange.

When this happens there is too much to be lost in belonging for some: one has to lose so much of oneself, one's heritage and one's community if belonging requires assimilation or sameness.

On the other hand, the host does not have to give up or lose anything, even if it, sometimes, 'fears the other, the stranger'. It's important to reflect on opportunities for the image of the host to change, and also to ask why some people continuously are positioned as the 'stranger', perhaps just because of their migrant heritages or different religious backgrounds.

H. Lyman Sayer *Daughter in a Rocker*



Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Embodying Inclusion

We suggest thinking about belonging, not as a category of (fixed) identity or sameness, but belonging-in-difference. This draws on the work of Édouard Glissant who thinks about identity as involving change, becoming and exchange.

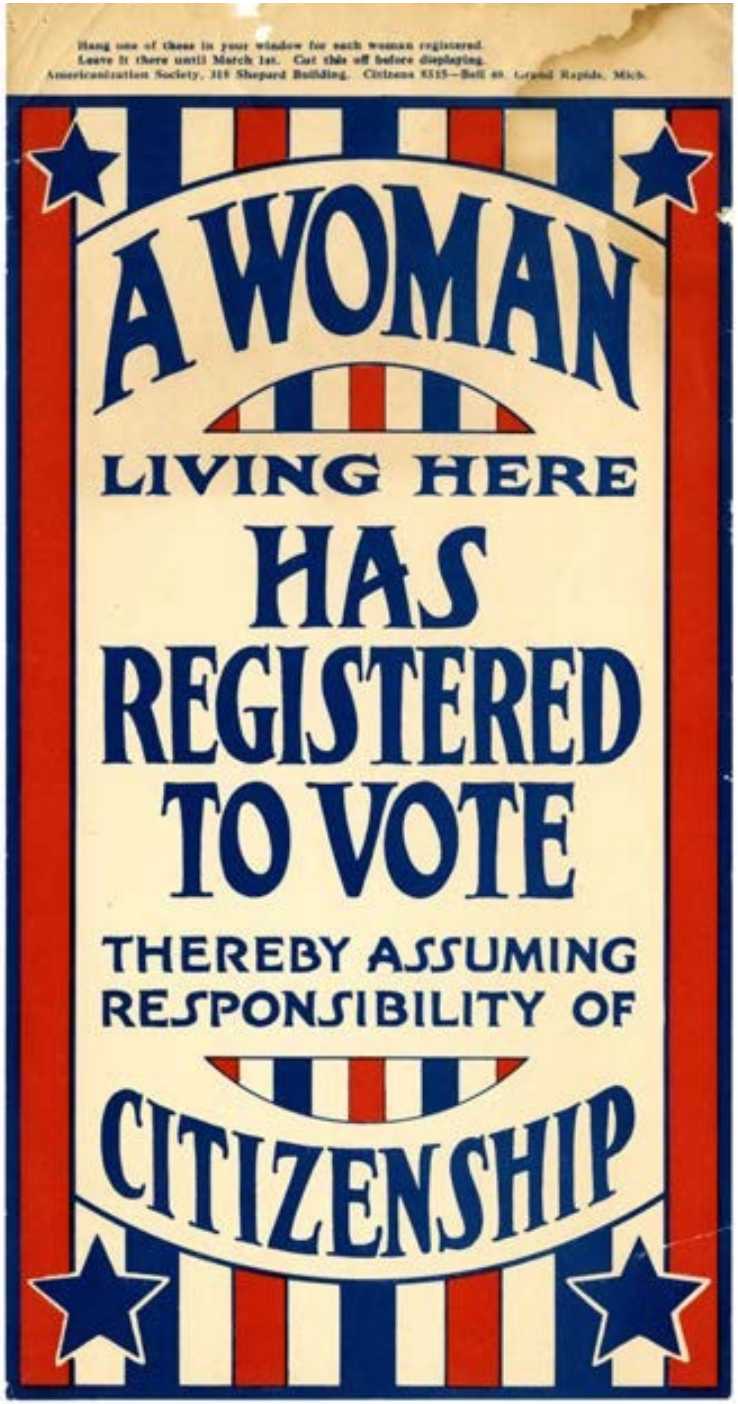
It is not enough to be satisfied with the *language* of inclusion. It is important to see how and whether inclusion is *embodied,* invites exchange, and whether this supports 'belonging-in-difference'. A first helpful step is an 'audit' of spaces that asks 'how does (this) space work?'

To understand this, questions that can be asked include:

- Who sits beside whom?
- What images are on the walls?
- What languages are represented?
- How is Irishness presented?
- Who is included in 'Irishness' (or any other nationality)?
- Are there outreach activities to those who may not be entering youth work spaces, or engagement with young people who might feel those spaces are 'their spaces' alone?
- Are relationships built with parents and the wider community inviting them into the space and helping them to feel like they belong?
- Are diverse cultures, beliefs and languages valued and welcomed into school spaces?

In Unit 1, we explored ways of becoming aware of cultures in organisations. Reflecting on inclusion as exchange builds on this idea. To begin, it can be helpful to reflect more carefully on 'intentionality' or 'intention'. What is the primary intentionality or intention that orients and guides the space? If it is inclusion, then how is that embodied and realised? What would someone else say the primary intention is? (Discipline? Academic assessment?). This also means young people be invited to reflect on the space. Young people may be claiming spaces as their own, and excluding other young people, questioning why they should be in 'their space'.

Suggestion: Artworks made by young people can be ways of not only creating spaces for expression but also ways of opening up conversations about questions and issues that can be otherwise be divisive. Since these are connected in different ways to lived experience, this can open up conversations in another way.



Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Identity and Agency

When young people engage with extremist groups, they may come from a place of injustice and may be completely correct to feel that injustice. The question then is what to do with the feeling and how to engage with it. This may mean agreeing with the young person that they are right to feel that way, but then exploring together or supporting them to explore together what can we do about it rather than telling them to conform.

At the heart of this is supporting the empowerment and participation of young people. If they have a space and feel they are heard – beyond lip service and consultation – they can develop a sense of agency and active citizenship.

But if not, the motivation to keep engaging with society is lost. However, it is important that young people do not in turn silence others with their agency.

It is important to have those young people who feel powerless but want change to have a sense of agency supported by the system.

There are lots of ways to do this.

They can organise for themselves and build sustainability. It also means addressing diversity in the curriculum, not just by talking about different groups, but by foregrounding contributions, for example, to literature or science or the arts, so that young people know that they have cultural heritages that are acknowledged and valued.

What can change a life is feeling and being involved and active, in advocacy for example as a young person.

This sense of being able to bring solutions to one's own community, channeling the pain in ways that are creative, and offering supports to help young people to do this to create actions.

Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Fluid Identities and Reciprocal Inclusion

"It can't be always a matter of a minority always having to justify their value to the majority society without the majority society ever justifying their contributions. It can't be about the minority always having to educate the majority on why they shouldn't be doing something or having to disclose and discuss lived experience".

Rather the bigger question is the essence of 'what it is I am looking to belong to'. Identities involve movement. They are not fixed. If I feel I belong to, say, Irish identity, it's with fluidity in my being, as I belong to so many other identities at the same time. And perhaps this is the issue – loyalty. Not being loyal to only 'one' identity, being suspect as a consequence, and making the majority group feel it at ease by unsettling what community and loyalty want.

But with inclusion, what does this mean? Someone is outside, and is invited in? We need another word because inclusion has to happen on both sides. It is also you getting included in my system. The power of a word and how it resonates can be problematic. We need a two-way exchange".

Moment for Reflection:

Reflect on the words of this workshop participant. What resonates with you?

- How do you and how might you bring two-way inclusion or exchange into your life and your professional practice?
- What ideas do you have to support two-way, or reciprocal, inclusion and exchange with young people?

Topic 2: Unpacking Belonging and Inclusion - Fluid Identities and Reciprocal Inclusion

"[..] No longer just to leave it to humanism, kindness, tolerance which are all so fleeting but to enter into the decisive mutation of a plurality to which we all consent'" (2020a: 34)

"For there to be relation, there must be two or more identities or entities that are sovereign, that agree to change by exchanging" (2020a: 25)

"How can one be oneself without closing oneself off to the other, and how can one open oneself to the other without losing oneself?" (2020a: 11).

From Glissant, E. (2020a) *Introduction to a Poetics of Diversity.* Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press.

'Imagination, Exchange, Relation" (2020b: 155)

From (2020b) *Treatise on the Whole World.* Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press.

Unit 3, Topic 3
“Extremism of the Middle”

Topic 3: Am I an "Extremist of the Middle"?

What do we mean by an 'extremist of the middle'? For some, it might sound exaggerated, even though we have mentioned it quite a few times.

In Unit 1, we described some of the traits that can be associated with 'extremism' including a desire for monoculture rather than multi-culture, desire for sameness and fixed identity (identical), anti-pluralism, intolerance, and dogmatism.

Liberal democratic societies often pride themselves on being pluralistic, but what kinds of difference are accepted and tolerated, and why in a pluralistic society, does there continue to be an insistence on the language of 'difference and diversity' - difference from what?

When we discussed the concept and experience of 'othering', what arose was the impact of what participants called the 'extremism of the centre or the middle', a centre that insists on sameness.

Whilst the 'centre' might not see itself as such and is often not aware that it is the centre, there are lots of ways in which people called 'different' by the centre feel 'othered', alienated and outside.

Some of the logics of 'extremist thinking' are present in this case, in particular in relation to cultural and religious identities, as well as migrant heritages.

This is not straightforward. One can have a sense of Irishness and a sense of belonging, even in spite of racial discrimination. This sense of Irishness does not have anything to do with the discrimination when someone has been here so long, that their life, their understanding of this place, the information they have shapes this feeling of Irishness.

This may not be an issue if not interacting with the outside world, but when interacting with others, the sense of belonging can disappear.

One participant said, *"If I am not accepted for who I am, then belonging is undone. Still, extracted from the world, I feel I am involved in this society, and it's deep, it's there and no one can take it away."*

Topic 3: Am I an "Extremist of the Middle"?

In Unit 2, we described practices of listening, and noticing defensiveness when certain conversations or topics arise. Here we want to continue to reflect first on practices of othering and then on the kinds of frameworks that make these practices feel normal to many.

One of the key themes that arose in our conversations with dialogues was the experience of being 'othered', of family members being 'othered', or witnessing young people and their families being 'othered'.

People spoke of the trauma and pain of constant micro-aggressions, the suggestions that they did not (fully) belong, were not (fully) Irish, and thus not (fully) part of society.

Some of this extended beyond micro-aggressions to racism and hate speech, and when people tried to articulate their experience, often they did not feel listened to because others tried to explain away ("diversity is new here") or rationalise their experience ("I am sure they didn't mean it").

But this accumulation of wrongs - of being told one does not belong, or if one wants to belong, one must lose other important dimensions of self and heritage - can lead some to wonder about whether where one belongs when you are told you do not belong to the place that you call home.

When does it become possible to speak critically of that place, without being told "you're not from here" or having one's voice discounted as "not really understanding Ireland" (or whatever country) because you're new, regardless of how long you've lived here. Or it might be finding oneself silenced on the basis of class or gender.

This can involve "small' gestures (moving away/speaking more slowly/jokes) or words that cut deep and alienate people, but it can also be overt instances of racism, exclusion, or misogyny.

Paul Gilroy's writings in Unit 1 speak to this issue.

Activity 3: Am I an "Extremist of the Middle"?

Sometimes, language is used that is viewed as, at worst, 'careless' or 'thoughtless' by some, but is experienced as painful and traumatising by others, in particular when this is an ongoing issue that they and their loved ones have to address on a regular basis.

Moment for Reflection

For you, what does inclusion mean?

Reflect on where you position yourself or where you are normally/generally positioned. Is it at the 'centre'? When is it at the 'centre'? Where is the centre? This may change in different situations.

Question for those in from the perspective of a dominant group (which may change with the issue at hand)

What kind of comment of the form 'All x are y' would you find really hurtful and make you feel vulnerable?

Imagine if every day you had to deal with people making direct or indirect comments in relation to this.

What would this be like for you?

What would it be like if you witnessed your family trying to navigate this? (Response by mapping/writing/drawing)

Unit 3, Topic 4

How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue

The Paradoxical Nature of Safe Space

The practice of unpacking extremism means working with young people who are the targets of hateful language and behaviour *and* with the young people who express this hate.

This demands finding ways to navigate the tension between keeping young people safe while allowing space for difficult conversations to take place. It can also require, at times, 'challenging' young people who express hate, though we prefer to say publicly addressing and unpacking such statements.

In this context, 'safe' is not about 'comfort', rather is about developing a space for 'disturbing' and potentially 'uncomfortable' conversations to take place. This somewhat paradoxical nature of 'safe space' is expressed in *Outside in: Transforming Hate in Youth Settings* (NYCI, 2018)

"To create a safer space does not necessarily mean guaranteeing a safe space; however, there are various things we can put in place, and actions we can take, to respond to each young person's need for safety. It is only once you establish, with the young people, what makes a space safe that you can work towards setting it up."

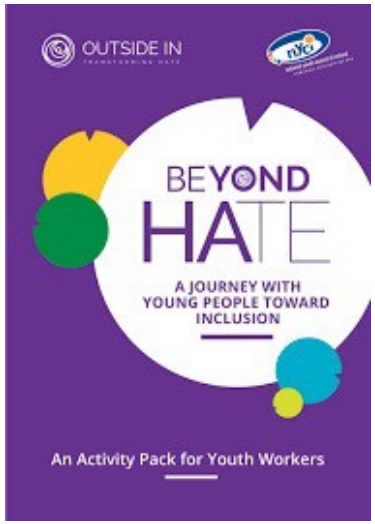
In summary, guidelines, more commonly referred to as 'Group Contract', are a good way to develop safe spaces for learning.

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Developing a Group Agreement/Contract

'Safer Spaces' is an excellent resource for the development of group agreements and includes examples of values (e.g. respect) and behaviours (don't interrupt people) to support safer practice. You can access the resource here https://politicsandcare.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/safer-spaces/

Tips and Tricks:

- The Group Agreement should always be visible in the group space.
- The more ownership the group takes over creating a Group Agreement the more likely they are to take it seriously.
- Every time a new person enters a process, it becomes a new group, meaning you should repeat the process and make a new agreement.
- You should refer to your agreement regularly if you are working with the same group for some time and you can adapt it if necessary.
- It's important to be aware that creating and maintaining safer space is a practice that requires more than just this activity. It requires constant work and commitment. However, this activity can support this process.
- Creating a safer space is a transformative practice that can prevent the occurrence of hate speech and hateful behaviour, as well as a tool that can be used in responding to hate.



'Tips and Tricks' is taken from *Beyond Hate*. You can access it here https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/PX3815-Beyond-Hate-V2.pdf
This module also includes an activity to support you in creating a group agreement.

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Developing a Group Agreement/Contract

Activity 1

Working on Difficult Topics in Group Settings

This activity is an important first step for creating a positive space that ensures development and inclusion of all.

Aim:
To create a group agreement that is based on the needs of everyone in the group in order to establish a safer space.

Time:
30-40 mins
- 15 mins introduction and individual work
- 10-20 mins categorising the ideas and making the group agreement
- 5 mins closing

Group size:
5 - 20 people

Who is it for?
Any age

Materials:
Flipchart paper, pens, sticky notes/sticky notes.

Step 1:
Tell the group that you want to create a space together in which everyone feels comfortable, respected, where they are able to participate and be heard. Break the group into small groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to discuss the following questions.

- What do you need to participate well in a group?
- What do you need to learn in a group setting?
- What do you need to feel respected and included in a group?

Step 2:
Ask each group to feedback. Write their responses on a flipchart. To clarify the group agreement on how to work together you can ask the group: 'How can we all try to meet these needs?'

Step 3:
If necessary, add some of the important principles in maintaining a safer space (see additional reading).

Step 4:
If everyone is happy with the list it becomes a Group Agreement that everyone will respect. When the Agreement is broken the group and/or the youth worker need to bring people back to remembering that the group had agreed on as a way of working that supported everyone's needs in the group. Explain that things can be added to the agreement if needed at any stage. When the young people agree everyone can sign the agreement.

Tips and Tricks:

- The Group Agreement should always be visible in the group space.
- The more ownership the group takes over creating a Group Agreement the more likely they are to take it seriously. The youth worker should facilitate this.
- Every time a new person enters a process, it becomes a new group, meaning you should repeat the process and make a new agreement.
- You should refer to your agreement regularly if you are working with the same group for some time and you can adapt it if necessary.
- It's important to be aware that creating and maintaining safer space is a practice that requires more than just this activity. It requires constant work and commitment. However, this activity can support this process.
- Creating a safer space is a transformative practice that can prevent the occurrence of hate speech and hateful behaviour, as well as a tool that can be used in responding to hate. (To know more about the concept of safer spaces see additional reading below).

Key themes: Group Agreement, Safer Space

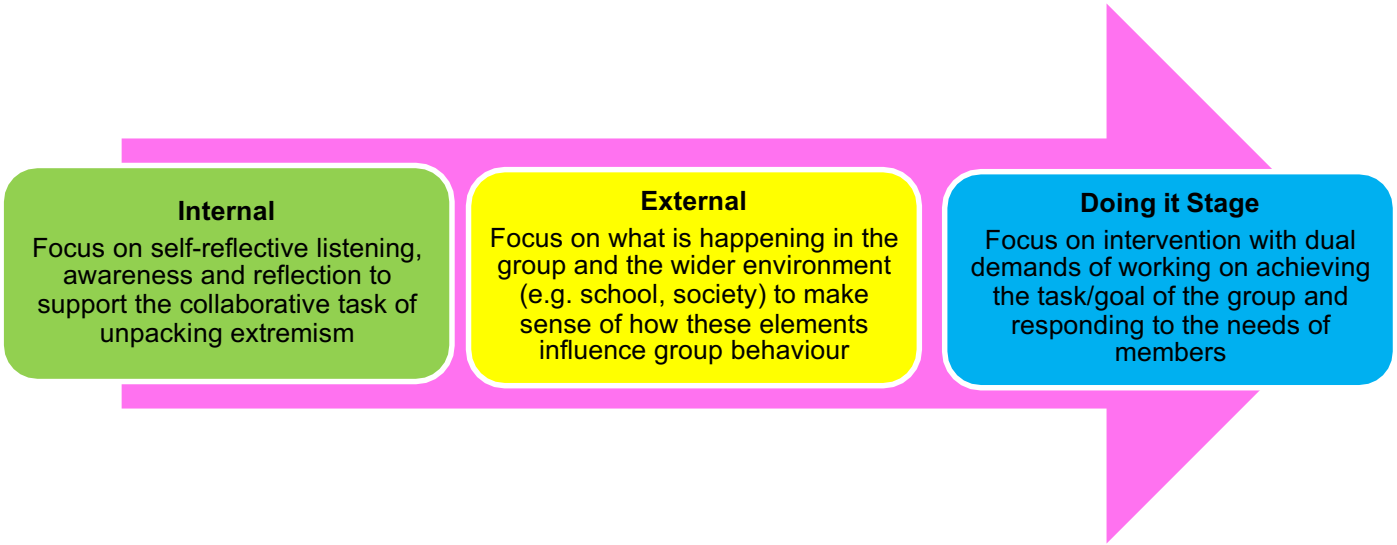
Link text
On creating safer space - Transforming Hate In Youth Settings Educational Tool and Practice Manual www.youth.ie/documents/outside-in-transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings/ Pages 18-24

Additional reading:
More information about safer spaces: https://politicsandcare.wordpress.com/2017/03/10/safer-spaces

https://splinternews.com/what-s-a-safe-space-a-look-at-the-phrases-50-year-hi-1793852786

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Group Facilitation to Support the Development of Safe Spaces

This is a basic model of facilitation to support practice.



Sources: Mehay, P. (2012) *The Essential Handbook for GP Training and Education*, London: Radcliffe Publishing Ltd.
Casey, D. et al. (1992) 'Facilitating Learning in Groups', *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal,* 13(4), pp.8-11.

Available here http://www.elementsuk.com/libraryofarticles/facilitating.pdf

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Working with Difficulties and Conflict

In many ways working to unpack extremism means difficulties and conflict will emerge as a natural part of group life.

Difficulties include resistance to engaging with the task or certain members/s dominating the space. In terms of conflict, it can manifest as hateful language or behaviour.

The role of the practitioner is to work with the group, managing the tension between using group experience to support learning whilst intervening to deescalate conflict that has the potential to damage young people and threaten the survival of the group.

Remember when faced with conflict, you can use the group contract/agreement as a tool for the group to evaluate whether conflict supports the development of safe(r) space. This is essential for learning.

"A core task for the groupworker is to continuously gauge where a group is in relation to healthy conflict and disruptive unhelpful chaos. At the point of conflict, the task is to stop and engage the group around this breach in contract that threatens the integrity of the group, alienates individual group members and marginalises their experience".

Source: Mc Conville, L. (2020) *Understanding Groupwork for Individual and Social Learning*, Peace for Youth, NI. Available at https://cooperationireland.org/content/uploads/2020/10/Understanding-Groupwork-for-individual-and-social-learning-YouthPact-2020-Brochure-Digital.pdf

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Problem Solving Model

What is the difficulty?

How is it reflected in the group

Who is involved/affected?

What are the possible causes of the difficulty?

Acknowledge the difficulty and advise it is a group issue

Highlight the process by which the difficulty came about

Be specific – 'I observed' and explore the impact on the group

Allow space for sharing of feelings/experience

Explore/Implement/Evaluate potential solutions with the group

Remember return to the contract/agreement

Use creative methods e.g. art, music, storytelling, pictures – they can change the mood of a group

If group become 'chaotic' – remain calm – intervene to protect members and group – e.g. end the session, and if necessary, offer support/feedback to individual members

Source: Prendiville, P. (2004), *Developing Facilitation Skills*, Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Topic 4: How to Create Safe(r) Spaces for Dialogue - Responding to Difficult Situations

It is very important to know what your **intention** is in the situation and what you want to achieve. Do you want to:

- Get the young person who caused the harm to understand they caused someone pain?
- De-escalate the situation?
- Raise awareness of the young people that, even if no one was directly harmed, the use of such language or behaviour is harmful and hateful?
- Use the situation as an educational opportunity?

The resulting response will entail one, or more, of the following:

- Connecting with the young people to understand better and therefore enable yourself to look at the situation with compassion i.e. **hear the young person.**

  or

- Wanting the young people to connect with you and understand that your need for providing a safer space for them is being challenged. You will be seeking to connect with the young people's ability to empathise i.e. **have the young person hear you.**

  or

- Wanting an action to happen which will involve directly asking the young people or your colleague/s to do something such as taking an individual away from the group for a chat. This may involve creating an opportunity for 1:1 support to make sure the young person is feeling secure in expressing themselves in a safer space or interrupt the activity so you can talk about what has happened with the group i.e. **take an action.**

This piece from *Transforming Hate* (2018, p.68) outlines some responses for managing hateful language and or behaviour.

Available at https://www.youth.ie/articles/transforming-hate-in-youth-work-settings

Further Activities

Activity 5: Building Group Cohesion - The River of Life

A river is a meaningful symbol in many cultures and people can associate a river with themes of life and journey. The purpose of the exercise is to build trust and cohesion in a group.

Procedure

Step 1: Tell the group you want them to draw their 'River of Life'. Ask them to start at the beginning of their life and include key dates, events and experiences in their life. They can use different colours to express different moods/experiences in their lives.

Step 2: Ask people to form small groups (3-4) to share their drawings. Because of the sensitive nature of the exercise it is may not be advisable to share in large group.

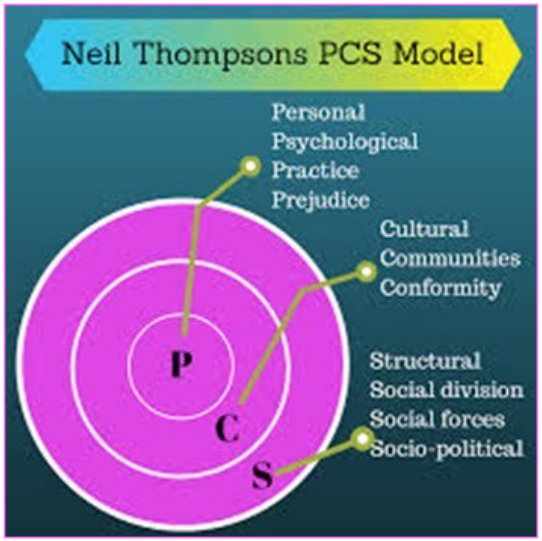
Step 3: You can encourage participants to put the drawings on a wall and informal sharing can take place.

Step 4: Group discussion on the experience of drawing the river of life and how this can support participants to work as a group.

Time: 15 minutes for drawing
Materials – Paper, crayons, 'BlueTack'

Source: Adapted from Hope, A. & Timmel, S. (1984) *Training for Transformation: A Handbook for Community Workers (Book 11)* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Activity 6: Personal, Cultural, Structural (PCS) Model



Purpose:

The aim of Thompson's PCS model is support social analysis at different levels. This allows a group to understand both the personal/interpersonal forces and external factors that influence group behaviour. In the context of working with extremism, it allows for the exploration of issues (e.g. racism, discrimination, homophobia) to support group learning.

Step 1: In small groups ask participants to analyse an issue that impacts on them, others and their community -these include: racism, discrimination, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, sexism, misogyny, classism, faith based hate.

Step 2: Encourage the groups to analyse the identified issue – at the levels of personal, cultural and structural levels

Step 3: Explore ways that young people can work to change these issues at personal, cultural and structural levels

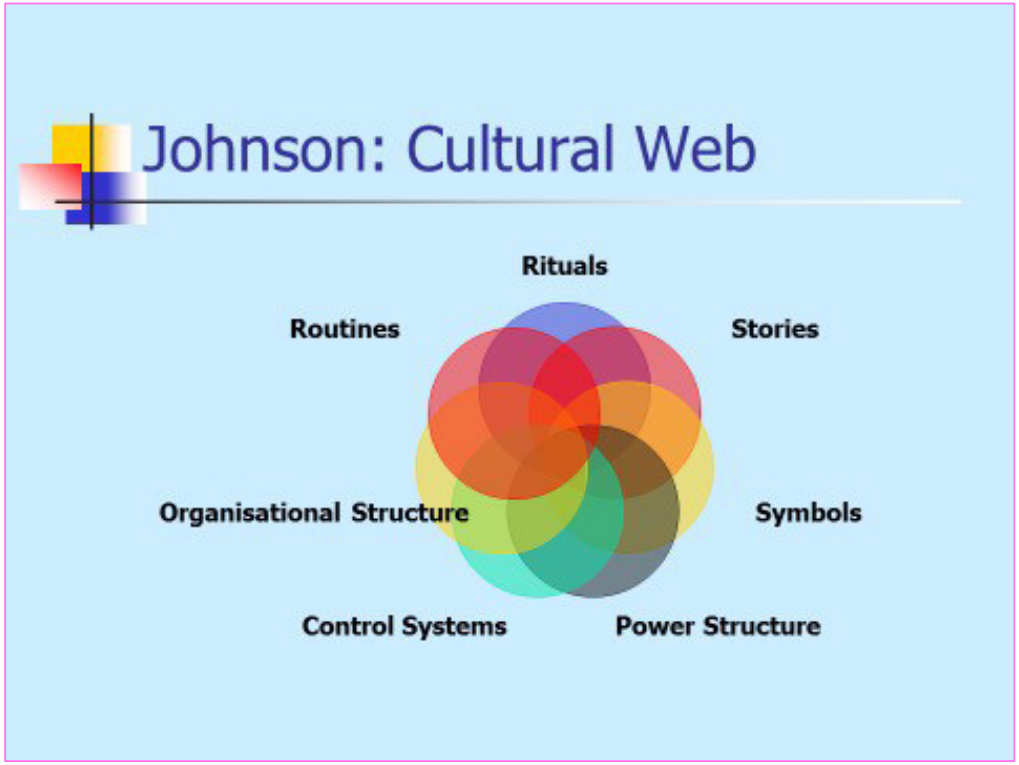
Step 4: Invite a wider discussion on how these issues are reflected in the group, and how members can explore these issues in a respectful and safe manner.

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Paper, markers.

Source: Thompson, N. (2012) *Anti-Discriminatory Practice: Equality, Diversity and Social Justice,* Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Activity 7: Cultural Mapping



When working with groups, it is important to remember that a group does not exist in isolation. Practitioners and groups are influenced by the wider culture of the organisation.

Organisational culture is both visible and hidden, as such it is not always easy to fully comprehend.

However, it has an impact on for example how organisations engage with diversity and difference: For example, does the school/youth project create a welcoming space through symbols that represent a range of faith and cultural traditions and heritages?

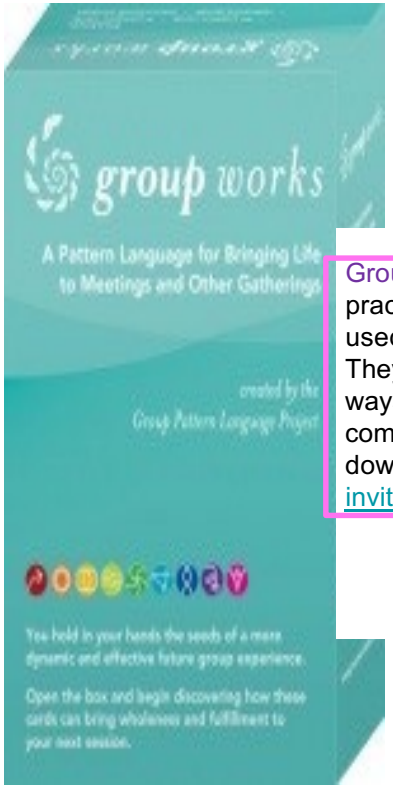
The Johnson & Scholes 'Cultural Web' is a framework for the analysis of organisational culture. As it is a web, the various elements are connected.

You can work through each element or concentrate on a few elements of the web.

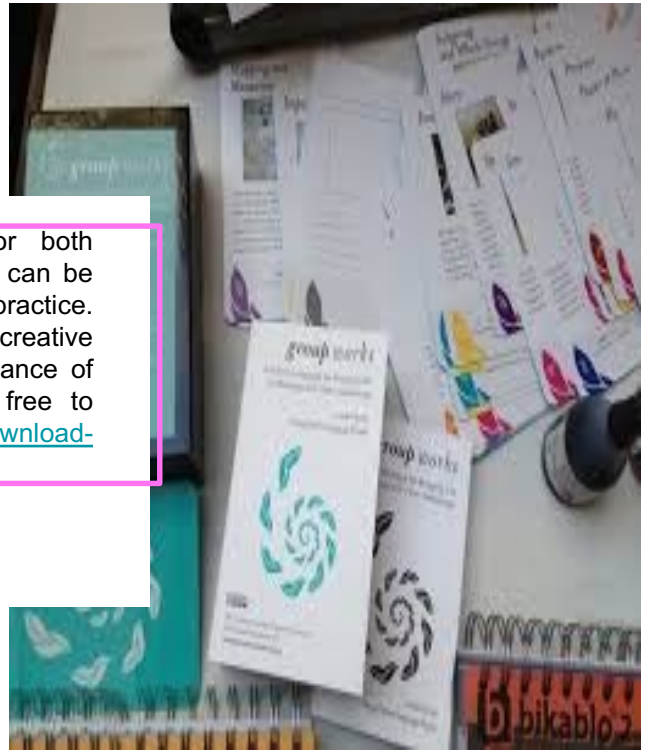
The purpose is gain an insight into your own organisation's culture and the challenges and opportunities it presents for the practice of unpacking extremism.

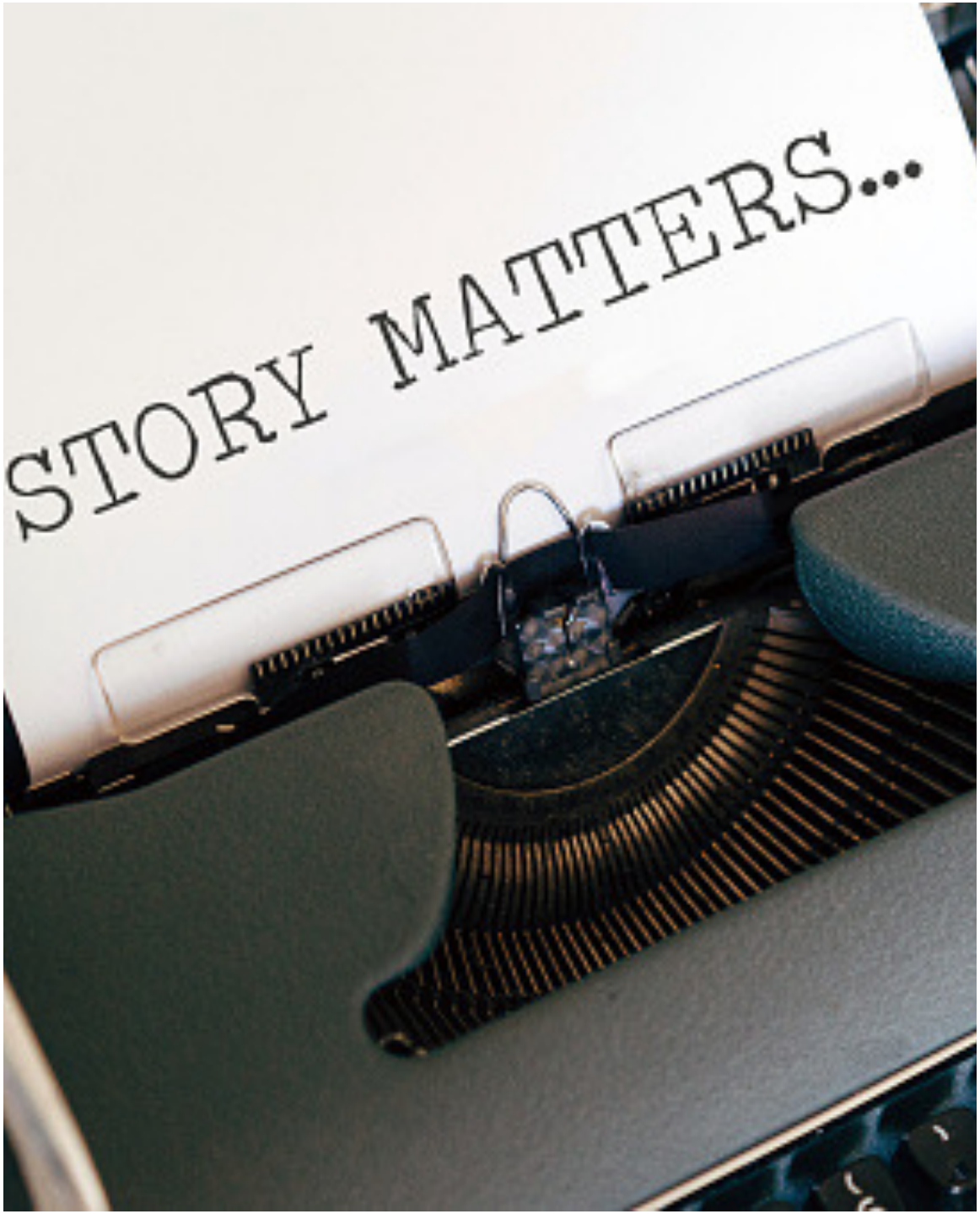
Source: Johnson, P.G., Scholes, P.K. & Whittington, P.R. (2007). *Exploring Corporate Strategy* 8th ed. Financial Times: Prentice Hall.

Resource: Group works



Group Works is an excellent resource for both practitioners and group members. The cards can be used by practitioners to develop theory for practice. They can also be used by young people in creative ways to understand how groups work, importance of communication, safety etc. The cards are free to download from https://groupworksdeck.org/download-invitation





Activity 8: Story Circle #2

Task

1. Reflecting on our earlier topics about 'unpacking extremism', belonging, identity and difference, and digging back into your memory, can you think of a pedagogical or a personal moment in your professional experience that was transformative, in however big or small a way.

2. You will tell the story of this. Please try to describe it as concretely as possible, setting the scene and context.

3. You can choose what you'd like to disclose, bearing in mind confidentiality. It can be as 'minor' or 'major' as you like. It might mean transformative for you in terms of your personal insight, a significant moment for a young person, for relationships with colleagues. There is no need to prepare anything formal. Trust what "wants to be spoken".

4. One person will offer to begin and then call on the next person. If you do not want to speak at that time, you can pass and before the next round begins you can offer your reflection. Please limit to 3 minutes each in the first round.

5. Listen to each person without interruption or framing your contribution in response to someone else's contribution until each person has spoken. In the next round, you will be invited to reflect further, and it will follow the same format of listening to each person without interruption or framing your contribution in direct response to someone else's contribution.

The guiding questions are:

- Why did you choose to share this moment?
- Why was it significant for you?
- What did you learn from it?

The break-out groups will then open up to discussion, sensitive to the fact that some people may not wish to further elaborate on their examples.

Activity 9: What Words Do

Generative Questions:

- What does hate speech look like?
- What does it sound like?
- Where might we encounter it?
- How do we respond educationally?
- Give Concrete Examples.

(Topics that may emerge include: Anti-immigration, white privilege, national identity, racism, extremism of all forms, and far right).

Task in Pairs: Reflect on some aspect of your identity that might potentially make you a target of abuse. Take care not to make yourself feel too vulnerable.

Imagine a world in which 'free speech' permitted public displays of abuse, targeted at you in particular.

What would that look like, feel like, sound like? Describe in detail, concretely and imagine it.

Asking Questions:

- Should everything be permitted as a right to free speech?
- Think of arguments for and against free speech.
- What about in the classroom or in youth work?
- Is there a difference?

Activity 10: Porch-sitting

Sometimes sitting side by side can open up conversations in different ways.

Key here is to keep this quite open and invite people to engage in a way that feels right for them.

- In silence, think of an object, a story, an image, or an experience that in some way symbolises, or connects with, the concept of conflict (or peace, extremism, hate, joy, freedom, equality..). (3 minutes).
- Don't overthink it.. Work intuitively..
- Sitting side by side (porch-sitting), speak to the person beside you for 2 uninterrupted minutes about whatever has come to mind. Change places. (4 minutes).
- You may then like to open into different kinds of stories that relate more personally to the lives of the participants but keep the concepts quite abstract and broad to allow for different kinds of engagement.
- Play with different kinds of seating, movement of furniture, directions of furniture, and ways of occupying space.
- See what new experiences these shifts in spatial and physical positioning open up.

Activity 11: Visual Thinking Strategy

The facilitator remains neutral but interested, open, and attentive, simply paraphrases, is physically expressive in pointing, and mirrors back, making connections. “What I hear you saying is..”, “Who haven’t we heard from..?”, “It seems that..”.. Can we answer that by looking? (Steer clear of pure speculation and fantasy).

You may choose an image or perhaps invite the young people or your colleagues to choose an image.

Step 1: All look at image in silence for 2-3 minutes
Step 2: What’s going on in this picture?
Step 3: What do you see that makes you say that?
Step 4: What more can we find?

Keep to this mode of open and formal questioning.

You might try a range of different images that might evoke different responses and emotions.

Paulo Freire’s use of generative images offers another strategy as does community philosophy. These are all ways of reading the world.

For more images and resources see:
https://www.permissiontowonder.com/imagebank and
https://vtshome.org/research/

You can also source materials and images from many museums and galleries for educational use and for ideas, plus ask the group to suggest their own images.

Activity 12: Ethnographic Infra-ordinary

This exercise builds on the earlier listening exercises in Unit 1.

The aim is to encourage people to move beyond unreflective stereotypes and cliches in everyday life, starting with everyday observations.

The term 'infra-ordinary' describes what has become invisible because of everyday habitual use. It is not the extra-ordinary.

It was coined by Georges Perec as a way of paying attention to the minute gestures, movements, habits, and moments. This exercise's aim is to bring to visibility and awareness this 'infra-ordinary' domain.

Step 1 Sit somewhere familiar outside or inside.

Step 2: Spend a few minutes observing and experiencing your surroundings very carefully with an open attitude.

Step 3: Begin to write a concrete description of this experience in the present tense "There is a ..". Don't introduce value judgements (good/bad). The description will help to share your perspective. Perhaps focus on one object/person/situation and see what happens to it.

See here for more ideas:
http://www.studiochronotope.com/uncovering-the-infraordinary.html

With thanks to Jessica Foley

Unit 4

How Stories are Made

Unit 4

Topic 1: What stories make you who you are and who you can become?

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> We are all made of stories. Some are tales we tell ourselves, memories we forever reweave in our minds, about the lives we live; others are from the understanding we have gained from a thousand other tellers of who and what we are and where we have come from. If folklore can be understood as a reflection of the cultural constructs of customs, narratives, beliefs, fears and hopes passed through the community for generations, then the tales that have survived, that have grown, changed and reseeded themselves into our lives, are both strong protectors of our culture and anchors to our living histories.

Eoin de Bhairduin (2020) *Why the Moon Travels.* Skein Press.

Exercise:

- What are the stories that you tell yourself about yourself?
- What stories is your life caught up in, despite itself?
- What stories do others (strangers) tell about people like you?
- What stories are part of your tradition and heritage?
- What stories are never heard?
- What stories would you like to hear?
- What other story would you like to tell about your life, your world, your communities?

Task: Together using storycircle #1 approach, write a story of who you are as a group. You might also choose to make statements. “I am/We are..”.

See Otobong Nkanga's artwork in this regard and Studio Chronotope http://www.studiochronotope.com/projects.html

Activity 1: How Stories are Made - Everything Moves, or The Story of the World

The aim of intercultural education is to shift from a focus on identity understood as 'identical' to that of identities involving reciprocal exchange and encounter. It focuses on relationships and challenges ideas of fixed and essential identity. To be alive is to move, to exchange and to change. Museum collections and galleries often offer collections that reveal how ideas, material, rituals, beliefs, and things move. But so too can cities, fashion, everyday rituals. Here we invite reflection on movement and journeys in different ways to 'normalise' and privilege movement and exchange. The questions aim to prompt a shift in sensibility toward movement, difference and exchange as foundational rather than the idea of 'identity' as sameness and fixed. Given fears of movements, exchange, and migration, it aims to open up the conversation indirectly about these issues

First: Brainstorm ideas/things that no longer have traction (fashion? hair?). Reflect on how ideas, maps, materials, motifs, technologies and aesthetic practices circulated the globe, for example, printing from Japan to the Gutenberg Bible to the internet.

Exercise 1: Take an everyday object, idea or technology and trace its genesis and journey, the objects/ideas with which it is affiliated now, and those with which it was once connected (perhaps a pair of sneakers). Imagine the hands that held it on that journey.

Exercise 2: Create a mind map/universe map showcasing what is important to the group taking all young people into account and allowing everyone to have a voice.

Exercise 3: Go for a walk in your local area and look carefully at the physical environment: where do the seeds and plants come from, the motifs on buildings, the metals that gleam? Become curious, an explorer of the world. Find different ways of mapping the environment (sound, video, rubbings, found objects..).

Unit 4

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas and Emotions: Navigating Online Spaces

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas and Emotions: Navigating Online Spaces

The idea of 'ecologies of ideas' stems from a number of thinkers including Spinoza, Hasana Sharp and Félix Guattari. In his writings *The Three Ecologies* (2000), Guattari describes the ethico-political-existential framework of ecology of the psyche, ecology of nature, and ecology of the social.

Drawing on this, let's explore some of the tendencies that he notes. When there is a desire for homogeneity or static sameness and segregation, this corrupts social relations, or sociality. We could think about 'filter bubbles' here as well as, of course, the preoccupation with purity of extremist groups. We might then reflect on how ideas circulate and how some 'stick together' and dominate other ideas. Word Clusters can communicate this somewhat, but what interests us here is which ideas come together and which exclude one another, e.g. pluralism and white supremacy. Do they change in different contexts?

This moves from a more 'personal' approach to 'my ideas' to just looking at ideas and how they move, which ones 'stick together', which repel each other, which try to dominate and which are more open, which are more powerful and why - we can map ecologies of ideas. You can also map your own psyche, society, community... Which ideas are toxic or poisonous and which creative? This allows us to take up a different relation to ideas and to see how 'they have us'. Our own biographies, traditions, and histories will shape our responses and associations.

Exercise: Create maps of ecologies of ideas. You might start with your own life, in your social relations or explore this as a group, but more powerful can be using either line and colour or other creative methods, using images or collage.

Imagine: Imagine an idea that might transform the existing 'clusters' of ideas and our own existences.

Source: Guattari, F. (2000) *The Three Ecologies.* London: Athlone Press.

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas - Emotional Geographies

Michalinos Zemblyas develops another way of thinking about cartography, geography, and mapping affects. He describes how emotions move and stick (to bodies). This language of 'emotional geographies' explores how they move rather than personalising them. Emotions are public and bound up with discourses of power, including organisation of hate, disgust, etc.

He notes that socialisation practices and discourses, including non-corporeal (non-bodily) spatial and discursive signs, and hierarchies of power and position, are critical to shaping the presence or absence, as well as the intensity of any given emotion. He explores how bodies are drawn together or move apart on racial or ethnic terms, with discourses having bodily markers to separate people.

He writes *"Hence movement is always embedded within certain socio-spatial contexts and connects bodies to other bodies; attachment to certain bodies (which are perceived to be similar) and distance from others (which are considered dissimilar) takes place through this movement, through being moved by the proximity or distance of others.*

*To put this differently: emotions do not come from **inside us** as reaction but are **produced in and circulated between others and ourselves** as actions and practices. This circulation happens precisely because individuals do not live in a social and political vacuum but move and thus emotions become attached to individuals united in their feelings for something. If emotions shape and are shaped by perceptions of race and ethnicity, for example, then it is interesting to investigate how certain emotions 'stick' to certain bodies or flow and traverse space"*

Activity 2: Ecologies of Ideas: Emotional Geographies

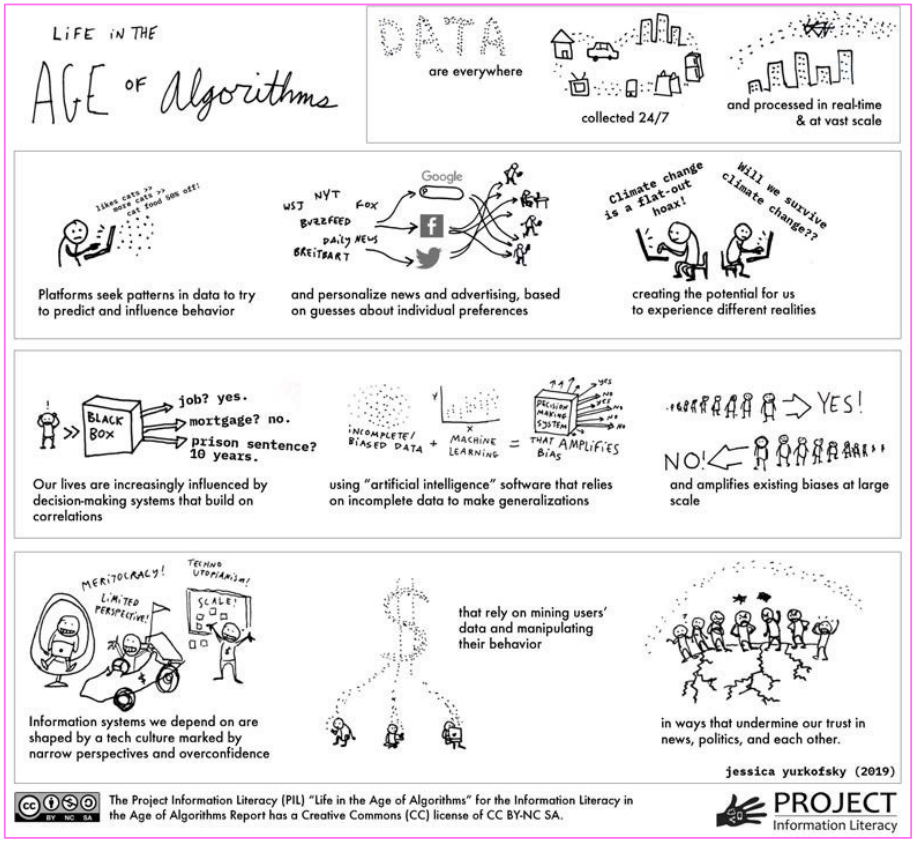
Zembylas suggests that a systematic investigation of the movement of emotions and bodies in certain spaces/places would be very helpful. This could be in relation to the nation-state, the border, the boundary, proximity (to sit, to touch), departure and distance, segregation, separation, occupation..

Task:

1. Building on the last theme of ecologies of ideas, explore with young people, practitioners and or community/family members, creative strategies to map the emotional geographies in your context.
2. Perhaps then map the emotional landscapes and journeys of the context: School, community, etc. Here you can use tracing paper to trace existing maps and intervene in new ways.
3. See Tiffany Chung's artworks for inspiration.

Zembylas, M. (2011) 'Investigating the emotional geographies of exclusion at a multicultural school', *Emotion, Space and Society (*4), pp.151-159

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas - How Algorithms Work



The last two themes explored ecologies of ideas and emotional geographies. Now we'd like to think about how these work in online spaces. It's important that young people understand how technologies work from the perspective of finance (e.g. click bait), sociality (e.g. identity feeling formation and filter bubbles), and design.

The diagram to the left shows some of the ways in which algorithms operate. Algorithms are just instructions, rules or procedures to perform a task or solve a problem – a recipe is a kind of algorithm. They offer useful ways of sorting, ordering, classifying and categorising information.

However, in online spaces they can serve to amplify bias and create 'clusters' whereby people already in agreement or who might be sympathetic are directed to information that reinforces this. This means that in the online space, people might not encounter different perspectives in their social media feeds. Also, the design of platforms also encourage certain kinds of user engagement – as much as possible! Developing digital literacy – reading the online world – means understanding how this works.

One simple exercise is to check in with your body and emotions when you read a headline or post, or something pops up on your feed. Sit with that emotion rather than letting it drive your responses. Don't react to it. What is it giving you? Is it confirming what you already believe?

Gabor Mate in his book *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction,* describes how this anticipation works – the next like, the next hit.. It can feed on itself spiralling into a void or vortex.

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas - How Algorithms Work (and How Ideas Feel)

Earlier we described some of the ways in which ideas *feel*, for example the idea of justice. Understanding feeling or affect is important because it is often what drives emotional responses and brings people into particular kinds of formations. White supremacy, for instance, feeds off and cultivates particular structures of feeling including grievance, loss, anger, fear and so on, but also love, belonging, connection, righteousness, protectiveness..

Digital platforms can bring together racial formations and structures of feeling, creating an intensive experiences as people try on different kinds of racism, for example, often masked as jokes.

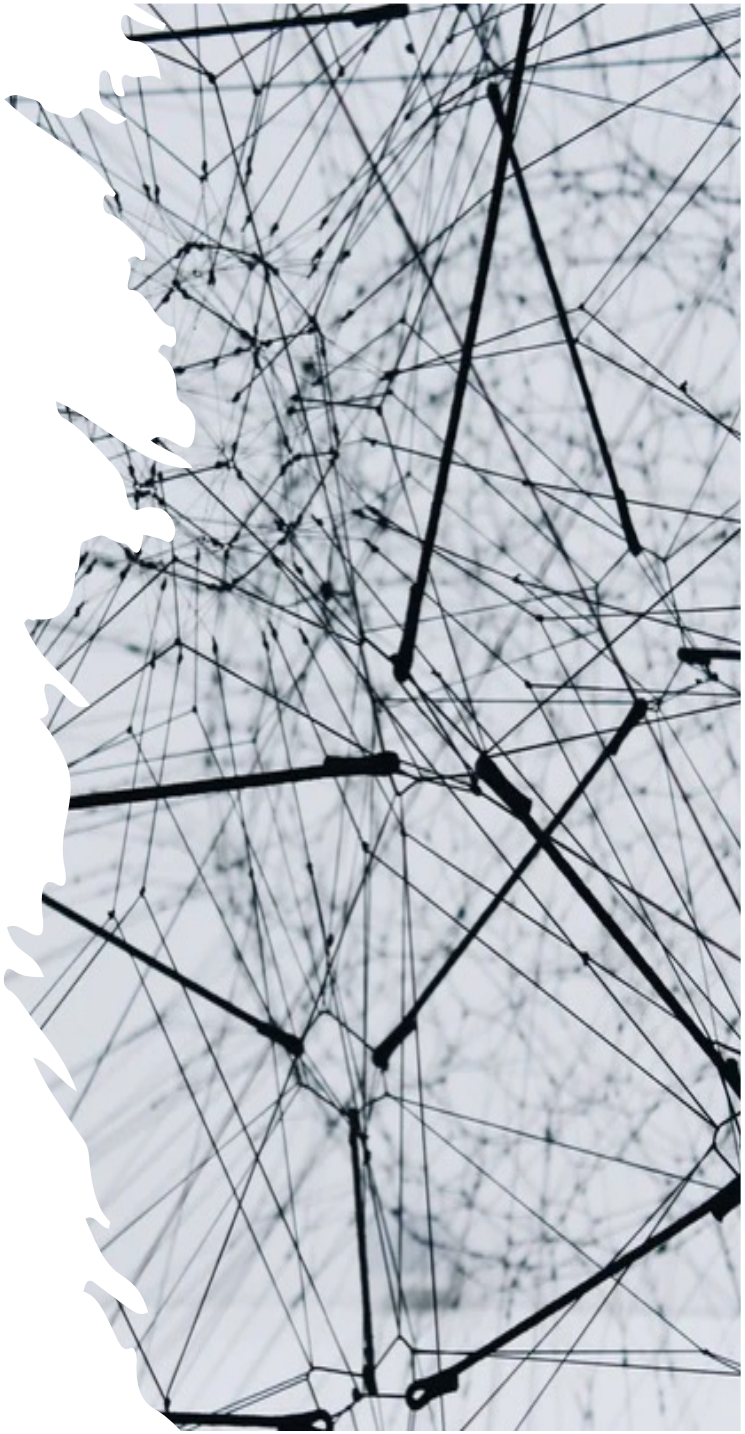
Online platforms can intensify emotions – for example, Reddit involves long scrolling which draws someone further and further in. Platforms promoting hate invite deep immersion and operate with a logic that is viral.

Platforming hate attracts users and encourages users to engage, interact, share and spread ideas. This is also financialised. Any use is good use. Young people are also attracted by the aesthetics of platforms.

These create spaces of participatory community which encourage not only the circulation of certain kinds of ideas, but also of certain kinds of affects, like fear or quest for (perceived) justice exchange of grievances, or purity. Not all kinds of relationality are positive, in particular when they are motivated by fear, grievance or a 'philosophy of loss'.

But talking with young people about how technologies work, how algorithms work, how ideas and feelings circulate, and how statements are often knowingly are designed to provoke certain kinds of emotions is helpful.

The experience of the global pandemic meant that some (young) people were attracted to conspiracy theories, sometimes because others dismissed their fears, ridiculed them, or thought arguments would work. Evidence and information is important, but so too is listening with compassion when someone is drawn into these online spaces.



Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas – Navigating Online Space

It can be hard to know how to talk about how technology works as an educator, but it is important before getting into discussions about content of ideas to talk about where ideas come from, how they cluster, how platforms work, how money is made from clicks, and so on. Whilst there is more work to be done about 'education and technology' this overview taken from the Institute of Strategic Dialogue's *Digital Citizenship Education: Programming Toolkit,* provides a very useful overview of key terms.

Fake News	Fake news is articles or posts that look like they contain factual information but which contain intentional disinformation with the aim of deceiving people, or misinformation, as people inadvertently share misinformation. People who create fake news can do so for financial reasons, political goals (to influence opinion) or personal motives (to cause divides in society.) It can be hard to distinguish fake news from truthful news.
Biased Writing	Biased writing is when a writer shows favouritism or prejudice toward a particular opinion rather than being fair and balanced. It's important to distinguish opinion from fact as it can lead to a poor understanding of issues by people, making it harder to deal with society's problems.
Echo Chambers	Echo chambers are social spaces in which ideas, opinions and beliefs are reinforced by repetition within a closed group. Within echo chambers, dissenting views are unexpressed or unrepresented, dismissed or removed. They are comfortable because it's easier to agree than disagree, but they can cause political fragmentation or polarisation, and reduce opportunities to listen to people from different perspectives and backgrounds, and reduce empathy for those who hold different perspectives.
Filter Bubbles	Filter bubbles are the result of personalised search and newsfeed functions. They can be useful, directing you to the content you want to consume, but they can also be harmful, separating users from information that disagrees with their viewpoint. This can isolate users in political, social or ideological bubbles, in a phenomenon closely related to the echo chamber. It can push people towards more extreme positions and reduce their empathy for people who think differently.

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas – Navigating Online Space

Stereotyping	Stereotyping occurs when people use an oversimplified and over-generalised set of characteristics to describe a group of people. People often adopt stereotypes because they offer a simple way to perceive the world. They become embedded in people's thinking because they assume that the characteristics of one person are true for every other person who shares one or of the same identifying characteristics, e.g. race, religion, gender, class or sexual orientation. When we use stereotypes we reduce people's individuality and character nuances to a list of characteristics that are easy to fit into a particular category. This has the negative effect of distorting someone's understanding of another person or group and stops them from recognising similar traits and commonalities they may have.
Scapegoating	Scapegoating is the practice of singling out a person or group within society for negative treatment and blaming them for social or political problems. Scapegoating is a key driver of intolerance and prejudice. Scapegoating a group and blaming them for social problems presents a simple and clear narrative that can drive polarisation and hatred within society. Examples of scapegoating include the treatment of Jewish people by the Nazis, or the blaming of ethnic minorities for social or economic problems.
Us v Them thinking	An 'us vs them' mentality divides the world into a negatively viewed, stereotyped out-group (them), and a positively viewed in-group (us). Divisions can be based across a wide range of identities such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, class, nationality and political views. Differences are often projected through the use of stereotyping, and all members of the out-group are characterised as the same. 'Us vs them' thinking is often used to polarise people, whether online or in real life, forcing individuals into a binary view of the content creator's own making. The out-group is often blamed for the problems experienced by the in-group, and this is used to strengthen the way the in-group views themselves.
Hate Speech	While there is no international legal definition of hate speech, it is widely recognised as speech which attacks, intimidates, humiliates, discredits or promotes violence against a person or group 'based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor'. Online hate speech is a major problem and something most individuals encounter at some point.

Topic 2: Ecologies of Ideas – Navigating Online Space

Online and offline spaces intersect so it's important to keep an eye on how information moves and to look at the outcomes of this and assess the sources of it. Some individuals and groups trade in hate and disinformation and have different reasons for doing so. Sometimes memes play into our existing prejudices, so notice when you agree a little too quickly to something that is about denigrating someone seen as 'other'. Ciarán O'Connor of the Institute of Strategic Dialogue describes extremism and ideologies in the Irish context. We have come across many of these ideas through this module. It underlines why it's so important for educators to address these issues as they arise with young people and with their peers.

- Ethnonationalism - “Ireland for the Irish.” Define Irish as a monocultural (white) Ireland.
- Support nationalism, nativism, racism, xenophobia or authoritarianism.
- Promote narratives of victimhood, threat or loss of (white) culture, traditions under attack or reverse discrimination.
- Hostile to liberal democracy, anti-system, to varying degrees.
- Reject and mobilise against diversity, plurality and minority rights, encourage violence.

O'Connor in his talk for EDURAD which is available on the website describes how hate is orchestrated online, and memes are spread to deliberately spread disinformation.

Other avenues include gaming, and youth workers from Ireland and the Netherlands who have been part of our dialogues, describe how connecting with young people through gaming is important to understand the kinds of opinions they are expressing and exposed to. TikTok is another ‘safe space' to hate, and as with other platforms and social media, code words are used, for example, "joggers" in order to bypass detection. Other strategies like this include dog-whistles, where something might seem harmless to a wider group, but is understood by the in-group. Groups, such as the far-right, are also piggy-backing on anti-vaxx protests in order to disseminate their views, as well as through 'well-being' platforms and influences.

Activity 3: Hacking the Codes

In the world of big data, our identities can be described in lines of code. A way of opening up questions of identity can involve imagining identities written as code, describing characteristics, likes, preferences, habits, dislikes, activities.

Think about how identities are coded, whether they reflect or relate to anyone real, and how your own identity can be understood as just coding. This opens up possibilities for hacking the identity or code you've been given to create something new. Or for deciding to stay with your codes. This is an exercise you can do with young people.

Instruction Poem

Step 1: Each person writes a series of descriptive statements. These can be fabricated or real.
"She walks to the shop everyday"
"She usually drinks three coffees for breakfast"
"She limps when she is tired"

Step 2: Mix up the statements to create a diagram of a person. This may read like a poem.

Step 3: Then write a code of your own life. Only use descriptive statements.

Step 4: Review and write the overarching codes (basic and inherited) that have shaped the codes of your life.

Step 5: Together as a group and individually, reflect on which codes you want to keep and which codes you want to hack.

With thanks to Jessica Foley

Unit 4

Topic 3: Values and Conviviality: Finding Meaning whilst Living Together

Topic 3: Values and Conviviality - Sacred Values

Whilst throughout this module, we have emphasised a particular kind of understanding of extremism, we have also tried to explore and unpack deeper values and shared different ways of listening to young people. It's important not to position all young people as passive, groomed, manipulated etc, including those who become involved in violent extremist movements. Not all political violence is 'extremist and some so-called extreme positions can sometimes be better understood as radical positions..

Scott Atran in his book *Talking to the Enemy: Faith Brotherhood and the (Un)making of Terrorists* is critical of approaches that are based on counter-narratives. He argues that young people who joined organisations like ISIS did so because it tapped into their 'sacred values'. They felt a sense of agency, purpose and connection, and rather than being passively recruited, many sought out ways of joining it.

In a recent article, he suggests that counter-engagements that allow for re-framing and re-interpreting 'sacred values' is less likely to have the reactive backlash to counter-narratives, because ideologies are not 'free floating ideas' but bound up in embodied and embedded social, political, cultural, psychological etc., conditions. They are not up for negotiation or trade off for material rewards. But symbolic exchange and recognition can be significant. He also suggests that prevention work involves stopping violence-promoting values from becoming 'sacred values'. This offers perhaps another way of thinking about prevention. Of course, others join movements that enable their desire for violence or quest for excitement without deeper motivation.

Whilst we have focused on the characteristics of extremism, part of this journey aimed explore deeper motivations and work with some young people at risk of getting caught up in violent extremism to find non-violent ways for them to live a life of significance connected to their 'sacred values' or desire for agency or action. The work of educators is to support young people in finding purpose, significance and agency, even through 'sacred values' whilst channeling them into more pro-social, even radical, outlets and cultivating their curiosity about the world. This topic seeks to open this up.

Activity 4: Values and Conviviality – Sacred Values/Living Values

Living Values Exercise and Reflection

Work first with the so-called "liberal values" topography. This exercise should give more depth and nuance to language of values including "core" or "shared" or "common" values. It should show the complexity of the different ways in which values are understood, lived and embodied, and invites another way of thinking values.

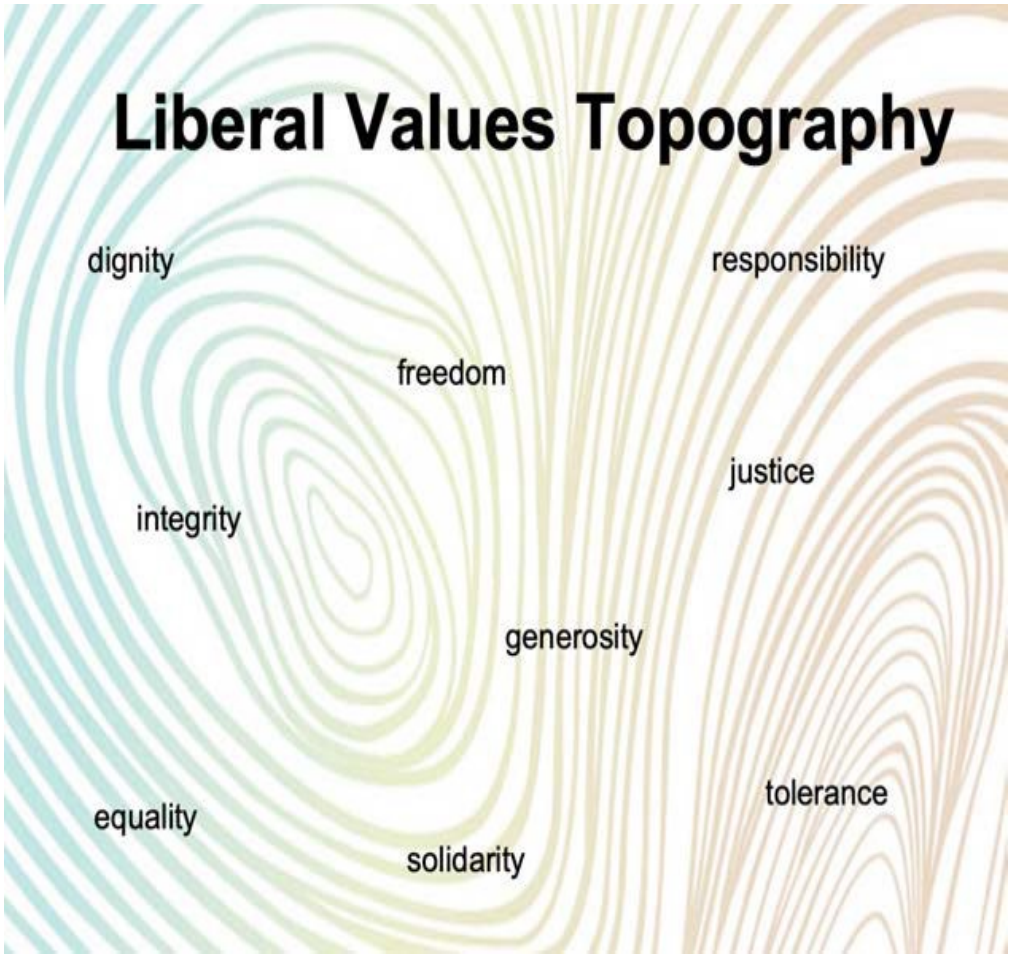
Divide into groups of 5-6. Put cards with the names of each value turned face down on the ground.

Round 1: (Two Minutes) Each person turns over one card at random. The person speaks to the value from experience or story – no theorising or analysing!!) without over-thinking it. See what comes up. Use a phone as a timekeeper.

If you do not wish to speak, hold the silence for the allocated time until it is the next person's turn. Move clockwise from first person. No interruptions or discussion. Simply listen. No chit chat or interruptions.

Round 2: (Three Minutes) Same as above. You have the following options:

1. Stay with the same concept/value
2. Choose a different one and the whole group stays with that one.
3. Each person chooses a different concept/value each time
4. Each person writes down a value that is **sacred** to them.
5. First they speak to the value.
6. Then the group creates a new group of values and repeats Round 1.



Topic 3: Values and Conviviality: Tools for Living Together

Les Back and Shamser Sinha (2016) describe how Ivan Illich's initial formulation of conviviality emphasises tools. By talking about tools, this gives a way "out of either reducing conviviality to a sense of 'identity' or claiming a kind of underlying 'cultural ecology' that structures and therefore explains convivial life".

In their ethnographic study they paid careful attention to the experiences of young migrants in order to 'find the capabilities and resources that enabled them to live, make space to live within a city that remains divided by racism'. In one of our policy workshops, one of our participants said, **'curiosity is a protective factor against extremism'.** Fostering curiosity is surely the task of education!

Back and Sinha (2009) say *"The first tool we want to foreground is the fostering of an **attentiveness to the life of multiculture**. What we see in the young lives of all of the people we have worked with is a capacity to listen to, read and be surprised by London's complex cultural landscape. They are curious about their social worlds and, as we have already noted, sometimes come to see it with the enchanted eye of a tourist. This kind of attentiveness to everyday multicultural life stands in stark contrast to what Noble calls perceptively 'panicked multi-culturalism".*

In the local context, the terms of belonging can be redrawn as a result producing a kind of 'neighbourhood nationalism' that shifts partially the terms of inclusion (see Back, 1996).

Activity 5: Values and Conviviality - Tools for Living Together

"It is within the spaces of everyday life that prosaic negotiations with difference through intimate proximity take place and are often compulsory and necessary. These are best characterised as 'micro-publics' including workplace, schools, hospitals, colleges, youth centres, sports clubs and other contact zones of association including public transport" (2016: 533).

The key learning that they share is the following:

- **Tools of conviviality** shape micro-publics rather than the other way around. *"The social ecology of multiculture [..] provides the staging of a micro-public – where profound proximity and encounter take place – convivial life is fashioned through these capabilities that are used to make a convivial life".*

- **Intolerance** of intolerance means not putting hate in your heart

- **Worldiness:** It's important to widen one's map of the world.

Questions:

- What tools of conviviality do you have available to you, and which would you like to invent?
- How do you resist putting hate in your heart?
- How will you widen your map of the world?

Back, L. & Sinha, S. (2016) 'Multicultural Conviviality in the Midst of Racism's Ruins', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, (37)5, pp. 517-532.

Unit 4

Topic 4: Imagining a World of the Future

Topic 4: Imagining a World of the Future

We keep this section empty and open as an invitation to imagine for young people.

You know how to listen and to support them in asking the questions they need to ask.

It's important that young people have opportunities to set the agenda, to connect with their 'sacred values', to discuss the issues that they think are important, to express and explore those ideas in ways that make sense to them, to manifest their thinking publicly and have opportunities for real agency and change, or even just adventure and excitement.

Talk with young people about how they want to express and explore their ideas: film, podcast, Instagram, Tiktok, literature..

Contemporary art practice offers lots of different ideas for engagement. See *The Enquiring Classroom* for some ideas as a starting point. Think about slogans, statements, silence, instruction pieces, the lives of things, hidden stories, transforming space, re-imagining pedagogy and curriculum. http://www.enquiring-project.eu

Unit 4

Further Creative Activities

Activity 6: Pocket History 1: An Assembly of Prompts

Ethno-national and/or imperial identities are driven by territorial logics of 'blood, soil and belonging'. At the time of writing war has broken out in the Ukraine and the concept of 'foreign fighter' will have changed in the European policy imagination.

Talking about war, violence, and conflict with young people is important and throughout this manual, we have shared different ways this topic can be broached. Many can be adapted to explore these issues.

The following exercises are directed toward another (imagined) future, one more sustainable where geo-politics doesn't create battlefields of either identities or resources or their mutual entanglement. In times of conflict, black and white polarised thinking can become more stark. Here we seek other kinds of grounding and perspective.

This exercise offers a different relationship to the land in the hope of 'distancing' from familiar narratives and opening up new and more intimate stories.

It takes up the image of the 'parliament of things' (*Dingpolitik)* of Iceland as imagined by Latour and Schneibel (2005).

We took to find more other more creative ways to relate to the earth, place and land than the logics of 'blood, soil and territory' that can drive ethno-nationalism, and monocultural ideas of the nation or community (or school) and expansionist ideas of empire.

They are also about cultivating a world-sensibility that can provide positive ways of responding to pressing issues like climate justice and peace. This may seem utopian, but perhaps this is what is needed, in particular in these times.

Often we suggest indirect approaches to these issues, ones that can open up dialogue, sensibility and thinking.

Activity 7: Pocket History #1: An Assembly of Prompts

Step 1: The Political and Ethical Imagination

1. Each person brings 2 things: A handful of soil from somewhere they know well, and a material object, or image or idea that in some way helps them to remember a significant moment in their past, collective or individual - whatever the person chooses.

Step 2: *Dreaming:* This Land as Witness:

a. Place-Speaking: If this place/land/island could *speak* what would it say about the myths and stories told about it? What stories have been occluded or silenced? How would it bear witness? Would its concerns be the same as those of humans? How would it describe its experience of the present?

Perhaps there would be no words, only images or poetic gestures.

Imagine and map this using text and image as a small group activity.
You need not agree.

b. Bags of soil: Ask each participant to bring their small handful of soil and mix them up. Each participant uses the smell, texture, look and feel of the soil – the sensuous experience - and imagines an image or gesture that captures the feeling of this all these places mixing together.

Use the soil spread on sheets of paper to make images to symbolise this.

c. A Walking Exercise - Getting Perspective: *Go for a walk***.** Experience the materiality and memory of this land through the senses as you walk through *this* place. Imagine moving back through to the perspective of geological time, telling the stories of the entangled histories and stories of this (is)land, this earth, and one's place in it and on it.

Activity 8: Pocket History #2: Materialising Memory - On Storytelling

Enquiry: How do we humans tell stories?

a. Object as Witness: Provision of material objects:

i. Each person tells the (fictional) autobiography of the object as it existed in the past, as it exists in the present, and may exist in the future on this land/island.

ii. Write in the first person of the life it has led, currently lead and the life it will have led.

iii. Describe its dreams, hopes and fears and how it will co-exist with others. (Be free and don't overthink.)

Using the objects is a way of stepping back from the known and the personal, and provides a way of addressing the questions below.

Free write in response to what emerges and/or use it as a prompt for discussion.

Questions

- What stories do we privilege? What does this say about our values, who we think we are, and sense of self?
- What is the relation between stories, memories and histories?
- Can we be together without telling our own stories?
- How might others tell our stories?
- What stories are silenced, excluded, ignored?

The Myth of the Crane Bag:

If you put your hand in the bag, and found what it is you *need* right now, what would that be?

The Crane Bag is another way of rethinking and retelling stories: identifying what we subjectively need for protection, to be heard, to get a measure of power over things that cannot be controlled - it is very usefully used with Storytelling as a way of saying what cannot be said directly.

Activity 9: Pocket History 3: Telling the Story of the Past of this Land/Island; Curating Possible Futures

Strange Futures: Museum on a Table/in a Rucksack

Going back to the image of the rucksack, take out the objects that the group has brough.

a. How might these objects/strange creatures co-exist without agreeing in a future together?
b. What would make this possible? How could we place them?
c. Enact/draw/make a storyboard for a film with the characters/material objects.
d. Use these to image the State as a Political Concept: What is the relationship between the State and the people? Include and re-imagine the institutions of the State.

Gatherings:

Thinking of democracy as a way of finding arrangements and institutions to help us to be able to bear to listen to one another. How can we create spaces where we can bear to listen to one another in which we also are open to changing and exchanging our own stories and understandings?

i. What are the limits of mutual understanding?

ii. What difference do they make? *Discuss. Map. Draw.*

Activity 10: Engaging with the Past

Exercise 1. Stories of Political Shame and Surprising Solidarity.

Creating the Space: Place your chairs in a triangle facing one way, perhaps looking out a window.

Begin with an invitation to tell a story of Political Shame (not personal shame) and then half-way through turn to a story of Surprising Solidarity.

- Each person speaks only when and if they are moved to do so.
- Silence is welcome.
- Be aware of and supportive of the presence of others but keep your gaze looking ahead.

Exercise 2: Counter-Memorialisation

1. Think of a story that has been silenced or forgotten, be it one of political shame or one of surprising solidarity or another.
2. How might it be memorialised in a way that would do justice to it? Ask, where and when do we memorialise? For whom do we memorialise? Perhaps it would imagine another story, a fiction or utopia. Perhaps it would involve a silent monument or a statement. Perhaps an event like Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument Or a sound.
3. Draw a diagrammatic proposal stating the issue/problem and then imagining a form of memorialisation. Describe in as much detail as possible. (Pencil, black pen, and Brown Card).

- **Share** provisional thoughts and proposals.
- **Silent Writing** for 10 minutes
- **Listen** to Lubaina Himid's Lecture "What are Monuments For?" https://vimeo.com/22938970

Activity 11: The Temporary Ethnographer

i. Sensing

- Leave the room that you are in if you can.
- Note the colour of the sky and the temperature.
- Note the time and date.
- Note the shapes of the buildings and any decorations or accessories that they are wearing? Imagine them as ancient (or modern) humans. What are their characters?
- Imagine the many feet that have walked along this stretch of earth for centuries and millenia. Stop and contemplate for one minute.
- Imagine yourself as a small child between two and a half to seven. How would you move through the street/land? As a scientific experiment, try a little movement that you might have done then, and see how you feel.

ii. Categorising and Classify

- Then, categorise and group the clothes-wearing-bodies that you see.
- Which ones belong together, and which ones don't. Try different ways of categorising.
- Do little drawings to help the reader understand. Move through different spaces.
- Observe your responses. Think about your classifications.

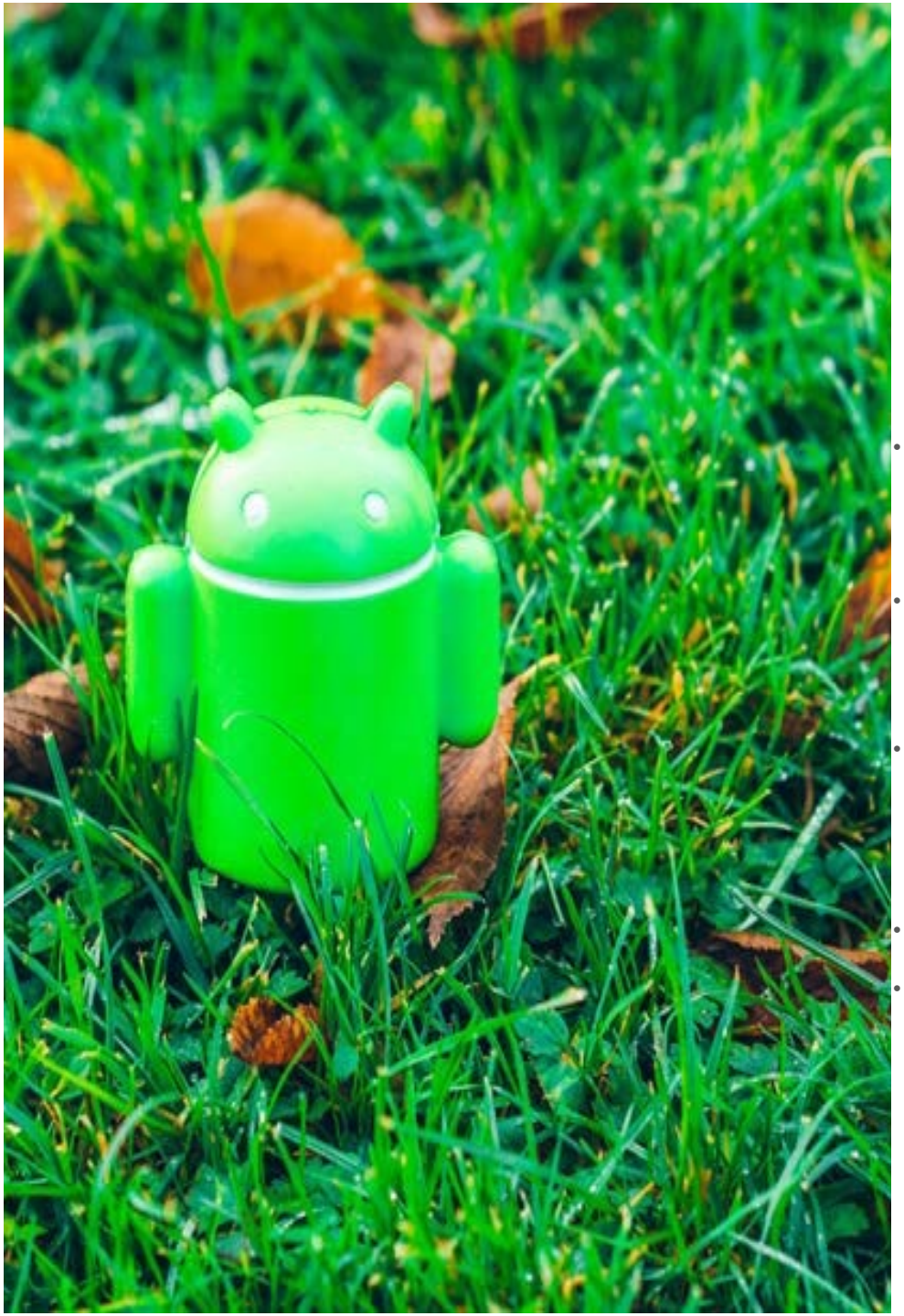
Activity 11: The Temporary Ethnographer (continued)

iii. Attending

- Then simply watch for five minutes.
- Note the movements and gestures as people and objects move through the spaces, as a choreographer might. On a small postcard.
- Draw the lines of their movement (intuitively). Are they tight, broad, loose, zig-zaggy, compressed, flowing, open..?
- Write the adjectives and verbs that come to mind.
- Collect gestures and movements by again noting them in words or image.

iv. Educating the Gaze

- Create two columns on a white notecard.
- Now, as you look at the people around you, ask yourself: What do I see? Write down exactly what you see.
- Each time an assumption, cliché, stereotype, fantasy or imagining comes to mind, jot it down with a brief description of the body in question in a column entitled, "What do I think I see?", then ask yourself again "What do I see?"
- Note how many times you look away because you don't want to see something.
- Note which bodies your body thinks it has an affinity with and reasons for this



Activity 12: Imaginary Dialogues/Encounters: The Martian Anthropologist (or Small Child who asks "Why?")

- **Reflect** and choose one aspect of your 'culture' that you embody in some way (whatever that is) that you find very familiar, common sense, and obvious and feel infringed when others transgress it (think about the body, space, noise, civility.. Everyday experiences)
- **Imagine** trying to explain it to someone who is completely unfamiliar with that practice. Provide the best argument, justification and rationale that you can give. If that fails, be dogmatic. (6 minutes – try it out in pairs)
- **Remember** encounters with other 'cultures' that you have had. [And reflect on what comes up and why you see it as another culture.] What practices did you find so beautiful or wonderful that you would like to bring them into your life? Describe one or two in detail and explain why. (6 minutes – pairs)
- **Discuss** what is 'culture' and how does it relate to 'values'?
- **Ask** is another 'culture' just someone who does things differently from me? Relate to tradition, expression, embodiment, space, sensibility, voice, loudness/softness, movement, and so on. What is the relationship between culture and values. Discuss. (Group 8 minutes)

Activity 13: Making Podcasts (from the VU EDURAD Module)

This short introduction offers some ideas for making podcasts. This might be something you'd like to do as practitioners to share with peers, or for young people to lead on themselves.

Think first:

- Is the topic one that matters to people?
- Is it a topic that allows for different perspectives?
- Will there be space for exploration and for the conversation to take unexpected turns?
- Will participants be willing to to explore ideas and thoughts rather than prove their own position?
- Who is your audience (local, national, peer group)?
- What platform will it be on?

Preparation

- Make a list of potential topics for discussion.
- Check in with others to see if your list is missing something.
- Identify speakers if you'd like to have invited guests.
- Draft some simple questions.
- Think about the style of the conversation – what role with you have? Will you ask questions, provide prompts, direct the conversation?

Helpful Resources

There is a wide range of software available for recording and editing your podcast. Here are some of the most common, during this planning phase you might want to start exploring the options available to you.

Some Examples of Software
GarageBand (Mac) [Free]
Audacity [Free]
Adobe Audition [Paid]
Alitu [Paid]
Anchor.fm [Free]

Some Helpful Guides
NPR Podcast Guide
BBC Podcast Guide
Buzzsprout
Lifehacker Podcast Guide

Activity 13: Making Podcasts – Planning Next Steps

You have decided your topic, your guests, your broad questions, and the tone/style of the podcast.

What happens next?

- What is the name of your podcast? Think about the kinds of issues you want to address, your audience, and the message you want to communicate.
- If you want to talk about challenging issues, then think first about what makes you more able to talk about these kinds of questions. What tone do you prefer, what atmosphere or environment? If in person, how are the chairs set up?
- Make sure your guests are set up and have all the information they need to participate in a relaxed way.
- Allow time to think and reflect. Let everyone know that silence is ok.
- Remember to record!

The Dutch module, **Podcasting for Resilience** on the EDURAD project website will talk you through the next steps of editing, sharing and getting useful feedback. https://edurad.eu/platform/