



What's in our control?

Strong emotions can be a part of everyone's lives, from arguing with friends to not getting the grades we expect, some emotions can become intense. This session provides a commonly used tool called the 'circle of control' by Steven Covey. It provides an opportunity for participants to take a step back from their emotions and focus on what they currently control, what they can influence and factors that we should try not dwell on - as we sometimes cannot control them.



60 minutes
approximately



Skills



8 -12 participants



By the end of this
activity participants
will be able to:

- Demonstrate the required skills to plan and achieve their set goals
- Apply a strengths based approach in setting goals.
- Illustrate the confidence in their own ability to set meaningful personal goals.



Aim

For participants to recognise the differences between things they can and cannot control in relation to loneliness and social isolation. Participants will be able to consider and set meaningful goals to address loneliness.



Suitable for 14 + (key
stage 4 and above)

Part of the 'Making Connections Count'
www.youthcymru.org.uk



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Session overview: What's in our control?

Time	Activity description	Group set up	Aim(s)	Resources
5	Introduction to session/project group contract setting	Whole group	To set group culture and provide session context	Flipchart & pens Space - such as a hall!
10	Ice breaker We recommend using the "If you..?" question	Whole group	6 questions designed to prompt participants to start thinking and decision making.	Ice breaker section resources chosen by facilitator and /or participants
10	Part 1: Circle of control	Whole group	Introduce the concept of control circles	Flipchart & pens
10	Part 2: Circle of control	Whole group	Develop an understanding of 'control'.	Flipchart paper & pens Activity sheet 1
10	Part 3: Circle of control	Individual work	Complete participant activity sheet 1	Paper/pens participant activity sheet 1
5	Part 4: Has this session achieved the intended outcomes?	Whole group	Test and confirm that outcomes have been met.	Session plan or outcomes, flipchart & pens
10	Evaluation-the people tree.	Whole group	What do participants feel about how the session went?	From the evaluation section resources



- Pens/ pencils / flip chart paper / plain paper and Post-it notes
- Activity sheets 1 & 2
- Tablet / laptop / projector
- Wi-fi/data

Overall Session : Resources list explainer

Youth Achievement Award (YAA) or "Participant Journal" - if a participant is taking part in completing a journal or an accreditation such as a **Bronze Youth Achievement Award**, please ensure that young people are aware they are to keep the copies of activity sheet 1 and 2 as evidence of them engaging in the session.

All resources sheets are available as a presentation and images can be enlarged to meet the needs of your session and used with a projector another device that can display in the landscape orientation.

Hints and tips:

Remember that participants taking on this session may find the concept new to them and may need additional support to apply what they have learnt in this session. [the How to manage your worries | Circles of Control | British Red Cross - YouTube](#) is available as a QR code to be used by the facilitator and participants to support the purpose of a circle of control.

If participants want to, they can change the wording - so, for example, 'things out of our control' could be renamed a 'concern for me'.

Further reading on circles of influence for facilitators and participants - [Circle of Influence. Why you have more power than you think - Then Somehow](#)

Resources sheets:

- **Ice breaker:** the "if you..?" question is a series of 6 questions designed to prompt participants to start thinking and decision making.
- **Part 1:** in and out of our control
- **Part 2:** circle of control
- **Part 3:** creating your circle of control
- **Participant activity sheet** is a version of a control circle and has been adapted to support participants to distinguish clearly what's in their control and not in control. **Facilitator notes provided.**
- **Part 4:** outcomes
- **Evaluation:** the people tree
- **Resource sheet 1:** In my control, things I can influence and out of my control.



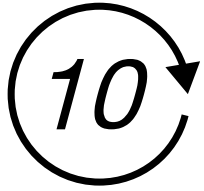
This symbol represents how many minutes (approximately) to spend on an activity.

Adaptations

If participants are working away from the main group, print and send out the session resources, evaluation and other sessions you are planning to use.

Potential difficulties

Participants are to be reminded that they should only provide personal examples if they are happy about others knowing these (as this session requires some self-reflection).



MINUTES
APPROXIMATELY

The "If you..?" question

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The "If you" question ?

1. If you had any pet in the world, what would it be?
2. If you could play an instrument, what would it be?
3. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?
4. If you had one wish, what would it be?
5. If you could eat one meal every day, what would it be?
6. If you could learn something new today, what would it be?



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Ice breaker

10

We recommend using-
The "If you..?" question

Part 1: In our control and out of our control

10



Flipchart paper, pens,
pens, pencils, Post-it
notes, etc.

In this activity, a group of 8-12 participants are asked to access a room and sit in a semicircle. hand out participant activity sheet 1 to be given out to each participant and is a useful prompt if they would like to work on their own or in smaller groups.

In control and out of control

The facilitator writes '**circle of control**' as area 1 and '**out of our control**' as area 2 on a flipchart paper and then shows the - How to manage your worries by the British Red Cross (QR code on this sheet). [How to manage your worries | Circles of Control | British Red Cross - YouTube](#) (1.13 minutes long). Inform participants that things that go on in our lives can be a cause for concern - especially if we think that we are unable to change the situation.

Resource sheet 1 has signs for controls to support and can allow the session to be delivered in a larger space.



Discussion questions:

The facilitator will ask their first questions to the participants on what their thoughts are on the video and **what is a 'circle of control'?** Prompt the participants to provide examples of '**what is in our control**' and '**what is not in our control**'. These can be added by the facilitator or encourage a willing participant to come up and write their answer.

The facilitator will ask the participants to now consider control factors and how they can affect loneliness and isolation in (young) people.

Support for the discussion

The answers should be captured on the flipchart and be in two areas '**what is in our control**' (area 1) and '**what is not in our control**' (area 2). If the participants are struggling examples have been provided in the facilitator notes.

Part 1: In our control and out of our control (continued...)

Linking back to loneliness

Loneliness is a temporary state and by understanding what's in our control we can make positive change to reduce loneliness.

Part 2: 'Circle of control'

10

The facilitator has available for the groups the flipchart (from part 1) on the wall, table or floor to use as a prompt, and a new flipchart sheet, Post-it notes and pens. Ask the participants to use the Post-it notes to capture all of the issues that participants feel are affecting them. Have them to place the Post-it notes on the flipchart paper. Once this is done, the facilitator can pick out a few examples to discuss with the participants in the wider group.

The facilitator will give them the following instructions:

Ask the participants to start dividing the issues into factors they feel that they can or cannot control. Start moving the sticky notes around as each point is discussed under the headings of 'I can control' and factors 'I cannot control'. Again, the facilitator will review the Post-it notes to explore the statements. Next add in a third area on the flipchart paper titled **'what I can influence'** (prompts are available in the facilitators handout). The facilitator then asks the participants if there are factors that they feel are **'out of my control'** (and capture these on Post-it notes) and whether they feel that they can/could influence them. For example, negative friendships/relationships resulting in not going out and feeling lonely - this can be influenced by seeking new friendships and/or by taking up new hobbies/interests.

It's time to add in the 'in my control' and 'out of my control' signs

Part 2: 'Circle of control' continued..


The facilitator provides the 'what if..?' scenario to participants. Once complete, explain that everyone's experience is individual and none of the answers are wrong. This could also be something you establish in your group agreement at the beginning of the session. Next, consider these questions:

- Are there similarities in what participants have identified?
- What actions could the group take to address loneliness (this conversation could lead to the group beginning to plan social action project to tackle loneliness with their communities)?

These comments should be written down on flipchart, as they are discussed.

Part 3: 'creating our own circle of control'

10



The facilitator now focuses the participants to think about their control circle (using participant activity sheet 1). Ask participants to find a comfortable space within the room to focus on themselves. The facilitator will explain that they are providing around 10 minutes to complete this exercise. The facilitator has an opportunity to move around the space and discuss briefly with each individual participant their control circle (referring to the facilitator notes for guidance).

Free space - facilitator notes:

Facilitator notes: Part 1: 'Circle of control'

Support participants to be aware that: this session can be delivered as a group activity or as an individual activity. Participants will be reflecting on issues that may be uncomfortable for them, so depersonalising the session (i.e. not focusing on participants individually) is important when holding a group discussion. However, there is also an opportunity to set individual personal goals through the action planning sheet! As always, refer to the group contract to remind the facilitator and participants on the learning agreement for this and other sessions.

This session allows participants to act on things they can control, while supporting them to realise there can be factors they can't control they have to try to let go of. Sometimes this activity can be known as a 'circle of influence and control'.

Control signs: to be printed out and cut out ready for session to be used on a wall, whiteboard, or flipchart paper - these can be enlarged to support viewing of participants.

Participant activity sheet 1: Control circle (building confidence) - is based on a control circle. However, to allow for participants to understand the differences between what is in our control and not within our control, the 'what I can influence' is used as a section divider, with the goal of the participants to work through things in a process to reach control or to try to let go of an issue.

Possible examples of things that we can control are: our thoughts, our words, our actions, learning from experience, our attitudes, our beliefs, taking care of ourselves, our enthusiasm, our skill set and what we buy, etc.

Possible examples of things that we cannot control (and could try to let go of) are: other people's happiness, other people's actions, other people's sadness, our past, family, cost of living, where we are born, how old we are, what other people say, the weather, being sick, what others think. Also, the news and social media, natural disasters, the economy, public transport, celebrities, strangers' comments, etc.

Possible examples of things that I can influence are: who our friends are, where we work, how far we need to travel, social action, recycling, voting, our commitments, who we follow on social media, etc.

Alternative delivery method:

If you have hall or a large space to move about, the signs can be used to create a floor space where it can replicate the circles - you could even use cones. Participants can then use an A4 sheet of paper (instead of Post-it notes) and map out the circle of control on the floor instead of using the participant activity sheet. This can allow the participants to explore the examples provided as a group and makes the experience more fun and interactive!



In my control

Things I can
influence



Out of my control

What I cannot
control:

What can I
influence?

What I can control?



Rethinking & finisher for the main part of the session

Part 4: Has this session achieved the intended outcomes?

The facilitator refers to the learning outcome(s) for this session. Do participants all agree on the outcomes have been met? The facilitator can 'test' that learning outcomes have been met by a 'pop' quiz with prizes, etc.

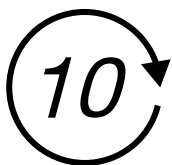
Two questions to ask participants to reflect on:

- How confident do you feel about setting goals?
- Do you feel that you have gained skills to set future goals through this session?

Evaluation



The people tree can be used prior to the session and then repeated after the session to identify any changes in the participants feeling of where they are after delivery. The tree can also be used after the whole section/project to ask young people to reflect on where they feel were before the project and where they feel that they are now as a result of engaging in the project.



MINUTES APPROXIMATELY



The People Tree

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ON THE PICTURE, CHOOSE WHICH CHARACTER BEST DESCRIBES
YOU AT THE MOMENT.

OR

WHICH CHARACTER BEST DESCRIBED YOU BEFORE THE PROJECT
AND WHICH BEST DESCRIBES YOU NOW AFTER THE PROJECT?

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO COLOUR IN YOUR CHARACTERS!!

WHICH OF THE PEOPLE ON THE TREE DID YOU CHOOSE HOW
YOU FEEL BEFORE THE SESSION WHY? (YOU CAN HAVE MORE
THAN ONE)

A large white rectangular area with a decorative, torn-paper-like border, intended for a drawing or response.

The People Tree

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AFTER COMPLETING THE FIRST ACTIVITY WHICH OF THE PEOPLE ON THE TREE WOULD YOU CHOOSE? WHY?

AFTER COMPLETING THE SESSION, WHICH OF THE PEOPLE ON THE TREE DID YOU CHOOSE? WHY (YOU CAN HAVE MORE THAN ONE)?

WHICH OF THE PEOPLE ON THE TREE WOULD BEST DESCRIBE HOW YOU WOULD WISH TO BE IN THE FUTURE? WHY?



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The People Tree

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Adapted from: The Blob Tree Tool



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Successful



Helping others up



Feeling loved



Helping others
over an obstacle



A part of a
friendships /
family



Falling but feeling
supported



Supporting
each other
through any
situation

Wanting to support others



I need a break



Climbing up

Falling - but want support



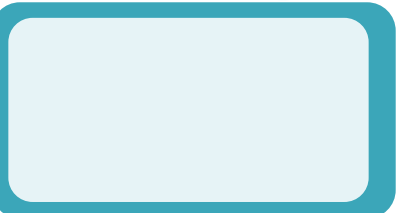
I have switched off



Growing with
others



Worried about
things



This list of actions / emotions are examples of how someone may feel. However, young people can change the meaning by writing next to the symbol and/or create their own at the bottom.



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Adapted from: The Blob Tree Tool