

Second  
**Chance**

PERSONAL  
GROWTH



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# PERSONAL GROWTH

Session 1: Who am I?

Session 2: Communication

Session 3: Decision making,  
control and change

Session 4: Setting goals

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Session 1:  
Who am I?



A close-up photograph of a woman's hands writing in a notebook. She is wearing an orange sari with small pink star patterns. Her right hand holds a yellow pen, and her left hand rests on the notebook. She is wearing several colorful bangles on her left wrist. The background is blurred, showing a white surface.

# Course introduction


## Slide set 1

*Session 1*



## WHY A COURSE ON 'PERSONAL GROWTH'?

- Helps you develop ways of thinking and practices that improve your life: in areas of self-knowledge, decision making, communication and resilience.
- Gives you the chance to focus on yourself, for once, and helps you recognize your own value
- Re-energizes your goals and aspirations
- Helps you clarify personal, work, or academic objectives.



# CROSS-CUTTING SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES NEEDED FOR EMPLOYMENT OR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS WELL AS USEFUL IN PERSONAL LIFE

- **Planning:** setting goals, planning, scheduling, monitoring
- **Managing:** persuading, networking, communicating; self-confidence; demanding quality and efficiency
- **Attributes:** self-awareness, honesty, ethics, taking responsibility.

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LIFE SKILLS AND PERSONAL GROWTH?



Originally defined by the World Health Organization as a **group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people:**

- **make informed decisions**
- **solve problems**
- **think critically and creatively**
- **communicate effectively**
- **build healthy relationships**
- **empathize with others**
- **cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner**

Life skills are not normally seen as a domain, or a subject, but as cross-cutting applications of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are important in the process of individual development and lifelong learning.

# LIFE SKILLS INCLUDE:

- Self-knowledge
- Communication especially assertive communication and active listening
- Self-motivation: doing tasks on your own without external motivation
- Self-confidence: believing in yourself...
- Empathy
- Interpersonal relationships
- Conflict management
- Making decisions
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Resilience
- Reflection
- Time management: achieving tasks on time and according to plan
- Working in a team: working with other people to accomplish shared goals
- Working under pressure
- Setting goals: planning specific goals to be accomplished within a certain time



# THIS COURSE IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING IDEAS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH:



Appreciate your achievements, strengths, talents and skills.



Identify where you feel you could improve. You might think of some things (e.g., communication skills) as fixed personal traits that we are born with. But change is possible with support and help from others.



Accept what hasn't worked out for you. Where possible see your experiences as a resource.



Learn about how to strengthen core skills in communicating, decision making.



Set yourself a goal and work out how to take steps towards it.

A woman with a bindi on her forehead, wearing a vibrant orange and red shawl with a dark floral pattern, is focused on her work. She is holding a wooden basket filled with white flowers, possibly marigolds, and appears to be sorting or preparing them. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a light-colored wall. The image is overlaid with a dark blue hexagonal graphic on the left and white curved lines on the right.

# Self-knowledge

Slide set 2

*Session 1*

Photo credit: UN Women India/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar



# WHAT IS SELF- KNOWLEDGE OR SELF-AWARENESS?

- Knowing yourself – your values, likes, dislikes, strengths and talents.
- It also means feeling secure and self-confident enough to recognize your weaknesses and areas of your life that have not worked out well – not as things you should feel bad or ashamed of, but areas where there is potential to improve, especially with the support of others.

# WHY IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT?



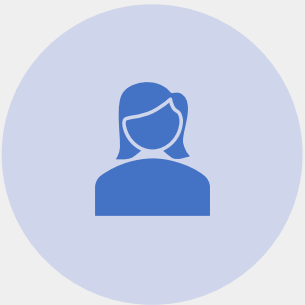
Self-knowledge is one of the keys to personal development because it allows us to:

- regulate and manage our emotion
- relate properly to other people
- strive for our goals and objectives



It allows us to see our potential.

- Each of us has our own characteristics, qualities, talents and our own story that make us unique
- Some introspection is needed to recognize our abilities and what we like, do not like, are good at and can improve.



It grounds us in our real selves:

- we understand our strengths and weaknesses
- it helps us to be realistic and keeps our feet on the ground



It can be hard for us to recognize our skills/abilities, especially if we've developed them at home.

Spending some time reflecting on our strengths helps us realise how much we have to offer.

# WHY IS SELF-KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANT?



It allows you **to focus on yourself**, to look at all areas of your life not through others' point of view but your own.

**Ask:** What do I want? What am I good at? What do I enjoy doing ?

**Instead of:** Are my family's needs met? Are my partner's needs met? Are my friends OK?



If we work on self-awareness, it has a **ripple effect** to almost everything in our lives.



**Sharing experiences with other women** will help you understand yourself better and be inspired by others.

Self-awareness allows you to communicate more effectively as you grow more confident.



A **daily check** to increase self-awareness, at the end of every day, ask yourself three questions.

- What went well today?
- What didn't go well?
- What can I learn to be better tomorrow?

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# Session 2: Communication





# Why and how we communicate

Slide set 1

*Session 2*



Photo: UN Women Chile/CVA

## WHY IS COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT?

- Communicating is fundamental to being human.
- When we are with others, we communicate constantly, even when we don't think we are.
- We must be aware that everything we do (or don't do) sends a message.

As women, we have been socialized to communicate in a different way to men, tending to speak less, avoid disagreement or conflict, etc.



# HOW CAN COMMUNICATION BE DIFFICULT?



We might think we already know what the other person is going to say so we don't listen properly



We are all different, so we hear things in different ways. We may say one thing, but the other person hears something very different.



We may communicate indirectly, not saying what we really think and hoping the other person understands what we mean.



We may say something hurtful without intending to, and then the other person dismisses what we are saying without really thinking about it.



Due to generational or cultural differences, older people might consider a younger person rude, even if the latter didn't mean to be.



We sometimes make assumptions based on people's appearances. This also applies to people's way of communication.

# HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?



There are 3 ways of communicating:

- **Oral/spoken:** face-to-face/in person conversation; talking on a phone; speeches or lectures. It could also include laughing, crying, screaming.
- **Written:** texts, emails, letters, news articles, reports, books
- **Non-verbal/body language:** facial expressions, head movements, and gestures – without any words (sitting straight or slumped, arms folded or relaxed); touch (shaking hands); eye contact. *Non-verbal signs or signals can be important for some people with disabilities.*

Communication can also be classed as either formal or informal. In some countries there is a big difference between the two, and social norms on where and when you should behave formally or informally.

# Assertive communication

Slide set 2

*Session 2*



Photo credit: UN Women

# WHAT IS ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION?

- Being assertive is **not being selfish or bullying**. It is simply **expressing your needs and valuing yourself** as equal to others.
- It means you are not afraid to express your opinion and stand up for yourself.

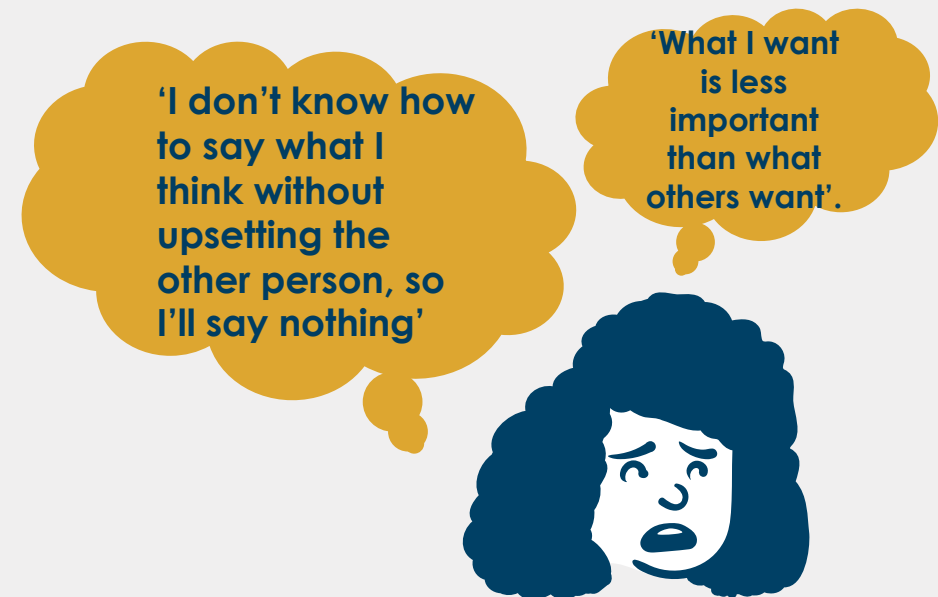


*Photo: UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar*

# BEING PASSIVE:

Where people do not express their opinions or feelings.

- They do not want to appear aggressive, or do not think their opinion or feelings matter as much as other people's.
- **But** this can mean you avoid hurting others at the expense of hurting yourself.
- It leads to thoughts such as, 'People never consider my feelings' or 'I'm unable to stand up for myself', or 'I get stepped on by everyone'.



# BEING AGGRESSIVE:

Where people express their feelings and opinions in a way that does *not* respect the feelings or opinions of others.

- Sometimes they intend to create fear or hurt, in order to get what they want.
- They can come across as attacking and may even be verbally or physically abusive.



# BEING PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE:

Where people appear passive on the surface but are really acting out of anger in a subtle, indirect way.

- They usually feel powerless, stuck and resentful.
- They might think: 'I'm too afraid to deal with you directly so I must use hidden ways to attack you and get what I want.' Or 'I will appear cooperative but I'm not.'



# BEING ASSERTIVE:

Where people clearly state their opinions and feelings. They value themselves, their time and their needs and respect the rights of others.

They might feel:

"I am 100% in control of how I communicate during this conversation."




"I am confident about who I am."



"I am equally entitled to express myself respectfully."







When someone is being assertive, they do not intend to hurt anyone, but it's not always possible to know how others will react. **You cannot control how other people will react to you.** All you can do is communicate with respect to others and to yourself.

A woman wearing a black hijab and a blue tracksuit is smiling and looking down at a pink visor she is holding. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in similar attire. There are decorative white curved lines in the upper right corner of the image.

# Activity 5: What is your communication style?

Slide set 3

*Session 2*

# WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT?

- listening
- talking with all kinds of different people
- calming things down when a conversation gets heated
- explaining things clearly



# WHAT DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT?

- get frustrated when you can't express exactly what you mean
- find it difficult to say no, because of a desire to please everyone
- find it difficult to disagree with people, especially men, even when you know what they're saying is wrong or doesn't make sense
- lose patience with people.





# Assertive communication as a woman

Slide set 4

*Session 2*



Photo: UN Women/Sonali Hedditch

**Have you** ever thought that men and women tend to communicate and behave in different ways?

**Have you** noticed that when a woman communicates in the same manner as a man, she can be criticized for being **too forward, bossy, aggressive** and **disagreeable**?

**This is because of social norms: the informal, unwritten rules and attitudes that people are expected to follow within a society.**



# WHAT IS SOCIAL CONDITIONING?

- Social conditioning process by which we absorb **social norms** and learn how we are expected to behave.
- It is a kind of **subconscious training**, by which we learn to **think, believe, act and communicate** in a particular way.



# WHAT IS SOCIAL CONDITIONING?


- As we grow up, we subconsciously learn the **social norms** in our society by absorbing the attitudes of the people around us and the messages sent through media.
- Through these messages we develop an understanding of the different roles men and women should play.
- We **absorb** these unwritten ‘rules’ without realizing it. We **internalize** them so that we ourselves believe they should be followed and **do not think to question them.**





# WHAT IS SOCIAL CONDITIONING?

- It creates an internal set of beliefs that we do not question and that we believe to be true – until we realize that these ideas are constructed by society.
- **They are not based on facts about women's or men's innate characteristics, behaviour or potential.**



It can be hard to recognize that it is often those norms, rather than our own conscious choices, that govern how we act, dress and behave.

**To see them involves looking at the world  
in a different way.**

# HOW DO MEN AND WOMEN COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY?

- Women and men are often perceived differently when they communicate.
- Women can be perceived as being arrogant or boastful just for seeking recognition of their individual achievements.



Photos: ACNUR Carreño Fotografía ,  
UN Women India/Priya Naresh and  
Aniket Kolkar and UN Women/CVA.

# HOW DO MEN AND WOMEN COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY?

In many societies, women are conditioned to:

BE POLITE

BE NICE

AVOID  
DISAGREEING

PUT OTHER  
PEOPLE'S  
FEELINGS AHEAD  
OF THEIR OWN

GO ALONG WITH  
OTHER PEOPLE'S  
OPINIONS AND  
PERCEPTIONS

SUPPRESS THEIR  
OWN THOUGHTS

AVOID VOICING  
THEIR OWN  
OPINIONS

COMPROMISE

TALK IN CODE  
RATHER THAN  
DIRECTLY

# HOW DO MEN AND WOMEN COMMUNICATE DIFFERENTLY?

- Men tend to **interrupt and speak over** women more than women do.

- At work, women tend to be less likely to promote their achievements. They tend to **diminish and undervalue** their professional skills.

- Men are socialized to be confident, assertive and self-promoting, whereas these characteristics **can be seen as inappropriate or undesirable in women.**

- In a mixed-sex group, women are **less likely to speak up** than men.

- Women tend to be **more tentative** in their speech than men (and more likely to doubt themselves generally).

- Some men, when explaining something to a woman, **speak in a condescending and overconfident way** and assume that she has little knowledge of the topic. This is known as **mansplaining**.



# TIPS FOR ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

## **Avoid words or phrase that undermine or diminish what you're saying.**

When offering an opinion, be more direct, less tentative, more confident in your experience and expertise – don't pose opinions as questions or suggestions but directly. Believe in yourself!

## **Learn to say no.**

Women are conditioned to be helpful, nice, say yes to tasks that may not serve them.

Becoming more assertive and comfortable with saying no requires clarity on goals and boundaries, plus help to practise declining.

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## **Ask questions – part of active listening.**

Be curious, draw out more from the person speaking. Try to understand what is actually happening, including from what is being left unsaid.



# Active listening

Slide set 5

*Session 2*



# WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING?

- It is called 'active' because the listener does not passively absorb the words which are spoken to her. She actively tries to grasp the facts and the feelings in what she hears.
- In this slide set, we learn the key behaviours of active listening.





# FOCUS AND DON'T PLAN WHAT TO SAY

**Focus** fully on the speaker: face them and have eye contact.

- Making eye contact with the speaker is generally encouraging; but eye contact can be intimidating, especially for shy speakers, so try to gauge how much eye contact is appropriate for any given situation.

**Don't start planning** what to say next.

- When we listen, we are often rehearsing what we are going to say when it is our turn to speak.
- When you have sorted that out in your head, the temptation is to say it as soon as possible so that you don't forget. But you should resist this impulse.



# DON'T INTERRUPT

**Don't interrupt** and don't feel you have to jump in if there is a pause or a few seconds of silence.

- If you interrupt, even with a relevant point, the speaker will then have to pick up the threads of what they had originally been saying.
- Be patient: accept pauses and short periods of silence. Don't be tempted to jump in with questions or comments every time there are a few seconds of silence.
- Active listening involves giving the other person time to explore their thoughts.



# SHOW THAT YOU LISTEN

## Show that you're listening and interested.

- If someone is speaking to you and they don't get any feedback, it is almost impossible to carry on. This could be non-verbal (smiling/nodding to show interest).
- Do not scroll through your phone while listening to others!





# DON'T BE JUDGEMENTAL

**Don't be judgemental** and don't impose your opinions or solutions.

- Remain as neutral as possible until you have listened to what the speaker has to say.
- If you display anger, frustration or disapproval when someone is talking to you, they will respond by adjusting what they are saying and may also become angry, scared, defensive or openly hostile.
- At best this makes people less likely to want to talk to you; at worst it may mean that they withhold information that is important.



# PARAPHRASE, SUMMARIZE AND REFLECT

**Paraphrasing means** putting what the speaker has said into your own words and playing this back to the speaker.

- It demonstrates that you are listening carefully and trying to understand.
- It gives the speaker an opportunity to correct anything you have misunderstood and offer more explanation.

'Can I check I understood what you were saying ..'





# PARAPHRASE, **SUMMARISE** AND REFLECT

**Summarising means** summing up the whole discussion concisely.

- This can provide a useful overview, particularly if it has been a long conversation.
- It could be that the person you are talking to may be repeating themselves or adding unnecessary details.
- You can also use this technique to check the accuracy of your own understanding.

'It sounds like you're saying that ...'





# PARAPHRASE, SUMMARIZE AND REFLECT

**Reflecting** – reflecting the emotion behind the words in order to show comprehension.

- It is a powerful skill that can reinforce the message of the speaker and demonstrate understanding.
- This will inevitably encourage the speaker to continue.

'... and you feel confused by this'



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Session 3:  
Decision making,  
control and  
change



# Agency

Slide set 1

*Session 3*



Photo credit: UN Women



# WHAT IS AGENCY?

- An **'agent'** is simply someone with the capacity to **act and make decisions**.
- **Agency** is the **sense of control** you have over your life; your capacity to influence your own thoughts, behaviour and actions.
- It is not to say that no one else has any influence over your life, but that you yourself have some control. You can take responsibility for your actions.



# WHAT IS AGENCY?

- A **'sense of agency'** means the personal awareness that you are initiating, executing and controlling your own actions.
- When people feel like the **protagonists of their lives**, they are said to have a sense of agency.
- Every act we perform is a direct result of our action, not of something else.
- The sense of agency is closely integrated with a 'sense of ownership': **knowing that I am the owner of an action, or movement or thought.**



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Since we were born, we have grown up in families and in a society, with rules and expectations, that limit what we do.
- We can sometimes feel that everything we do is determined by things outside our control – how much money our family has, our upbringing, the care duties that we as women are expected to take on, the roles that we as women are not encouraged to play.

**Every day you do exercise your agency, even if in small ways. You are exercising your agency by choosing to do this course.**

# WHAT DOES AGENCY MEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR LIFE?

Agency is the **capacity to question decisions that are made for you** or expectations that it is assumed you will go along with. Here are some examples:

Seeking out programmes that offer skills training so that you don't spend your life in your own home, as society expects you to.

Asking your father for a small amount of cash to help you start a business.

Asking your partner to go with you to the family planning clinic because you'd like him to understand contraception options.

Re-arranging how you spend time during the day so that you have half an hour every day to study.

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?

*How much of what happens to you has to do with external elements, and how much has to do with your decisions?*

**It is a difficult question to answer, since what we are so intertwined with our circumstances.**

# WHAT DOES AGENCY MEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR LIFE : EXAMPLE 1

For example, your current life situation now may be almost entirely a consequence of events outside your control:

- your parents deciding who you will marry
- your husband wanting children when you were very young
- teenage pregnancy forcing you to leave school early
- you having no choice but to raise the children and do the housework and management of your home

In this situation, you might have agency in how you manage your home and the cooking and how you raise your children.

You might take up training or education opportunities if they arise.

# WHAT DOES AGENCY MEAN IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR LIFE : EXAMPLE 2



Consider another difficult situation:

- When Mary was 12, her village was attacked by rebels and she and her family fled to another part of the country.
- She couldn't go to school anymore.
- They eventually moved to a refugee camp. There were no opportunities for Mary to go back to school, train, get a job or earn any money.
- **She felt she had very little agency.**

**But then a programme started for adults who wanted to pick up their education again.**

- The waiting list was too long, and she couldn't join. But she offered to help as a volunteer.
- She distributed leaflets and spread the word about the programme in the camp.
- Eventually a space became available and she was able to join.



# What happens when you develop a sense of agency?



Developing a sense of agency involves recognizing the decisions you make and their consequences and recognizing yourself as responsible for your actions.

**If you are an ‘agent’, you have desires, you make plans and you carry them out. Agents are able to take action in some form according to their needs or desires.**

# Motivation

## Slide set 2

*Session 3*



Photo credit: UN Women Cameroon



# WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

- Motivation is **why a person acts or behaves** in a certain way.
- It is difficult to act without motivation because **we all need a reason for doing whatever we do**, including doing routine daily tasks.
- Motivated people tend to have **better self-esteem and concentration** and can manage stress better.
- Motivation has a good effect on our wellbeing.



Photo: UN Women India/Ruhani Kaur

# EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL MOTIVATION

- **External** motivation comes from outside, through rewards such as **money or recognition** from others.

For example, someone with external motivation will work hard on something despite having little interest, because external stimulus such as recognition will motivate her to finish it.



Photo: UN Women Chile/CVA

# EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL MOTIVATION

- **Internal** motivation comes from within and is associated with the **satisfaction** you get from doing an activity.
- You may be internally motivated by the pleasure you get from **helping someone**, the **feeling of achievement** you get after doing something difficult, or the **enjoyment you get** from **doing something you love**.
- Internal motivation can help you to improve at something.
- **People who want to grow and develop themselves** usually have good internal motivation.



# EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL MOTIVATION

Usually, people are motivated by a mixture of **both motivators**:

For example, a woman might be motivated to run a jam business both **because of the money** and **because she loves making jam** and designing her products.

Or a woman might be motivated to join SCE partly **because her daughter wants her to go along with her** and partly **because she herself would like to earn a new skill**.



# POSITIVE VS. NEGATIVE MOTIVATION

There are also **positive and negative motivations**.

**Positive** motivations are based on the idea of **a positive reward**, which can be external (a compliment) or internal (a feeling of satisfaction).

**Negative** motivations encourage us to do or not do something **to avoid an unpleasant consequence**, whether external (people may be annoyed at us) or internal (feeling like a failure).

Identifying what motivates us can help us keep in mind **the reasons for doing something** and in so doing **can help us achieve it.**

# Activity 4: A day in my life

Slide set 3

*Session 3*



*Photo credit: UN Women India/Ruhani Kaur*



### A day in my life

 Morning

Time	Activity	Type (Personal, Home, Work, Community)	Duration

 Afternoon

Time	Activity	Type (Personal, Home, Work, Community)	Duration

 Evening

Time	Activity	Type (Personal, Home, Work, Community)	Duration

# Think about:

- What time do you wake up?
- What is the first thing you do when you wake up?
- Who wakes up other household members?
- Who prepares food?
- What time do you eat breakfast?
- How much time do you have to get ready for the day?
- What time in the morning do you pause for a break and some refreshment?
- At what time do you go to bed?

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red t-shirt, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a large, ripe, orange-red tomato in her hands. The background is a lush green field of tomato plants with many other tomatoes visible, some green and some red. A large, dark red, semi-transparent arrow-shaped graphic points from the left side of the image towards the center, containing the text.

# Resilience

Slide set 4

*Session 3*



Photo: UN Women India/Ruhani Kaur

# WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

- Resilience is the ability to recover from adversity.
- This can include family and relationship problems, poor health, serious illness, poverty, bereavement, upheaval from your home and countless other serious events.

# A FICTIONAL STORY OF RESILIENCE

Listen to this audio recording of Miriam's story of resilience



# A FICTIONAL STORY OF RESILIENCE



Consider Miriam, the mother of three young children. Her family depended on her husband's wages as a labourer. This brought in just enough money for essentials.

But one day her husband had a terrible accident at work and died. Miriam was left as a single mother, caring for three children with no source of income.

# A FICTIONAL STORY OF RESILIENCE



For a long time after her husband's death Miriam struggled to get through each day. She had no hope for the future, for herself or her children.

She stayed for a while at her parents' house and just about managed to keep things going for her children.

# A FICTIONAL STORY OF RESILIENCE



She would get them ready for school in the morning and give them lunch when they came home.

Even when she felt everything was hopeless, and nothing was going to improve for her, she would get up every day and make sure her children had what they needed.



# A FICTIONAL STORY OF RESILIENCE



After some months, she started to look ahead and envisage a future for herself and her family. She moved back into her own house. She decided she would use her cooking skills to start selling snacks.

She gradually became less financially dependent on her parents and started revitalizing her dreams for the future, which involved expanding her business and paying for her children's continued education.




How has Miriam shown resilience in this story?

- She experienced a truly terrible event and managed to continue caring for her children.
- She **kept going** through a period of grief and stress, accepting help from her parents and allowing herself time to recover.
- She **exercised her agency** by making decisions herself: accepting help and eventually moving back to her own home.
- After allowing herself time for recovery, she rekindled her **hope** for the future; by the end of the story she was working **optimistically** towards goals she had set for herself.
- She **persisted** in her efforts to recover and then rebuild her life.



We all experience twists and turns in life, from everyday challenges to traumatic events with more lasting impact, like a serious illness. Each change affects people differently. Yet people generally adapt well over time to life-changing situations and stressful events—in part thanks to resilience.



While these adverse events are painful and difficult, they don't have to determine the outcome of our lives. Becoming more resilient not only helps us get through difficult circumstances, it can help us to learn and grow as a person.



Photo: UN Women

# WHAT RESILIENCE ISN'T

- Being resilient doesn't mean that we won't have difficult times. It means **being able to recover from those difficult times** and even learn from them.
- Resilience isn't a personality trait that only some people have. Certain factors might make some people more resilient than others, but **we can learn to think and act in ways that make us more resilient.**

# We can become more resilient by:



Staying connected



Taking care of our health



Finding a purpose



Being proactive



Moving towards a goal



Helping others



Learning from our past



Accepting change



Being hopeful



## Staying connected

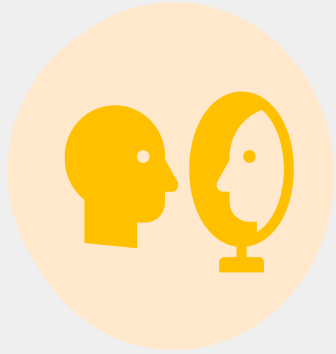
**Stay connected** with empathetic people to remind you that you're not alone. Accept help and support from those who care about you. Along with one-on-one relationships, being part of a group can help. This is why SCE sees building relationships between yourself and your peers as so important.





## Taking care of your health

**Take care of your health** through proper nutrition, enough sleep, hydration, and regular exercise. A strong body will help you to adapt to stress and emotions like anxiety or depression. Try to remember the positive aspects of your life and the things you're grateful for, even during very hard times.



## Finding a purpose

**Find a purpose** – a reason to keep going, something that motivates you to get up in the morning.



## Being proactive

**Be proactive.** Sometimes it's possible to do something positive to improve a situation or help you get through it, such as by deciding to talk to someone or seek help. Asking, "What can I do about this situation?" can sometimes reveal actions you can take. Even if they feel minor, they give you the chance to exercise your agency.



## Moving towards a goal

**Setting a small, realistic goal** and doing something regularly can give us a feeling of accomplishment. It doesn't matter how small or trivial it feels. Instead of focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, ask yourself, "What's one thing I know I can accomplish today that helps me move in the direction I want to go?"



## Helping others

**Helping others** gives a sense of purpose and self-worth, and enables us to connect with other people.



## Learning from your past

By looking back at hard times, we may discover we've grown in some way; for example, we might be able to empathize more with people in a similar situation. We may also remember who or what was helpful to us.

Trying to control your thought processes. How we think can play a significant part in how we feel. We can all think irrationally at times, such as assuming the very worst is going to happen.

We need to keep things in perspective. For instance, if we've failed at something, this is not an indicator of how our future will go or that we will fail at the next thing.

We may not be able to control what happens to us but we can control how we respond.



## Accepting change

**Accepting that change is a part of life** can help us adapt to changing circumstances. It may mean that some things we wanted to do or were looking forward to are no longer possible. Recognizing that means we can focus our efforts on things that we can do.



## Being hopeful

It's hard to be positive when life isn't going our way. But try to be optimistic and hopeful. Try visualizing what you want, rather than worrying about what you fear.



Second  
Chance

The background features a dark blue color with several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent light blue hexagon on the right side; a smaller, semi-transparent light blue hexagon at the bottom right; a red hexagon at the top center; a yellow hexagon to the left of the top red hexagon; a red hexagon at the bottom center; a yellow hexagon to the left of the bottom red hexagon; and a large, semi-transparent light blue hexagon on the left side. In the bottom left corner, there are three white, curved lines of varying thickness, resembling a stylized arc or a partial circle.

Session 4:  
Setting goals

# Vision boarding

## Slide set 1

*Session 4*



Photo credit: UN Women Cameroon



Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig

## About this session

- This session is about setting goals that we create and own ourselves.
- Setting goals gives us a direction, specific things to work towards and be motivated by.
- But before creating goals, it helps to have a vision, something that describes what we want out of life and reflects what's important to us.
- This presentation explains the 'vision boarding' activity that follows.



# WHAT IS A VISION BOARD?

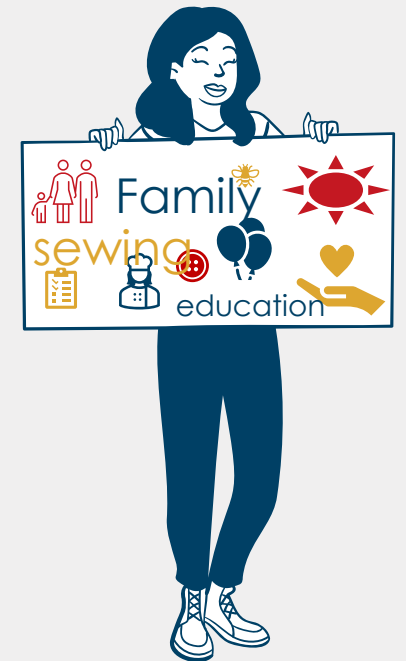
- A vision board is an idea from Nakoa Pitt who works with Real Futures, a past SCE partner, in Australia.
- It is a collage of images and words used to spark motivation and remind you of your values, goals and dreams.
- It should be filled with things that inspire you or make you feel happy.
- Vision boards don't have to contain pictures.
- Whether it is words or images they should inspire you to have a positive mindset.



# WHAT IS A VISION BOARD?

You can create one with:

- a sheet of A3 cardboard
- magazines (to cut out pictures and words)
- images printed off the internet
- scissors and glue.





# WHAT IS A VISION BOARD?

- Words can include affirmations, true statements about oneself like 'beautiful', 'creative', 'confident', 'grateful', 'loved', 'resilient'.
- To build on what you have already done in this course, bring (or pull up on your phone) your rich life picture from the first session.
- You can draw on the ideas in that While your rich life picture reflects the important events in your past, your vision board looks to the future.



Your vision board is about your journey, whatever that may look like. **Take your time, plan, and have fun.**

You can display your vision board in a prominent place at home to remind you *why* you do what you do every day.

**You can finish at home if you need more time.**

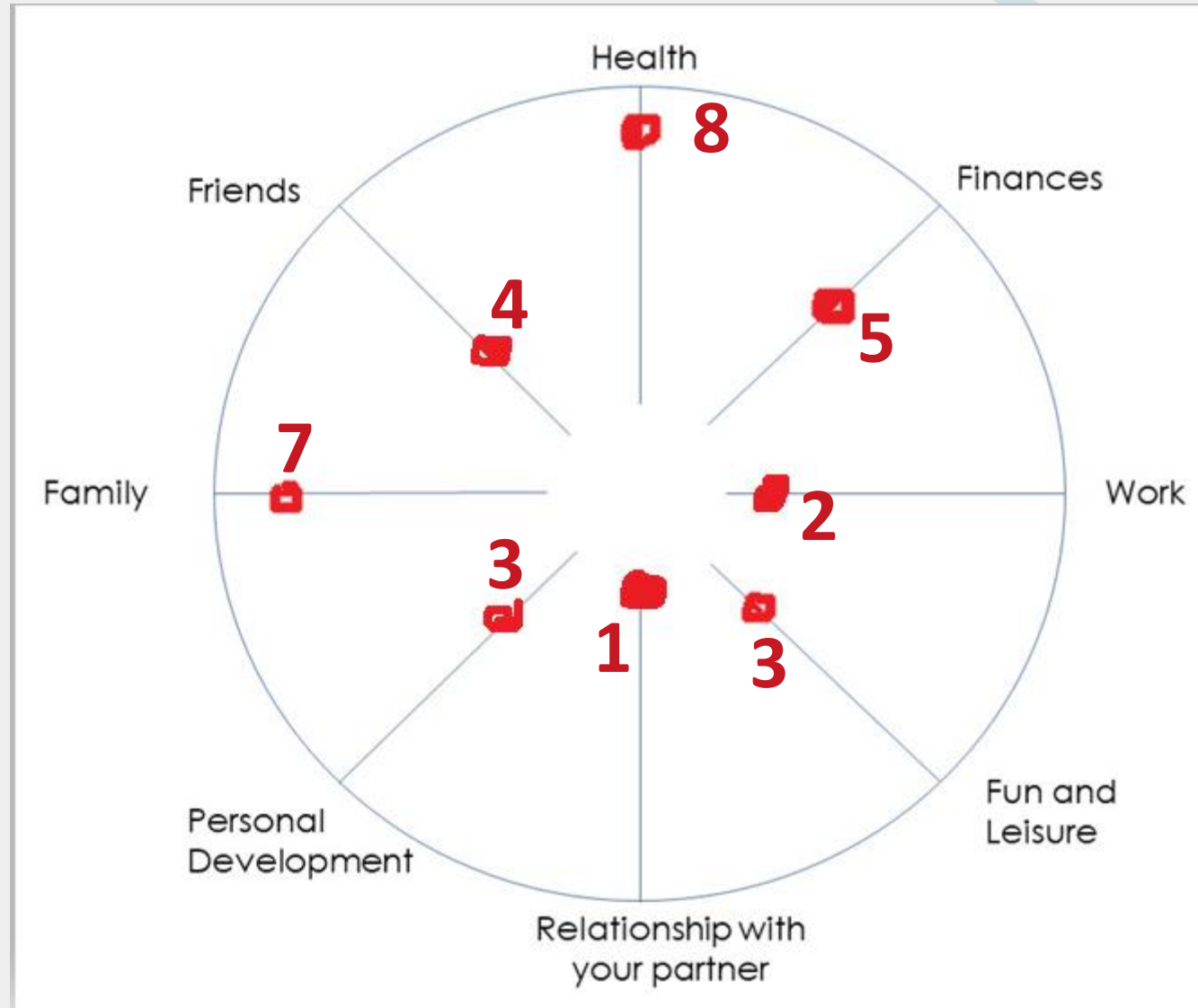
# Activity 2: Evaluating areas for change

Slide set 2

Session 4








# SMART goals

## Slide set 3

Session 4

Photo: UN Women/Maria Fernanda Novelo Duarte



Once you know what you would like to focus on – whether your personal development, finances, health, or any of the other areas of your life – and you know in broad terms what you want to do, it's time to set goals.

But goals that are a bit vague, or too ambitious, or not really relevant to you will not be useful.

You are unlikely to achieve them and rather than being a source of motivation, they may cause you to feel discouraged or as if you've failed.

The SMART acronym helps you avoid this and to set goals that are actually helpful. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

# SMART: SPECIFIC

**Specific** means your goal should be clear. The more specific your goal is, the easier it is for you to see what you're trying to achieve. It should answer the question: **What do you want to achieve?**

For example, instead of setting a goal of 'I want to increase my sales', you can be more specific and set a goal of 'I want to double the number of sales with the help of Instagram in the next three months.'



# SMART: MEASURABLE

**Measurable** means once you have set the goal, you need to be able to measure your success in achieving this goal and also keep track of your achievements.

For example, to be able to achieve 'double the number of sales with the help of Instagram in the next three months', you need to define smaller steps to reach the goals such as 'gaining 30 new followers on Instagram every week' and 'receiving 10 sales enquiries from Instagram every month'.



# SMART: ACHIEVABLE

**Achievable** means your goal should be realistic, something which you can make happen and not impossible. It should answer the question: **How can you achieve your goal?**

For example, it is not realistic to double your sales in three weeks if you're not trying anything new. But you can do it in three months and with the help of a new platform such as Instagram. You can then set smaller goals in order to help you reach this goal, such as take 2 different photos of your products every day. Post FOUR photos of your products on Instagram every week.



# SMART: RELEVANT

**Relevant** means that your goal matters to you and will help you grow. It should align with your values because otherwise you will lack the motivation to succeed. **How will this goal change my life?**

For example, in order for you to reach the goal mentioned earlier, you need to be realistic and think if your goal is what you really want to achieve in your life now and you are happy with it.



# SMART: TIME BOUND

**Time-bound** means every goal needs a target date, so that you have a deadline to focus on. It should answer the question: **By when should I achieve this goal?**

For example, you have set a time limit of three months to achieve the goal mentioned earlier. So you have three months or 12 weeks until your goal is completed.





# SMART

To set attainable goals, also ask yourself:

- Is there anything that will be **more difficult** because I am a woman? How can I best prepare for that?
- Is there anything that will be **easier** because I am a woman? How can I make the most of that?
- Who do I want to support me? Are they able and available?
- Who do I need to avoid? Who makes me feel de-motivated or discouraged?



A close-up photograph of a person's hands using blue-handled scissors to cut a piece of fabric. The person is wearing a red and white patterned garment. The background shows a workshop environment with various fabrics, including one with a yellow and black geometric pattern, and cardboard boxes. A large red hexagonal graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Activity 3

Slide set 4

Session 4

# SETTING GOALS - EXAMPLES

- to save a little money every week
- to control household expenses
- to manage my money better
- to look after myself and my own health
- to organise my time better so I have some time for myself
- to start a small business
- to get more support from my family for my business
- to say thank you to the people who are supporting me
- to improve the quality of my product
- to start applying for jobs.



# SETTING GOALS


To include in your **action plan**:

- **What** do you want to do or achieve? The objective.
- **Why** do you want to do this? The reason behind your plan.
- **When** do you plan to start and when do you want to finish? The deadline.
- **With what** will you achieve it? What do you need for success? The components.
- **Who** needs to be involved for the plan to work? The networks.
- **How much** time and money will your goal need?
- **How** will you achieve it? The steps you will need to take.



# KEY REFLECTIONS

- Although there are things in life that we can't control, having a goal and a plan for achieving it gives us a **clear path to follow**. It shows that in areas of life where we do have control, we can grow as people and change things for the better.
- Your plan can be **flexible**, so if something in your life changes, you can adapt to that change while keeping sight of your goal.
- It doesn't matter how old you are. **Anyone** can identify things they want to change in their personal life.
- Plans are vital for achieving objectives** and for planning ahead so that you have the time and resources you need.



# Course wrap-up

## Slide set 5

*Session 4*



*Photos: UN Women/Maria Fernanda Novelo Duarte, UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar and UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar*

# APPRECIATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS, STRENGTHS, TALENTS AND SKILLS.

As women, we play many different roles and have talents and skills for all of them.



*Photos credit: UN Women/Maria Fernanda Novelo Duarte, UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar and UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar*

But it can be **hard for us to recognize our skills and abilities**, especially if we've developed them at home.

Spending some time **reflecting on our strengths** helps us realise how much we have to offer.



# WE ALL HAVE POTENTIAL!

Each of us has our own characteristics, ways of being and acting, our own anchors, our own story.

We each have a history, qualities and talents that make us unique, that distinguish us from others and allow us to feel proud of ourselves.




*Photo: UN Women*


**TO UNLOCK THAT POTENTIAL** we need to give ourselves permission to **focus on ourselves**, to look at all areas of our life not through others' point of view but our own.

So instead of asking, **Are my family's needs met? Are my partner's needs met? Is my children's health OK? Are my friends OK?**


**We should ask:**



What do I want,  
socially,  
emotionally,  
intellectually?



What am I  
good at?  
What do I  
enjoy doing?



What did I want  
to do when I was  
younger which I  
had to let go?

**Communicating** well is helpful in all areas of life. We can all learn to get better at it.

Being **self-aware** and **feeling self-confident** help us to be secure enough to share our own thoughts and opinions.



*Photo: UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar*



*Photo: UN Women/Priya Naresh and Aniket Kolkar*

## IT IS EMPOWERING TO IDENTIFY WHAT WE FEEL WE COULD DO OR IMPROVE.

We might think some things, like how well we communicate, are personal traits that we are born with and cannot change.

But with small steps and support from others,  
**change is possible.**

- We should **accept** what hasn't worked out for us. Where possible we should see our experiences as a resource.
- Set yourself a **goal** and work out how to take steps towards it. With support from others, we can surprise ourselves with what we can do.
- Sharing **experiences** with other women helps us recognize we are not alone and is inspiring!



Photos: UN Women, Naresh and Aniket Kolkar and UN Women/CVA.



**THANK YOU**