

YOUTH COMPASS IN THE CLASS

HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS



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Overview

The Youth Compass is an interactive online program designed to support the well-being of adolescents. This five-week program includes a wide range of exercises tailored specifically for young people. This handbook outlines the theoretical background, goals, and content of the Youth Compass program and provides a recommended structure for implementing it, particularly in classroom settings.

The approach and individual exercises can also be adapted for use in counselling or in supporting individual students or small groups. We hope this material proves useful to all professionals working to promote youth well-being in schools, clinics, and other settings.

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Foreword

The five-week interactive digital Youth Compass program was developed as part of the Youth Compass project at the Department of Psychology, University of Jyväskylä, between 2017 and 2021. It was created in close collaboration with adolescents by an interdisciplinary research team, combining expertise from developmental psychology, clinical psychology, psychotherapy, computer science, gamification, game design, and graphic design.

The Youth Compass is grounded in a strong theoretical foundation supported by empirical research and follows the principles of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Its aim is to promote psychological well-being and prevent mental health problems among young people. Originally designed for lower secondary school students (grades 7 – 9, ages 13 – 17), the program is also suitable for first-year upper secondary students and those in the early stages of vocational education.

This handbook presents a model in which an entire class or group uses the program under the guidance of a professional, such as a teacher, in a classroom setting. The program and its exercises can also be adapted for counselling or individual support. Overall, the material is intended for all professionals working to enhance youth well-being in various settings. The Youth Compass is freely available in Finnish, Swedish, and English at <https://nuortenkompassi.fi/>.

The program is based on recent research and extensive experience with digital interventions focused on well-being. A team of researchers in developmental and clinical psychology has studied the program's effectiveness and user experiences in Finnish schools. To date, approximately 800 young people and 80 professionals across Finland have participated in Youth Compass studies. By September 2025, the program had attracted over 8,000 registered users.

Schools play a vital role in supporting the well-being of children and adolescents and in developing well-being skills. Curriculum goals and the rising levels of youth distress underscore the need for evidence-based methods that can be integrated into regular school activities (e.g., student counselling, health education, homeroom classes) and reach a broad student population. Structured online programs offer easy implementation with minimal training. Youth Compass is one such tool for practicing these skills in schools.

The Youth Compass research team extends its gratitude to all the schools that participated in the program's effectiveness and user experience studies, enabling testing in real school environments. Feedback from teachers, school psychologists, counsellors, principals, parents, and students has been invaluable. We also wish to thank all the young people who contributed to creating materials for the Youth Compass.

Professional Access

Professionals can explore the Youth Compass program using the following test credentials:

Username: professionaltest

Password: youthcompass

These credentials provide immediate access to the full program and all its modules. Otherwise, the program opens one module per week, with a new module available every Monday.

Theoretical Background of the Youth Compass

The Youth Compass is based on the principles and methods of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which supports well-being and the development of emotional and social skills. ACT uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies to help individuals increase psychological flexibility and commit to actions aligned with their personal values (Hayes et al., 2012). The core idea is that well-being consists of skills that can be learned and actively practiced (Hayes et al., 2006).

When adolescent well-being is approached from a skill-building perspective, the goal may be to help young people reflect on the direction of their lives and identify steps toward personally meaningful goals. Through practice, they can learn how to manage thoughts and emotions, develop self-compassion, and strengthen social skills. The Youth Compass trains these skills through five modules.

Previous studies have shown that participation in the Youth Compass program reduces stress and increases academic buoyancy (Puolakanaho et al., 2019), alleviates depressive symptoms, and enhances life satisfaction among those who completed at least three of the five modules (Lappalainen et al., 2021). Adolescents experiencing elevated stress and low mood benefited particularly from the program (Keinonen et al., 2024). Moreover, those with higher stress levels were more likely to engage with the program (Hämäläinen et al., 2021). The Youth Compass can also support youth career planning (Kiuru et al., 2021). For more information on Youth Compass research and publications in English, visit: <https://r.jyu.fi/Gjv>

This handbook presents a teacher-led “class model” where the program is implemented with one preparatory session and five lessons. We strongly recommend a preparatory session (see [p. 13](#)), which is intended for registration and watching the introduction video. In addition, the program can serve as a tool for professionals working with youth in various settings or used independently by the young person.



Getting to Know the Youth Compass

Professional test credentials

Professionals can explore the Youth Compass program using the following test credentials:

Username: professionaltest

Password: youthcompass

With the test credentials, you can immediately access the full program and its modules. Otherwise, the program releases one module per week, with a new module available every Monday.

Weekly modules

Each weekly module of the Youth Compass program includes a variety of exercises and content such as videos, comic strips, reflection tasks, and chats with a virtual coach. Each module is divided into five subsections: an introduction, three exercise sections, and a feedback section.

The student progresses through the program one exercise at a time, or can return to the module overview and jump directly to a desired section or exercise. Each exercise is designed to take approximately 2 to 5 minutes.

Mandatory content and exercises in each section are marked with a star symbol in the module overview:



- A star with a yellow outline indicates the task is not yet fully completed.
- A full yellow star indicates the task has been completed.

Other exercises (marked with a circle) are optional, and the student can choose which content to explore during the lesson in addition to the starred exercises.

Below, the central theme and goal of each module are presented. Teachers may review these in advance if they wish.

NOTE: It's important to remind students that using the Youth Compass is secure and no personal data is intentionally collected. The stored data is used only for scientific research purposes in a way that individual users cannot be identified.

Weekly Module 1: DIRECTION IN LIFE

Skill: Identifying what matters personally, setting goals, and making value-based choices



It's important for young people to recognize their interests and the things that energize them. Personally meaningful things – values – act as guiding principles that help plan actions and make everyday choices aligned with what matters. This module gives youth the opportunity to pause, make conscious choices, and take small, concrete steps toward shaping their lives.

In this module, the student reflects on their future, goals, identity, and what they want from life. Exercises include selecting goal cards, spinning the “game of life” wheel, guided audio reflections, and chats with the virtual coach about goal setting. The student is guided in finding answers to questions such as:

- What do I want from life?
- What is important to me?
- What do I want in my life now and in the future?
- What are my dreams?
- What concrete actions can bring me closer to my dreams?
- What comes after basic education, and what about career choices?
- What are my long-term goals in life or specific areas of life?
- What intermediate goals will help me reach them?
- What prevents me from taking actions that matter to me?

Weekly Module 2: ME AND MY MIND

Skill: Recognizing and managing thoughts and emotions



The exercises in this module can be imagined as a remote control that helps the student “turn down the volume” of their constantly active mind. Through visualization and verbalizing thoughts, students learn to handle their thoughts constructively, so they don’t interfere with schoolwork or other goals.

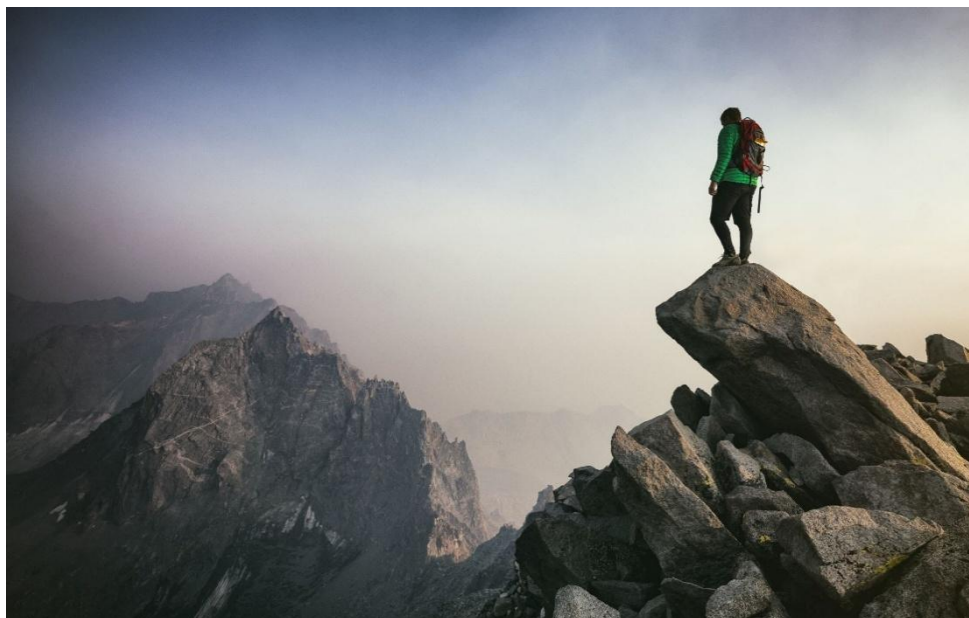
Students practice creating distance from their thoughts and emotions, recognizing that these are constantly changing and don’t need to be identified with. This helps reduce emotional burden and supports well-being.

In this module, students practice:

- Observing thoughts and emotions in their mind
- Noticing that the mind is a storyteller, and its stories (thoughts) aren’t always true or worth reacting to
- Recognizing self-critical or judgmental thoughts and creating distance from them
- Relating to their thoughts and emotional reactions in new ways
- Accepting all kinds of thoughts without pushing them away or avoiding them, since avoidance can negatively impact well-being

Weekly Module 3: ME NOW

Skill: Being present and focusing on what one is doing



Recognizing thoughts and emotions requires the ability to direct attention to oneself, others, or the environment. This ability to shift focus depending on the situation is called mindfulness or presence skills (referred to in the Youth Compass program as “present moment skills”).

Young people may get caught up in their thoughts or have trouble focusing. Practicing present moment skills has many benefits: it reduces stress, calms the mind, improves self-understanding, and supports focus in school, hobbies, and social interactions.

In this module, students practice:

- Focusing, relaxing, and directing attention using breathing exercises
- Observing emotional and physical states (e.g., tension) without reacting, with acceptance
- Recognizing feelings like anger and frustration in the body and mind and observing them without reacting
- Applying present moment skills in everyday activities, schoolwork, and hobbies like music or sports
- Using present moment skills in social media and conversations with friends

Weekly Module 4: MYSELF

Skill: Taking a new perspective on oneself and practicing self-compassion



In this module, students explore a new way of thinking about themselves. They examine and question self-critical thoughts and beliefs, learning to reduce comparison and excessive self-criticism, and to respond to mistakes more constructively. They also develop self-compassion: the ability to treat oneself with kindness and understanding.

In this module, students practice:

- Reflecting on the effects of comparing themselves to others
- Considering the pursuit of perfection and its consequences
- Recognizing their strengths and the mind's stories about themselves (e.g., "I'm not good enough") and realizing these are just thoughts, not facts
- Understanding that thoughts and emotions change, but there is a stable "self" that remains unaffected
- Taking a new perspective on a difficult issue
- Practicing kindness and compassion toward themselves

Weekly Module 5: ME AND OTHERS

Skill: Promoting collective well-being and developing relationships, engaging in positive interaction for the benefit of other people



In this module, students reflect on who they are as people and how they interact with others. The goal is to increase positive interactions, empathy, helpfulness, and kindness. Students also practice skills useful in challenging situations, such as public speaking or stressful events.

In this module, students explore:

- How often they hear criticism versus positive comments and feedback
- Practicing not criticizing others
- Noticing times when they've received unexpected help or kindness
- Identifying people they could thank or acknowledge
- Thinking about what positive feedback they could give to friends or others
- How they could spread positivity around them
- What kind of community they want to live in and how they want to treat others

Instructions for Teachers

Plan for **one separate preparatory session** (15 – 45 minutes; see options below) for registration and **five 45-minute lessons** (one for each module, ideally once a week).

Consider how to schedule the preparatory session and the first lesson with your class. Here are some options:

1. **Double Lesson Start (2 x 45 min)**

- First lesson: watch the Youth Compass introduction video (1:03 min) and register.
- Second lesson: begin Module 1.
- This option gives students more time to engage with the first module.

2. **Separate Preparatory Session (20 min) + Full Lesson (45 min)**

- Preparatory session conducted at the end of another lesson. Includes the Youth Compass introduction video and registration.
- Module 1 starts in the next full 45-minute lesson.

3. **Single Lesson + Break (45 + 15 min)**

- The Youth Compass introduction video, registration, and Module 1 during one lesson and the following break.

For the Youth Compass lessons you will need

Personal computer, tablet, or smartphone:

Each student needs their own device.

Headphones:

Since the program includes many videos and audio recordings, each student should have headphones.

Username and passwords:

Students can create their own usernames and passwords to register and log in to the program. Make sure to save them (e.g., take a photo of them – teachers should emphasize this!) because lost usernames or passwords cannot be retrieved.

Starting the Youth Compass program

The teacher can introduce the beginning of the Youth Compass online program as follows:

“Over the next five weeks, we’ll spend one lesson per week working with the Youth Compass program. Youth Compass is a five-week online program designed to develop well-being skills that help you face new and challenging life situations. The program includes various exercises and videos, as well as short questionnaires and a gamified adventure journey.

In today’s lesson, we’ll get to know the program, register, and go through the introductory information. At the end of the lesson, I’ll also give you a small weekly task.

A quick reminder about data security: Youth Compass is safe to use, and individual users cannot be identified.”

Step-by-step instructions

1. Watch the introduction video

- Watch the Youth Compass introduction video (1:03 min) together with the students:
<https://youtu.be/5iRv0qa5NUI>

2. Register for the program

- Students register for the program. The teacher also registers if they haven’t already.
- Go to <https://nuortenkompassi.fi/en/>
- Click the **“Register”** button.



3. Create a username and password

- Choose a username and password. Make sure to save them (e.g., take a photo of them – teachers should emphasize this!) because lost usernames or passwords cannot be retrieved.
- The password must be at least 8 characters long and cannot be the same as the username.
- Click **“Create an account”**.

A registration form titled 'Choose a username and password'. It contains three input fields: 'Username', 'Password', and 'Confirm password'. Below the 'Username' field is a note: 'Username is not visible to other users. Still, choose preferably a username that doesn't reveal your real name.' Below the 'Password' field is a note: 'Password has to include at least 8 symbols. It cannot be a common password (such as 12345678) and it has to differ from the username.' Below the 'Confirm password' field is a note: 'Write down the username and password for yourself.' There is a checkbox labeled 'I accept the terms of use:' followed by a link to 'Terms of Use'. At the bottom is a green button labeled 'Create an account »' and a link 'Already have an account? Log in.'

4. Introductory information

- Students proceed to the **Introduction** section and work at their own pace.

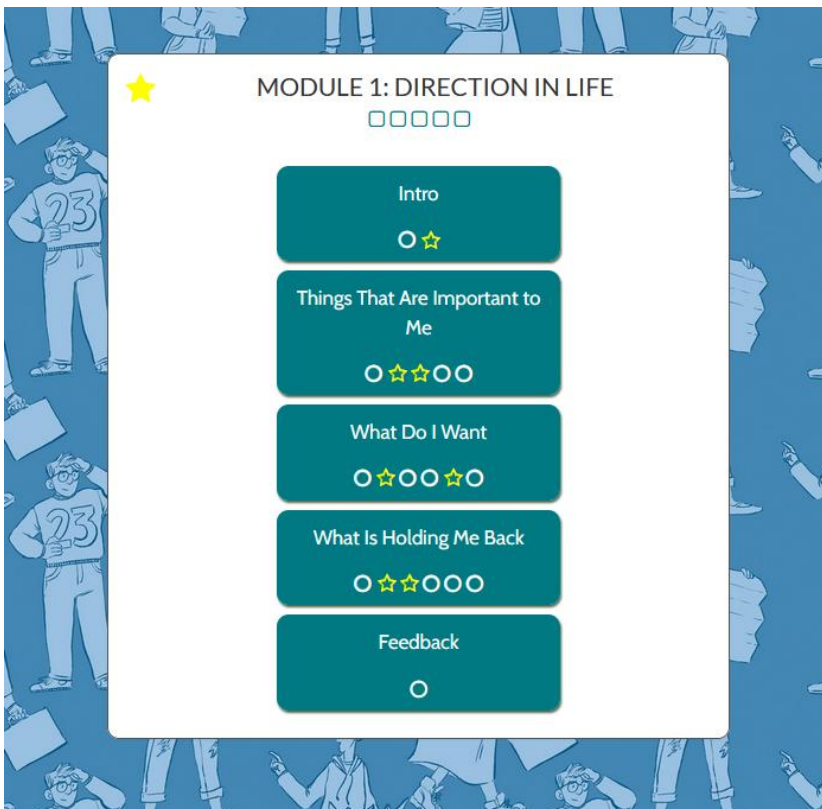


- NOTE:** If time is limited, students can watch only the Introduction video and skip the “Hero of Your Life” and “The Journey Begins” game episode.
- After watching the Introduction video, the program modules become accessible.

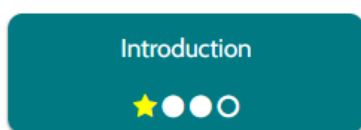
Program overview

Teacher explains the program structure

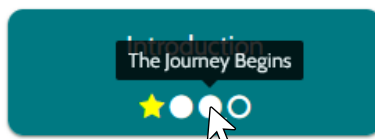
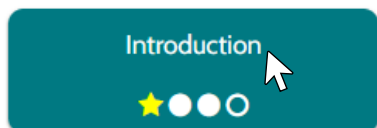
- Each module consists of five parts: an **Intro**, **three exercise sections** (also called “levels”), and **Feedback**.
- Starred tasks** (mandatory) are marked with yellow outlines. Other exercises (white circles) are optional and can be chosen based on interest.



- Completed star tasks turn fully yellow and completed circle tasks turn fully white.



- You can access a specific section by clicking on its name or one of its exercises.

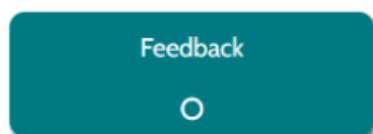


Navigation

- Use the “**Modules**” button in the navigation bar to return to the main overview from any exercise.

Feedback

- After each module, students should provide feedback on the **Feedback** page of that module.



Weekly task

- At the end of each lesson, the teacher introduces and distributes the weekly task (the tasks can be found in [Appendix 1](#) of this handbook).
- Students are encouraged to take a photo of the weekly task with their phone.
- Alternatively, the teacher can send a PDF of the weekly tasks to students in advance.

The goal of the weekly task is to help students apply to their everyday lives what they’ve learned in the Youth Compass.

Lesson 1 (45 min): Module 1 – DIRECTION IN LIFE

Introduction to Module 1

Personally meaningful things – values – act as guiding principles that help plan actions and make everyday choices aligned with what matters. Instead of drifting aimlessly, this module gives students the opportunity to make conscious decisions about their lives. They reflect on their future, set goals, and consider who they are and what they want from life.

Students may find answers to questions like:

- What do I want from life?
- What is important to me?
- What do I want in my life now and in the future?
- What are my dreams?
- What concrete actions can bring me closer to my dreams?
- What comes after basic education, and what about career choices?
- What are my long-term goals in life or specific areas of life?
- What intermediate goals will help me reach them?
- What prevents me from taking actions that matter to me?

Reminder about starred tasks

The teacher should remind students that the **starred tasks (highlighted in yellow)** are the primary exercises to complete. Other tasks are optional and can be chosen based on interest.

Independent work (25 min)

Students work independently on Module 1 during the lesson. During this time, the teacher can print and prepare the instructions and cards used for the small group discussion (see [Appendix 2](#)). Each group should have its own set of cards available.

Feedback questionnaire: Once Module 1 is completed, students should provide feedback at the end of the module.

Discussion in small groups (15 min)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3 – 4 in each group. The teacher distributes the instructions and cards for the discussion (see [Appendix 2](#)).

Teacher introduces: *This week we have been reflecting on what matters the most in life – our values – and what are the actions that bring us closer to our values, dreams, and goals. Now, using these cards, you can continue with your reflections.*

Instructions: Value cards

1. Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text.
2. Take turns to take a card and read it aloud to others.
3. All students in the group reply to the same question.

or...

The student who took the card and read it replies to that question.

or...

The student who took the card asks the question on the card to the student who sits on their right side (who then will take a new card and so on...)

example of the cards

What is most important to you right now?	What are your goals when it comes to school?	Who are the people that are important to you?	What skill would you like to learn?
What are your goals when it comes to your life?	What kind of adult do you want to be in five years?	What would you like to do less of?	What would you like to do more of?
What is one important thing you have learned in life?	What do you like to do in your free time?	What small thing could you do every day that brings you joy?	How would you like someone you care about to describe you?
What is your dream job?	What could make school more appealing to you?	How would you like to be as friend?	What are you proud of yourself?

Weekly task

At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives students the weekly task and encourages them to apply it in their daily lives:

Direction in Life

Choose something that is important to you and that you'd like to spend more time on. Write it down or choose a background image for your phone that reminds you of it. Try to do one action related to that at least once a week.

Lesson 2 (45 min): Module 2 – ME AND MY MIND

Introduction to Module 2

The theme of Module 2 is learning to recognize and manage thoughts and emotions constructively.

With the Youth Compass, students learn to “turn down the volume” of their mental “thought factory” and handle thoughts in a way that doesn’t interfere with school or other goals. They practice creating distance from thoughts and emotions, recognizing that these constantly change and don’t all require a reaction. This helps prevent negative impacts on well-being.

Students practice:

- Observing thoughts and emotions in the mind
- Noticing that the mind is a storyteller, and its stories (thoughts) may be exaggerated or untrue, they shouldn’t always be believed or reacted to
- Recognizing self-critical or judgmental thoughts and creating distance from them
- Adopting a new attitude towards thoughts and emotions
- Accepting that all kinds of thoughts are welcome, and you do not have to push them away, as avoiding them may have a negative impact on your well-being

Independent work (25 min)

Students work independently on Module 2 during the lesson. During this time, the teacher can print and prepare the instructions and cards used for the small group discussion (see [Appendix 3](#)). Each group should have its own set of cards available.

Feedback questionnaire: Once Module 2 is completed, students should provide feedback at the end of the module.

Discussion in small groups (15 min)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3 – 4 in each group. The teacher distributes the instructions and materials for the discussion (see [Appendix 3](#)).

Teacher introduces: *This module was about learning to recognize and manage thoughts and emotions constructively. Thoughts are just thoughts, and we should not always believe in them or act on them. Now you will get the chance to practice and discuss this in small groups.*

Instructions: Self-critical thoughts

Many of us are quietly hard on ourselves. We walk around with an inner critic, telling us we’re not ‘good enough’ and never amount to anything. For example, if your friend had the thought “Nobody likes me,” your friend probably wouldn’t be eager to go out and talk to people.

1. Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text.
2. Take turns to take a card and read it aloud to others. Then, discuss:
 - What would happen if you/your friend firmly believed in that thought?
 - How could you take distance from that thought?

Remember that thoughts are just words, and we should not always believe in them or act on them.

example of the cards

<i><u>"Nobody likes me."</u></i>	<i>"Others are better than me."</i>
<i>"Others look better than me."</i>	<i>"I can't do anything right."</i>
<i>"I fail at everything."</i>	<i>"I am bad at school/sport etc."</i>
<i>"I should have studied more for that exam. I'm such an idiot."</i>	<i>"I always mess things up."</i>

Weekly task

At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives students the weekly task and encourages them to apply it in their daily lives:

Me and My Mind

Write down a thought on your phone that is critical of yourself or others. Whenever you notice a critical thought, notice that you can choose how you will respond to it and whether you will act on it. You can also say silently to yourself, "I have a thought that..." Remember that thoughts are just words, and we should not always believe in them or act on them.

Lesson 3 (45 min): Module 3 – ME NOW

Introduction to Module 3

This module focuses on the skill of being present, concentrating, and directing attention to what one is doing.

Recognizing thoughts and emotions requires the ability to focus on oneself, others, or the environment. This ability to shift attention is called mindfulness or present moment skills.

We all get lost in thought or distracted sometimes. The ability to refocus is valuable, as it reduces stress, calms the mind, improves self-understanding, and supports concentration in school, hobbies, and social interactions.

Students practice:

- Focusing, relaxing, and directing attention
- Observing emotional and physical states (e.g., tension) without reacting, with acceptance
- Recognizing feelings of anger and frustration in the body and mind and observing them without reacting
- Applying present moment skills in everyday activities, schoolwork, and hobbies like music and sports
- Using present moment skills in social media and conversations with friends

Independent work (25 min)

Students work independently on Module 3 during the lesson. During this time, the teacher can print and prepare the cards used for the small group discussion (see [Appendix 4](#)). Each group should have its own set of cards available.

Feedback questionnaire: Once Module 3 is completed, students should provide feedback at the end of the module.

Discussion in small groups (15 min)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3 – 4 in each group. The teacher distributes the instructions and materials for the discussion (see [Appendix 4](#)).

Teacher introduces: *This module focused on the skill of being present, concentrating, and directing attention to what one is doing. It has many benefits: it reduces stress, calms the mind and helps you to concentrate better. Let's practice and discuss this in small groups.*

Instructions: Mindfulness cards

Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text. Take turns picking a card and reading it aloud to the group. Everyone in the group follows the instructions on the card.

example of the cards

Read to others and do accordingly Place your hand on your belly. Take 10 deep breaths. Notice your hand moving up and down as you breathe.	Read to others and do accordingly Sit very still and notice one thing you can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell.
Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and spend one minute thinking about the best day of your life. Try to remember as much as you can!	Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and think about how you are feeling. Happy? Sad? Annoyed? Excited? Something else? How do you know you are feeling this way?
Read to others and do accordingly Sit quietly and place a small object in your hand. A pencil, eraser, or something else. Think about how it feels in your hand. Notice one new thing about this object.	Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and sit quietly. Notice how your clothes feel on your body: your shirt, pants and shoes. Do you notice anything you did not notice before?

Weekly task

At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives students the weekly task:

Me Now

Every time someone speaks to you (e.g., a friend, parent, teacher), focus and be present in the moment. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying. Give your full attention to the speaker. Notice how mindful presence affects you and others.

Lesson 4 (45 min): Module 4 – MYSELF

Introduction to Module 4

This module focuses on gaining a new perspective on oneself and practicing kindness and compassion toward oneself.

Students explore new ways of thinking about themselves, reduce comparison and excessive self-criticism, and learn to respond to mistakes more constructively. They also practice self-compassion: treating themselves with kindness and understanding.

Students practice:

- Reflecting on comparing themselves to others and its effects
- Considering the pursuit of perfection and its consequences
- Recognizing the mind's stories about themselves (e.g., "I'm not good enough") and realizing these are just thoughts, not facts
- Understanding that thoughts and emotions change, but there is a stable "self" that remains unharmed and has space for all kinds of thoughts and emotions
- Taking a new perspective on a difficult issue
- Practicing kindness and compassion toward themselves

Independent work (25 min)

Students work independently on Module 4 during the lesson. During this time, the teacher can prepare the instruction sheet used for the small group discussion (see [Appendix 5](#)). The sheet can be displayed on a screen where everyone can see them, or provided on paper.

Feedback questionnaire: Once Module 4 is completed, students should provide feedback at the end of the module.

Discussion in small groups (15 min)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3 – 4 in each group. The teacher distributes the instructions and materials for the discussion (see [Appendix 5](#)).

Teacher introduces: *This week we will practice self-compassion. Self-compassion is treating yourself kindly when things don't go well. It's being aware of your feelings and treating yourself with the same understanding you'd give to someone you care about. It's also acknowledging that struggles and challenges are a part of life and that everyone goes through them. We human beings are all in the same boat.*

Instructions: Self-compassion

Imagine the following situation: A close friend of yours is feeling really bad about themselves or is struggling in some way. How would you respond to your friend in this situation? Would you offer a supportive touch – a pat on the shoulder, a fist bump, or a hug?

Discuss:

1. What would you do and say to comfort your friend who is struggling?
2. Now, think about times when you felt bad about yourself or were struggling. How do you typically speak to yourself in these situations?
3. Did you notice a difference between how you talk to your friend and how you talk to yourself?

Could you respond to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when they are struggling?

Weekly task

At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives students the weekly task:

Myself

Try speaking to yourself like you would to a good friend. Praise yourself for successes or comfort yourself when things are tough (e.g., “You did great!” “This feels difficult now, but it will pass.” “You’re a good person!”)

Lesson 5 (45 min): Module 5 – ME AND OTHERS

Introduction to Module 5

This module focuses on developing the skill of engaging in positive interaction with others and contributing to the well-being of people and society (prosocial skills).

Students reflect on who they are as individuals and how they interact with others. The goal is to increase positive interaction through helpfulness, empathy, and kindness toward others. Students also practice skills that are useful in challenging situations, such as public speaking or stressful events.

Students explore:

- How much criticism versus positive comments and feedback they hear around them
- Practicing consciously not criticizing others
- Noticing if they've ever received unexpected help or kindness
- Identifying people they could thank or acknowledge
- Thinking about what positive feedback they could give to friends or others
- How they could spread positivity around them
- Reflecting on the kind of community they'd like to live in and how they want to treat others

Independent work (25 min)

Students work independently on Module 5 during the lesson.

Feedback questionnaire: Once Module 5 is completed, students should provide feedback at the end of the module.

Reserve the last 15 minutes of the lesson for you and the students to provide feedback via the online forms about your experiences using the program. If time permits, you may also do the discussion exercise (see Appendix 6).

[Students' feedback form](#)

[Teachers' feedback form](#)

Discussion in small groups (15 min, optional)

Students will be divided into small groups of 3 – 4 in each group.

Teacher introduces: *This week we have practiced skills that are useful in challenging situations but also reflected how we interact with others. This is something that you will get to discuss now.*

Instructions: How would you like to live?

Work in groups of 3 – 4 and discuss what kind of school/community you would like to live in, how you would like to treat others and how you would like to be treated.

Discuss:

How would you like to be treated?

How would you like students/young people to treat each other?

How would you like to treat others?

How would you make sure no one is left alone?

What else do you consider important?

What could be one small action that you can do today/tomorrow to move towards the person you want to be to others?

Weekly task

At the end of the lesson, the teacher gives students the weekly task:

Me and Others

What positive thing could you say to a friend (or teacher or loved one) during the coming week?
Say it out loud or send it as a message.

In Closing

Dear Professional,

We want to thank you for participating in the Youth Compass program. We hope that taking part in the Youth Compass program has been a positive experience.

If you have any questions or comments beyond the feedback that you provided earlier, please feel free to contact us by email, phone, or text message.

Contact information

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Additional information

More about the Youth Compass research at <https://r.jyu.fi/Gjv> or scan the QR code to access the website.



🎥 Finnish introduction video for professionals (3:06 min): <https://youtu.be/Ew5s-lzNUxM>

🎥 English introduction video for youth (1:03 min): <https://youtu.be/5iRv0qa5NUI>

Information and exercises (in Finnish and in Swedish) on acceptance and commitment therapy: <https://oivamieli.fi>

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Appendix 1. Weekly tasks summary

(For copying and distributing to students)

Weekly task after Module 1

Direction in Life

Choose something that is important to you and that you'd like to spend more time on. Write it down or choose a background image for your phone that reminds you of it. Try to do one action related to that at least once a week.

Weekly task after Module 2

Me and My Mind

Write down a thought on your phone that is critical of yourself or others. Whenever you notice a critical thought, notice that you can choose how you will respond to it and whether you will act on it. You can also say silently to yourself, "I have a thought that..." Remember that thoughts are just words, and we should not always believe in them or act on them.

Weekly task after Module 3

Me Now

Every time someone speaks to you (e.g., a friend, parent, teacher), focus and be present in the moment. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying. Give your full attention to the speaker. Notice how mindful presence affects you and others.

Weekly task after Module 4

Myself

Try speaking to yourself like you would to a good friend. Praise yourself for successes or comfort yourself when things are tough (e.g., "You did great!" "This feels difficult now, but it will pass." "You're a good person!")

Weekly task after Module 5

Me and Others

What positive thing could you say to a friend (or teacher or loved one) during the coming week? Say it out loud or send it as a message.

Appendix 2. Value cards ([Module 1](#))

Instructions

1. Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text.
2. Take turns to take a card and read it aloud to others.
3. All students in the group reply to the same question.

or...

The student who took the card and read it replies to that question.

or...

The student who took the card asks the question on the card to the student who sits on their right side (who then will take a new card and so on...)

What is most important
to you right now?

What are your goals
when it comes to school?

What are your goals
when it comes to your
life?

What kind of adult do
you want to be in five
years?

What is one important
thing you have learned in
life?

What do you like to do
in your free time?

What is your dream job?

What could make school
more appealing to you?

Who are the people that
are important to you?

What skill would you like
to learn?

What would you like to
do less of?

What would you like to
do more of?

What small thing could
you do every day that
brings you joy?

How would you like
someone you care about
to describe you?

How would you like to be
as friend?

What are you proud of
yourself?

Appendix 3. Self-critical thoughts ([Module 2](#))

Instructions

Many of us are quietly hard on ourselves. We walk around with an inner critic, telling us we're not 'good enough' and never amount to anything. For example, if your friend had the thought "Nobody likes me," your friend probably wouldn't be eager to go out and talk to people.

1. Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text.

2. Take turns to take a card and read it aloud to others. Then, discuss:

- What would happen if you/your friend firmly believed in that thought?
- How could you take distance from that thought?

Remember that thoughts are just words, and we should not always believe in them or act on them.

"Nobody likes me."

*"Others are better
than me."*

*"Others look better
than me."*

*"I can't do anything
right."*

"I fail at everything."

*"I am bad at
school/sport etc."*

*"I should have studied
more for that exam.
I'm such an idiot."*

*"I always mess things
up."*

Appendix 4. Mindfulness cards ([Module 3](#))

Instructions

Work in groups of 3 – 4. Lay the cards on the table in the middle so that you cannot see the text. Take turns picking a card and reading it aloud to the group. Everyone in the group follows the instructions on the card.

Read to others and do accordingly Place your hand on your belly. Take 10 deep breaths. Notice your hand moving up and down as you breathe.	Read to others and do accordingly Sit very still and notice one thing you can see, hear, feel, taste, and smell.
Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and spend one minute thinking about the best day of your life. Try to remember as much as you can!	Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and think about how you are feeling. Happy? Sad? Annoyed? Excited? Something else? How do you know you are feeling this way?
Read to others and do accordingly Sit quietly and place a small object in your hand. A pencil, eraser, or something else. Think about how it feels in your hand. Notice one new thing about this object.	Read to others and do accordingly Close your eyes and sit quietly. Notice how your clothes feel on your body: your shirt, pants and shoes. Do you notice anything you did not notice before?

Appendix 5. Self-compassion ([Module 4](#))

Instructions

Imagine the following situation: A close friend of yours is feeling really bad about themselves or is struggling in some way.

How would you respond to your friend in this situation? Would you offer a supportive touch — a pat on the shoulder, a fist bump, or a hug?



Discuss

1. What would you do and say to comfort your friend who is struggling?
2. Now, think about times when you felt bad about yourself or were struggling. How do you typically speak to yourself in these situations?
3. Did you notice a difference between how you talk to your friend and how you talk to yourself? Could you respond to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when they are struggling?



Appendix 6. How would you like to live? ([Module 5](#), optional)

Instructions

Work in groups of 3 – 4 and discuss what kind of school/community you would like to live in, how you would like to treat others and how you would like to be treated.



Discuss

- How would you like to be treated?
- How would you like students/young people to treat each other?
- How would you like to treat others?
- How would you make sure no one is left alone?
- What else do you consider important?
- What could be one small action that you can do today/tomorrow to move towards the person you want to be to others?

