

mindroom

Future Me

A guide for accompanying adults



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Salvesen Mindroom Centre is a Scottish charity that supports, informs and empowers children and young people living with learning difficulties. Our vision is to become an internationally recognised centre of excellence in neurodiversity to help create a world in which no mind is left behind. To learn more about us please visit www.mindroom.org or ask for copies of our literature.

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About this Guide

Future Me is designed to support a young person to reflect on their skills & qualities and how these could relate to their dream future. The focus throughout Future Me is on the young person's own thoughts and ideas.

This booklet contains hints and tips for each activity in Future Me so that an adult working alongside them can help the young person get the most from it.

Please note that you do not need to use all of the sections in Future Me. Select those that are most relevant and will be most useful to the young person. The Time to Reflect sections are designed to help you choose.

More advice, including information on training options, are available by contacting us at directhelp@mindroom.org.

Some general advice

The pointers below give some general advice on how best to accompany a young person through this process.

- Set a relaxed tone at the start.
- As you work through the activities together, use the questions that are posed as conversation-starters and encourage the young person to reflect on what they think.
- If it is easier for the young person, then enter their answers for them. And if you do, make sure they're happy with the way you have presented their responses.
- Ask open questions that cannot be answered with a straight 'yes' or 'no'. For example, if asking about favourite music, also ask 'What do you like about it/them?' rather than just accepting the name of a band or song.
- Use 'active listening' – reflect back, make their responses more concise, get underneath what has been said, but never interpret.
- If you have a sense of humour then use it, but make sure you're laughing with the young person, not at them.

- Interpersonal boundaries are important; ensure respect. If, for example, you think something is being shared that is inappropriate, say so.
- Amplify positives and possibilities. Although tempting, do not give your own ideas. You are helping the young person to formulate and express their own ideas and opinions, not advising. Remain neutral.
- Some of the activities ask the young person to reflect at a personal level quite deeply. If they are not comfortable with this, then it's okay to move on. This resource is not a therapeutic tool.
- Congratulate and affirm the young person as they complete each activity, especially if it has not been easy for them. The process should always be positive.
- Some activities contain examples and suggested responses. Remember that these are just there to help, if they are not relevant to the young person you are accompanying, you can ignore them.
- Share your own responses to questions where this seems appropriate and helpful. This can encourage openness and lead to good conversation.
- Do not judge the young person or their responses –always keep an open mind. This will allow the young person to think and speak more freely and openly.

- All of the activities are intended to support a process, they are not an end in themselves. If there are things that are not relevant, then it's okay to leave them out.

Remember:

It is a privilege to accompany a young person as they begin thinking about the journey from school into adult life. Enjoy it!

Section 1

My life's journey so far

Purpose of the activity

Setting the scene by exploring significant life events in the past before beginning to think about the future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Allow the young person time to reflect.
- Milestones can be positive or negative. If they're negative don't dwell on them but use them as an opportunity to affirm that the young person moved on from the situation.
- You can use cut and paste if you want to reorder entries.
- Events should be what has been significant specifically to the young person, which may be different to what has been significant to their family or friends.
- Don't worry if the young person struggles to come up with many events. Remind them that they can include anything they wish – significant birthdays, holidays, getting a pet and things they've done with friends are examples of what could be included.

Section 1

My Dreams

Purpose of the activity

To get a picture of what a happy and fulfilled future could be like for the young person.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Encourage them to think big.
- Think about different aspects of life, include ideas such as where you will be living and who with etc. Questions like ‘what would be included in your ideal future?’ or ‘What would make you most happy in life?’ can be helpful.
- Make sure that you don’t inhibit the young person by trying to ground ideas in what’s possible. In a dream, anything is possible.

Section 1

My nightmare

Purpose of the activity

To identify things that the young person wants to avoid in their future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- You are creating a simple list, don't try and reassure or advise about things that the young person raises.
- Encourage the young person to speak freely, rather than agreeing or disagreeing with them.
- This is a reflective session, so don't be tempted to dig deeper or question responses other than for clarity.
- Don't spend too long on this activity, especially if it brings up difficult feelings for the young person.
- If the young person begins to show signs of distress then be encouraging and affirming before moving on. You could get advice from a site such as www.youngminds.org.uk if appropriate.

Section 1

My perfect working day

Purpose of the activity

To begin thinking about what kind of things might be important to the young person in their daily life.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- These responses can be as vague or specific as the young person wants.
- The responses do not have to relate to work tasks, for instance it may be important to the young person that they have time to chat with their friends or future colleagues or take frequent breaks.
- Use this as a chance to think openly and freely, so don't worry about how realistic any of the responses are.

Section 2

Time to Reflect

Purpose of the activity

To begin building a picture of how life is now for the young person and their feelings about the future. The responses here will be reviewed later in Future Me and at the very end of the booklet. Responses will help to guide which sections the young person wishes to prioritise later on.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Explain the purpose of this activity
- Don't feel the need to respond to the young person's choices, especially where they are low. Simply acknowledge and move on to the next statement
- The box for naming their future job choice can be completed in as specific or as vague a way as is relevant to the young person's thinking.
- The 'transition plan' is the formal plan that will be made with the school regarding what they will do when they leave school and what support they might need to do it

Section 3a

My skills type

Purpose of the activity

To think more generally about the type of skill that describes the young person and raise awareness of different people being suited to different things.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is on 2 pages.
- Discuss each skills type as you read the information about it.
- When ranking, begin with what is the most like you, then what is least like you. You can then fill in the 3 in-between.
- Don't treat this too seriously – think of it as a bit like a personality quiz in a magazine!

Section 3a

What 'general' skills do I have?

Purpose of the activity

To help the young person identify the type of thing that they are best at, and what sort of tasks might need more support.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Remain positive.
- Use examples of what helps them to achieve their best in skills that they find difficult.
- There's a lot here – don't feel that you need to cover it all in one go.

Section 3b

Independent Living Skills

Purpose of the activity

To begin thinking about the bigger picture of life as an adult.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This is the first of a 2-part activity.
- Encourage the young person to think as broadly as they can and be as specific as they can e.g. under welfare include things like 'wash my clothes' and under finance 'buy my food'.

Section 3b

With a little help

Purpose of the activity

To continue thinking about the bigger picture of life as an adult.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This is the second of a 2-part activity.
- Don't overthink this, and base it on what the young person thinks of their skills/abilities rather than what you believe is possible for them.

Section 3b

Let's get more specific

Purpose of the activity

To think in detail about the skills the young person has relating to life as an independent adult.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Emphasise the information about being independent not meaning that you have to be completely self-sufficient.
- Some of these skills may need a lot of discussion.
- Allow the young person to self-assess and encourage them where they need it.
- If necessary remind them that they are not suddenly going to have to start doing all of these things for themselves, this is just a chance for them to identify what they're good at and what they might want to get better at.

Section 3b

My Strengths

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on the range of skills the young person has and decide which are the strongest.

To provide positive affirmation of the young person.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- You will need to refer back to your pages from the general skills activities as well as independent living skills.
- Look together at the range and quality and well as the quantity of skills that the young person has.
- Use this activity to provide lots of affirmation.
- For each of the top 3 skills (or types) that the young person chooses, discuss how they use them in their everyday life.

Section 4

What a feeling

Purpose of the activity

To begin thinking about how personality and personal qualities might influence the young person.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Note the difference between skills and qualities.
- On the second activity remind the young person that we all experience these feelings at different times, and that's okay.
- Encourage them to think about the way the emotion might affect their facial expression, tone of voice or the way they react to other people.

Section 4

How do I like people to respond?

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on how their feelings can affect the young person's needs.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Some emotions may illicit the same response, which is perfectly okay.
- Sometimes a young person will not know how they like people to respond. Referring back to the specific examples in the last activity may help.
- It may be helpful to share some examples of your own.
- The final box is to give the young person opportunity to express negative preferences if relevant. Some people may, for example, like to be given a hug when they're sad whilst for others they would really dislike being touched in any circumstance.

Section 4

My Personality

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on the positive aspects of the young person's personality, and how they make a difference to others.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- These questions can be quite challenging, so take it steady and help as much as is needed to find a response to each question.
- Reword the questions if it helps the young person. E.g. 'What makes you feel most alive?' Could be re-phrased as 'When do you feel most excited?' or 'What makes you feel really good about things?'
- When reviewing responses from other people, read them through and discuss them.

Section 4

Graffiti Wall

Purpose of the activity

To allow the young person the opportunity to express something about their personality in a creative way, pulling together some of their thoughts from the previous sessions .

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity can be completed outside of the workbook itself.
- The activity can be done on paper with art materials or on the computer using Google Drawing (docs.google.com/drawings)
- Google Drawing is free to use but you will need a Google account to access it.
- Have a go at doing the activity yourself alongside the young person.

Section 4

Personal Statement

Purpose of the activity

To sum up together what the young person has discovered about their own strengths, in terms of both skills and qualities. .

To produce a block of text that could be used in a CV or application

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- You will need to look back at their skills, including independent living skills, as well as their own and others responses about their personal qualities
- The young person may need support to be able to structure these points into a coherent paragraph. It is okay to take a lead on doing that so long as the content is what the young person wants to say.
- Use this as an opportunity to affirm the young person

Section 5

Reflect & Review

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on their previous responses and consider whether anything has changed in the light of their thinking about their skills.

To decide on which sections of Future Me will be most relevant to the young person.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Explain the purpose of the activity
- Try not to influence the young person in the response – part of the aim is for them to develop the ability to reflect for themselves
- Allow them to lead the discussion in what they would like to focus on from the rest of Future Me
- If they have already agreed with their school that they will be completing an Employability Award, explain that this will be the main focus of the rest of Future Me. You could still identify additional sections now and explain that you will include if there is time once the employability work is done

Section 6

Where shall we begin?

Purpose of the activity

To order the independent living skills that were identified in Section 3b from strongest to those needing most support.

To prioritise and plan activities to help develop 2 of the skill areas where the young person identifies themselves needing most support

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This is basically a straight-forward sorting activity. Go back through the skills that the young person scored in Section 3b and note each one in the appropriate box, based on the score that they gave themselves.
- It's fine to make changes to the scores if the young person decides that they need or want to do this.
- Work together to choose 2 of the skills for which the young person identifies themselves as needing most support and plan some appropriate activities that will help them to develop these skills. Make sure that they are achievable and realistic for the young person.

Section 7

Awards that I have received

Purpose of the activity

To begin building a profile of achievements, academic and non-academic.
To develop personal reflection.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Use this activity to celebrate a range of achievements and accomplishments – it's not just about school-based academic success.
- If the young person does not have anything to enter on this page then simply miss it out
- When completing the reflective questions at the end, encourage the young person to question why they feel the way they do.

Section 7

Awards that I hope to get

Purpose of the activity

To add to thinking about specific hopes and plans for the future.
To embed a focus on positives – strengths and ‘islands of competence’.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity extends the activity on the previous page.
- Remember to include non-academic qualifications, such as awards from clubs and societies
- If the young person has no plans to do anything that might attract an award, then simply leave this activity out.

Section 7

Further education

Purpose of the activity

To relate achievements and successes to plans for the future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- It may be helpful to look at apprenticeships.scot, myworldofwork.co.uk, or the websites of local colleges/universities that are of interest.
- An internet search for relevant courses and qualifications may also be helpful.
- If the young person wants to go to college or university and is not yet at that stage, looking at the entry requirements for courses they might want to do may be helpful when they are deciding which subjects they will want to focus on whilst still at school.
- Encourage the young person to reflect on why they are making the choices that they are – do they relate to their aspirations/strengths or are there other reasons?

Section 7

Getting there

Purpose of the activity

To continue to relate achievements and successes to plans for the future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Looking at next steps can help make what seems a distant goal feel more realistic and achievable.
- Use this activity to record anything that is relevant.
- Encourage the young person to refer back to this as they work through their plan

Section 8

What is my ideal workplace?

Purpose of the activity

To introduce the young person to thinking about what will be important to them about the kind of environment they work in

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This is a straight-forward activity that should not require too much thought – go with gut reactions
- Other things can include absolutely anything, from the kind of lighting a workplace uses or how close nearest supermarket is – remember it's what is important to the young person.

Section 8

What is my dream job?

Purpose of the activity

To draw together the thinking from the previous sections and identify a dream job that the young person would like to have in the future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This is not necessarily a job that the young person could do straight after leaving school – it's their dream for the future.
- Encourage the young person to think about their skills and qualities, and the kind of things they have said they would like to have in their own working day.
- If the young person doesn't know what sort of tasks might be involved in the job have a go at doing some research together to find out. 'My World of Work' (www.myworldofwork.co.uk) may be helpful in doing this, or in finding jobs that match the young person's skills and personality.
- Encourage the young person to think about how this dream job fits in with their dream future in Section 1.

Section 8

How my Strengths will help me

Purpose of the activity

To encourage the young person to focus on their strengths, and to think about how these could help them achieve their dreams.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- The Strengths were listed in Section 3 and should be automatically copied here if you're completing this on a computer.
- Try to be specific about how these skills could be helpful in the dream job that the young person has named.
- If they don't appear to match at all then have a conversation about that. Does the young person want to change anything? Make sure you keep the focus on the positives.
- You will think later about what skills the young person might want to develop or new skills that they might want to learn, so don't worry about any apparent gaps.

Section 8

Practical Research

Purpose of the activity

To help the young person to build a picture of what sort of things they need to consider when looking for a job

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Don't worry if the job the young person chooses is not a realistic option for them at the moment – the purpose of the activity is to learn more about the process of job hunting and not to actually apply for one!
- My World of Work may be a helpful place to start but any job search website, such as goodmoves.org, sjobs.com or myjobscotland.gov.uk, could be used

Section 8

Reflecting on the job hunt

Purpose of the activity

To encourage the young person to think more deeply about the kind of career that they want to pursue

To reflect on how well the young person's skills fit with what employers say they are looking for in their chosen job/career

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Encourage the young person to be honest, especially if they discover anything that surprises them
- Encourage the young person to reflect on how well their skills fit with those described on the job site, and whether they are a good match. Do they have skills that are not the skills they named as their Key Skills that are relevant?

Section 8

What other skills might I need?

Purpose of the activity

To start thinking about how the young person might begin the journey towards their dream future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Use what you have found in the previous activities about the skills that are needed to help with this.
- Don't worry if you can't identify skills for each question. The process of discussing the idea of developing job-related skills and learning skills on the job is valuable in itself.
- The responses to how the skills might be learned or developed do not need to be very specific, at this stage it is sufficient to think in general terms.

Section 8

My CV

Purpose of the activity

To begin the process of compiling a CV

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- The Personal Statement can be copied or adapted from the statement written in Section 5.
- Education should include any awards, such as Nat 4s, that the young person has received.
- Think together about what kind of person would be able to give the young person a good reference – they don't need to actually approach them for this.

Section 8

Being Interviewed

Purpose of the activity

To help the young person begin thinking about how they will apply what they have learned about themselves to an interview situation

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- The interview questions here are examples of the kind of thing that are typically asked in interviews, regardless of the specific job
- Help the young person to focus on positives
- This can be completed in note form, it's not intended to be a word-for-word script or to be a formal written submission. If the young person prefers to write their ideas in full, however, that is equally okay

Section 8

A 'Mock' Interview

Purpose of the activity

To give the young person experience of an interview type situation

To give the young person practice in speaking positively about themselves

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This pages is intended for completion by the adult supporting the young person
- Being constructive and helpful in your criticism – never just describe something as being bad, always focus on how it could be improved.
- Make a point of always starting with a positive in each assessment, go on to offer constructive criticism and conclude with another positive.
- Remember that if the young person is autistic then eye contact may be difficult for them – this kind of information is what will be looked at in section 11

Section 9

Managing Finances

Purpose of the activity

To raise awareness of the range of things that money is needed for, and to think about the difference between needs and wants.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is in 2 parts.
- Encourage the young person to consider different aspects of their life, so that they get as broad a picture as possible.
- Spend time discussing the difference between essential things and things that we simply like to have. What are the things that the young person thinks they could not live without?

Section 9

Budgeting

Purpose of the activity

To raise awareness of how money is used on essential items in a household budget.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is in 2 parts.
- The actual amounts vary a lot depending where in the UK you live and your personal lifestyle. Some people earn less than this and still live comfortable and happy lives.
- Some people's income is made up from a combination of money that they earn and benefits from the government.
- You can either complete page 3 of this activity on a computer or print it and use it as a grid to place the cards you cut out from page 1 of the activity.
- Once you've completed the activity, make sure to discuss what you have discovered and if anything surprises you.

Section 10

Independent Travel

Purpose of the activity

To gather information about how experienced the young person is in travelling, and in doing so independently.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- For each mode of travel the young person should either leave it blank (if they've never used this form of transport) or select one of Supported or Alone.
- Once you have done this you can then consider whether the young person would be able to use each mode of transport independently in the future.

Section 10

Getting Ready

Purpose of the activity

To help the young person assess whether they are ready to begin travelling independently

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- The skills listed here are all basic skills that a young person would need to be confident in if they were to travel on public transport independently
- Encourage the young person to be honest and realistic
- There is no 'hard and fast' way of determining what scores would indicate readiness, use your own and the young person's judgement based on the overall picture
- If any skills score lowly spend time thinking together about how the young person could develop that skill.

Section 10

Using the bus

Purpose of the activity

To increase the young person's awareness of the steps involved in using the bus
To develop a record of the young person's progress in becoming more independent

NB – This activity involves practical application and so needs to be done outside of the school setting. The young person can continue with other sections of Future Me whilst still working on the remaining activities in Section 10

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is not a once only task – the double page should be copied or printed as many times as it is needed
- Be realistic about what the young person will be able to do for themselves on the next bus journey you take, and identify these steps in the first column
- Discuss the experience and complete the second column after the journey
- Repeat as often as necessary when making journeys together until the young person has gained the skills and confidence that they need

Section 10

Going Further

Purpose of the activity

To further develop the young person's skills in independent travel

NB – This activity involves practical application and so needs to be done outside of the school setting

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity should be returned to each time a young person is able to complete one of the steps independently
- Take any opportunity that you can in real life situations to develop these skills
- Remember that this will take time – continue working through the rest of Future me while you continue to support the young person to develop their independent travel skills.

Section 11

My information

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on the young person's individual support needs and collate information about this.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is designed to help the young person identify and name their own support needs, at this stage it is not about what they would want other people to know.
- Encourage the young person to think in specific terms, and to be honest with themselves.
- Spending time discussing these support needs in a constructive and positive manner can help to develop the young person's self-awareness and build their confidence.
- It may be helpful to remind them that everyone needs support to do things at different times in their lives.

Section 11

Sharing my information

Purpose of the activity

To consider whether the young person is comfortable sharing specific information about their support needs with others.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity can be repeated for as many pieces of information as needed.
- People often think about the pros and cons of doing something. Including the pros and cons of not doing it helps make a more informed decision.
- Many young people with specific support needs are wary of sharing the information as they believe it will disadvantage them. This activity helps to look at the bigger picture – many support needs require ‘reasonable adjustments’ that an employer, for instance, would have to make but they can only do so if they know about the need.
- Information about a young person’s needs belongs to them and it is important that they have full ownership of whatever is shared and are in full agreement with it, but be aware of the importance of making sure that they do not share information that could place them at risk of harm.

Section 11

Information to share

Purpose of the activity

To collate a list of information that the young person is happy to share about themselves.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity provides space for the young person to collate the information that they have decided they would be happy to share about themselves, having gone through the previous 2 activities.

Section 12

Forward in time

Purpose of the activity

To relate the thinking the young person has done to their dream for the future.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- The points listed here should be realistic. This is about making the dream a reality.
- Try to be as specific as you can.
- If the dream itself seems unrealistic try to think of things that might relate to it. For instance if the young person wants to live on Mars in the future then you could explore what they could do to pursue an interest in astronomy.

Section 11

Right here, right now

Purpose of the activity

To identify what the young person's starting point is.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is fairly straight-forward but may require the young person to think quite deeply and they may find it difficult to name the feelings that they have.
- Support and encourage them as they explore this and use very brief responses if that is most appropriate.

Section 11

Stay Strong

Purpose of the activity

To encourage the young person to reflect on what they can do to help themselves keep focused on actively moving closer to their dream.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- *Things I can do* is intended to produce a very straight-forward practical list of actions that the young person can take to help them keep focused on the way ahead.
- *Things to develop* will need a little more thought. It is about things that the young person could do to help stay focused, but may need help to get better at. Encourage them to think about the way they relate to other people if this is something that they find difficult.
- *Things to stop* is to encourage the young person to reflect on whether they have any unhelpful behaviours or attitudes that could be prevent them from making the progress they would like.

Section 11

Roll up! Roll up!

Purpose of the activity

To remind the young person that they are not in this alone and identify people that will support them.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Remember that the young person is not identifying what these people will do, simply that they are the people in their life that they think will support and help them.
- It is okay to suggest people, but the activity should focus very much on the ideas and wants of the young person.
- Don't be offended if you're not in their list!

Section 12

Action !

Purpose of the activity

To begin the process of creating a plan of action for moving forward.

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- This activity is designed to help the young person make concrete decisions about specific things that they can do.
- The first step should be something that the young person will do themselves, the others can be things that they may need help with.
- Include information about who will help where relevant

Section 2

Time to Reflect

Purpose of the activity

To reflect on how the young person is now feeling about life as it is for them now, and their future.

To compare their responses with those from the beginning of Future Me to explore what change there has been

Tips on getting the most from the activity

- Complete the review in just the same way as you did at the beginning of Future Me in Section 2
- Once this has been done look back at the responses from Section 2 and compare them.
- Spend time reflecting with the young person on what has changed, if anything, and why this might have come about.
- Finish by congratulating them on all they have achieved in the course of working together!

Now that you're done...

We recommend making sure that the young person you have supported has a copy of Future Me, with all of their responses.

If you have used a physical copy of Future me then simply give it to them. If you have used a digital version then you can either give them a digital copy or it could be printed into a booklet for them to keep.

Thank you!

Thank you for using Future Me to help support a young person as they develop their ideas about who they are and what they want for themselves in the future.

If you have any feedback on what you have found useful, or on activities that have not worked well for you, then we would be delighted to hear from you.

You can contact us by email at admin@mindroom.org