

OUR SOLUTION: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAKE THEIR OWN WAY



DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

We focus on developing young people's social and emotional skills so that they are empowered to face many of these challenges head on. These are the skills that are central to the healthy functioning of children, young people and adults. They underpin how we interact with others, how we handle stress, how quickly we give up and many more attitudes and behaviours that help determine our choices and success in life.

During periods of difficulty and change, social and emotional skills become particularly important: acting as a protective factor that helps us to avoid unhealthy patterns of behaviour and stay on track with our goals. They give us the confidence to reach out for help, to understand and express our emotions and to adapt positively to challenging circumstances or change.

It's during periods of difficulty and change that many of the young people we work with experience Outward Bound. They may be struggling with their confidence or with feelings of anxiety about the future. They may have started a new school and be finding it difficult to make new friends. Or they may be facing a family break-up or have been bullied in the past and feel unable to express their emotions. Others are academic higher achievers but they are failing to reach their full potential. And for those who are starting out in the workplace as an apprentice or graduate, they may not have yet had the opportunity to develop the kinds of behavioural skills their employers require, and need to be able to adapt quickly to the new working environment.

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DEVELOPING YOUNG PEOPLE NATURALLY

Every Outward Bound course uses adventure in wild outdoor environments to expose young people to new and challenging experiences, and at the same time equip them with the skills they need to face them head on and overcome them. Each course aims to achieve specific learning outcomes for participants, and our instructors work closely alongside the accompanying staff members, as well as the young people themselves, to create action plans for applying the learning after the course has ended. The courses are residential, making the experiences that young people have highly social.

Our Theory of Change on pages 12 and 13, sets out the four key principles that underpin how we design our courses, and the steps that lead to more empowered young people who are able to thrive in whatever they do.

HOW SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPED IN CHILDHOOD INFLUENCE OUTCOMES IN ADULTHOOD

A number of studies highlight the importance of developing social and emotional skills in childhood.

The most recent is a systematic review conducted by the Institute of Education in 2015 of the evidence linking these skills in childhood with outcomes in adulthood¹¹.

It highlighted the link between skills such as **self-control**, **self-awareness**, **social skills** and **resilience** in childhood with many aspects of adult life, including **mental and physical health**, **qualifications**, **income**, **crime** and **mortality**.

It highlighted **self-efficacy** – our belief in our ability to achieve our goals – in particular to be a predictor for **educational attainment** and **employment outcomes**.

Social skills were identified to be important predictors of non-labour market outcomes such as mental health and health behaviours.

It concludes that *“substantial benefits are likely to be gained across people's lives if effective interventions can be found to enhance social and emotional skills in childhood.”*