



# LOST VOICES

## CHANGE OF ENVIROMENT

### USER GUIDE



Lost Voices is a FME Programme



FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION

HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS

**SLIDE:  
1**

# Changes of Environment

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Welcome the group of young people into the set environment.
- Introduce yourself if you are unfamiliar to the group.
- Create a Group agreement.
- Introduce the topic - Change of Environment.
- Create a signal young people can use throughout presentation when needing to leave the room.

"Hello guys, welcome to today's presentation where we will be exploring change of environment as a topic, the effects it can have on young people and their family dynamic, and ways of coping and supporting each other."



*If you feel it would be beneficial for the young people to have copies of the presentation, printouts or copies can be handed out at this time as well as pens for writing down additional information.*

"My name is (*your name*) and I will be leading today's presentation which we will start exploring together in just a minute.

First, let's create a group agreement for this topic together. Let's think of all the things we would like to have in place for us to feel more comfortable discussing this topic together".

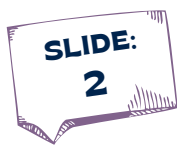
- » Compassion
- » Confidentiality
- » Empathy
- » Respect
- » Time management
- » Use of language



Before moving on to the next slide agree a signal with the young people that will let you know they are ok or if they need to leave the room at any time. If they feel uncomfortable, they can leave without signalling and another leader can follow them to check they are okay.

"Just before we get started, I would like all of you together to come up with a hand signal that you can use throughout the presentation if you need to leave the room for something like needing the toilet. However, because this can be a sensitive topic for many young people if you do find yourself feeling uncomfortable you are more than welcome to leave without signalling and another team leader will assist you outside of the room."

## LEADER NOTES



## Our Hopes for This Presentation

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

- Outline key learning objectives.
- Outline hopes for the presentation.
- Encourage interaction and engagement from the young people.

### Reviewing Key Learning Objectives and Hopes for the Presentations

The young people are now introduced to both you and the presentation. Now you must introduce them to their learning objectives and what you hope they will take away from these slides and discussions.

#### We want them to leave this lesson with:

- A clear understanding of what a change of environment might be.
- Knowledge around stigmas or preconceptions around the topic.
- A small amount of statistical knowledge.
- Understanding of ways to keep safe and feel better and hopefully support other people around us.

“Our hope for all of you after this session is that you will all have a clearer understanding of what a change of environment might be, such as moving home, loss of friendship, or change in family circumstances. We also want to provide you with the knowledge about stigmas and preconceptions surrounding a changing environment so that you can understand that they aren’t always necessarily accurate.

We are also going to provide you with some statistical knowledge to comprehend how relevant all of this is today. Another key aspect of this presentation is to inform and understand all the ways to create a safe environment in which young people like yourselves can feel better and more supported so that you can go on to support others around you”.



Young People should be encouraged to engage in all activities to the best of their ability, (some young people may be naturally more introverted, and this can be seen as a negative). As a leader, you should encourage the young people to engage the best they can, with care and acknowledgement for their fellow peers. The most effective learning takes place in a comforting and kind environment.



“This topic will be more relevant to some of you more than others which can be a great way for us to learn from each other, I would ask that you consider that maybe your peers are struggling with something along these lines and would benefit massively from this session. It is highly encouraged that you all listen and engage with the content to the best of your abilities and that we will all be understanding as a group if anyone feels the need to take a break during this session so we can create a comfortable, kind and open environment to learn effectively.”



## LEADER NOTES

**SLIDE:  
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## Icebreaker

The objective of this activity is to get all the young people more familiar with each other through a light engagement icebreaker.

To get the game started ask each young person to take sheets of toilet paper, it is important to not tell them how many they can take, let it be an individual choice.

Once everyone has collected their paper, ask them to sit in a circle or comfortable position.

Explain that for every sheet they individually took they must share one fact with the group e.g., 2 sheets = 2 facts.

Allow each person within the group to share their facts about themselves so everyone can become more comfortable and familiar with each other.

"This is an activity just to get everybody talking and familiar with each other. I want all of you to take as many sheets of the toilet paper as you would like".

"Now that you all have your toilet paper sheets, count how many you have. For each sheet of paper you have, I want you to think of one fact about yourself to share with the room so if you have 2 sheets you share 2 facts".



Allow time to think of facts and then proceed around the room sharing facts. After everyone has shared their facts, take some time to reflect on the activity with each other.



"Thank you, everyone, for being so open with each other and sharing some really interesting facts, I think we're all a lot more familiar with each other now. It's really interesting to see that we've all come together today for the same reason, but we all have different facts and characteristics that make us unique. These facts make us who we are and how we identify ourselves. This can also be said for our experiences in life, they can be very different and can form our views and interests for the future."



We also have common traits that allow us to relate to each other and form connections and friendships. These connections and friendships can help us bond and support each other when times are tough, or we are struggling.

It was great to see you all really listening to each other and taking the time to learn new things about the other people around you, hopefully you find common interests with others in the group and form new friendships and relationships with people you might not have thought you would after this activity”.



## LEADER NOTES



## What could be a change environment?

### TRANSITIONING INTO THIS SLIDE:

From this slide, it is encouraged to open the conversation to all the young people in the room. Discuss the definitions of a change in environment, the young people's opinions, and any relevant information they are willing to share.

*Leader can use a flipchart and pens to list what comes up in this brief discussion.*

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

Topics like these can be difficult for young people to talk about initially so it is vital to create a safe space for the young people to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Having a quick conversation around housekeeping rules can be helpful to allow everyone to understand the level of respect that is expected to maintain a safe environment.

"Just before we start into today's topic, I would like to remind the group of the agreement we created at the beginning of the session, just so everyone is on the same page.

I completely understand for some of you this might be the first time having an open conversation about quite an intimate topic and that can be difficult. The whole aim of these open conversations is to create environments where we can talk more freely about topics like this and make everything less taboo to help anyone who might be suffering.

The first step in this journey though is having a mutual level of respect for us and each other. For some of you, the topics and experiences may not be relevant and that is a great privilege but for the person beside you, it could be different.

What I will ask of you is that we listen to each other carefully and be as understanding as we can, so we can continue having conversations like this".



This slide talk about the definitions of a change in environment and the examples that would be relevant to young people today. For this slide it might be effective to ask the young people to come up with some examples themselves and add the ones from the presentation to their list, this will boost the levels of engagement within the room. Allow the young people time to think and then open the room for discussion.





The leader can start by giving some examples to encourage and guide the young people to feel confident to suggest their own ideas – *moving house due to separation, entering the care system, death of a loved one, moving schools etc.*

"So today we're talking about changes in environment and their effects. Firstly, we need to know what a change in environment is and what types we're talking about specifically. A change in environment could be anything that shifts you out of your comfort zone or changes some aspect of your life. An example of this could be moving schools or moving up a year in your education. Have a quick think about examples you can think about and then we'll make a list".



Once a list has been created add on any that may have not been mentioned from the presentation.

## LEADER NOTES

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## Stigmas around this topic

When faced with a change of environment or circumstance, especially in young people, it can be very hard to regulate their thoughts and feelings. They can suffer with anxiety, stress, low mood etc. They can also end up feeling very isolated and alone, thinking they might be the only one going through that specific change in environment.

Within this presentation slide feelings, effects and stigmas should be talked about to allow the young people to express their views but also reduce any stigmas that they may have around the topic.

"Has anybody here ever felt like they could not relate to anybody else about something? Maybe it was your taste in music or your family situation. It's very easy to feel isolated when no one talks about their harder experiences in life isn't it? It can be really difficult to deal with our feelings or emotions on our own that's why we're having talks like this and creating safe spaces for discussion and expression.

So, we have already looked at what a change of environment might be but now we're going to have a look at what effect those changes might have on us as individuals. If you think of maybe a breakdown in a friendship, you and your best friend fall out, what feelings might you potentially have during that time? "



"If your parents decide it is better for them to separate and maybe one of them moves out of the family home, you could have feelings of sadness, anger, confusion.

But it is important to talk about these feelings, so they don't snowball into bigger issues like depression or a mood disorder. Like we talked about before talking through those emotions is creating a healthy habit.

Does anybody have any questions or anything to add to the conversation around effects, emotions or thoughts?"



The conversation can then lead on to the stigmas they may come into play when talking about a change in environment.

"From the presentation, we can see a few examples like 'I am the only one who has experienced this' and 'there is no help'. These thoughts can all feel very real, but I can guarantee you that everyone has felt that way about a situation before no matter how serious or not serious it may have been.

A stigma is just a stigma, and we can get rid of them by talking to each other and being very honest and vulnerable when we are going through a hard time. You will never be completely alone or be the first one to struggle and when you share your struggles and experiences you will connect with other people who have been through similar if not the same as you have."



It can be very difficult for young people to open up about their experiences at home or in their personal lives. Sometimes the adults in their lives don't realise the need for communication and vulnerable conversations that allow young people to express how they feel.

Taking the time to have these conversations and allowing them to control what they share with the group is going to influence their well-being in a very positive way and help them to develop resilience and confidence as they work through tough challenges in their futures.

## LEADER NOTES

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## Statistics

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

- Using statistics can give deeper understanding and a more informative foundation when discussing topics such as breakdowns in family life.
- Helps to see how relatable a certain situation may be.
- It is important to remember statistics in any case are collected from real people, understanding and an upheld level of respect when discussing these statistics and/or anything related to this topic of conversation should always be paramount.

Using statistics is incredibly beneficial in terms of giving young people a deeper understanding and a more informative foundation when discussing topics such as changes in environment.

This will also allow the young people to see how relatable a certain situation may be if the statistics are quite high. However, it must be kept in mind that when using statistics in a case like this there should always be acknowledgement that there are real people behind these numbers and that there is an understanding and an upheld level of respect when discussing these statistics and/or anything related to this topic of conversation.

Using this slide, it will be the optimum time to create a supportive environment by allowing the young people to share experiences and stories. Introduce this slide by talking through the statistics around foster care, single parent households and the effects on children.

Allowing the young people to visualise and converse these figures can help them to understand how common these types of events are and show them that they are not alone if they are currently experiencing something similar.

"In this next slide, we are going to have a look at some statistics to help you gauge how often and relevant some of these environmental changes can be. It can be tough to listen to facts and figures around subjects like this and that is completely understandable.

It is important to always remember that behind the number there are real people who have gone through this experience. If you do feel uncomfortable or upset and would like to leave the room for some air outside that is absolutely ok, you can just leave the room and a member of staff will follow you to make sure you're ok."



"So, if we look at the statistics, we can see that in Northern Ireland, the percentage of children in foster care has risen since 2017. In 2022, there was 3624 young people within the care system. When you think about it that is a lot of young people going through a very similar experience because of new or different circumstances. They have all had a massive change in environment that will have a big effect on their mental health."



"That can be seen from the statistic below that says one in six children between 5-16 years old are likely to struggle with their mental health. This figure is constantly increasing, and you can see from the presentation that in 2022 the figure for young people between 17-19 years old rose to one in four.

These figures are talking about young people that are your age showing how important it is for you guys to talk and connect to share your stories. By doing all this work you will find people you can relate to and support each other through hard times.

You can see from the other statistics mentioned, there are a lot of young people within Northern Ireland that are struggle with many different changes in environment. With such high numbers experiencing these types of changes there is a lot of support and connection that is needed and sometimes the best support or advice comes from a friendly face who can relate."



Does anybody have any questions or thoughts they would like to share with the group?"

- Does anybody have any questions or thoughts that they would like to share with the group?"
- Why might these things impact on our emotions and our mental health?
- What do you think about these statistics? Did they shock you? Were you not surprised?"



SLIDE:  
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## How can creating Art help?

Let's have a look at how artwork can be used to express ourselves and to connect with one another.

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

- What do the colours say to you.
- What do the images say to you, and how the artist has used them.
- How does the text used make you feel?
- What does the poster, say to you? What is it about?
- Is there a particular poster that stands out to you?



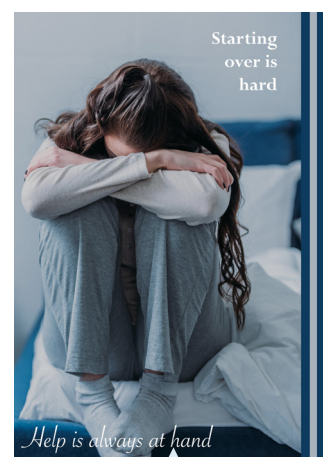
**Moving Schools**



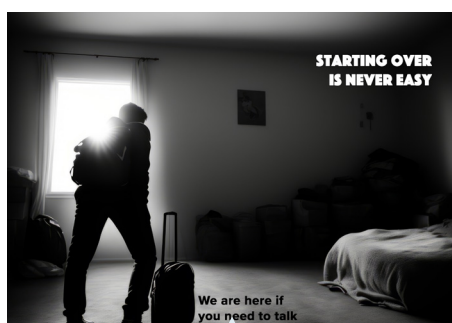
**Change Can Be Hard**



**A New Chapter Begins**



**Starting Over is Hard**



**Starting Over is Never Easy**





## Activity:

"Let's get into different pairs, half the group is going to choose images they feel would be good in a poster, the poster should aim to connect with other Young People, to let them know that are not alone in whatever they are experiencing, and that there is support for them available."



Leader can organise the group into A's or B's, each pair will have an A and B.

### Group A:

You will be gathering and choosing images that speak to you, this might be 1 or many images collated to make one poster with a cohesive message.

#### You will be thinking about:

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Styles
- » Tone
- » Location
- » Theme
- » If a person(s) in images:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity etc.

### Group B:

You will be choosing slogans, or text that you would like to see on a poster. These should have a clear and concise message, with the hopes to resonate with young people. They should reflect the theme, and offer direction to support (Resources) like the Lost Voices Support Page

#### You will be thinking about:

- » Colours
- » Shapes
- » Shadows
- » Tone
- » Font
- » Size
- » Rhyme
- » Sentence structure
- » Storytelling
- » Impact
- » Flow

"Now we are going to work with our partner to put our ideas together, we are going to create at least 1 final design joining our two ideas together.

Think about what text your partner has created, does it work with the images you have chosen? Once you have agreed on which aspects can be merged, draft your final poster design"



Leader allows time for this activity to be completed. Before the group shares with each other.

“So, we are going to share our ideas with one another, let's work from (PAIR 1 onwards). We would love to hear why you have chosen the ....” (Refer to bullet points).

“What part of the AMBER Approach have we just explored together?

We have gone through all the things in AMBER’s name today.

We can see how EXPRESS can help us to work through feelings, emotions, and our thoughts around things. Using art to create these posters, we engaged with each other and came up with ways to help connect with other young people. This has been a demonstration of how ANCHOR shows up for us in group settings, connecting with our pair in the safe space we have created.

For a lot of people, art can be a way to RELAX, when we are focused and creating something this can be very therapeutic, encouraging space to BREATHE.

Through the creation of art, we have all explored the MOVE in AMBER. As we have moved our creative energy onto our pages.”

LEADER NOTES

A series of horizontal lines for taking notes.







# Lost Voices Podcast



## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Watching the Lost Voices podcast can allow young people to feel related to, as it is young people discussing issues in relation to how they affect young people.

These podcasts may also highlight topics that may not have been previously discussed, giving young people an opportunity to delve deeper into the topic ie. Change of Environment.

"Let's watch a Lost Voices animated podcast together. The Lost Voices Group opened conversation for young people around this topic, and created safe space for sharing thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Let's go back to our group agreement and the points we agreed on around empathy and respect, lets ensure we are being kind to each other while we watch this together and when we share with each other on reflection."



**Watch Podcast**

## LEADER NOTES

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## Discussion

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

This is the time to allow for a discussion following the podcast. Leader should allow the group to offer their initial thoughts before prompting. See below for prompt questions:

- » Why do you think the Lost Voices group wanted to make this podcast?
- » Why is it relevant to us?
- » What did you like about what they had to say?
- » What did you not like about what they shared?
- » What do you think they want adults to know from this podcast?
- » Do you think the podcast was informative/ relatable?
- » What have you taken away from the podcast?
- » Need to be included in the conversation
- » What did to the poem make you think/ feel?
- » Do you think you would like to bring up the conversation up with the people around you?
- » Do you feel more encouraged and equipped to connect with other people around this topic?
- » What do you think about what the group shared about things they could do to help or support the people around them?
- » What coping methods/ measures have you picked up from the podcast?

### LEADER NOTES

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## Activity (Suggested- Time Permitting)

### LEADERS KEY POINTS

Additional activities can be found in the Mental Health Booster Booklet.



### Activity: 'Calm Scribes'

#### Learning Objectives:

- Understanding we can help ourselves and others in a time of emotional support.

"We are now going to think about what someone might need to hear or to remember if they are going through changes. We are going to have a go at writing a letter to someone dealing with change".



Leader should have writing resources such as pens, paper, crafts etc ready for group.

"Think about the words someone might need to hear in a difficult time. What would you like someone to say to you?"

Here are some prompts for your letter:

- Sometimes we can be lonely, or sad, and that is okay. You don't have to be alone. Support is here
- The good days always come back around again.
- I'm sorry you're going through a difficult time



*This exercise can be adapted using art instead of the written word, or a voice recording. This can be adapted depending on what works best for your group of young people.*

“We are now going to place our letters inside our envelopes, and we are going to keep these, we are going to keep these for ourselves, we can read this to ourselves if we ever need something to help us deal with the changes in our lives”.



LEADER NOTES

A large rectangular area with horizontal lines for writing notes.





## What can help you and others navigate the changes of life?

### LEADERS KEY POINTS:

Sometimes young people can find it difficult to express how they feel or to disclose what they may be going through at home. They may find it easier to approach the topic through an activity to alleviate those emotions. If they engage in a hobby or a practice whether that be inside or outside of the home, it can help them to feel better and allow them time to process and heal from the experiences they may have gone through or are currently going through.

Within this slide there should be a lot of discussion both in smaller groups and then as a whole. The young people should come up with their own ideas as well as guided with healthy habits and ideas to overcome struggles with a change of environment. Write these ideas somewhere the young people can see e.g., a whiteboard, to allow them to take a photo or write them down as a note for potential future use.

"Now we have spoken about all the facts, figures and stigmas it is time to look at the positive actions we can take to help ourselves feel better if we are going through a change of environment. It is great to take up a healthy habit or hobby to give our minds a place to relax. Support is also key to creating a comfortable and stable place to express our feelings and ask for help; if we need it."



"What I want you to do is get into small groups and come up with three things or pieces of advice that you would share with someone who was struggling to find a way of navigating or coping with a change of environment.

We will then write them all on the board and you guys can take a note or photo of them in case you find yourself in a position you might need them in the future".



Once all the ideas are written down wait for everyone to write or photograph them before asking if there are any questions or queries.

**LEADER NOTES**

Lined area for leader notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.





# Amber Approach

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.

"So, we looked at the **AMBER Approach** before we started looking at these topics.

Let us recap on what **AMBER** is and how we use it"



Leader should open this up to the group and ask what they can tell us about each part of **AMBER**'s Name.



### A - ANCHOR

Anchoring, we can anchor through co-regulation, this is from friendships, family members, teachers, youth workers etc.



### M - MOVE

Moving your body releases built up energy through exercise, making art or music. Taking care of yourself both inside and outside, making your bed, having a shower.



### B - BREATHE

Breathing is the crucial link between mind and body. Taking space and time to breathe can help calm the mind.



### E- EXPRESS

Express yourself safely. Expressing through crying, talking, creativity can release difficult emotions.



### R- RELAX

Finding activities that help you relax and feel restored are important to aid your body regulate and process what is going on within your life.



## Questions

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Allow some time for the young people to ask you any questions from all the topics within the PowerPoint.

It is important to be open and honest with the young people and if there are any questions that are of a serious nature, or you believe show there is something more harmful going on within the home then it is best to refer these onto the appropriate organisations or leaders.

## LEADER NOTES







## Group Discussion

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

It is beneficial to give the young people time to talk to each other and to yourself as a type of debrief.

Topics such as these can create discomfort when talking about them for the first time and allowing time for self-thought and self-reflection can ease these feelings before continuing with day-to-day activities.

## LEADER NOTES



# Thank You

## LEADERS KEY POINTS

Finish off this presentation with thanking the young people for their time and attention. Give them time to have conversation amongst themselves as a debrief as well as time for them to come to you to ask questions or to talk about anything they need to express. If needed refer the young person to a higher team leader or organisation if you feel you cannot supply the assistance they require.

"I just want to thank you all for taking the time to listen and respect the talks we've had today. I hope you can all take something away with you and feel more supported and motivated to make a positive change.

I'm going to give you guys some time to talk amongst yourselves about everything mentioned today and feel free to come talk to me and ask loads of questions if you would like to".



## LEADER NOTES







[www.fmelostvoices.com](http://www.fmelostvoices.com)

Lost Voices is a FME Programme

**FME** FRESH MINDS  
EDUCATION  
HEALING HEARTS & HELPING HANDS