



This section of the portfolio will consist of an in-depth analysis of a session for the Build On Red project that the trainee youth worker planned, developed and delivered during her time on placement at Foothold Cymru.

Before choosing an activity, the trainee youth worker was inspired by ideas that focused on mental health and well-being. These influences included the *Mental Health Act 1983* (cited in NHS, 2022) for ensuring that those with mental disorders have rights, and have access to assessments and treatments. Also, the *Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015* (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2024) ensuring the Government makes decisions for a better quality of life for future generations. Lastly, after completing a NAOMIE needs assessment, the outcome was that the well-being and mental health of young people needed a focus. The focus on mental health and well-being fits in perfectly with the Build on Red social action project as this focusses on the same idea, including building resilience (Lock, 2023; Foothold Cymru, 2024). This project promotes young people's well-being by allowing them to

engage in activities such as a pamper session, therapeutic stone painting, and getting them to build and decorate a well-being garden.

Moving on to the activity, the trainee youth worker created a snakes and ladders board game (see image below) which was influenced by Sherman (2015) but altered her ideas. Sherman's (2015) version of the game included the participants colouring the steps they land on, stating if they are happy if they land on a ladder, or unhappy if they land on a snake, whilst landing on an arrow grants them a wish. The trainee youth worker's version was played like a standard snakes and ladders game- up the ladder and down the snakes, however, on each step there would be a question, or a reminder. For example, a question such as "What is something that I am grateful for right now?", the reminder would either be to do something such as "Mark out an hour a day for screen-free time", or a reminder of a positive phrase such as "My self-care time is not selfish". These were influenced from what the trainee youth worker would tell her younger self or from previous discussions with young people, something they may want/need to hear. The participants would write those reminders, and their answers to those questions, down on a piece of paper. They did not have to share their answers if they did not want to as it was personal to them, however, if they chose to then the option was there to discuss it in a safe space with the group, or one to one with the trainee youth worker after the session. The young people were then given miniature well-being jars to put those pieces of paper in, for consideration to their future self-care. For example, during a difficult time, they could take out a piece of paper from their jar to boost their mood. The idea of "future you care" (Shea, 2021, np) is so that in the moment, whilst experiencing self-care during the activity, they are also preparing themselves by building self-trust. This acts as a later reminder for them to look after themselves when going through a difficult time, and this is an example of "reflection in action" (Burns and Bulman, 2000 cited in Mulcahy, 2024). Taking the idea of a board game makes it young-people-friendly, resulting in them potentially wanting to engage more, or as Sherman

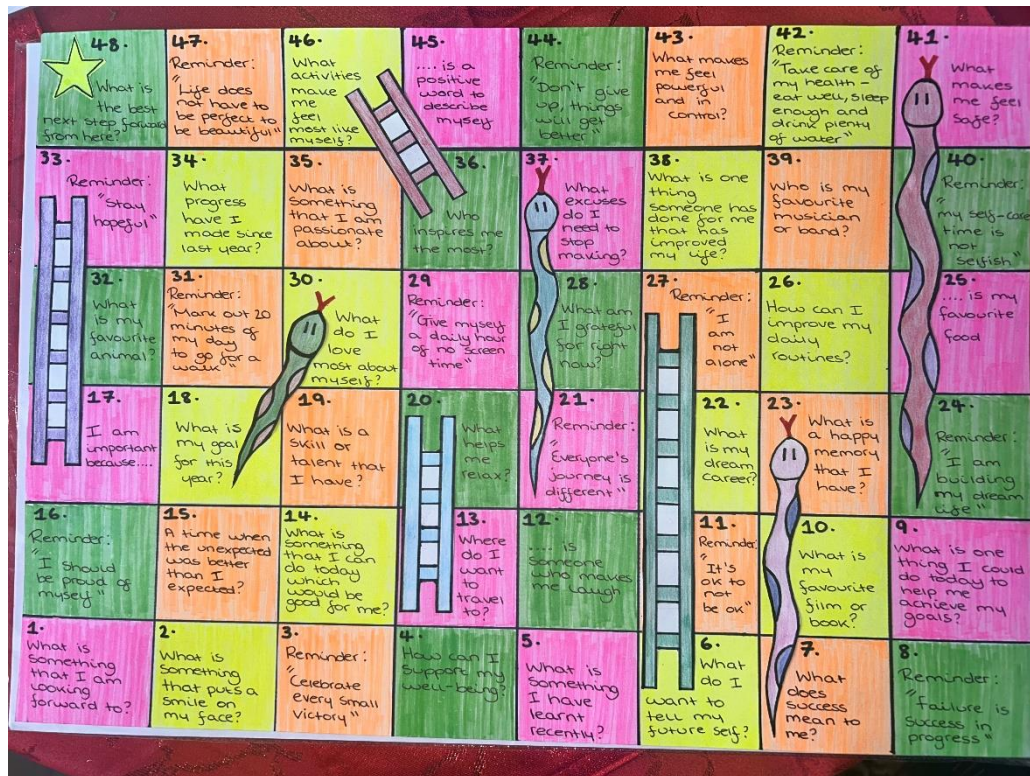
(2015, p. 161) would say, a way which can be “utilised to create play that is inventive and very helpful” to the young person. This was a helpful way for the young people to be a part of experiential learning, enabling them to have that hands-on experience was a way for them connect and get enjoyment out of learning about self-care (Kolb, 1984; Cottrell, 2015).

Furthermore, the trainee youth worker got involved in the activity to increase engagement, also upholding youth work values such as “Participation and active involvement” (CLD Standards Council Scotland, 2019, p.5). The hope was that observing the trainee youth worker’s participation would increase the chances of the young people wanting to get involved themselves. It was also a way to further develop the relationship already built between them and the trainee youth worker, and by empowering them to take part this upheld one of the five pillars of youth work, namely “empowerment” (Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022, p.9).

Lastly, a positive atmosphere was present throughout the session due to the mindfulness element of the activity. Also, being that the participants were present in the moment enabled them to be self-aware of their emotions, a way to improve their esteem needs within their hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943 cited in Sapin, 2013). This activity also included the stop, think, reflect model, for example, stop- pause and take a breath, think- the emotions that are being felt, reflect- the best way to respond. A perfect way to help them understand and build strategies to gain “emotional control” (Cottrell, 2015; Sippl, 2023) when dealing with stressful situations that may occur.

To summarise, this was a good experience for the trainee youth worker to prepare and plan a session on a topic she is passionate about. As self-care is personal to the individual, ensuring that all young people are happy can be a challenge. However, from having open discussions, their ideas have enabled the trainee youth worker to schedule two extra sessions- a well-being

walk, and a music workshop. It is evident that this piece of work the trainee youth worker developed was a success, being that the young people engaged and wanted more well-being sessions.



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