



BELONG
CONTRIBUTE
THRIVE 🏠

“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.”

Proverbs 24:3-4

**RESOURCES
FOR YOUTH
GROUPS AND
LEADERS**



YOUTH ACTIVITIES (11-18 year olds)

We have designed these activities as a way of engaging youth groups with some of the issues that a young person might experience if they were homeless or struggling to find accommodation.

Each of the four sessions has been inspired by the four stages of accommodation that is provided by YMCA Exeter and the journeys young people take between them. Each session includes:

- one or two introduction activities,
- discussion questions,
- move-on activity,
- takeaway thought.

For sessions one and two we've included additional resources e.g. Activity 1A requires Resource 1A. Where necessary, these keys are noted in the top right hand of the activity. We have also described below what each stage of accommodation entails and an explanation of some key terms that come up in the activities.



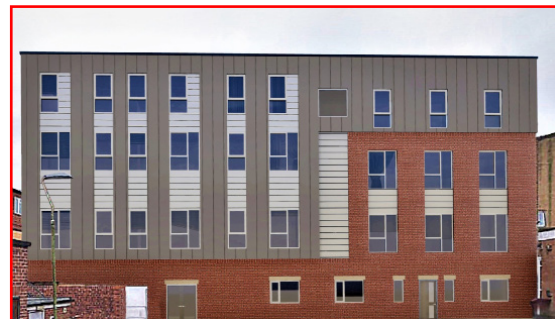
STAGE 1 / SESSION 1
DEALING WITH PROBLEMS AS THEY ARISE
At our 31-bed residential centre on St David's Hill, young people receive a self-contained living and kitchen area, shared bathroom facilities, and access to a wide range of wellbeing groups.



STAGE 2 / SESSION 2
TAKING CONTROL TO AVOID CRISIS
At Stage 2 young people continues to engage in a one-to-one support plan, with a particular focus on employability and community engagement.



STAGE 3 / SESSION 3
WORKING TOGETHER
Stage 3 is a range of two-bed houses in Exwick where young people continue their route to independent living without the need of a deposit or rent in advance.



STAGE 4
ESTABLISHED IN A COMMUNITY
The final step into independent accommodation, the brand-new Sidwell Studios will include 26 studio apartments where young people will be able to establish themselves in a community.

KEY TERMS

Rough sleeping

Definition:

To literally “sleep rough” is to sleep outside, usually used to describe people who you see on streets and in doorways, usually in sleeping bags – literally sleeping out in the open.

Street attached

Definition:

This term is used to describe people whose lives are very much based around towns and cities in the open. They may or may not be actually rough sleeping; they may be accommodated in a hostel or project, however much of their daytime activity is out in the open, around those that are rough sleeping.

Hidden homeless

Definition:

Hidden homeless refers to those in situations where they are not easily counted as being “homeless” as they are not visible like rough sleepers are. They may be sleeping in cars, camping away from where they’d be noticed, sleeping on floors in abandoned buildings, staying in homes of strangers or people they do not know very well, and sofa surfing (see below).

Temporary accommodation

Definition:

Any housing that is not a permanent home – i.e a rented property or your own home. People are placed in temporary housing if they have special circumstances and might be at higher risk if they were not provided with housing immediately. Councils can provide some temporary housing for people who are homeless for a short period of time whilst a longer-term solution is found – but only certain people are eligible for this.

Sofa-surfing

Definition:

This term is used for people who are homeless and move around various different friends and families houses, (usually sleeping on their sofas) whilst they try to find a more suitable place to live. Sofa surfing inevitably results in rough sleeping and so intervention to help those who are in this situation means that they’ll not have to experience sleeping on a pavement.

SESSION 1 ACTIVITIES:

STAGE 1 FULL SERVICE HOSTEL

1A 1B

[LINK TO INTRO VIDEO 1- BECKY](#)

ACTIVITY 1A

PROBLEM SCENARIOS : In-person game

EQUIPMENT

- Scenarios activity sheet 1B
- Resources cards 1A

DESCRIPTION

1. *Stand in a circle and give each young person a different scenario from Resource 1A.*
2. *Pick one young person to stand in the middle and give them all the options from Resource 1B*
4. *All at once young people must shout their scenarios to the young person in the middle, who with the resources they have, must try and solve the crisis' presented to them.*



Note: There are 10 different scenarios to solve, if you have more than 10 young people you can use the scenarios twice. There are also some blank resource cards so you can add some options yourself. This activity is supposed to be chaos so don't worry if lots of things go wrong!

ACTIVITY 1C

PROBLEM SCENARIOS : Zoom or in-person

DESCRIPTION

1. Split the group into teams. Explain they have had an argument with a family member and they have been asked to leave their home.
2. Give each group one of the following three scenarios to discuss. For each scenario, think about:

What kinds of problems could you face in this kind of accommodation?

How long do you think you could stay there?

Are there any positives attached to this type of accommodation?

YOU DECIDE TO
STAY ON A
FRIENDS' SOFA

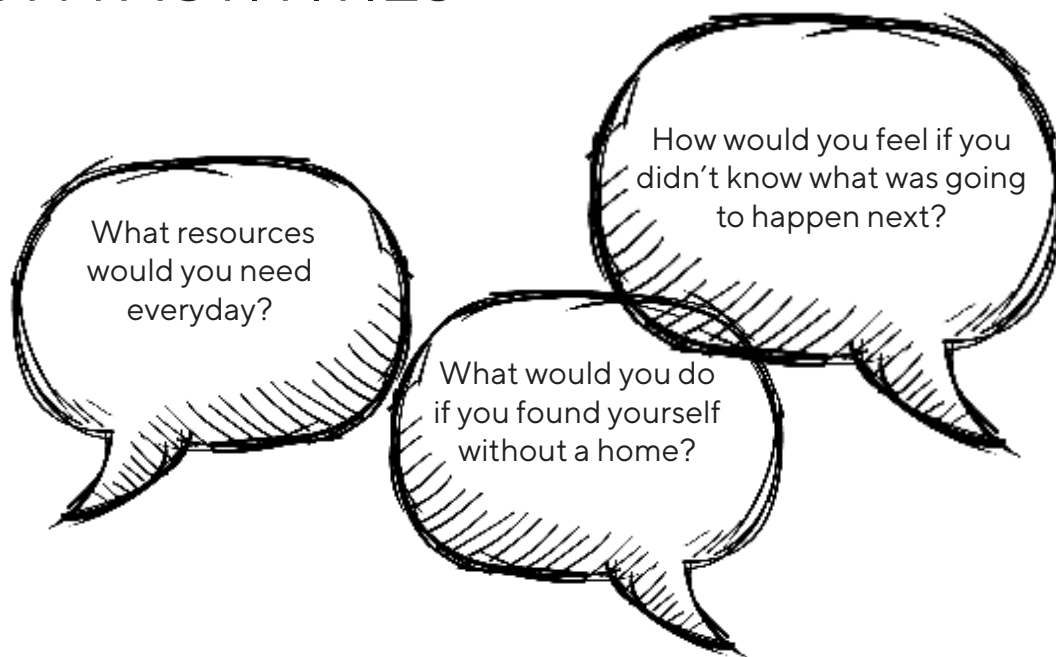
YOU MOVE INTO
TEMPORARY
ACCOMMODATION

YOU END UP
STAYING OUTSIDE
ON THE STREETS

3. You can determine how long the discussion lasts and more information about each scenario is in Resource 1C. After the discussion come back and share thoughts and ideas. We've put a few more discussion questions on the next page.

SESSION 1 ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



MOVE ON ACTIVITY

MANAGING THE CHAOS

DESCRIPTION

In the earlier activities we experienced some of the chaos people sometimes experience in life. Now it's time to think about how we would get that chaos under control, so that we can move on to our next session exploring Stage 2 style accommodation.

On a piece of paper (or whiteboard if you are on Zoom) talk about the situations that created the chaos at the start of the session and how you might go about getting them under control.

Write these steps down and prioritise what needs to happen soon to what can wait a bit longer.

EQUIPMENT

Pens
Paper
Whiteboard (Zoom)

TAKE AWAY



Why not try sleeping somewhere other than your bed for the night? Try sleeping on the sofa or on the floor in your living room, in the garden in a tent or even on the floor of your church building.

How would you feel if you had to do that every night? What can be learnt about the importance of feeling safe in a home?

Scenario cards

You need to attend a job interview

You need to pay your phone bill

You have an argument with a family member

You have run out of shower gel

You need food for a week

You need to put money in your electricity meter

Your friend is asking you to hang out with them

You need to buy hygiene products

You need to fill out a job application

You need to clean your room

SESSION 1 RESOURCES

Resources cards (block of 15)

1B

£5		Mobile phone
	£10	
Duvet cover and pillow		£3
£5		Pens
	Clothes	

SESSION 1 RESOURCES SCENARIO INFORMATION

1C

Scenario	Information
Staying with a friend	<i>Your friend is single and has two small children. The only space they have for you to sleep is the sofa in the living room.</i>
Staying in temporary accommodation (such as a hotel or B&B)	<i>The accommodation is poor quality and the landlord doesn't really want you there. It is also costing you more money each night you stay there.</i>
Staying on the streets	<i>You have found a regular group of people that live on the streets and decided to stay with them.</i>

SESSION 2 ACTIVITIES: STAGE 2

TAKING CONTROL

2A

[LINK TO INTRO VIDEO 2 - BECKY](#)

ACTIVITY

Jenga - In person game

EQUIPMENT

Giant Jenga or normal Jenga

DESCRIPTION

1. Cut out each of the statements from Resource 2A
2. Place each of the statements onto different blocks of Jenga
3. Play Jenga!
4. Talk about how various life experiences can build up over time for a person and affect their resilience. Sometimes just one thing, or Jenga block, can come crashing down around a person and be really overwhelming.

Leaders note: At YMCA Exeter, Stage 2 is all about encouraging residents to build resilience to cope with everyday life.

ACTIVITY

Who am I? - Zoom or in-person

EQUIPMENT

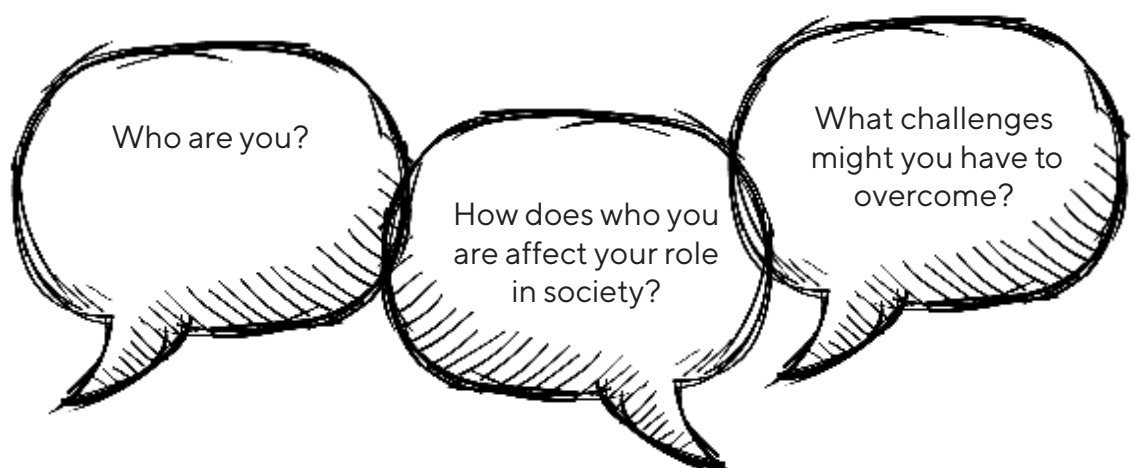
Activity sheet 2 and 3
Questions
Paper
Pens

2B

DESCRIPTION

1. Give each young person a message with different scenarios from Resource 2B
2. Youth leaders read the questions out from Resource C and whenever a young person can answer 'yes' to one of the questions, they need to mark that as one point.
3. At the end of the questions, share scores and as a group you'll be able to see how various opportunities are afforded to people depending on their situation. Some things to consider are in the discussion questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



MOVE ON ACTIVITY

Teaching Resilience

EQUIPMENT

Paper or card and pens -
if you are running the session in
person you can also collect craft things
like stickers.

DESCRIPTION

A big part of being able to move on from Stage 2 style shared housing at YMCA Exeter is the ability to cope with what life throws at you - so we are going to make some resilience flashcards.

1. On each card write something that you will do next time you get into a difficult situation or when you find a situation hard.
2. Put them in a place that you can access quickly when you need them.

Ideas could include:

- Do something that makes you happy
- Think about all the positive things in your life
- Be brave - try something totally new
- Find somewhere quiet where you can chill out
- Eat something that makes you happy
- Find a picture of something that makes you happy
- Go outside into the sunlight and go for a walk
- Play a video game for half an hour



Allow the young people to decorate their flashcards however they want and encourage them to add anything else that will help them cope when things get hard.

TAKE AWAY ACTIVITY

One of the things that makes us more resilient is being thankful, so why not make a thankful jar?

1. Decorate a jar with the word, 'thank you'.
2. At the end of every week write down what you are thankful for and put them in the jar.
3. At the end of the year take out all the things and read through them to see the good things that happened in your life that year.

SESSION 2 RESOURCES

2A

Earning money	Work	Relationships with friends
Be on time to things	Getting up in the morning	Brushing your teeth
Making friends	Hanging out with friends	Doing your washing
Making your bed	Making dinner	Doing the washing up
Doing your own paperwork	Relationships with family	Exercising
Taking medication	Budgeting	Keeping yourself clean
Cleaning your house	Helping a friend when they are upset	Signing on at the job centre
Learning to get on with people in your house	Choosing what to eat for breakfast	Working out how to allow enough time to get to places

SESSION 2 RESOURCES

2B

You're a 45-year-old German electrician, married, 2 children
You're a 35-year-old cleaner, Iranian refugee, male, without partner
You're a 23-year-old bank clerk, female, Turkish, Muslim, without partner
You're a 17-year-old apprentice, Kurdish, gay
You're a 51-year-old English worker, severely disabled, without partner
You're an 18-year-old Moroccan auxiliary worker, without graduation
You're a 42-year-old Filipino nurse, without partner
You're a 35-year-old English nurse, without partner, 1 child

SESSION 2 RESOURCES

2C

Can you expect fair treatment from the police?
Do you get dental treatment if you need it easily?
Do you feel safe when you're out in the night?
Do you get support from your family?
Are you able to become a member of the tennis club in your town?
Can you choose where you live?
Are you able to live your religion without problems?
Can you apply for a job with average chances?
Are your colleagues/classmates treating you without prejudices?
Can you have a relationship with the person you love without problems?

SESSION 3 ACTIVITIES: STAGE 3 MOVING ON 3A

[LINK TO INTRO VIDEO 3 - BECKY](#)

ACTIVITY

Minefields - In person game

EQUIPMENT

Ball pool balls/ cones
Blindfolds
Prizes

DESCRIPTION

1. Scatter ball pool balls across the room in a random fashion. Put some close together and others further apart to make it more difficult to navigate.
2. Split the group into teams at one side of the room. The first person in the queue is blindfolded and the second person in the queue must direct the first through the minefield without touching the mines. The person directing is not allowed to touch the person with the blindfold on, they must tell them with words where to go. When they get to the other side the person without the blindfold can walk back to the start.
3. They put the blindfold on and the next person in the team directs them. The last person in the queue is directed by the first person who is blindfolded. The team to get all of their team to the other side first is the winner.



ACTIVITY

Food for the day : Zoom or in-person

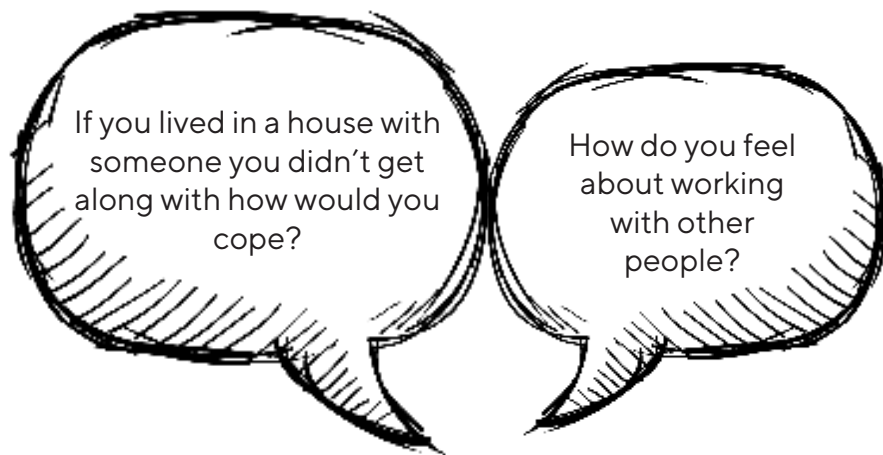
EQUIPMENT

Pens and paper

DESCRIPTION

1. Split into break-out rooms of two or three people. Give each group a budget of £15.
2. As a small group they need to work out a menu that will feed all of them for one day. They can use online grocery websites to put together a shopping list and budget. They will need to include breakfast, lunch, dinner and drinks and they must all agree on the menu.
3. Come back together and hear their menu plans. Ask them: Was the budget fair? Was it easy to agree on food you all like?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



MOVE ON ACTIVITY

Circle of communication

EQUIPMENT

Rope/ string
Blindfolds
Timer

3B

DESCRIPTION

1. Give each young person a blindfold and ask them to stand in a line.
2. Pass them a piece of string or rope along the line.
3. Get them to put their blindfold on and move into a circle.
4. Put the rope on the floor in front of them and then take two steps back. They have two minutes to shape the rope into a perfect square in their team. They will need to talk to each other and communicate with each other to understand where other people are with the rope.

Leaders note: This game is all about communication. Living with someone tests your communication skills and allows you to learn how to better communicate with people. This is a key part of moving on from this stage.

TAKE AWAY ACTIVITY

Sit back-to-back on the floor with someone, with your knees bent. Link arms and now try and get off the floor without unlinking your arms.

How did it feel to work together with someone? Was it difficult?



SESSION 4 ACTIVITIES: STAGE 4

INDEPENDENT LIVING

4A

[LINK TO INTRO VIDEO 4 - BECKY](#)

ACTIVITY

Aliens have landed : Zoom or in-person

EQUIPMENT

Pens and paper, if you are doing it in person.

DESCRIPTION

Aliens have landed and they don't speak English. You have to explain to them something about where you live (It could be your area: e.g. about Exeter). You also have to explain that you want to be their friend.

1. As a group work out the best way to communicate with them e.g. physical, verbal
2. Decide on five symbols or gestures that you would use to communicate and share that with the group

Leaders note: When entering a community group for the first time it can be a daunting prospect and young people might feel like they don't know how to talk to others, they may feel like an alien in a different world.



ACTIVITY

Frostbite : In-person

EQUIPMENT

Pillows
Blankets
Chairs
Blindfolds

4B

DESCRIPTION

Choose one person to be the leader. They must act like they have frostbite and lie on the floor not able to move. Everyone else must be blindfolded.

The leader must direct the other people to build a shelter with the things in front of them, whilst everyone is blindfolded. You can put a timer on it, if you are trying to keep to time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



MOVE-ON ACTIVITY

The Bring-It-Together Relay

EQUIPMENT

Plastic cups
Water
Buckets
Two bedsheets
Tarp (if you are doing this activity inside)
Tape

DESCRIPTION

1. Split the group into two teams
2. Tape a line to the floor at each end of the room and place a bucketful of water behind the line at one end, and two empty buckets behind the line at the other.
3. Give each team a plastic cup and a bedsheet. They need to transfer as much water as possible to the empty buckets using only their plastic cups in 1 minute.
4. The team that transfers the most water wins

Leaders note: This activity brings together all the things we have learnt throughout the sessions. Problem solving, managing task and working as a team. If they get half way across and spill the water across the room you get to see how they react to a crisis.

TAKE HOME ACTIVITY

Look for things that you can do in your community that might have an impact on those who are lonely, such as the elderly or those who live on their own. Many young adults live on their own or in shared houses and this can be a lonely environment even if you live with people. You could bake them cakes or just simply say hello and smile at them as you pass them by .

YOUTH SUMMARY

Through all four sessions we have learnt a lot about what it means to journey for supported accommodation to independent living.

- Session 1 - We learnt about how to deal with problems as they arise.
- Session 2 - We learnt about taking control to avoid getting to crisis point.
- Session 3 - We learnt how to work together.
- Session 4 - We learnt about the wider community, and how to get involved..

Although there is a lot more involved in each stage, this give you an idea of the situations that residents at YMCA Exeter experience, and how we encourage them to grow in their full potential. Much of the work we do is just about showing the young people their own value and worth. It's also about showing them that other people see their value and worth as well.