

STUDENTS

AS DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGERS



SDCE OERs Module 4: MANAGING A DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT



Module 4

In this module, we will examine how students can manage their own Digital Civic Engagement project.

Students will learn how to put a team together utilising each other's strengths. Students will also learn how to avoid project fatigue and how to evaluate their DCE project to ensure it is a success.



Topic 1: Designing and Working Within A Digital Civic Engagement Team



Topic 2: Transforming Obstacles Into Strengths



Topic 3: Avoiding Project Fatigue



Topic 4: Evaluating Your Impact



Module 4 Exercises

A note on the terms we use

Before we start your Civic Engagement journey, we need to explain what some of the abbreviations are that we will use throughout these Modules.

HEIs- Higher Educational Institutions.

SDCE- this is the name of the project that created these materials.

DCE- Digital Civic Engagement

The Guide to DCE- this is a guide surrounding information about Digital Civic Engagement and students. You can find [a link to the toolkit here](#)

The DCE Toolkit- Our Student Digital Civic Engagers' Toolkit is designed to teach you about relevant digital tools that you can use for your own civic engagement.



DESIGNING AND WORKING WITHIN A DIGITAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Learner level: Intermediate



TASK 1: REFLECTION ON MANAGING A DCE PROJECT

In this module, the exercises will be provided at the beginning and end of the module.

Think about the following questions as you go through the module. Try and build a pool of ideas for DCE projects that you might want to work on- we will help you do this!

What kind of project do you want to create?

Think about how the initial team comes together? Pick 5 team members, and give them tasks to do. Who makes the decisions? Who is the team leader?

What are the goals of the project, what are the impacts? How will these impacts get measured? What will some of the goals be? What will the data sources be?

TOPIC 1: DESIGNING AND WORKING WITHIN A DCE TEAM

Building your initial team:

In the initial research we conducted for the Guide to Digital Civic Engagement, we found that there was a wide variety of reasons and ways that Digital Civic Engagement (DCE) projects can be established.

IO1- A Guide to Digital Civic Engagement can be [found by clicking on this link.](#)



TOPIC 1: DESIGNING AND WORKING WITHIN A DCE TEAM

In Module 3, we covered the types of DCE teams that can occur:

Student Led- A DCE team that is founded and led primarily by students.

Educator Led- A DCE team that is founded and led primarily by educators.

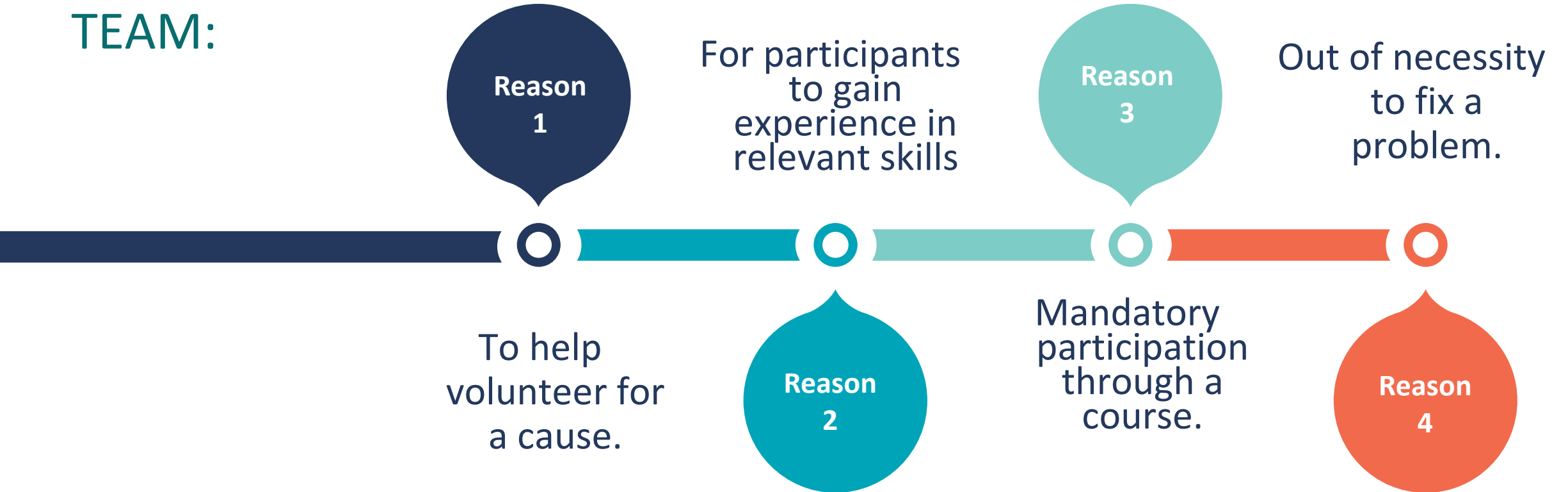
We are now adding a third team type.

Service Led- A DCE team that has been founded and led with the purpose of service learning.



BUILDING YOUR INITIAL SDCE

TEAM:

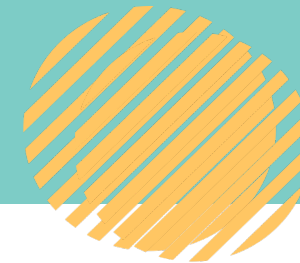


Some of the reasons the groups can come together.

BUILDING YOUR INITIAL DCE TEAM

Understanding **how the team will be formed** (whether there is choice in team members, or if team members are automatically made) will enable the leaders of the team to produce a **strong** and **effective** team.

It is also important to note at this stage, who will the **leaders** of the project be? Will **lecturers oversee the project**, or will the **students be in charge** of the project themselves?



BUILDING YOUR INITIAL DCE TEAM

There are several steps you can take to ensure your DCE team will be effective.

The first step of creating a team, is to establish the mission of the group. A mission is the purpose or reason of your project.

Identifying a mission will also help to ensure that all team members are on the same page, and everyone understands their purpose.

[Source](#)



BUILDING YOUR INITIAL DCE TEAM

Next, the leaders of the group need to evaluate the **skillset** and **experience** of each member of the group. Each member of the project will bring something **different** to the team, from attitudes to skills- think about how each member might fit into their roles.

By aligning the correct tasks to the right group members, you will help to ensure the **success of the project**.



[Source](#)

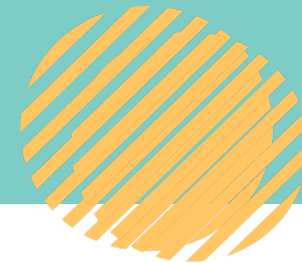


BUILDING YOUR INITIAL DCE TEAM

The next step is to establish the roles of the members of the group as it will help to ensure the project will be a success.

When you have all the members for your team, it is important to assign roles for each team member, so everyone is clear on what they must do for the project.

This stage also offers great learning opportunities for students through peer-to-peer learning.



Building your Initial SDCE Team Resources- interesting reading:

[Click here to find an interesting blog post on some tips on how to build an effective team for project management. \(3 min read\)](#)

[Click here to find some activities for engaging team building exercises.](#)

[Click here to discover more about team-building exercises for students.](#)



02

SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR MANAGING YOUR DCE PROJECT

Learner level: Advanced





WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS TOPIC

In this topic you will learn how to set up your digital civic engagement project and drive your project forward through collaboration and creating partnerships with purpose.

You will learn how to get started and to use the different and relevant support systems in your communities in terms of business and civic engagement, how to work within partnerships, pool resources, get the most out of networking and volunteering and attracting resources.





TEAMWORK IS THE DREAMWORK

Before you starting putting your feet firmly on the ground and setting things in stone you are going to need support specific to setting up a Digital Civic Engagement project.

If you focus on the problem with collaborative support, you are more likely to unlock a focused solution.

With these networks and communities, you can dig deep and get to the root of the problem(s) and discover the often-unlikely solutions and collaborations that truly make a difference.





WHAT ARE ACCELERATORS?

Ideas often need incubation in a protected, supportive dedicated social innovation environment that provides resources, support, advice and freedom to evolve

Accelerators are educators, enablers and highlight the critical role played by the 'connectors' and 'connecting' and 'collaborating' in any innovation system is highly valuable – bringing together - the brokers, entrepreneurs and institutions that link together people, ideas, money and social innovation power – who contribute together to lasting change as thinkers, creators, designers, activists and community groups.





DEDICATED EUROPEAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SPACES

This section will introduce you to different Civic Engagement Accelerators that have different approaches.

We will explore three different resources that will allow you to gain support in your project, whilst networking with likeminded people.

These resources can provide a lot of support for your own DCE project, but also by joining in on an existing project it will help build your experience and confidence to create your own project managed by you.





ASHOKA

ASHOKA

A network based in Ireland and the UK which focuses on a networking and community building, which cultivates a community of change leaders based worldwide.

ASHOKA has three main areas of support- Social Entrepreneurship, Empathy and Young Changemaking, and Organizing for Changemaking. ASHOKA aim to inspire and enable changemaking in the public-at-large, and work to give all citizens the confidence and tools to solve problems for the good of all.

Check out the [ASHOKA website by clicking on this link](#)



ASHOKA

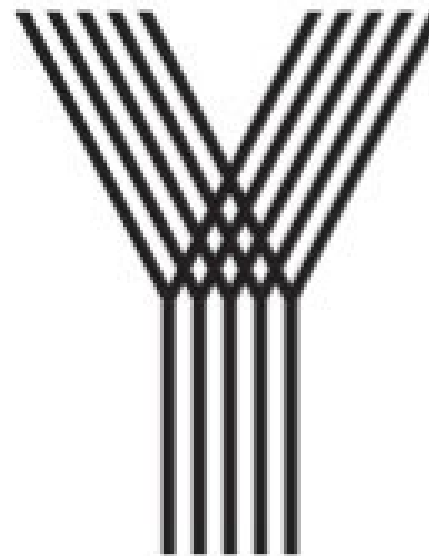


YOUNG FOUNDATION

The Young Foundation, based in the UK, are a leading centre for supporting and incubating social innovation; creating new enterprises, ideas and solutions to tackle some of our most pressing problems. They provide insights, programs and design impact investment funds.

The Young Foundation supports locally-led action, building knowledge around the issues people care about. They work collaboratively to improve lives and address shared challenges, driving social change for stronger communities and a fairer future.

[Click here for a link to their website](#)



**THE
YOUNG
FOUNDATION**
THINKING
ACTION
CHANGE



CONSERVATION X LABS- THE DIGITAL MAKERSPACE

Is an open online project platform where entrepreneurship, conservation, and technology communities come together to collaborate on solutions to end human-induced extinction.

Within the digital makerspace, you can respond to a challenge in the challenge browser, join a project in the project browser, post a new idea in the ideas bin and discuss tough problems in the problem bank.

[Click here for a link to the website](#)





FURTHER LINKS AND RESOURCES

[Take a look at this YouTube video which highlights some of the best techniques to manage projects](#)

Explore the following civic engagement and social innovation training websites which may also help you on your DCE journey:

[Skoll Centre, UK- School for Social Entrepreneurs](#)

[Cibernarium, Spain \(Training Focus\) provides digital and technology training for all levels](#)



03

AVOIDING PROJECT FATIGUE

Learner level: Intermediate





TOPIC 3: AVOIDING PROJECT FATIGUE

Project fatigue can be a complex topic, but it is easy to recognize. It can be seen as a type of disengagement, where people may have plenty of work to do, but they passively disengage.

Source





TIPS FOR REDUCING PROJECT FATIGUE

There are several things that group leaders can do to ensure that the group doesn't suffer from project fatigue.

Have a clear structure of leadership- is the project student led or lecturer led? For SCDE projects, it is important to establish a clear sense of who the leader are, especially if the project is student led, but with guidance from lecturers.

Ensure that the team has a clear vision on what needs to be done, and when. Generate short term wins to ensure team motivation.

Source





AVOIDING PROJECT FATIGUE

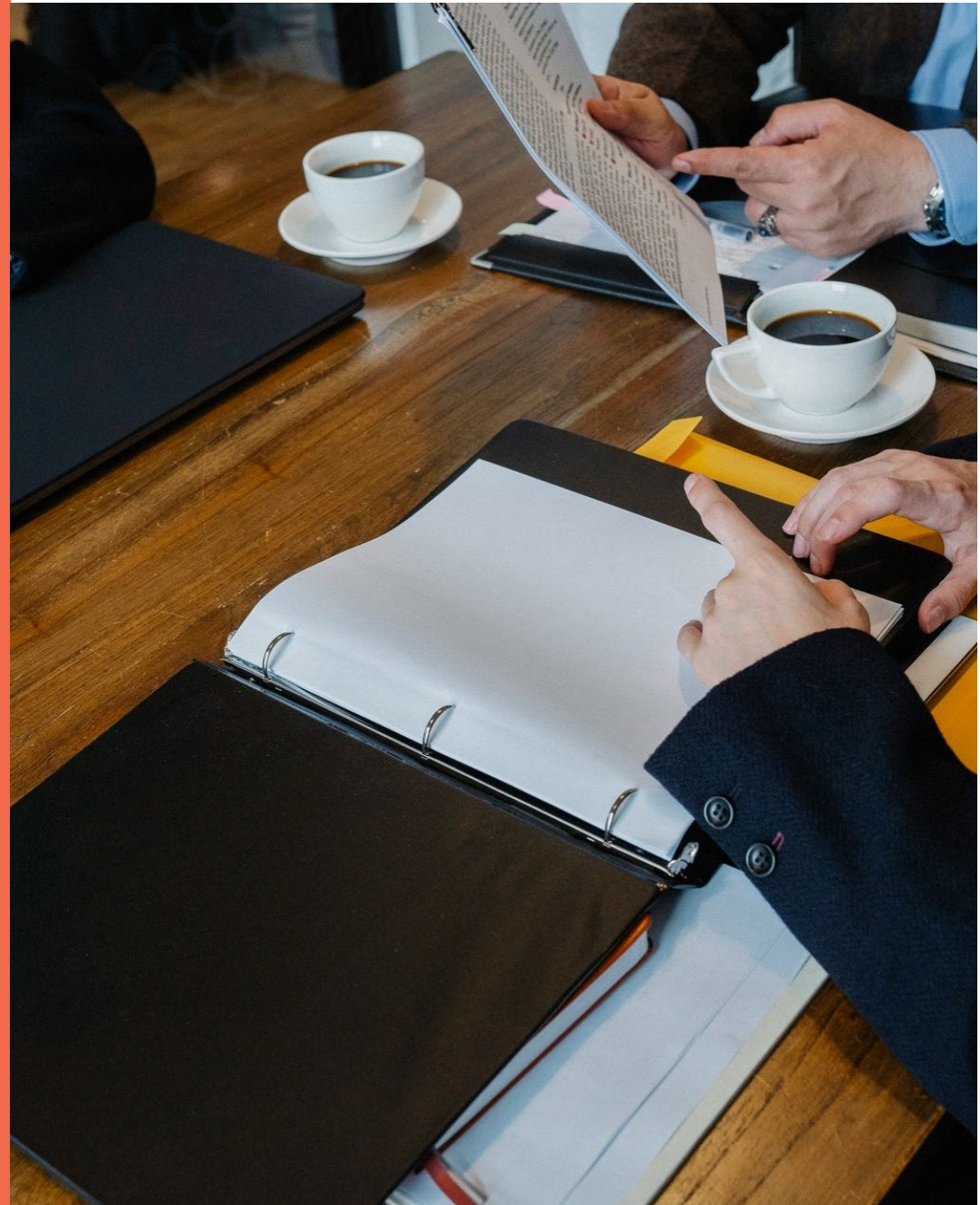
Avoid the cycle of inaction!

During a large project, situations can occur where decisions need to be made, but group members are not sure of who needs to make the decision.

The group agrees on what needs to be done, but no one takes action on what needs to be done.

This creates a cycle of inaction!

Source





AVOIDING PROJECT FATIGUE

Given enough time, this cycle of inaction can lead to demotivation, and disengagement.

There are several ways to overcome this. The two main methods are:

- Redefine the project's purpose.
- Define who will make decisions on the project.





REDEFINE THE PROJECT'S PURPOSE

All group members may think that they are familiar with what the purpose of the project is, however, it will always benefit the group and project to analyse how the group will establish what needs to be done.

This will ensure that all group members are clear on what needs to be done, and how everyone will establish this.

Having clear, unambiguous roles can be the difference between project **success** and **failure**.





DEFINE THE DECISION-MAKER

Decisions will always need to be made during the lifespan of a project, but not having a clear-set decision-maker or process for making decisions can lead to project fatigue and a cycle of inaction!

Upon the creation of the project create a clear methodology of making decisions.
Is it one person?
Is it a vote?

Knowing who and how decisions are made can also be the difference between project **success** and **failure**.





REDUCING REMOTE PROJECT FATIGUE

As SDCE is a digital project, it is also important to note that remote work and using digital technologies can also create a sense of fatigue.

According to research, remote workers are more empathetic, and the nature of virtual meetings seem to have the potential to create more stress than meetings in person.

Read on to discover some of the methods that we can utilize to help remove remote fatigue...





REDUCING REMOTE PROJECT FATIGUE

When having online meetings, ensure that the meeting is no longer than 30 minutes, and if it is longer, take regular breaks.

Create specific times that project members can be contacted to ensure this does not happen during unsociable hours.

Ensure project leaders help practice resilience building activities with project members.





Resources- interesting reading:

[How to avoid collaboration fatigue](#)

[7 Steps to break the cycle of inaction](#)

[Article on remote worker fatigue and empathy](#)

[A Ted Talk on bouncing back from burnout](#)

[How to lead when you and your team are exhausted](#)



04

TOPIC 4: EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

Learner level: Intermediate





TOPIC 4: EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

What is evaluation, and why evaluate a project's impact?

Evaluation is a structured process by which a project's activities are assessed and understood.

By continuously tracking, analysing and interpreting data about the project in order to identify and ensure the project's impact.

Evaluation can also highlight weaknesses allowing to adjust and improve aspects of the project as it progresses.

Source





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

Evaluation can allow the following:

- Learn from previous experiences- what went right, what could be done better in the future?
- Check progress- is the project making progress, are we establishing the goals of what we set out to achieve?
- Establish a plan for the future, with a clear timeline.
- Help display progress to funders and key stakeholders.

Source





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

How to evaluate the impact and success of your project?

There are many ways to evaluate your SDCE project. One way is to visualise the future, some time after the project has completed.

Imagine what did the project do well on. Did it achieve what the team set out to achieve? Think about what might have gone wrong, and how you could have fixed it.

Source





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

When we think about what the project achieved, these are called **Impacts**. Impacts can be seen as what changes and differences occurred due to the project's creation.

The impacts can measure four different aspects of an SDCE project:

- The project members
- The establishment behind the project
- The beneficiaries of the project
- The systems and procedures in place behind the project.





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

When we want to evaluate the impact of our projects, we identify data sources.

These are the sources of information that we can use to help identify the success of our project's impacts. Data sources can include questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation.

It is important to gather feedback at various stages of the project, as it can help to ensure that any issues or risks are dealt with, and to ensure the success of the project.

[Source](#)





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT

When we have gathered the data, and identified the impacts, it is now time to assess and act on the information we have found.

This is a time where we evaluate the successes of the project so far, and the goals that have been established.

Is the project on track? Have the objectives been met? What could be done differently or more efficiently? At this stage it is important to assess all information well, to ensure the projects success in the future.

Source





EVALUATING YOUR IMPACT EXTRA RESOURCES

How to evaluate community projects

5 ways to measure a project's success

Improving your project evaluation
process



05

MODULE 4 EXERCISES



WATCH

DESIGN THINKING IN SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS

Click on this link to a video on how to apply design thinking to your social innovation or DCE project!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPDLD35_hgE



WATCH

PROJECT MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES FOR INNOVATION AND CO-CREATION - PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Click on this link to a video on some best practice ideas on how to manage your projects to be as innovative as possible

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxXt-JMX0Fg>



WATCH

TED TALK BY THE FOUNDER OF A
GROWTH MINDSET

Curious about how to adopt a Growth Mindset? Check out the video below for more information on Growth Mindsets, and how to build them:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjBdcyueom8>



WATCH

TED TALK BY THE FOUNDER OF A GROWTH MINDSET

A short YouTube video that breaks down the concepts behind project evaluation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KqwMleovVU>



WATCH

GOOGLE ON REMOTE PROJECT FATIGUE

For more information on remote project fatigue, check out this interview from Google's David Rosenthal on Remote Project Fatigue:

<https://youtu.be/sT2S4ItGoL4>



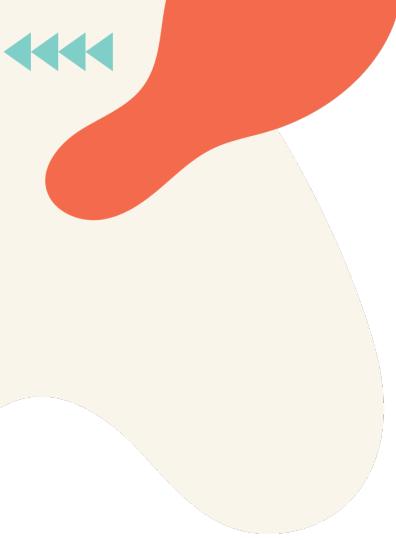
TASK 2- BUILDING A GROWTH MINDSET

Try the following activities to help build a growth mindset:

Think about different situations comparing a growth mindset to a fixed mindset. For example, think of a recent setback you had- how would you have dealt with it if you had a fixed mindset, versus if you had a growth mindset.

Have a think about yourself, and try to be as honest as possible. What way do you normally react to setbacks or failures? If you tend to typically have more of a fixed mindset, imagine different ways that you might look at challenges in the future.

Learn something new! When we try and learn a new skill, we can help build neuroplasticity, and resilience! [Check out this Ted Talk for more information on Neuroplasticity.](#)



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