



# PROGRESS INHIBITORS – Learner Motivation

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

## Progression Inhibitors: Learner motivation

### Rationale/Outline

A key requirement for a successful study programme is that each learner is recognised as an individual, with their needs and personal circumstances identified early in the programme so they can be effectively supported. If this does not happen the learner is more likely to leave or make insufficient progress towards their learning goals.

Research shows those from poorer deprived areas are more likely to leave early. This resource is designed to help pinpoint what is required regarding types of support and advice required in relation to previous experiences and current levels of motivation to reduce the risk of learners leaving. This resource has two main aims:

- To encourage an open-ended discussion and learner self-assessment of potential risk factors likely to cause insufficient progress in an individual's study programme.
- Agree an action plan to address and reduce risk factors which is learner focused and captures the progress the learner is making as they overcome any inhibitors.

### Suggestions on how to use this resource

This resource is most effective when learners take the lead to review a variety of statements and decide which of these best reflect their own thinking or concerns.

It can also be used with a fictional character "M" to avoid learners talking about themselves.

This can be an individual activity or group discussion with selected cards to help identify the specific nature of any identified risk factors that may hinder progress. **Not all cards need to be used, select the cards that are most appropriate for each group or individual.** Further discussion points can include the challenges learners may face, how they can be avoided and the support available. If used as a group discussion the tutor is then available for 1 to 1 tutorials.

- Learners go through each statement card and sort them into 2 piles according to whether they agree or disagree.
- Ask the learner/s to discuss each statement they agree with to identify the nature of their concern.
- After identifying individual needs a risk assessment regarding likelihood for leaving early can be completed. There is an example risk assessment on page 9.
- An individualised set of actions to address risk factors using personalised targets to identify progress made against each of these factors can form an action plan. There is an example action plan on page 10.
- Use the blank template to add relevant statements.

**Some learners may not wish to disclose their true feeling or concerns in a group session. This activity can be done several times during a learners programme as their circumstances may change over time.**

### Intended impact

Learners are reassured that their individual needs have been identified, and they will have access to the support they need to make the progress of which they are capable.

The relevant support and tracking will be planned early in the learner's course so chances of leaving or slow progress are drastically reduced.

A personalised action plan of support clearly shows how the learner overcomes any inhibitors that affect their motivation to succeed and subsequent progress.

## Learner motivation

Success and high motivation are closely linked. Motivation is often defined as a need or drive that energises a learner towards a successful goal.

It's more difficult to stay focused and work hard at something we find too challenging, difficult or outside of our comfort zones, particularly if no support is given, and this in turn adversely affects levels of confidence.

Early identification of motivational triggers is key to maintaining learner's progress to ensure learners stay on programme and achieve their maximum potential.

## Card sort activity

The purpose of these cards is to allow a simple but effective way of letting learners highlight issues or concerns relating to their previous experiences in work and education, and factors that affect motivation. These may stop them from progressing and leading to disengagement or leaving early.

Using the cards will help to create an action plan to put strategies in place which lessen the risk of leaving and track their progress.

### Instructions: this can be a group or individual activity.

1. Place the 2 large cards '**This is like me**' and '**This is not like me**' in front of the learner/s about 60cms apart.
2. Shuffle the small coloured cards so they are in a random order.
3. The following is a guide to what can be said to introduce the task:

“This task will help us to talk about what help or support you may need to be successful, make good progress and remain on your study programme. There are no right or wrong answers – it's all about you as a person. On each card there is a short sentence. I would like you to read each one in turn and then put the card in one of two piles - underneath the two large cards. So, if the sentence applies to you put it under 'This is like me' and if it does not apply to you put it under 'This is not like me'. If you can't decide or you are not sure for whatever reason, put the card to one side. You can have as long as you want to complete the task - there is no need to hurry but it will probably take between 5 – 10 minutes to complete. Any questions? Let me know when you have finished.”

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Find more resources at [www.excellencegateway.org.uk](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk)

4. Leave the learner/s to complete the exercise on their own. Remain nearby to help if they get stuck or confused.
5. When the learner/s complete the task, check how they felt about completing it and if they have any general comments to make about the process.
6. Take the cards from under the 'This is like me' card and look at each one in turn:
  - Confirm that the card does reflect them and if it applies to them.
  - If they select something like 'most of the time I do not feel very confident', they clearly have some concerns. This will be an opportunity to discuss these concerns and see if any further actions or investigations are required.
  - They may also choose cards that confirm no barrier. There is an opportunity to check this is the case.
7. As you work through the cards make sure key notes are kept about possible barriers to address.
8. Next, look at any cards which they were undecided about and work through whether they do apply or not.
9. Go through the cards put under 'This is not like me' just to check they are in the right pile (not spending time on each card as above) as a quick review.
10. Discuss how any barriers can be addressed and/or the range of jobs and development they can aim for in view of their motivation. This will include personalised targets to show progress.
11. Use a risk assessment form or action plan (or both) to highlight those learners likely to require frequent interventions and/or checks. The examples reflect the need for short frequent interventions, so it is addressed in first few months. The action plan demonstrates clearly progress being made and how it has impacted the learner. If preferred, modify the action plan to fit current systems in place.

**This is like me**

**This is NOT like me**

**CARDS TO HELP IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES**  
**Previous work and education experience – these are examples, use the blank template to create your own.**

I have never had any sort of work experience.	I have had a few different types of work experience.
I have the sort of behaviours and attitudes employers want.	I don't know the behaviours and attitudes employers value.
I like learning on my own – doing homework and online.	I struggle to write notes and keep up with the teacher in class.
I get bored easily in class and tend to 'switch off'.	I didn't learn a lot at school.
I have some idea of the sort of career or job I would like to do.	I have no idea what sort of work I would like to do.
I'm not sure if this course will meet my needs.	I don't know much about different careers and the skills required.

**CARDS TO HELP IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ISSUES**  
**English and maths skills**

I think my English skills are good enough to succeed on my course.	I think my maths skills are good enough to succeed on my course.
I worry about whether my English skills are as good as they need to be.	I worry about whether my maths skills are as good as they need to be.
I think employers want people with good maths and English skills.	I need to improve my English or maths if I want to go onto higher education.
I need to improve my computer skills if I want to succeed on my course.	I need to improve my spoken English if I want to succeed on my course.

## BLANK TEMPLATE

You may want to create your own topics for discussion.


## Risk assessment

After identifying individual needs, a risk assessment regarding likelihood for leaving early can be completed.

### Example risk assessment following card activity

Risk assessment for possible early leaver      Name: \_\_\_\_\_      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Risk factor identified	Level of possible impact 1 - mild 2 - moderate 3 - severe	Re-assessment	Re-assessment	Re-assessment	Re-assessment
		Date 1	Date 2	Date 3	Date 4
Not sure the learner is on the right course as do not receive sufficient information about options and has little understanding of what their choice of career involves.	3	3 - Had intensive tutorial session. Now doubts if current course is really for the learner. Given options to change.	2 - Changed curriculum area and support is now in place to ensure the learner settles in well.	No risk - settled very well, making good progress and now happy with choice.	
Concerned about level of IT skills, as learner feels they are at a very basic level.	2	2 - An in-depth initial assessment of IT skills shows areas for development. The learner assured and reassured they will receive extra tuition to address areas for development.	1 – Attending extra IT sessions and making good progress.		No risk. Has now passed an IT assessment to the level required and feels lot more confident about their skills.

## Example action plan

Alternatively (or as well as) an action plan can be agreed that fits with the organisation's system for tracking progress.

Area of concern	Specific action(s)	Personalised target	Progress with date	Evaluation
(Date) Undecided career path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete 'interests' questionnaire and discuss with tutor.</li> <li>- Carry out individual research on National Careers Service website to identify skills, aptitudes and qualifications required for at least 3 identified areas of interest.</li> </ul>	Commit and move to a curriculum area to reflect chosen career path.	(date) In process of moving to hairdressing curriculum area and arrangements with personal tutor to catch up on missed work. (Date) 90% of missed work now completed.	Learner much more employment-focused now and feels hairdressing is the right course for them – not something they had previously considered. Close support for changeover has ensured the learner settled in quickly.
Not confident with functional IT skills in work setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete diagnostic assessment for IT skills.</li> <li>- Identify key areas to work on to improve skills.</li> <li>- Arrange extra sessions and distance learning in IT.</li> </ul>	Pass an IT assessment at the appropriate level. Demonstrate ability to use an excel spreadsheet for stock taking.	(Date) Attending all extra sessions and completing work set independently. Completed several different spreadsheets up to level 2. (Date) Passed mock assessment.	Learner has grown in confidence and demonstrates a good attitude to their work, helped by now feeling they are on the right course and has the potential to achieve what is required in IT skills.