

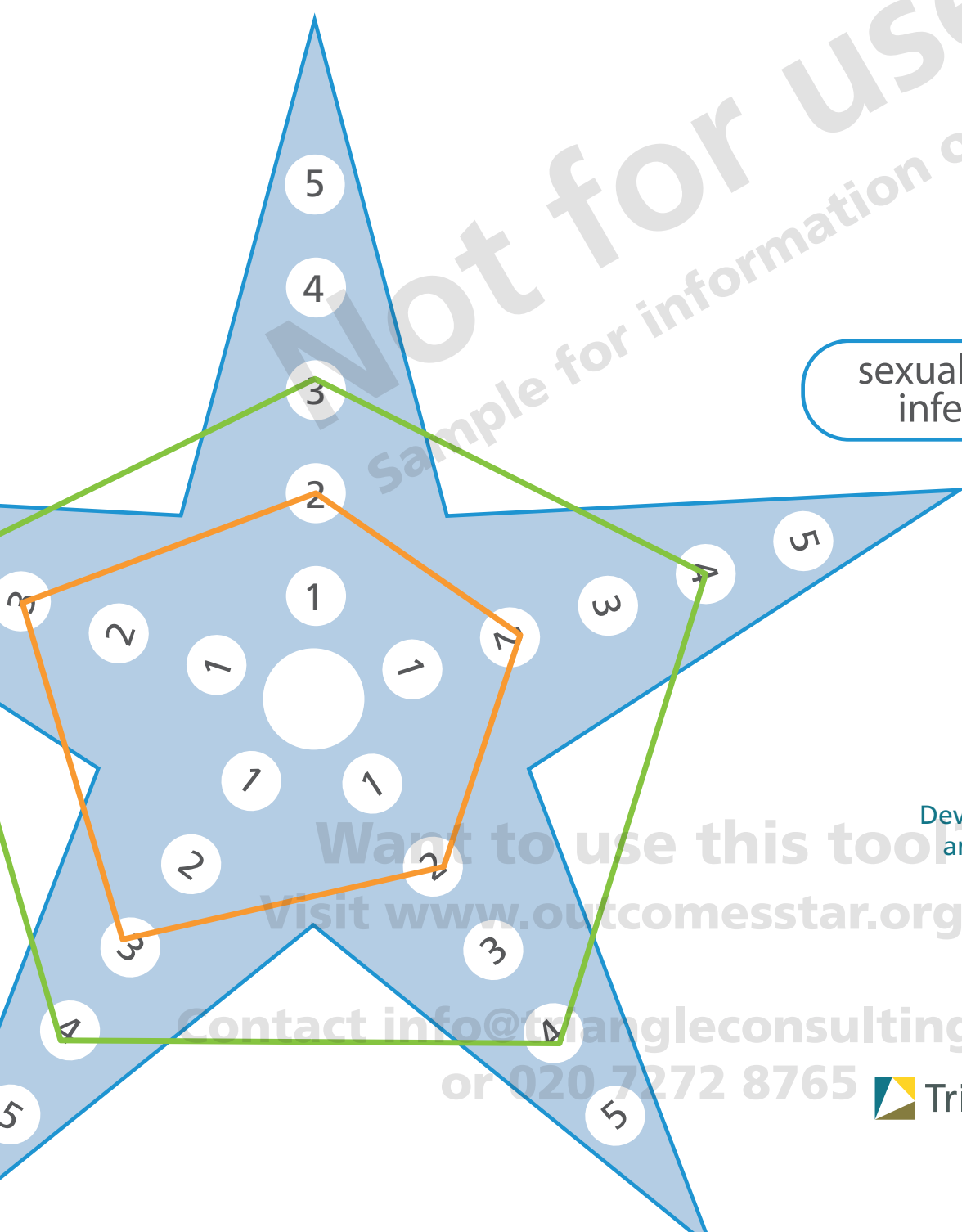


Sexual Health Star™

The Outcomes Star for young people and sexual health

alcohol & drugs

sexually transmitted
infections (STIs)



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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™

This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

The original commission for an outcome measurement system came from St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and Triangle recognises their vital roles in the development of the Outcomes Star. We would also like to acknowledge Kate Graham's important contribution to the development of the suite of Stars, both as a founding partner of Triangle and as co-author of the original Outcomes Star (now called the Outcomes Star for Homelessness).

We would particularly like to thank Brook and all their managers, workers and service users for their contribution to this version of the Star.

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Introduction

The Sexual Health Star is a version of the widely recognised Outcomes Star; a tool for supporting and measuring change when working with people.

Outcome areas

The Sexual Health Star focuses on five areas that are key to enabling young people to ensure good sexual health:

- Alcohol and drugs
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Contraception
- Friends and relationships
- Confidence to make the right choices.

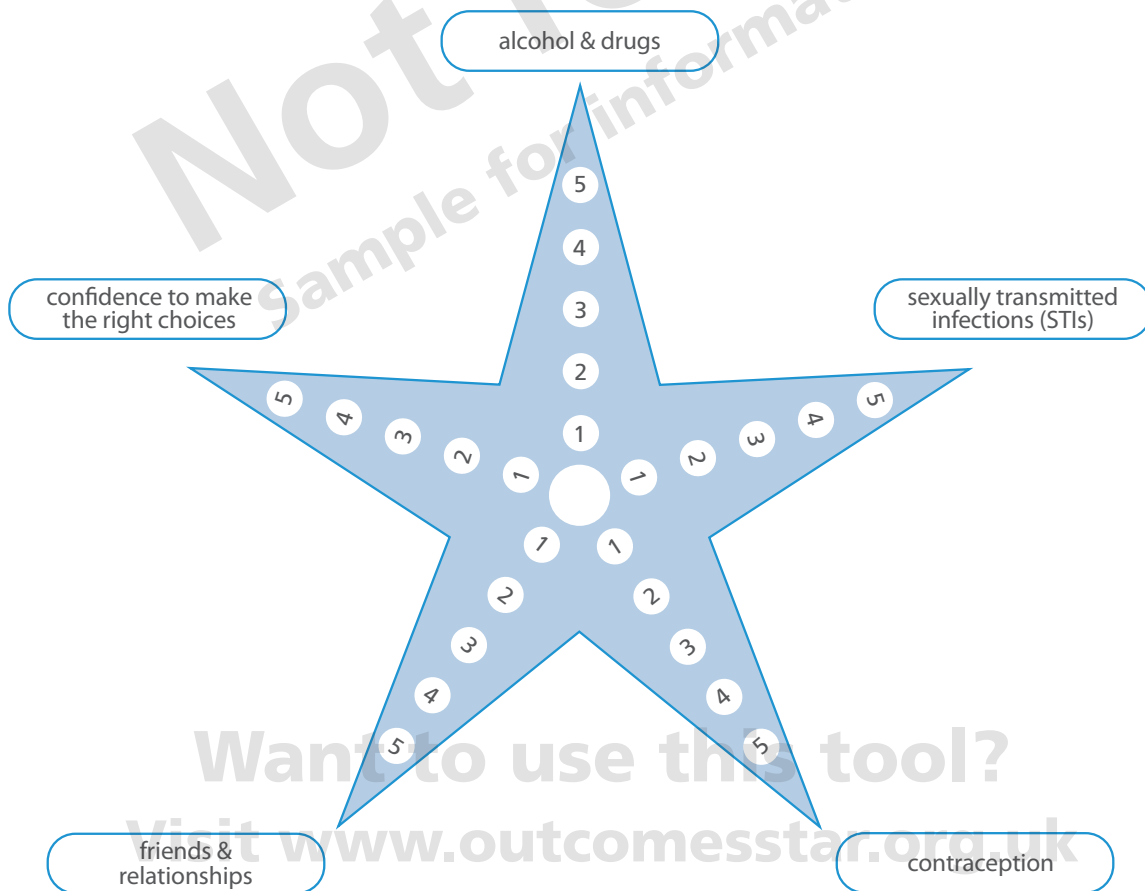


Figure 1: The Sexual Health Star

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Journey of Change

Change doesn't happen in one go – it is a journey. All the Sexual Health Star scales are underpinned by a five-step Journey of Change:

1. At the beginning of the journey, the young person is **taking risks** and not motivated to change or accept help
2. The first step forward is when they **want change** and accept help, though they are still taking risks
3. Then they move to **trying** – making an effort to behave in ways that are safer but often not managing it
4. At 4 they are **mostly safe** but some changes are still needed
5. The end point of the journey is when they are **safe and confident** to maintain their sexual health and well-being.

This Journey of Change is described in detail in Part 2 of this document.

Sexual Health Star™ resources

1. The Sexual Health Star Chart and Action Plan, with space for notes
2. The Sexual Health Star Quiz
3. A web application for online completion at www.staronline.org.uk
4. This Worker Guide
5. Pocket Sexual Health Star, with the Star Chart and Quiz combined
6. Further information at www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

The Sexual Health Star was developed by Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise in collaboration with Brook, and was tested with over 200 young people.

All workers need training before using the Sexual Health Star, from Triangle or a Licensed Star Trainer.

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Part 1: Using the Sexual Health Star™

Using the Star is meant to be a helpful process that stimulates and focuses discussion and provides a useful basis for action planning. All workers using the Star with young people need to have had training and the following guidance is designed to supplement this training and help you use the Sexual Health Star well so that it is a positive experience for both worker and young person.

The Star is a flexible tool that is quick, accessible and engaging to use. It is designed to be used in a one-to-one setting, though it can also be completed in a group with support. We are not prescriptive about the setting in which the Star should be completed or how long it should take: the key is to have a genuine engagement with the young person.

How the Sexual Health Star™ can help

- Increasing the engagement of young people – the Star provides a clear focus for conversation
- Demonstrating and reinforcing progress – seeing the change set out in a visual way can be very encouraging
- Helping with goal-setting – the Journey of Change helps to break change down into small, manageable steps
- Creating a more holistic approach – the Star can help raise issues that might otherwise get lost
- Making support more systematic and consistent – the Star creates a consistent framework for support.

Before you use the Sexual Health Star™

All workers using the Star – and young people if it will be used with peers – need to have had training from Triangle or a Licensed Star Trainer, including:

1. A good understanding of the five stages on the Journey of Change
2. Familiarity with the five scales and Quiz questions, so that they can unpack and rephrase them if the young person is having trouble understanding them. Part 2 of this guide provides fuller descriptions of each of the scales
3. Ability to introduce the Star, complete it collaboratively with a young person and explain how it is used in their project.

How to introduce the Sexual Health Star™ to young people

The way in which the Sexual Health Star is introduced is important in encouraging young people to engage, so take care to set up the right conditions for change. This can include any of the following:

- Flag up that you are going to use the Star in the session before it is introduced and completed, where possible. This could be done through displaying the materials on the wall

- Be enthusiastic and clear when introducing the Sexual Health Star. Use open body language, be friendly (and perhaps provide biscuits!)
- Choose which materials to show or give to the young person, depending on their interest and literacy – the Star Chart, pocket Star, Quiz and/or visual Journey of Change. Paraphrase and explain the scales as appropriate
- For some young people it will work best to have a chat first and then bring out the Star after the chat. For example, say: “This is a good conversation – let’s record it on this so we don’t forget.” For others, the Star Chart and Quiz can be used to stimulate discussion
- Either way, listen carefully and use what the young person says to make the Star relevant to them and their issues.

The following phrases for introducing the Star were among those suggested by workers at Brook:

“This is a really useful tool to sit and reflect where we are now and figure out a way forward.”

“You said you wanted to change [...]. Shall we look at that in a picture form?”

“Getting to a place where you are safe and confident is not just one step. This is about how you get from where you are to where you want to be.”

“This whole process is about you as a young person and we want to make sure that you get what you want, in the areas that you want to feel better in.”

“It is all about the things you recognise that you want to change. We need to be accurate about where you are now so you know where you are starting from.”

“You are here because of the difficulties with [...] and you may not understand the risks you are under.”

“We are looking for you to be safe and well, but that doesn’t happen overnight.”

“Let’s look at where you are at and where you want to be.”

Explain that 5 is the top of the Sexual Health Star scales but not the end of the journey, and people will continue to improve after they have reached this stage.

You may want to explain that as well as supporting young people’s progress, the Star is necessary to help the project understand what it is doing well (and what it is not doing so well). However, it is best not to mention terms like monitor, measure or data analysis.

Other advice from Brook workers and managers includes:

- Latch on to the positives and look for strengths
- Appreciate and praise anything you can
- This is not about judging people but it is about having realistic expectations
- The referral may not state what is most important to the young person at the time, so ask what that is
- Put the scale descriptors on cards or on the wall
- Use all the youth work skills you have!

Completing the Sexual Health Star™ with a young person

The Sexual Health Star is a flexible tool that workers can use to respond to the needs and abilities of each young person:

- For most young people, it will be helpful to go through the Sexual Health Star Quiz together, or they can go through it on their own initially and then discuss it together, collaboratively agreeing where they are now
- Select the most appropriate version of the Quiz for the person and context – the A4 sheet, pocket version or Star Online on screen
- You can start with an open discussion and then give them the Quiz to complete, or use their responses as a springboard for discussion
- Encourage young people to mark their choices on the Star Chart themselves – either as each area is discussed or all together at the end after completing the Quiz. Suggest they join the points to create their own Star shape
- Young people at 3 or above can probably take the lead in placing themselves on the Star scales. If someone is at 1 or 2, you may need to be more directive about where they place themselves on the scales
- If someone appears to be between two scale points, choose the point where they are most of the time or opt for the lower of the two points. Don't place young people between the scale points
- The visual Journey of Change (in Part 2 of this guide and in a simpler format in the Pocket Sexual Health Star) is an optional extra resource, which can be used to explain the underlying model of change, either alongside or instead of the Quiz.

Using the Sexual Health Quiz is not compulsory. For those young people who are particularly put off by paperwork, it may be better to just use the Star Chart and to talk through each of the Star points verbally, describing and drawing on the underlying Journey of Change to guide the young person towards agreeing where they are on their journey.

It will be important to use the Star to encourage self-reflection, which can be done by asking young people for evidence of why they think they are where they are on the scales and taking the time to challenge appropriately and discuss their views.

Differences of opinion are helpful starters for discussion. If a young person struggles with low self-esteem, they might place themselves towards the start of the journey and need reminding of what they do well. Others may not recognise or admit the risks to which they are exposing themselves, and may place themselves unrealistically high on the journey. Workers might present evidence of discrepancies between their behaviour and their views, paving the way for a meaningful discussion or working relationship and for a more realistic assessment from which progress is possible.

One common example of a discrepancy is where a young person is taking what workers know to be significant risks but because the young person does not recognise this, they place themselves at 5. You would place them at 1 because of the combination of taking risks and not recognising this or being open to support. If you cannot agree on a scale point and you decide it is not helpful to discuss it more, record both readings on the Star, labelling which is which.

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Whatever approach you choose, it is vital that the discussion and agreed number is based on the defined scales. Without this, one young person's 3 could be another's 5 and although the process may still be helpful on a one-to-one basis, the collated Star data will not be useful.

Using the completed Star Chart to agree actions and next steps

The visual of the completed Star provides an excellent basis for agreeing changes and actions that are needed. These actions can be noted on the back of the Star Chart and Action Plan, or on the Star Online.

Once you have the completed Star, either on paper or on screen, look at it together and prompt the young person to reflect on it as a basis for what to do next, asking motivational questions such as:

- Is the shape of the Star an accurate picture of how things are for them now?
- What does it tell them about what is going well and any risks they are exposed to?
- What helps them in the areas that are going well? How might they apply those strengths in other areas of their life?
- What do they want to address first?

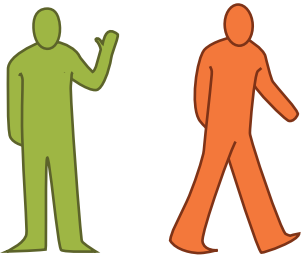
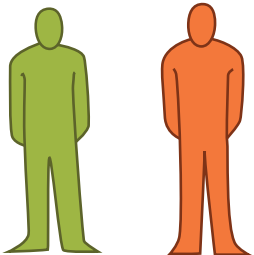
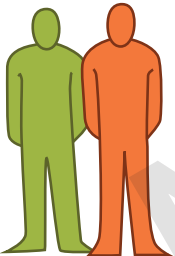


Once the areas are agreed, further questions might include:

- Where on the journey do they want to get to and by when?
- What actions are needed in order to bring about that change?
- Who is responsible for those actions?
- Is it appropriate to set a deadline for completing them?

A young person's position on the Journey of Change can provide valuable pointers for how to work with them and how likely they are to follow through on actions independently. Some key pointers are summarised in the table on the next page.

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Stage on the journey	Possible approaches and actions that could be agreed
<p>Safe and confident</p> 	<p>At this stage the young person is confident and has good sexual health and little or no need for support. They may well disengage from the service at or before this point, but if not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage them to continue. Maybe they could volunteer, or help their friends or others to make positive choices • Ensure they know how to seek help in the future if needed
<p>Mostly safe</p> 	<p>At this stage a young person is mostly looking after themselves and their partner(s) well. But they occasionally take unnecessary risks or there are one or two areas where they are less confident, so the focus of keywork may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating the progress they have made in staying safe • Helping them reflect on what makes them more likely to take a risk and how to deal with those situations differently
<p>Trying</p> 	<p>Young people at this stage are trying to look after their sexual health and make the right choices but find it difficult, and often their actions don't match their intentions. Goals and actions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping them to plan what they are going to do and develop strategies and reminders for themselves • Encouraging them to spend more time with people they trust and who support them in making positive choices
<p>Want change</p> 	<p>At this stage young people may say they want things to be different and agree to actions but not follow through. They may worry about this at times and want to be safer but they are not doing much to change their behaviour or are afraid of people finding out that they are sexually active. Support may need to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust and reassuring them about confidentiality • Setting up appointments for them and even accompanying them if possible • Encouraging them to follow through on actions
<p>Taking risks</p> 	<p>Young people at this stage are at risk of pregnancy, catching an STI or experiencing other harm but they do not recognise risks or willingly accept help. Perhaps they are not aware, don't see their behaviour as a problem or worry but do not say anything. The focus could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassuring them and arranging for them to go to a clinic or their doctor for confidential help and advice • Giving them information about the risks they are taking, for example STIs or accidental pregnancy • Considering contraception that does not rely on them taking responsibility, such as an implant or injection

Revisiting the Star™ at reviews

The Star is designed to be completed at regular intervals to show progress.

For short interventions, a follow-up Star reading at three and six months will help both the young person and service to see the longer-term changes and effects of the work. These follow-ups also provide an opportunity to agree further goals.

If goals are reviewed after, say, three months and six months and new needs emerge, the young person can then be referred or signposted for further support.

At each review, repeat the process of discussing each of the Star areas and agree where the young person is on each scale. We recommend you do this initially without reference to the previous Star, in order to focus on a snapshot in time without being influenced by previous readings. Once the new Star is completed, it is helpful to compare the two to give an instant visual picture of change. You can then use this to encourage discussion:

- Does what the young person sees on the Star fit with their own sense of how they have changed?
- How do they feel about what they see, especially where they have moved up one or more of the scales?
- What has helped them make progress? What strengths have they brought to this? What might they learn from that to help them in other areas?
- If they have slipped back, what has contributed to them taking further risks and what do they now want to change?
- What areas do they want to address now – the same areas as before or new ones?
- Where do they want to get to by the next review? What actions do they want to agree to make that happen?

Then complete a new action plan and, if working on paper, file the Star Chart and Action Plan and enter the data as required. If you are using the Star Online, the data will already be captured. Just print out and file the Star Chart, Notes and Action Plan.

When positive change occurs, reviews can be very helpful in encouraging and motivating both the young person and the worker, as the Star makes progress very evident. Change is difficult, particularly at the **trying** stage, and young people can easily be put off by difficulties that arise. Seeing progress on the Star can help reinforce change as young people start to try out new ways of doing things. You can use your discussions with them to help point this out.

Retrospective readings

If you feel that using the Star early on may get in the way of building trust, then try introducing it later. In this case young people can be invited to look back and say where they think they were when they first joined the project. This retrospective reading can count as the initial reading and the later one as the second.

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Using the Star™ in projects where there is no one-to-one work

For some services, one-to-one time is very limited. It is possible to use the Star in group settings provided there is an opportunity for some one-to-one discussion. This is a more challenging approach as young people may be reluctant to reflect honestly in a group setting and may tend towards following their peers.

Group work is more effective when you can show young people how the Journey of Change relates directly to the work you are doing with them. It is also essential to be able to identify and record an individual's readings so that you can compare where they are when you repeat the exercise at the review date.

There are different options for how this is done and workers are encouraged to be creative. Data has been collected with similar Stars by:

- Young people having the Star in front of them when it is introduced to a group and marking where they think they are and then talking about that one to one and changing the scale point if necessary
- Walking through the Journey of Change
- Using methods such as putting the Quiz or Journey of Change on wall charts and giving each young person a differently numbered sticker that they attach to each question. Keep a record of which person has which number so that you can record the results and repeat the process at review time, preferably made into a game and done speedily so young people won't just choose the same scale point as their peers
- Experienced peers completing it in peer-to-peer situations.

The Sexual Health Star is not recommended as something that young people take away to do by themselves or for completion as a group without a conversation.

Frequently asked questions

Using the Star may mean working with young people in a different way. How natural and easy it feels for you will depend on your ways of working prior to the introduction of the Star. Most young people find that the Star is fairly self-evident and feels familiar and comfortable after they have used it a few times, but the following questions are most frequently asked in training.

What if we don't agree on where the young person is in an area?

This is a rich starter for discussion. Part of the process of a young person making changes in a particular area is developing a realistic picture of how things are at the moment. Here are some pointers:

- Listen carefully to what the young people have to say – it will help you to understand their perceptions. They may also have information you are not aware of that will change your view.
- Present evidence for why you see things differently, explaining why you think the young person is at a different stage of their journey. This will work best if you present specific examples rather than general statements. For example, "You tried talking about contraception last week but that didn't work quite as well as you had hoped", rather than, "You are still avoiding contraception issues". If the young person is underestimating their progress, provide specific evidence of their achievements. For instance, "You haven't drunk so much that you've lost control at any point over the last two months. That seems like quite an achievement."
- Take into account the young person's current situation. In the early part of the journey, they are likely to be less self-aware and this can result in a higher personal rating.

If you and the young person still disagree after discussion, record both readings on the Star Chart.

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What if the young person can't or won't engage with the Star?

Young people who are **taking risks** in most or all areas will not, by definition, engage meaningfully with the Star. You may choose to share your worker-only assessments with them later, when they have started to co-operate with keywork, in order to demonstrate progress or to prompt learning and discussion.

It is unusual for young people to engage with keywork but to resist using the Star. If this happens, ask why and check they have had a sufficiently detailed introduction to the Star and have not misunderstood how it works or how the information will be used. Make sure they understand the key points and answer any questions or concerns they have. You may also want to point out that the Star is an integral part of how your service or project provides support.

If young people don't make progress, will my performance be in question?

The purpose of the Sexual Health Star is to help young people see where they have come from and where to go next, to give your service an overview of where it is assisting young people in making positive changes, and to identify areas which may need further attention. When young people do not make progress on the Star, there are many possible explanations. It is not about judging the work of individual members of staff.

However, this may indicate that you have a particularly difficult caseload or need additional support or further training. You may want to discuss this with your manager.

What if the young person doesn't want to discuss certain areas?

This can happen when a young person feels that some of the scales are not relevant to them because they do not have an issue in that area. If you also feel that this area poses no problems, simply place the young person at 5 for that scale and move on.

Some areas may be particularly sensitive or the young person may not be willing to discuss a problem. Many workers find that simply having an area as a scale on the Star can be a helpful way to introduce sensitive issues that do need to be discussed. However, the relationship of trust between the worker and young person, and the goal of supporting the young person's progress, are more important than the Star. If it is not helpful to continue, opt for either 5 or 1, and move to the next scale.

Won't young people be demotivated if they go back down the scales?

When negative change occurs, workers are sometimes concerned that seeing this so clearly on the Star will demotivate young people. Usually, however, the young person is only too aware that they have moved further away from their goal, and acknowledging this can be a helpful first step in reversing that trend. In these instances, it can be helpful to remind them that change is difficult and that it isn't necessarily a linear process.

It is also possible that young people may choose a lower scale point in a review than in an initial assessment. This can be a positive step that is indicative of greater self-awareness and trust. It is therefore important to identify why their readings are showing a decrease and whether this is a slip-back or the result of greater self-awareness and honesty.

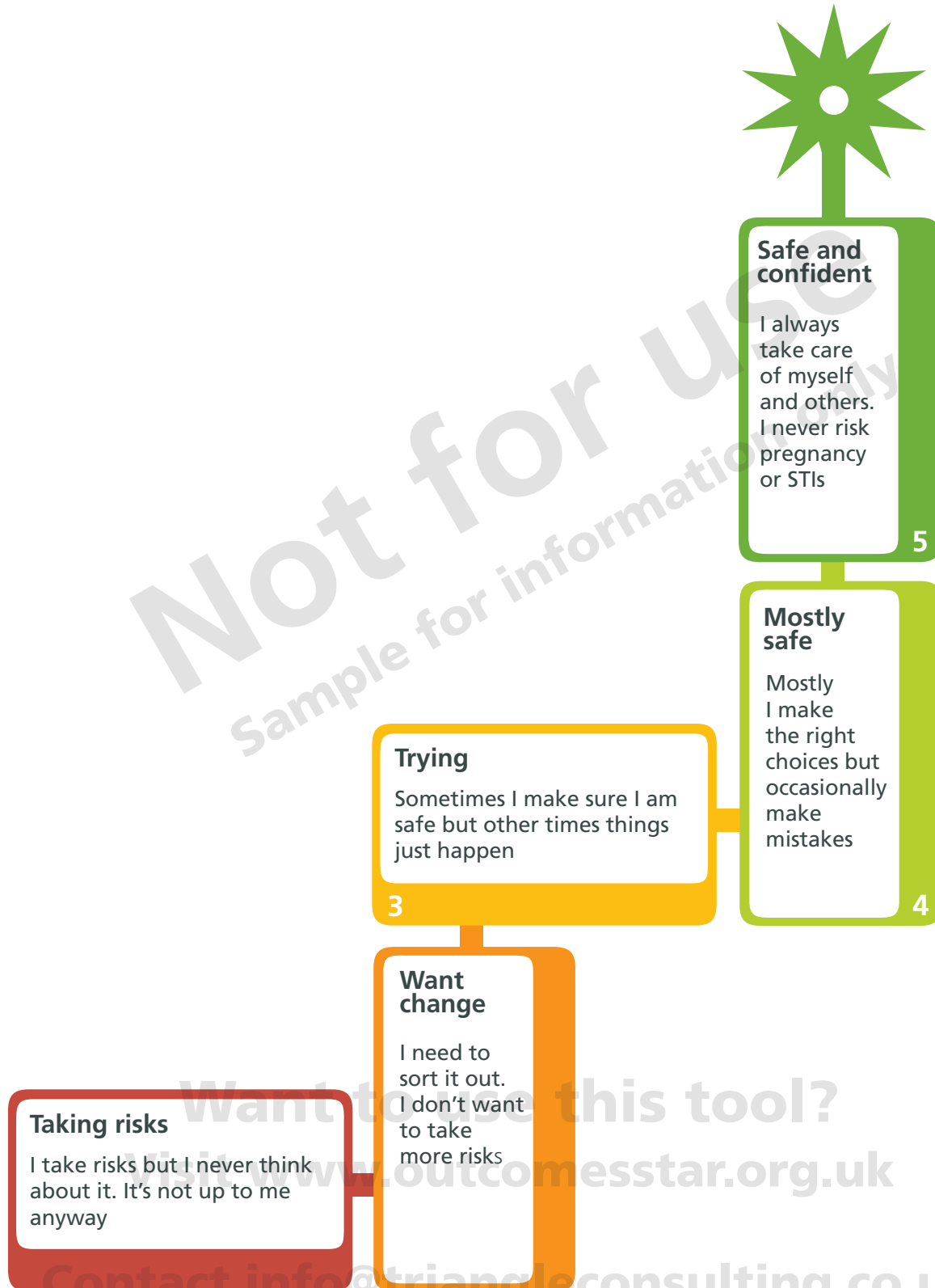
What if a young person has limited English or literacy in English?

The Star materials are designed to be used flexibly. If a young person's English is limited, you may need to paraphrase the text in simplified language to support their understanding. If a young person has limited literacy in English, you could use the Star Chart and explain the five stages verbally. You could read out the descriptions of the stages you feel they are closest to at that time.

If you have a question that isn't answered here, or you have any concerns about the Sexual Health Star, you are encouraged to raise them with your manager. It is important that you have the chance to discuss your views, as the Star will only work well for you and the young people you work with if you feel comfortable using it.

Part 2: Journey of Change and detailed scales

The Journey of Change



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1 Alcohol and drugs

This scale is about how well you look after your safety and take responsibility for yourself and your behaviour. It includes avoiding risky situations like getting out of it on alcohol and drugs, and having sex with people you don't know very well.

5 Safe and confident

- You take responsibility for yourself and others
- You know your limits and stay within them
- You make sure you're safe and know when to stop if you drink or take drugs

4 Mostly safe

- You mostly stay within your limits
- Things seem under control and pretty good most of the time
- Sometimes you take risks but you learn from them

3 Trying

- You know your limits and try to stay within them but things just seem to happen
- Perhaps you make plans to avoid risky situations but you can't stick to them
- Maybe you sometimes put yourself at risk in order to avoid difficult feelings
- You may feel as though it's not just you and that other people sometimes mess things up for you

2 Want change

- You know you're putting yourself at risk and want to stop
- Perhaps you drink and take drugs a lot and are worried by some things that have happened and/or your life feels chaotic and you don't like that
- Perhaps you sometimes have sex with people and regret it the next day
- You want to feel safer and more in control, but don't feel able to make this happen

1 Taking risks

- You drink or take drugs a lot and as a result end up in risky situations
- You have sex with people you don't know very well or can't trust
- You don't care what happens
- You may be breaking the law, but you're not sure
- You are breaking the law, but you don't care

2 Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

This scale is about preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It includes understanding how they're caught, how to prevent them, how to find out if you have one and getting the treatment you need. If you're not having sex or oral sex at the moment, put yourself at 5.

5 Safe and confident

- You know about STIs
- You always use a condom unless you're in a stable relationship and know there's no risk
- You regularly get tested if there's any possibility of infection, e.g. every six months or when you change partners
- You may have an STI but you're treating it and doing all you can to prevent your partner(s) catching it if you are having sex
- Or, you don't have sex or oral sex at the moment

4 Mostly safe

- Mostly you use a condom and look after yourself and your partner(s)
- You occasionally take risks but get tested afterwards
- You always get treatment if you catch an STI

3 Trying

- You intend to use a condom but things just seem to happen
- Perhaps you plan to be safe but forget after drinking or using drugs
- Perhaps you know you should carry condoms but don't always plan ahead
- Occasionally you get tested for STIs

2 Want change

- You know the risks but a lot of the time you don't use a condom
- You make excuses for not using a condom, e.g. the clinic was closed or it was your partner's responsibility
- Perhaps you or your partner don't like condoms so avoid using them
- You may want treatment for symptoms you have but are scared to go to the clinic or don't know what to do

1 Taking risks

- You never think or worry about the risk of catching something
- You may have symptoms of an STI but you're ignoring them
- You may not know anything about STIs and the risks to you and others
- Or, you know about STIs but don't act on your knowledge

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3 Contraception

This scale is about using contraception. If you're not having sex nor planning to, or you only have same-sex relationships, put yourself at 5 as contraception is not an issue for you.

5 Safe and confident

- You always use contraception so can enjoy sex without worrying about unplanned pregnancy
- You understand that both people need to take responsibility for contraception
- You understand the method you use, it works for you and you review it regularly
- You go for check-ups

4 Mostly safe

- You use contraception most of the time
- You've chosen a method of contraception and feel mostly OK about it
- You occasionally forget to use your method of contraception, but when this happens you get emergency contraception and it helps you remember next time

3 Trying

- You have the pill, condoms or another contraceptive but often forget to use it
- You plan to be safe but then forget, perhaps after drinking or using drugs
- You may not fully understand how your contraception works. Perhaps you're not sure what is safe and what isn't
- Perhaps you're worried about putting on weight or about other side effects of the pill and/or don't use condoms because you don't like the feel of them

2 Want change

- You would like to feel safer and know you need to sort out contraception but don't know what to do
- Perhaps you're worried about parents or others finding out, or your partner doesn't want you to use contraception and puts pressure on you
- You may often end up going for emergency contraception

1 Taking risks

- You never use contraception
- Perhaps you don't feel like it's up to you and/or you're just not bothered
- You may not know what the options are
- Maybe you think you or your partner can't get pregnant, perhaps because you/he pulls out or because it hasn't happened yet