SymfoS
Symbols   for Success

Concept note
IO2: Basic Clearing

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Concept note

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Title:	Basic Clearing – Concept note
Intellectual Output – IO 2	Basic-Clearing methodology for Symbol work
Description:	The Basic Clearing is the starting point of the SymfoS counselling approach (see SymfoS Methodology), that has to be developed completely new within this project. We need a simple, short and smart assessment tool to decide, whether a client needs only some practical information (which has to be provided by each organisation outside the project), or if there is a need for counselling on competences and resources or if there is a demand for an intense guiding process, where we may reassign to qualified advise centres. This IO will be used for train the trainer issues as well as a tool in basic assessment to identify target group, that fits best to SymfoS Method.
Partner organizations responsible for IO2:	Ballymun Job Centre, Hafelekar, Sozialwerk Düren
Researcher(s) responsible for filling in this document:	Ruth Baker, Paul Schober, Stefan Henke
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Basic Clearing

The SymfoS Project looks to establish the use of symbols as a guidance tool for young people. Not all young people will need the intense interventions that can be offered through symbols work, while others will benefit from a tailored use of this technique throughout their guidance experience. The basic clearing section of this programme has been established to provide practitioners with a quick assessment tool to establish the needs of the young person they meet. By the end of the assessment practitioners will have decided, in conjunction with the young person, the need level of the client and if the use of symbols is applicable to them.

In the SymfoS programme we distinguish between the following categories of need:
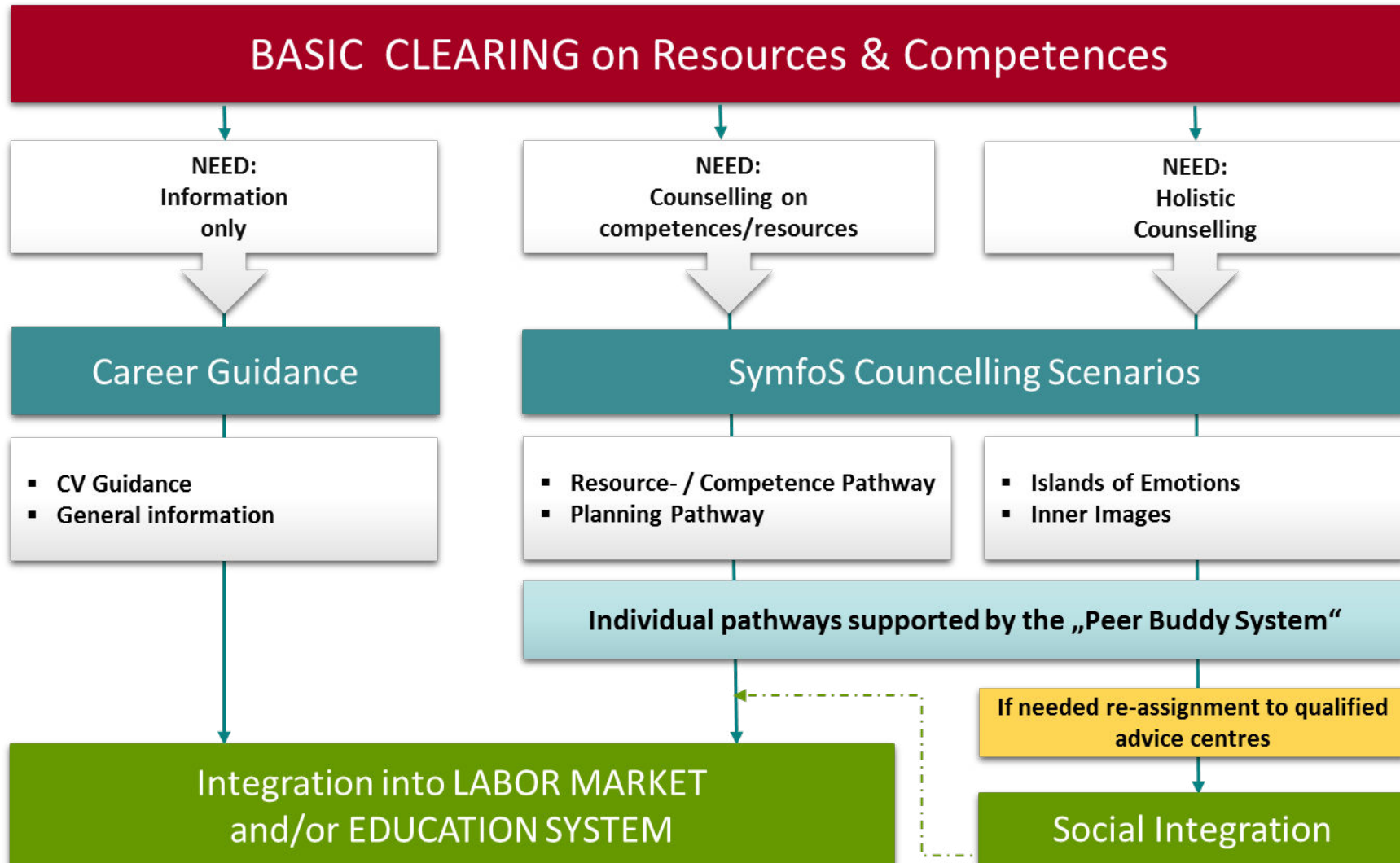
- Need 1: Information only. These clients are job ready and require limited individual counselling
- Need 2: Counselling on competencies/resources. These clients require more detailed career guidance counselling related to a specific area or barrier, for example access to appropriate training course.
- Need 3: Holistic counselling. These clients have multiple barriers and require intense holistic counselling and intervention before they can be reintroduced to the labour market. There might be a reassignment to specialised advice centres.

Category 1 clients do not require further symbols intervention.

Category2 clients can be brought through further aspects of the career and education counselling process in order to address their strengths and barriers.

Category 3 clients can profit from symbol work to clarify their main areas of further development before they are able to step into the career counselling process. A reassignment to specialised advice centres could be an option (starting assessment for a Case Management process).

Below is a visual representation of the Counselling Process (Figure 1).

Counselling Process

BASIC CLEARING on Resources & Competences

NEED: Information only	NEED: Counselling on competences/resources	NEED: Holistic Counselling

Career Guidance

SymfoS Councelling Scenarios

- CV Guidance
- General information

- Resource- / Competence Pathway
- Planning Pathway

- Islands of Emotions
- Inner Images

Individual pathways supported by the „Peer Buddy System"

If needed re-assignment to qualified advice centres

Integration into LABOR MARKET and/or EDUCATION SYSTEM

Social Integration

4

Basic clearing methodology

Figure 2: Work pad for basic clearing

The work pad is structured like an atom, with a goal at the centre and relevant aspects of the young person's life surrounding it.
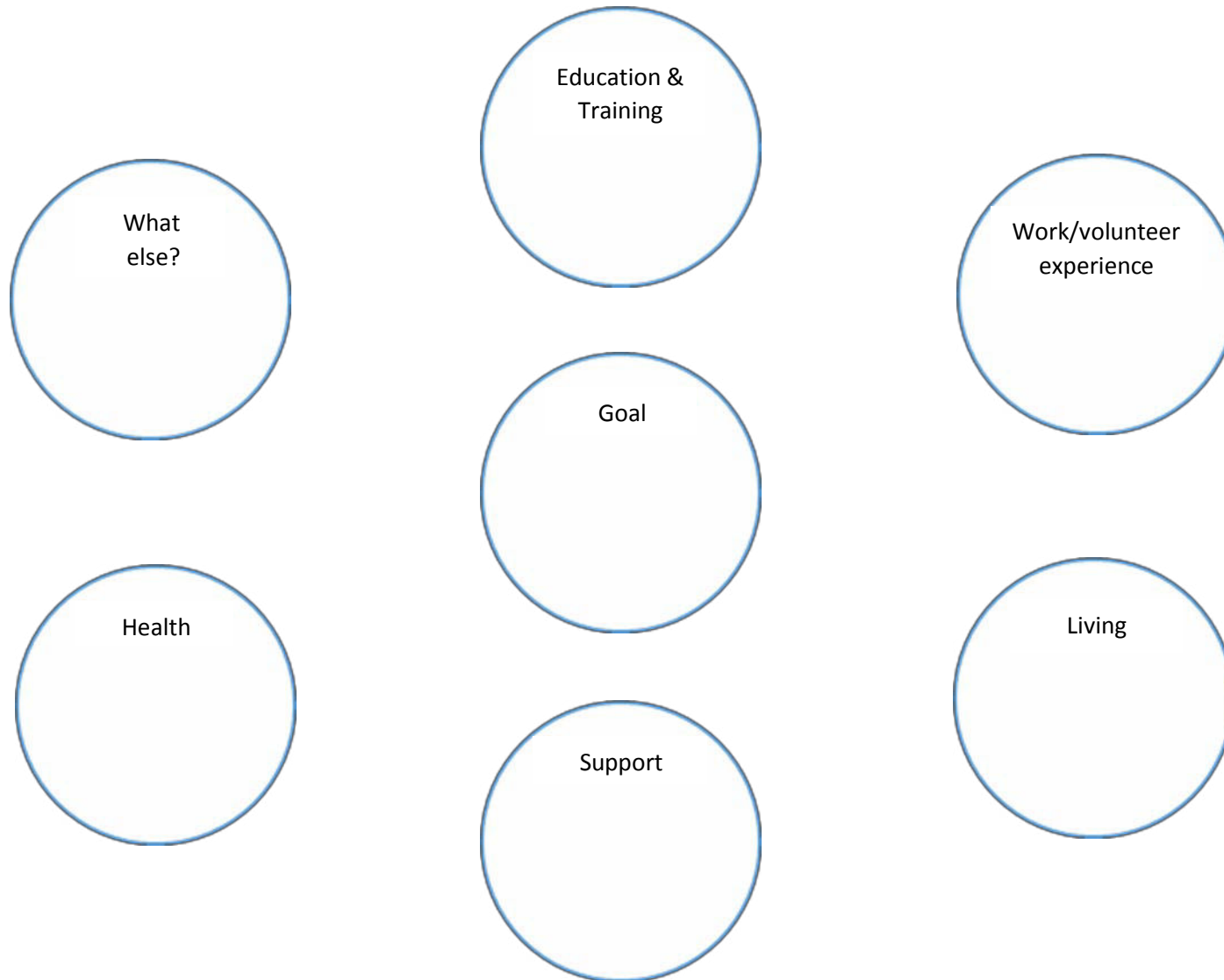
Figure 3: Aspects for basic clearing

I.)   Starting point: Goal setting

The young person discloses their goal to the practitioner, chooses a symbol for their goal and puts it on the centre of the page. In some cases, the practitioner and the client will have to clarify or reframe this aim, if it seems too unclear or implausible.

II.)   Choosing symbols for each aspect

As the young person works through the sheet they select symbols that they feel represent each of the areas on the page relevant to their own lives. In some cases, clients may leave some areas without a symbol, which also gives certain information.

Figure 4: Symbols chosen for each aspect

III.)   Evaluate the situation in each area

To evaluate each area, the young person is invited by the practitioner to assess his personal situation in each area. To make this visible, the young person then chooses to lay pathways between each symbol and their goal; either solid ground, thick ice or thin ice.

- Solid ground; I feel very stable and safe here

- Thick Ice; I feel somewhat stable and safe but I feel a little wobbly

- Thin Ice; I am very shaky and the ice could break at any moment
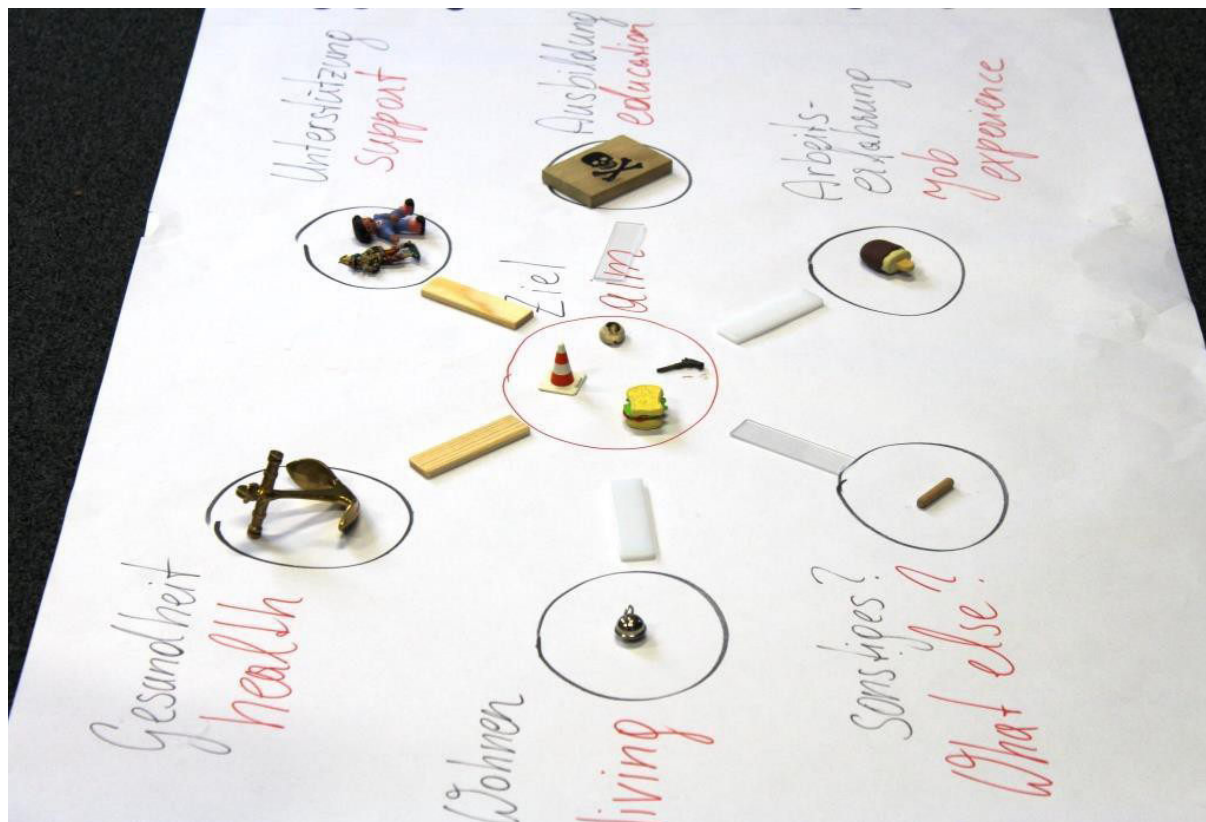
Figure 4: Evaluation Pathways

Figure 5: Symbols and evaluation pathways on the work pad

IV.) Counselling session

1. Presentation
The client presents the heading/ topic of his presentation
He talks about what he has displayed. The client always states which symbol he is talking about. (e.g. "this hand stands for...")

The practitioner listens carefully to what is being told. She is aware of the client's presence. While he is speaking, the practitioner observes his gestures, mimicry, posture, breathing, the pitch of her voice. Does he show emotions, does he touch a symbol, which one?

2. Factual questions
The practitioner asks factual questions. These questions only refer to the symbols, to "what is visible". No "why"- or "how come"-questions are asked. This is not about interpretation but understanding only.

The client gives answers to the factual questions.

3. Perception
The practitioner addresses the client directly. She describes everything she has perceived and everything she has observed while she was told the story. If someone detects emotions, she should be able to explain how they were perceived. (Mimicry, gestures, pitch of the voice etc.)

The client listens attentively.

4. Interpretation
The practitioner talks about the client. She is thinking aloud, asking questions like "What is the problem?", "What should be different?", "What would he want to solve, understand, do?", "Where could be difficulties? Where would there not be difficulties?"

The client listens attentively and does not respond for now.

5. Agreement on actions

When the practitioner is finished "thinking aloud", the client talks about his thoughts regarding the considerations of the practitioner.

What is true from his point of view? What is not? Where are his insecurities? Are there doubts? What does he like to hear? What does he not like to hear? What is especially important from the things said? Where would he like to begin?

This phase leads into a discussion between client and practitioner about the support needed and further steps for the client to reach his goal. At the end, the client should be committed to agreed actions.

Figure 6: Counselling process

I.) Filling Action plan

The practitioner can address the action agreement through the action plan. Together, the client and practitioner can review what strengths or barriers each area presents in relation to their goal and create a complete action plan based on this.

The action plan allows the client and the practitioner to correctly identify the level of intervention that is required after the basic clearing assessment. Relying on their professional training, practitioners can review the action plan and establish what category of support is required for the client moving forward; information, guidance or holistic support. A template of the action plan is available with this document.

The basic clearing model can be carried out on a one to one basis or in a group setting. The group setting can allow for extra interpretation and feedback from group members for the client. This can be enlightening for some clients and provide additional insight and support. Some clients however may find this uncomfortable and are more suited to the one to one interaction. The practitioner should use their knowledge and training to decide which setting suits a client's needs best.

Action Plan

Goal:

Area	Strength/Barrier
Education	
Career	
Living	
Support	
How are you?	
What else? Please elaborate	

Actionplan

Action 1:	
Action 2:	
Action 3	

Level of intervention	O Information O Career counselling O holistic support in the following area: _____

Case Study

- Name of the client: Pablo (Name changed)
- Basic data of the client: 17 year old student, living with parents, one to one setting
- Name of intervention: Basic Clearing

Goal setting- His goal is to work in the multi-media field. He is particularly interested in working as a photographer.

Starting point: Goal setting

Pablo's goal is to work in the multi-media field. He is particularly interested in working as a photographer.
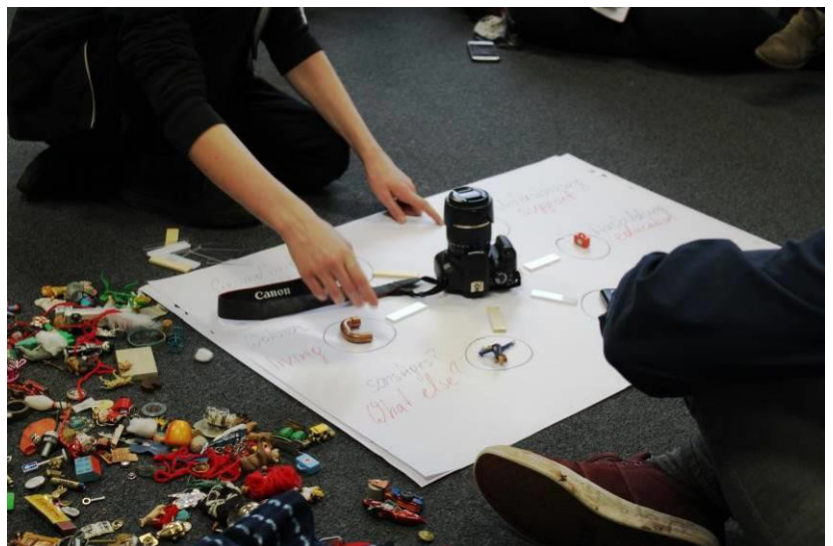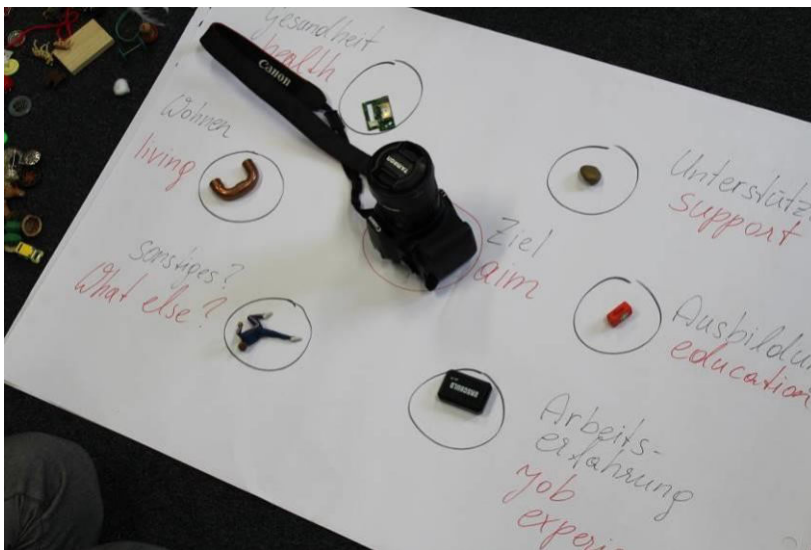

Figure 7: Basic clearing – case study Pablo

1. Presentation:

Pablo placed a camera on the circle representing his goal. He explained that he would like to work as a photographer. He talked about working with mechanical things with his Dad at home. He likes sports, break dancing and spending time with his friends. He said he is in good health and receives support and advice from his friends. He attends 10th grade and feels good about his education so far. He did two internships, one in a kindergarten and the one a shop. He lost his last internship. Pablo expressed a less stable connection with his living circumstances, job experience, and education. He said that his brother may move out or that the family may have to move house. He expressed a desire to do A grade in school but wasn't confident he could do it. Getting into A grade depends on achieving good exam grades, especially in Maths. He said he has to do an internship next year, in a social environment setting like a Youth centre.

2. Factual questions: Yes

3. Perception (without evaluation, interpretation…)

Pablo sat in a stable position on the floor. He looked directly at the counsellor during the intervention. He touched the camera when speaking about his goal of working as a photographer. He pointed and touched the other symbols when talking about the themes. He moved his hands about a little and spoke in a clear voice. He smiled when he spoke about helping his Dad and spending time with his friends and dancing. He was animated when he spoke about working in the multi-media field.

4. Interpretation/Suggestions

Because he has an uncle who is a teacher it was suggested he could ask his uncle to help him get better grades in Maths. In order to secure an internship place he could ask the manager where he completed his last placement if she knew somewhere he could do the internship.

5. Agreement & action-plan

He said he would ask his uncle to help him with Maths. Pablo said he would ask his boss where he did the previous internship if she would ask around for a place for him. The practitioner said that he would talk to Pablo about it in school. Pablo agreed that he would ask the previous boss. He agreed to arrange a time to discuss it with her. He agreed to do it within the next week.

Case Study: Pablos Action Plan

Goal: *become a photographer (working in multimedia area)*

Area	Strength/Barrier
Education & Training	*Strengths: Good connection with his father, likes to go to school, already had two internships*
Work/volunteer experience	
Living	
Support	*Barriers: few supports in tuition, lack of self esteem, family probably has to move house*
Health	
What else? Please elaborate	

Actionplan

Action 1:	*Ask uncle for private tutoring next Saturday (March 25th)*
Action 2:	*Ask previous boss for support in getting next internship end of next week (March 31st)*
Action 3	*Next Career counselling session April 11th, 9.15 am*

Level of intervention	O Information **X** Career Counselling O holistic support in the following area: ---

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