



# TRUE GRIT





# TRUE GRIT

## OVERVIEW

**TRUE GRIT** is a course designed for boys aged between 10–15 years who demonstrate leadership potential but are making poor decisions regarding their school life. Delivered in a fun, relational and proactive way, the course provides holistic support and meets the personal, social and learning needs of students..

**TRUE GRIT** helps students develop confidence, set goals and build positive relationships by implementing respect, resilience and self-belief into their daily lives. True to its name, the course is all about the tenacity required to make great choices, the strength to live an exciting life without succumbing to the pressures of having to 'fit in', and the courage to dream big!

Across the eight sessions, topics covered during the course include:

- Goal setting
- Health and resilience
- Respect and teamwork
- Work ethics and integrity
- Good choices
- Safe social media



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## INTRODUCTION

### *Welcome to TRUE GRIT!*

Introduce yourself and your team (if present). Give a quick overview of the course while the 'Getting to Know You' handouts are being distributed to everyone present, including teachers and your team.

### *What is TRUE GRIT?*

TRUE GRIT is that moment where you dig deep. It's that determined voice within you that says 'not today!' when times get tough. It's the moment when a fighter picks themselves up in the middle of a contest. It's that moment when you're exhausted after a long game but still find that extra strength to keep going.

Here at TRUE GRIT, we, and your teachers, believe each of you is wonderfully unique and mysteriously complex ... and that's a great thing! We think each of you has potential inside that can overcome any challenge that comes your way. We think you can dream big and inside each of you is a future world-changing leader, regardless of what career you choose.

Over the next seven weeks, we'll learn how to make great choices and succeed in life, no matter the obstacles. .

Explain to the students that TRUE GRIT is a safe place where all participants are wonderfully unique and mysteriously complex. As a result, everyone will have different goals and answers, and even though everyone might not agree with the other, they will still show respect. Come up with a way for the group to acknowledge when someone does something great or requires encouragement. Clarify rules with the participants regarding the use of mobile phones during the sessions.



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## SESSION 1 ... GOALS!

*Today we're going to discuss goals!*

***If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.***

**–Yogi Berra (Former American baseball player and coach)**

Hand out a goal-setting sheet and discuss/reflect on the students' (and leaders') answers with the group.

Discuss the following:

- If you don't set goals, you can't identify the steps you need to take to reach those goals.
- Dream big! You can achieve more than you believe you can!

Encourage group members to share stories of their achievements.

### **Extreme Frisbee**

Head outside to play extreme Frisbee. Each team gets five touches of the Frisbee to advance it down the field. You score by throwing the Frisbee into the goal. You cannot run with the Frisbee and if you drop it, it's a handover. The aim of the game is to skilfully pass the Frisbee around the field to team-mates and score goals.

**Equipment required:** Frisbee, marker cones, goal-setting sheet and 'getting to know you' sheet.



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## WEEK 2

## .....HEALTH AND RESLIENCE

Start with a brief chat about how everyone's week has been.  
Celebrate any good news.

Today, we're talking about being healthy and having resilience.

**Question:**

What would you say makes someone healthy? According to the World Health Organisation, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Did you know?

- On average, men die six years earlier than women.
- Fifty per cent of men are overweight.
- Men are more likely to have heart disease and cancer.
- Men are three times more likely to suicide than women.

We need to be healthy physically and mentally. To do this we need to:

- Exercise daily.
- Build positive relationships – find people we can talk with about life issues.
- Establish positive lifestyle habits – adopt habits that are good for the mind and body. A balanced nutritious diet can be just as important as daily exercise. Alcohol and drug abuse have a range of negative consequences for our health.

**Question:** So thinking about these things, what would you rate your health out of ten (one being the worst and ten being the best)?

Discuss responses.

### The Workout

On either the oval or a large open area of the classroom, ask the group to pair up. Have each pair move to a separate station that is identified by marker cones. Change stations every few minutes.

**Station 1:** Side plank

**Station 3:** Sit-ups

**Station 2:** Push-ups

**Station 4:** Star jumps



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After a full rotation, change stations (depending on the enthusiasm level of the participants) and provide different options (for example, running on the spot, planking, skipping and burpees). Complete second rotation.

**Question:** During the exercises, what was the hardest station? Was there a time where you wanted to give up? (Give students time to answer.)

Resilience is the ability to recover quickly from illness, change or misfortune and the persistence to keep going when it's hard. It's also known as buoyancy. Imagine a buoy on an ocean. When the seas are rough, the buoy rises and falls with the waves. When we build resilience in our lives, we can overcome the waves that life may throw at us – just like a buoy. Overcoming can take grit and determination.

**Question:** Can you think of a time in your life when you showed resilience? (TRUE GRIT leader to share personal stories.) (Give students time to answer.)

••• ***He's a million rubber bands in his resilience.***

–Alan K Simpson (American politician and historian)

The above quote is how Simpson once described a man he knew. To say that someone is a million rubber bands when describing their ability to overcome, is an indication of how strong they are in the face of challenges!

Being healthy and having resilience go together. When we attempt something hard, we can either push on or give up. That includes exercise, school, relationships and how we feel and think.

**Equipment required:** An open space/outdoor area and lots of encouragement.



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## WEEK 3 ..... THE ECONOMY OF RESPECT

This week, there is the opportunity to bring a guest speaker to the session. It could be someone who is respected in the community, especially by the students, for example, a sporting personality or someone with an interesting job.

If a guest is being brought along, please ask them to share:

- their testimony of respect in their life
- some key stories about respect.

Start with a brief chat about how the group's week has been.

Celebrate any good news.

This week's topic is all about respect.

**Question:** What do you guys think respect is?

The crazy thing about respect is that it's not something you can walk into a room and expect as a right. It's something that is earned. There's an economy to respect – you won't get any unless you first give it. (Give students time to answer.)

### Exercise

Give each student a small piece of paper and ask them to draw a line across the middle of it. Get them to write the name of someone they respect above the line, for example, a sportsperson, family member, teacher or friend, and the name of someone they don't respect below the line. Discuss the responses and the reasons behind them.

### Morning Tea Game

Set up a morning tea with small amounts of different tasting things, for example, corn chips and salsa, chocolate, cheese and biscuits, or twiggly sticks. Break the group (if large) into two smaller groups and allow each member to choose one plate of food and bring it back to the group. Discuss how people like or dislike and ultimately choose different things. Encourage participants to be accepting of each other's choices. Spend the next 10 minutes enjoying the food and company.



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*However you wish to be treated by others  
is how you should treat everyone else.*

—Luke 6:31 (TPT)

## Discussion points

- Respect is about accepting other people's opinions, perspectives and cultures.
- If you act with respect towards someone, what do you think will happen in return?

*Equipment required:* Morning tea supplies – catering to various dietary requirements.



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## WEEK 4 ..... WORK, WORK, WORK!

Start with a brief chat about how the group's week has been. Celebrate any good news.

Discuss what the group has learned and talked about over the past few weeks. A good way to jog their memory is to mention the games and interactions used to connect them to the topic.

### **True, True, False Game**

In this game each person gets a turn at telling the group three things about themselves. Two of them are true and one needs to be a lie. The other members of the group must then guess which was the lie. The aim of the game is to be convincing and trick people into not being able to pick which statement was a lie.

**Question:** What does the word integrity mean to you?

(Give students time to answer.)

Integrity is a concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations and outcomes. It's about being honest in all situations and accepting responsibility for your behaviour.

Have you ever had a friend who regularly let you down? It could be not turning up after you had made plans to meet, or often bailing on arrangements. A person with integrity keeps their word –they act consistently and are not flaky.

**Question:** Why would integrity be important to an employer?

(Give students time to answer.)

Integrity goes hand in hand with your work ethic and employment. When you get a job, your boss will want to be able to trust you and know that the job is getting done well even when they're not present.

In our first session, we talked about planning and having goals. It is important to work towards a career or industry that we desire to be involved in.



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## Activity

Use a whiteboard for this activity. Ask participants to come up with a long list of jobs. Accept all answers. Then, on a small piece of coloured paper, ask each person to choose a career or job they are interested in and write it at the top of their paper.

Now ask participants to swap their piece of paper with someone in the group. Under the job, ask them to write three steps that would need to be taken to get the job. For example, if someone wrote 'electrician':

- School certificate or Year 10 equivalent
- Apply for apprenticeships and attend interviews until successful
- Complete all relevant TAFE courses, as well as three to four years of on-the-job training.

These days, people usually switch careers between three and seven times in their lifetime. Share stories of your career journey.

**Question:** Who has attended a job interview? What are some of the key things you need when heading to a job interview?

(Give students time to answer.)

- Have an appealing and organised resume with up-to-date references
- Dress appropriately and neatly to make a great first impression
- Be confident and be yourself
- Prepare and practice common interview questions.

(If time permits, refer to '10 Sample Interview Questions' sheet.)

*Equipment required:* Whiteboard and markers, coloured paper, pens.



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## WEEK 5 ..... WISE CHOICES

Start by asking how the group's week has been. Celebrate any good news.

Discuss what the group has learned and talked about over the past few weeks. A good way to jog their memory is to mention the games and interactions used to connect them to the topic.

**Question:** What does the word hindsight mean to you?  
(Give students time to answer.)

Hindsight is the understanding of a situation or event after it has occurred.

Give an example of when you made (or had an opportunity to make) a decision and, looking back on it, you realised that it was (or was going to be) a bad choice.

**It is easy to be wise after the event**

—Arthur Conan Doyle (author of *Sherlock Holmes*)

Teenagers are faced with many decisions and are often pressured to make them way too early.

**Question:** What are some of the hard decisions you have faced? Have you ever made a decision and regretted it later? (Give students time to answer.)

Write responses of hard decisions on a whiteboard.

Possible conversation starter statistics:

- The average age at which Australians have their first alcoholic drink is 16.2
- The average age at which Australians try their first cigarette is 16.6
- The average age at which Australians have tried an illicit drug is 19.9
- The average age at which Australians lose their virginity is 17

**Question:** Based on the decisions you have made (or the stats above), what are some potential consequences you can face?  
(Give students time to answer.)

\* Arthur Conan Doyle is the author of *Sherlock Holmes*.



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Next to the list of responses on the board, make two columns: one for unwise decisions (discuss why they are unwise) and another for wise decisions (discuss why they are a better option).

**Steadfast:** Resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering.

We believe that the world needs more steadfast people. Each of you has the strength to be confident and steadfast in your decision making.

There are times when it's going to be tough, but you all have the strength that will allow you to make wise choices when faced with peer pressure, or if you find yourself caught up in a moment of uncontrolled hormones or a brain snap in the playground.

## Activity

Play a game of 'Stand Firm'. You will need to put a piece of rope (approximately two metres long) on the ground, effectively creating two 'territories'.

Divide the group into two and then allocate each group a territory. Ask for one volunteer person from each territory.

Ask the volunteers to place their right foot on the rope, making sure it touches their opponent's foot. Their left foot can be placed anywhere, but it must remain stationary. The opponents must hold hands and see who can, by pushing or pulling, cause the other to move their feet.

Once the volunteers have had a turn, ask everyone to pair up with an opponent from the other team and have a turn. Once each pair has a winner, ask: "Who managed to stand firm?"

**Question:** What are some things that have helped you stand firm when you've faced a hard decision? Allow the group to share, then offer the following tips:

1. Know what you stand for. Decide what your response will be before you face the situation. There is a saying that goes like this: "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."

Working out what you stand for will help you make better decisions in the heat of the moment.

2. Make a 'pros and cons' list. List the 'pros' (positives) and 'cons' (negatives) of a particular decision you've had to make. This helps you to stop and think through the outcomes.

3. Speak to a 'safe' adult. When you have a big or hard decision to make, it can help to talk to an adult you trust. This could be a parent, youth group leader, teacher or family friend.

*Equipment required:* Whiteboard and markers, coloured paper, pens.



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## WEEK 6

## .....REAL RELATIONSHIPS

Start with a brief chat about how the group's week has been.  
Celebrate any good news.

**Question:** What does a relationship mean to you? (Give students time to answer.)

Relationship: how two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected. A relationship doesn't just mean dating or married, it's all interactions we have with each other. From classmates, friendships, family, all the way to boyfriends, girlfriends and partners – relationships are all around us.

**Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It's not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything.**

—Muhammad Ali (world champion boxer of the 1960s and '70s)

**Questions:** What are some good qualities you would want in a friendship? What are some bad qualities you have found in your current friendships? (Give students time to answer.)

On a whiteboard, make a list of good and bad qualities in a friendship. Discuss if there are any qualities in the bad column that the group may find in their current friendships. Ask why those qualities are tolerated.

Psychologists have researched human nature and how one of our primary desires is to have a sense of belonging. Quite often we will tolerate negative things in relationships to maintain that sense of belonging. Those negative qualities shouldn't be tolerated, especially as teens at a time when you are establishing the boundaries that will form what you will and won't tolerate in the future.

By understanding what a healthy friendship is, we can lay the foundations for all future relationships. All relationships need boundaries to be healthy and knowing what those boundaries are allows us to be steadfast when enforcing them.

*Equipment required:* Whiteboard and markers.



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## WEEK 7 .....SOCIAL MEDIA

Start with a brief chat about how the group's week has been.  
Celebrate any good news.

**Questions:** When you think of 'social media', what are the words that jump at you?  
(Give students time to answer.)

We live in an age where our lives are played out through social media and our devices. As a result, we can become desensitised to some elements that may have previously been private. While there is some merit to this, it has its fair share of downsides too. For every time we feel that one of our friends may not be doing too well, there are people who overshare so much that it makes it hard to tell if they're in genuine need or just being dramatic. We can also find it hard not to compare ourselves to someone who, on social media at least, seems to have a perfect life, when in fact it is more likely that they are only sharing the good bits.

On a whiteboard, come up with separate lists for the positive and negative ways social media can be used. Discuss ways in which social media can be unsafe (for example, sexting or exchanging nude photographs) and how this can lead to dangerous interactions and in some cases, criminal convictions. Also, discuss how the positives of social media can develop the relationships we have with friends outside social media.

The intention of social media was to build connections, but in a world of connectivity young people are feeling more disconnected than ever.  
Why do you think that is? (Give students time to answer.)

When we think of social media and the content people post, it is rarely an unfiltered version. Social media, despite what we see, is primarily a filtered and planned window into the world of others, who pick and choose what they want the world to see. In many ways, it almost seems like a standard has been set that tells us we need to show we're constantly busy, constantly looking good, constantly surrounded by people and the centre of attention. It's unrealistic and at its core is unhealthy.

Ask each student to create a list of ways they can:

- Use social media in a positive way.
- Avoid using social media.

*Equipment required:* Whiteboard and markers



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## WEEK 8 ..... WHAT MAKES YOU, YOU: AN INTRODUCTION TO 'A BETTER ME'

Start with a brief chat about how the group's week has been.  
Celebrate any good news.

Organise a celebration to acknowledge students reaching the end of **TRUE GRIT** (wait until the final chats and Appreciation Chair are finished).

Thank everyone for being part of the group and contributing to **TRUE GRIT**.  
Explain that today will be a shorter session to allow time for everyone to celebrate together.  
Discuss moments within the course that have been most helpful to the group. Ask the group if there is someone they weren't necessarily friends with before the course but, thanks to the course, have now found themselves friends. Discuss what everyone has learned about themselves during the course. Discuss moments within the course that have been most helpful to the group.

### **Appreciation Chair**

Place all chairs in a circle (if not already set out that way) and put one chair in the middle. This is the Appreciation Chair. Each student takes a turn at sitting in the Appreciation Chair while the other students throw a ball to each other at random. Whoever catches the ball must say something they appreciate about the person sitting in the Appreciation Chair. (Previously, this activity has yielded nothing but positive results and made students feel uplifted before the celebration.)

Discuss how sometimes what we think and how we view ourselves isn't always in line with how others see us. Ask if anyone was surprised by how they were described?

## THANK EVERYBODY AND **CELEBRATE!**

