**Professional Experience Placement - Stepping out of your comfort zone**

Engaging in a professional experience placement involves not only unfamiliar schools and/or centres but also meeting new colleagues and sharing a classroom space with your supervising teacher. Stepping out of your comfort zone can be scary, but it’s also vital for career progression as it provides you with opportunities to learn new skills, meet new people and get clarity about different opportunities in new environments.

Here are some practical steps you can take to move beyond your comfort zone.

**1. Start small**
Making small changes to your daily routine can help you grow your confidence and motivation to take on bigger challenges. Try a new teaching strategy, classroom management or behaviour management approaches; adjust basic routines to include innovative approaches.

**2. Question your refusal**
Always make sure you’re saying ‘no’ for the right reasons. Do you genuinely don’t have time or are you actually just feeling a bit wary about facing the unknown? Being honest with yourself (and your Supervising teacher) is key in ensuring you’re not holding yourself back.

**3. Take the leap**
Often the idea of doing something is scarier than actually doing it. If you’ve been debating on taking a certain step, think of one small action you can take to get the ball rolling and get it done. Overcoming that first hurdle can give you the confidence and motivation to keep going.

**4. Learn something new**
Learning a new skill is always a great confidence booster, so invest time in educating yourself about something you’re genuinely interested in. This can be work-related or something you enjoy in your free time. Try to scaffold the exploration of new learning strategies and teaching practices to allow reflections on what worked well in your specific placement context.

**5. Meet new people**
Meeting new people can be inspiring. Sharing perspectives and experiences may open your eyes to topics and opportunities that can set you on the path to something new and exciting. Volunteer to join industry-specific groups online. There are loads of ways to meet others.

**6. Channel positive experiences**
Reflection can be a powerful motivator, so think of the last time you tried something new and succeeded. Thinking back to positive experiences and how they expanded your comfort zone can give you that final push to get going.

Trying something different may be daunting, but it’s also what keeps work and life interesting. So, what will you do next to step out of your comfort zone?