

2025

Mindsketch
Programme



Co-funded by
the European Union



This manual captures the MindSketch program - an innovative Erasmus+ training course that brought together youth workers from across Europe to explore how creative expression can support mental wellbeing. Through eight intensive days in Bulgaria's mountain town of Bansko, participants engaged in hands-on workshops combining art therapy techniques with mental health education.

The program moved from foundational concepts (understanding mental health vs. wellbeing) through practical creative exercises (constellation mapping, emotional expression through abstract art, analyzing famous artworks through a mental health lens) to nature-based activities and vulnerable sharing experiences. Participants learned to use art as both a personal healing tool and a professional resource for working with young people.

What emerges is both a toolkit of replicable activities and a testament to how creative expression can break down barriers around mental health discussions. The manual includes detailed workshop guides, facilitator instructions, and participant reflections - making it a practical resource for youth workers seeking to integrate art-based approaches into their mental health support work.

The content balances academic understanding with experiential learning, offering evidence-based methods alongside deeply personal accounts of transformation and connection through shared creativity.

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Where the
Story begins





STARRING...

Mekabs

Ela

Julie

Liz

Nader

Irina

WEREWOLF
Liza
Liza

Mohanna

Gökçe

Ekimora

Sasha

Magi

Aigly

Dani

Alena

Carla

Lawrence

Adam

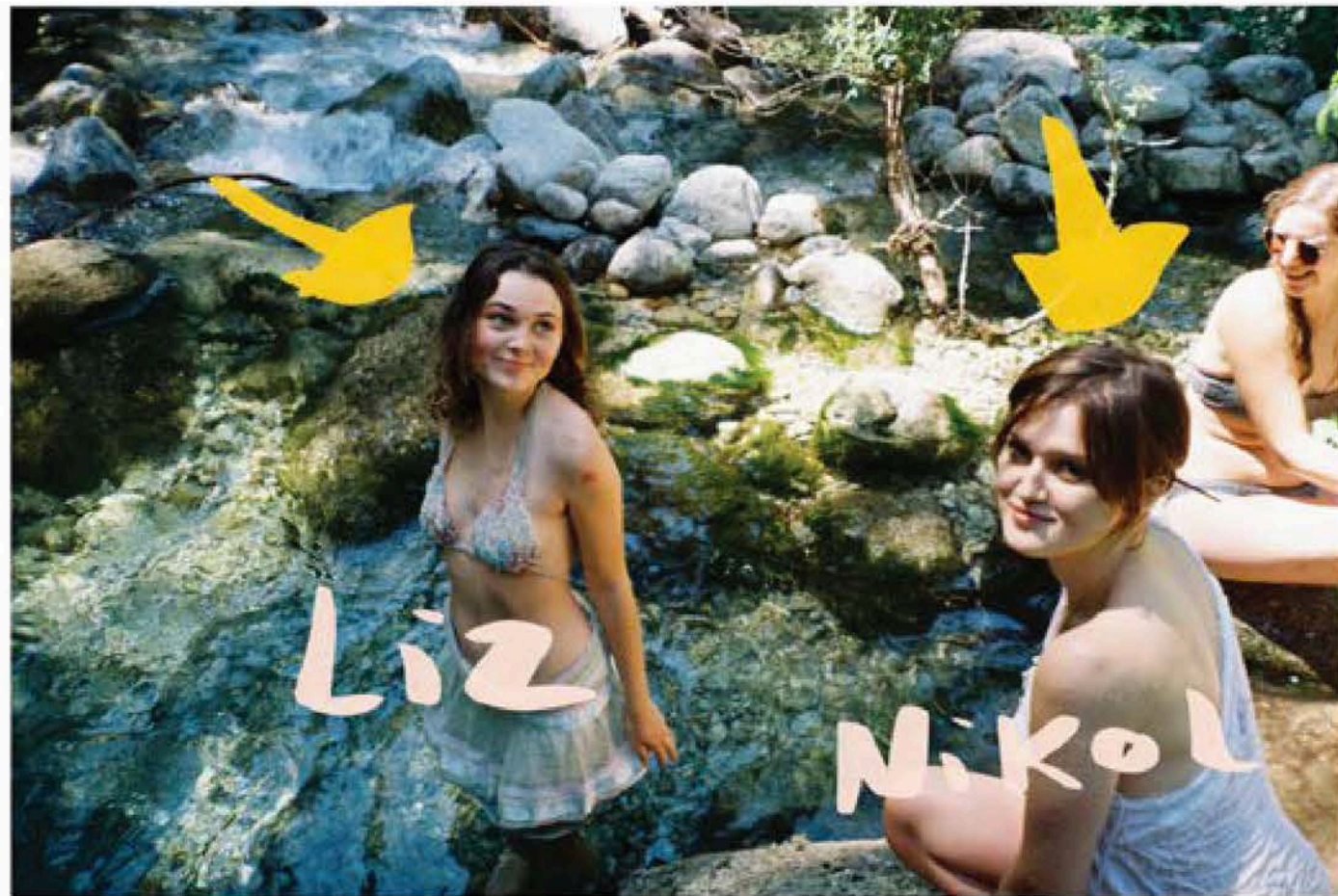
Demetres

Milica

Nikel

Hernan

Creators of



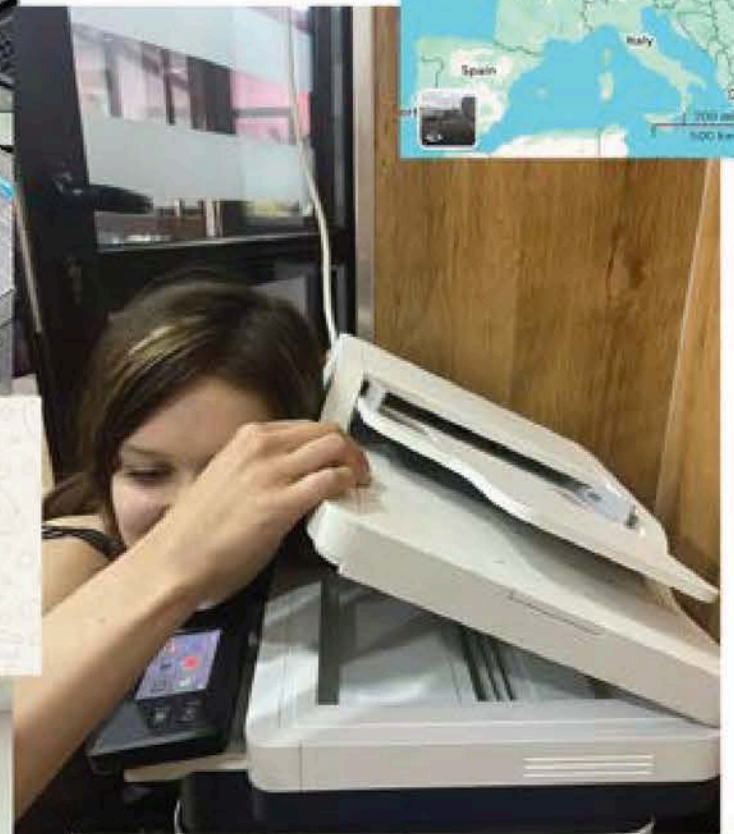
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Behind the Scenes

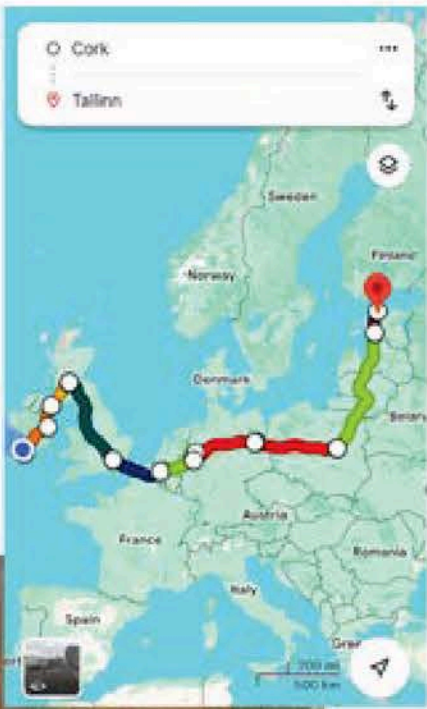


will you be at any point today
working on this amazing
breathtaking manual? 12:08

maybe we can make a call and
have live support 12:08



im a freelance designer 12:10



Introduction

Where creativity meets wellbeing
From July 6 to 16, 2025, the peaceful mountain town of Bansko, Bulgaria, became a creative and emotional haven for participants of MindSketch, a unique Erasmus+ training course designed to connect mental health and artistic expression. But what exactly is a training course under Erasmus+?

Erasmus+ is the European Union's program supporting education, training, youth, and sport across Europe. One of its key goals is to promote personal development, sense of belonging, intercultural understanding, and lifelong learning. Training courses like MindSketch are part of this mission, offering non-formal education experiences that bring people together to explore new topics, develop skills, and grow personally and professionally.

For youth workers in particular, Erasmus+ training courses offer the chance to gain new tools, perspectives, and methods that can enrich their work with young people. MindSketch did just that, equipping participants with creative, art-based approaches to open conversations about mental health, reduce stigma, and support emotional wellbeing in their communities.

Over the course of eight full training days (with a much-appreciated free day to enjoy nature), MindSketch invited youth workers and creatives to dive deep into the intersection of art and mental wellbeing. The program blended hands-on artistic workshops with thoughtful discussions, offering a safe space to unpack mental health topics and challenge the stigma often surrounding them. From expressive painting and collage to traditional chant, and visual journaling, participants explored a wide range of practices. They learned how art has supported mental wellbeing throughout history and how it can still be a powerful prevention and support tool today.

Discussing the artworks created during the sessions proved to be a deeply cathartic experience, offering a space for honest dialogue and mutual understanding beyond words. A special highlight of the experience was that participants built their own workshops based on what they had learned, meaning they left Bansko not only with inspiration but with replicable tools they could use in their own youth work practice back home. And this isn't just theory, this toolkit was born out of those lived experiences. Inside, you'll find exercises that help people reconnect with their emotions, tips on how to lead non-judgmental creative spaces, and examples of how to integrate art into your youth work practice. If you're looking for fresh ways to engage with mental health topics, or simply create more meaningful, inclusive spaces for young people, keep reading. You're in the right place.

From reflection to creation: layering the groundwork for MindSketch

On the first day of the MindSketch program, we started with something simple but incredibly meaningful: self-reflection. Before diving into the work ahead, we took a step back to look inward and understand not only ourselves but also each other. The activity was designed to help us uncover and share our personal expectations, fears, and the contributions we believed we could bring to the team.

In an evening session, each of us received three different colored stickers, one for our expectations, one for our fears, and one for our contributions. We were asked to write down our thoughts and then place all the stickers together on a large sheet of paper. Once everyone had shared, we took time to read them out loud as a group. This moment opened a valuable space for connection and transparency. It was eye-opening to see how many of us carried similar fears or had comparable hopes for the project. There was comfort in that shared experience, and it immediately started building trust among us.

But perhaps the most impactful part was seeing the wide range of contributions people brought to the table. That collage of skills and experiences revealed just how multidisciplinary our group was. Some of us came from psychology, others from artistic backgrounds, and others still from education, facilitation, or youth work. It was clear that everyone had something unique to offer, and the richness of that diversity became one of our greatest strengths. Being surrounded by people who think differently, not just in terms of expertise but in how they approach challenges and creativity, expanded our perspectives from the very beginning.

The activity around fears, expectations, and contributions didn't just help us get to know each other; it helped align us. It brought together all these different points of view while creating a sense of unity and shared direction. By making space for honest communication from the start, we laid the foundation for open collaboration throughout the program. This collective moment of reflection shaped how we would move forward not just as individuals, but as a connected team ready to build something meaningful together..

It was eye-opening to see how many of us carried similar fears or had comparable hopes for the project.



The second day of the MindSketch program began with an activity called World Café, a dynamic and participatory method designed to spark meaningful conversation and collective insight. We divided into small teams of four and rotated between five different tables, each centered around a key theme. At every table, there was a large sheet of paper with a specific prompt. As we moved from one station to the next, roughly every ten minutes, we added our thoughts, questions, and ideas to the evolving

The prompts were carefully chosen to explore the intersections of art, well-being, and youth mental health.

Beyond Words	of	Feeling
Your	the	Silence
The	to	Well-Being
Breaking		
Barriers		

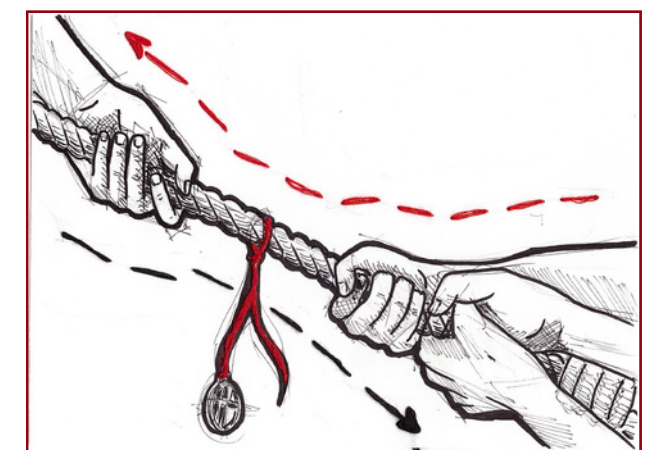
Each table encouraged a different lens on the topic, inviting us to think deeply about the emotional, professional, and social dimensions of supporting young people through creative and holistic approaches.

The goal of the World Café was to create a shared foundation, a common understanding among all participants, on how art and well-being are intertwined, and how these elements can be leveraged to address the mental health challenges faced by young people today. It was an exercise in listening, exchanging ideas, and building knowledge collectively, where every voice contributed to shaping a bigger picture. At the end of the rotation, each group presented a summary of the insights collected at their final table. These presentations became the basis for a full-group reflection, allowing us to draw connections between the different themes and deepen our understanding of the program's core purpose.

After the presentations and reflections, we transitioned into a deeply personal and creative session, one that many of us later described as one of the most meaningful parts of the day. Before arriving at MindSketch, we had all been asked to bring with us a visual piece, either a photo, drawing, or printed image in at least A5 format, that represented something we were currently struggling with in our personal lives. The goal was to explore this challenge in a thoughtful, artistic way, using creative expression as a tool for release and reflection. The session began with a short guided meditation to help us ground ourselves and tune into the emotions or situations connected to the image we brought. We were invited to notice how we were dealing with those struggles, mentally, emotionally, or physically, and then, from that space of awareness, we began to create. Using materials provided, we each crafted a personal piece of art inspired by our original image, with the intention of transforming or releasing some of the emotional weight attached to it. It wasn't about artistic skill, it was about expression. The act of creating allowed us to process, reshape, and in some cases, let go of difficult emotions. This was not only our first hands-on encounter with art and well-being in the project, but also our first quiet, internal moment, a time to work individually while knowing we were all navigating similar depths together. The session concluded with a collective reflection. People were invited to share their pieces and the stories behind them if they felt comfortable. This opened a vulnerable and respectful space, where the atmosphere of trust deepened. It marked a turning point in the project: from this moment on, it felt like the group had begun to truly connect, not just as collaborators, but as human beings with shared experiences and care for one another. This activity did more than introduce us to the connection between art and mental health. It helped set the tone for the entire program: honest, emotional, creative, and grounded in meaningful relationships.



Why we chose these days to speak about We chose to write about the first two days of MindSketch because they left a lasting impression on each of us, for different, yet deeply connected reasons. For one of us, these days stood out as a personal anchor. "I'm someone who tends to create high expectations, so having the space to reflect on what we were all hoping for, fearing, and contributing helped me ground myself. It gave me clarity and allowed me to be more realistic moving forward. Also, I've always loved beginnings. I'm full of energy at the start of things, and this was that exciting moment where everything felt open, new, and full of possibility." Another member of our team found these early days to be the most vivid in memory. "The whole program was so intense, with many layers and activities that started blending together in my mind. But the first two days were clear, meeting everyone, exchanging energy, learning how to interact. It was during this time that I started to feel like I was part of the team. That feeling of inclusion made it easier for me to open up and speak, and that meant a lot." For the third of us, the decision was rooted in the emotional depth of the experience. "In the rush of everyday life, we rarely take time to stop and truly reflect on what we feel, fear, or carry within us. The first day gave me that pause, space to look inward. The progression from personal reflection to group brainstorming, and finally to creating art from a struggle I had been going through, was incredibly powerful. It reminded me of where I've been and how far I've come, and that impact has stayed with me. Together, these reflections show just how essential those early days were, not only for setting the tone of the project, but for helping us connect with ourselves and each other in meaningful ways. They laid the emotional and creative foundation for everything that followed.





Chapter III. Draw me your State of Mind

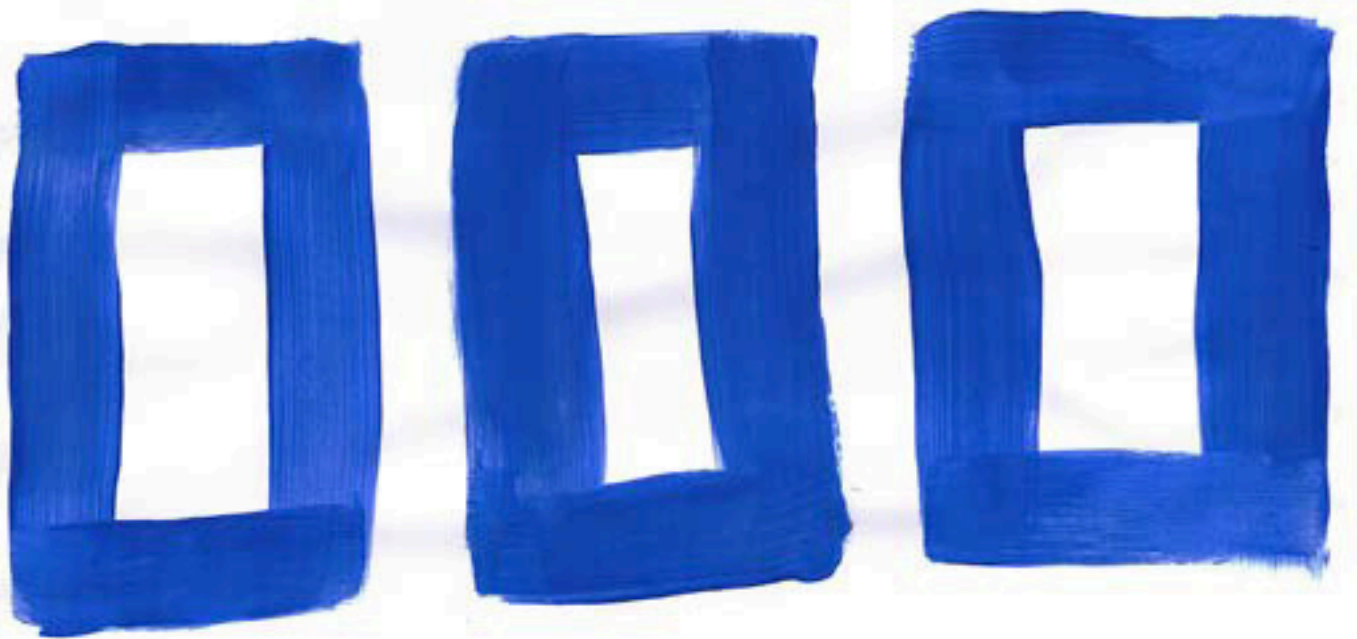
“Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community.”

-World Health Organization’

Activity 1:

Understanding Mental Health “The Ruler”

This session aimed to clarify key concepts related to mental health and mental well-being, promote critical thinking around common misconceptions, and encourage self-reflection and discussion among us. It consisted of two interactive and participatory activities, followed by group reflections and discussions.



Objective:

To challenge participants' assumptions and misconceptions about mental health through physical engagement and dialogue.

Method:

We responded to a series of statements about mental health by positioning ourselves physically on a “ruler scale” standing high “literally above chairs” if we strongly agreed, sitting or lying down on the ground if we strongly disagreed, and intermediate positions for partial agreement/disagreement.

Debrief and Reflection:

We shared our insights about what shifted in our understanding.

We explored previous misconceptions and how they changed after the activity.

We compared diverse perspectives within the group.

Statements Discussed:

- 1 “Mental health is the absence of mental illness.”
Prompted: What is mental illness?
- 2 “Mental health is about controlling our emotions.”
- 3 “If someone has a mental illness, we can say they're mentally sick or unhealthy.”
- 4 “You can have poor mental health without a formal diagnosis.”
- 5 “Society doesn't have such a big impact on our personal mental health.”
- 6 “We can improve our mental health like physical health.”
- 7 “Mental health is only relevant if something goes wrong.”
- 8 “There's still a lot of stigma around mental illness and seeking professional help.”

Activity 2: Mental Health vs. Mental Well-being

Objective:

To differentiate and connect the concepts of mental health and mental well-being.

Method:

We received individual papers with a sentence or phrase representing a part of an idea.

We had to search for the person with the complementary part of the phrase to complete its meaning.

Once matched, each pair discussed whether their completed sentence related more to mental health or mental well-being.

Discussion Points:

Shared reasoning behind each pair's decision. Explored why certain phrases fit under health vs. well-being. Highlighted common overlaps and unique aspects of each term.

Emphasized how well-being can exist even in

the presence of mental health challenges, and vice versa.

Key Takeaways

Mental health is not just the absence of illness but a broader concept involving

functionality, resilience, and societal factors.

Emotional regulation is important, but

mental health isn't solely about control. It

includes acceptance and seeking

support.

There are still

Activity 3: Artistic Mapping – Drawing a Constellation of Your Mental State

This activity invited us to reflect on our current mental health and well-being through a creative, symbolic approach. By drawing a personal constellation, we represent aspects of our internal world – cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. Just as constellations group distant stars into meaningful patterns, this exercise encourages individuals to connect different parts of themselves into a cohesive, visual "mental map." The objective was to promote self-awareness and reflection on mental health in a non-verbal, creative format, as well as to externalize and visualize inner states, offering a new perspective on our current mental well-being and which areas deserve more understanding.

We were guided through the five lenses:

Physical (Mind in body: Do I care for my body's needs?)

Emotional (Do I allow myself to feel and express emotions? How do I react when I'm overwhelmed?)

Social (Do I feel connected or lonely? Who do I turn to for support?)

Spiritual (What gives my life meaning? Do I feel connected to something beyond myself?)

Cognitive (Am I learning or challenging myself? Do I feel mentally sharp or foggy?)

Process/Methodology:

To map our constellations we were invited to use: blank paper, Colored pencils, markers, or pens. In the process of creating the constellation, we were asked to quietly reflect on things, visual images that mirror our current mental state.

Then a creative process started.

On blank paper, we began drawing our mental constellation. It may include shapes, lines, imagined stars, symbols, or even abstract forms. There are no rules, only that each element should represent some aspect of their current inner state. Distance, proximity, movement, or stillness in their design is encouraged.

In the end, in a safe, voluntary setting, we got to share their constellation and reflections in small groups. Emphasize that sharing is not required and that interpretations may remain private if preferred.



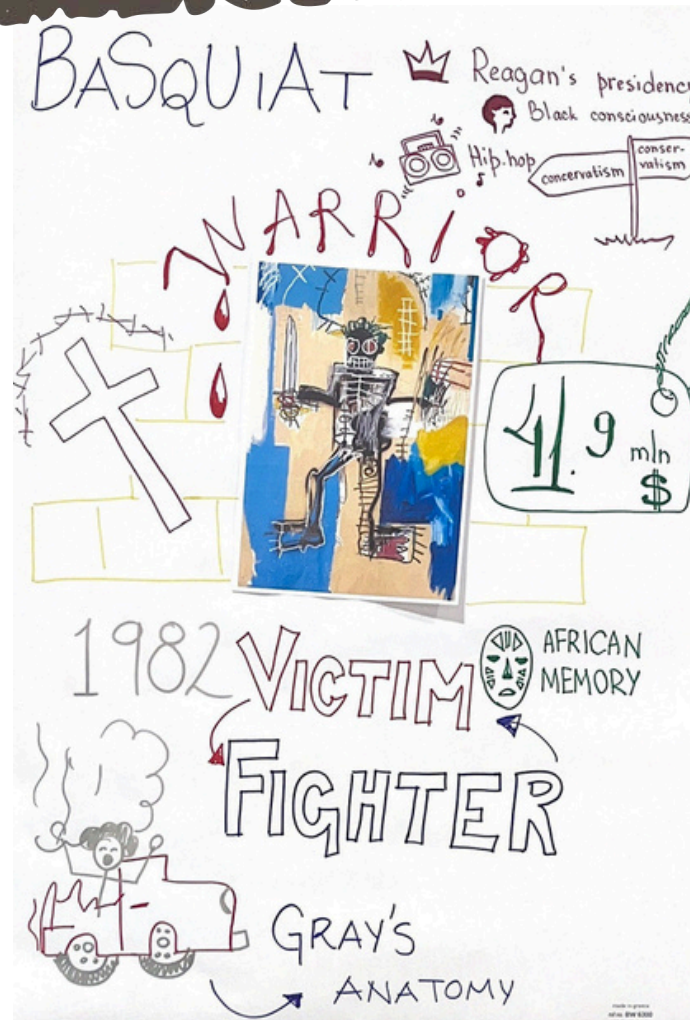
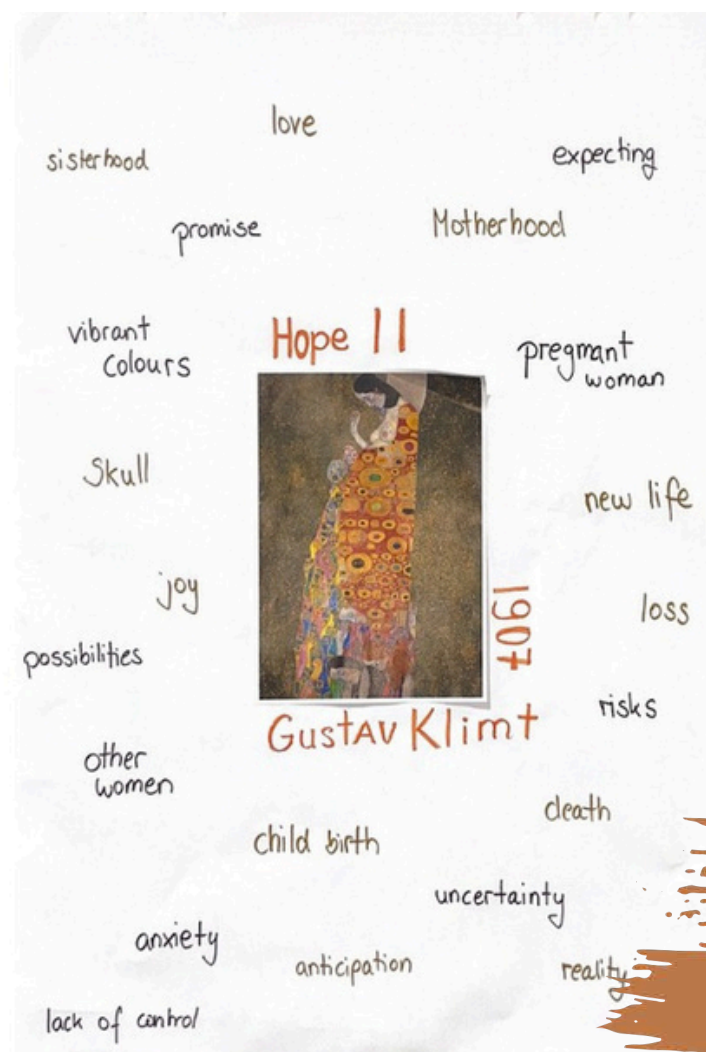
Activity 4: Explaining a piece of artwork

Objective:

At the beginning we are presented works of art, but no information about them. We have the opportunity to choose the work that resonates with us the most. The activity aimed to foster empathy, art analysis skills, and group collaboration through shared emotional themes.

Logistics:

We worked in small groups 2-5, each centered around an artwork that resonated emotionally or thematically with its members. There were more artworks than groups, allowing for personal choice and diversity in selection.



Selected artworks included:

Hope II by Gustav Klimt, Maman by Louise Bourgeois, Melancholia by Albrecht Dürer, The Scream by Edvard Munch, My Bed by Tracey Emin, I am too sad to tell you- Bas Jan Ader, No 14 - Mark Rothko

Method:

Each person chose one artwork that spoke to them emotionally or thematically and that's how the groups were formed. We were encouraged to analyze the piece by looking into: The life and experiences of the artist; The symbolism, colors, textures, and techniques used; The message or emotion conveyed through the piece



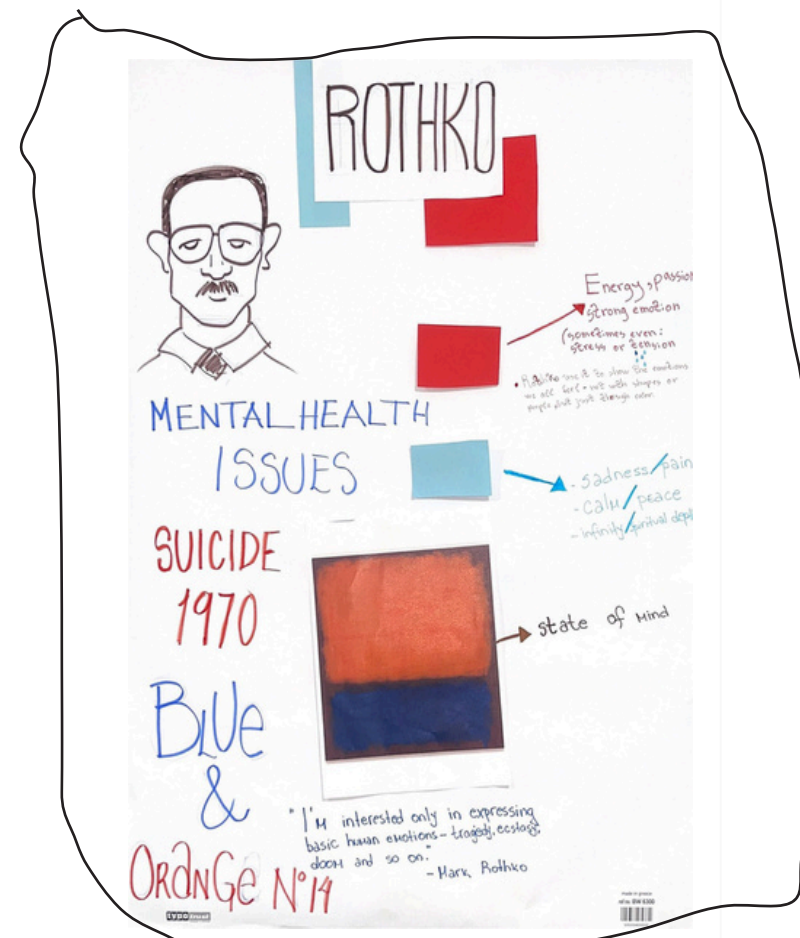
Reflections:

The activity was deeply engaging and personally meaningful because we were naturally drawn to works that spoke to their own emotions. It highlighted how art can serve as a mirror for both the artist's and the viewer's inner world. We appreciated how creative expression can be used as a healing process, and how analyzing art together can foster connection, empathy,



Process:

We browsed several artworks and selected the one that emotionally resonated with us. People with similar choices formed teams, promoting shared interest and connection. Each group investigated the artist's background, the historical or emotional context of the artwork, and its artistic elements. Groups used guiding questions to interpret how the piece communicated emotions or personal experiences. Each group presented their insights to the larger group,



Activity 5: Take an artwork and recreate it, draw inspiration, and make an answer to what this piece is saying to you

After we presented the meaning of the paintings through the lens of mental health, our emotions, and our feelings, we had to recreate the art pieces, incorporating our inner emotional state into the painting that represents us the most. The work was individual, and we had the freedom to show our creativity through art by writing a poem, drawing, or doing other activities. The idea wasn't only to connect with the painting, but also with our inner selves. Everyone represented themselves through colours, shapes, and words. Each of the artists discussed before placed a part of themselves into their work and many of these pieces carry deep meaning related to the human mental state.

An example of this is the painting Blue and Orange. The two colors symbolize different emotions in a person. Orange represents energy and passion, heat or fire, tension or even anxiety, while blue represents calmness, silence, sadness or grief, and depth. Some people chose to use only these two colors in their artwork to recreate themselves – sad or energetic, thoughtful or free. The artwork Hope II, on the other hand, represents hope, but a kind of hope that comes after death, "miscarriage," and human suffering. At the center, there is a pregnant woman symbolizing life, while around her there are skulls and crying faces – symbols of death. The golden background gives the scene a sense of spirituality, and hope survives despite the pain and sorrow.

Objectives:

1. Rediscovering the connection between mental health and art.
2. To delve into our inner world and emotions.
3. To recreate our inner world by connecting with the artwork that most describes ourselves.
4. To develop our creativity and improve our relationship with ourselves.
5. To discover the power of art and how we can find ourselves through it.

*I'm on the edge between myself and non-existence
I'm in despair and need of some assistance
My sister dies in the nearest madhouse
I see the blood, it's all pure chaos
The silence's screaming - what I feel
The constant losses - that's my deal
But that's my compass in my life
Which guides me through and past the line
The real emotions - what I gain't
You might be frightened - just don't
Faint!*



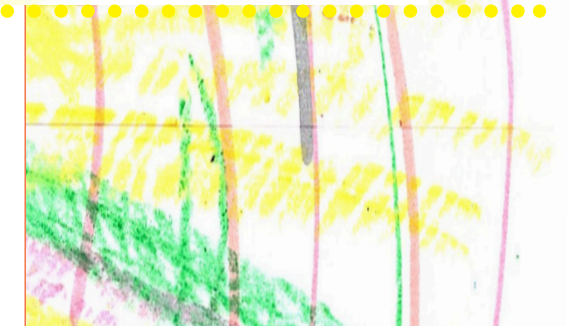
Process/Methodology

Materials needed:

- sheet of paper, colored pencils, markers, pens, laptop, or phone
The task was individual, and we had the opportunity to be alone. To be by ourselves and connect with our inner selves. Everyone chose a place where they felt safe, the lobby, or another quiet spot. Then the creative process began.



*In a dream you saw a way
to survive and you were
full of joy.
- Jenny Holzer*



Outcomes & Reflections

Everyone managed to recreate themselves, their uniqueness, and their individuality by connecting them to the artwork they felt closest to. Each piece reflected the inner world of the person who created it.

The process was creative and helped us get to know ourselves better, and each project was deep, honest, and personal.

Whoever wanted to and felt ready could share (on the next day) what their artwork represented, which painting they connected it to, and why. Moreover, the exercise showed that a painting can be recreated in different ways through different perspectives. Everyone took from it what they needed, what described them, and what they felt most connected to.



A photograph of a pond with several lily pads floating on the water. A tree trunk is visible on the left side of the frame. The water is a deep blue-grey color, and the lily pads are green with some brown spots. The background is slightly blurred, showing more lily pads and some reeds.

Expressing our feelings

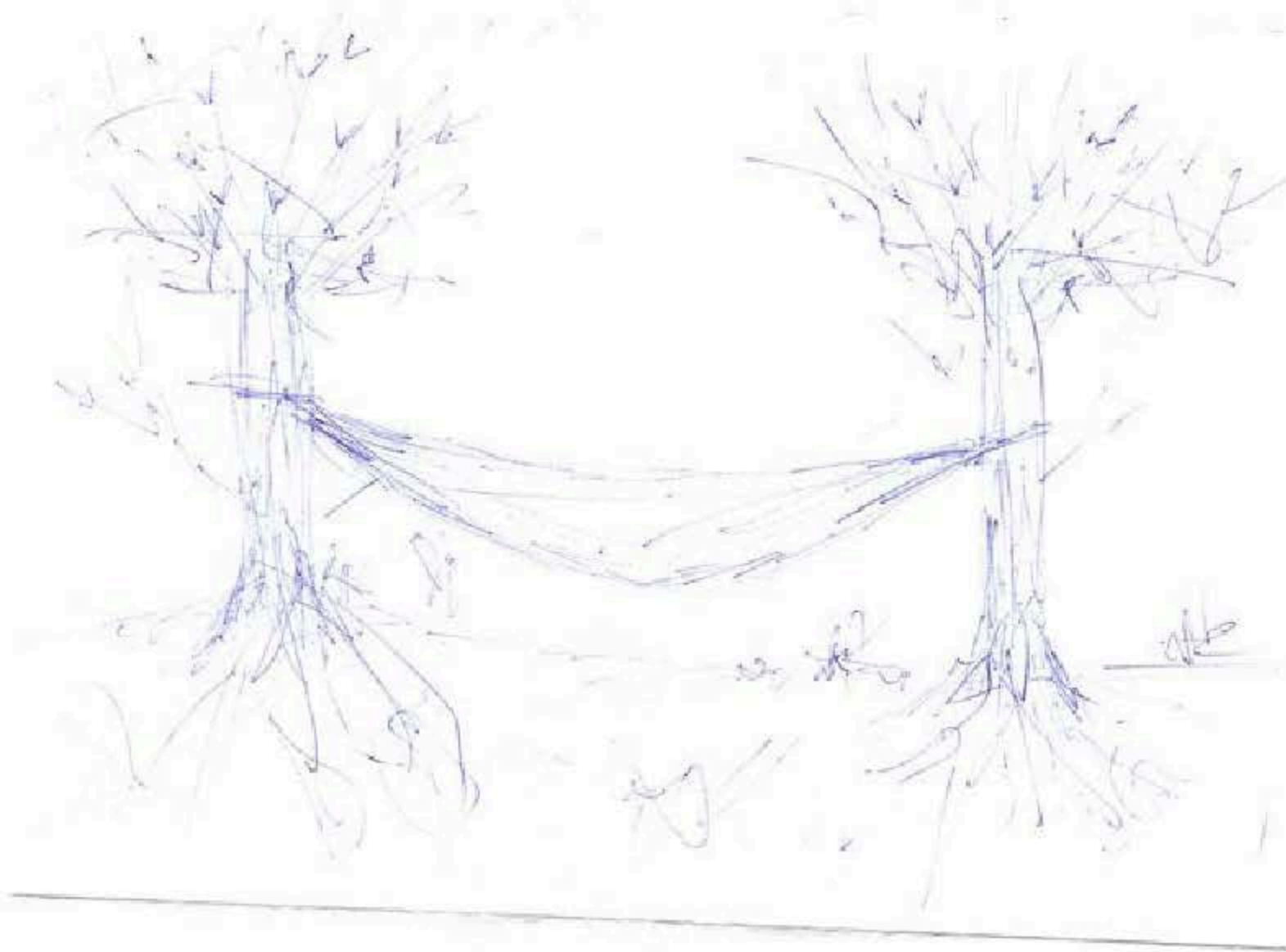
We enjoyed the day, because on this day we connected to our own feelings and combined it with artistic expression.

During the first session we discussed the differences between feelings and emotions. During these conversations we came to the conclusion that everyone had a bit of a different idea about the differences between the two. Some found that feelings were more of a short term situation while emotions are a longer lasting state of mind and often have deeper feelings and consequences. Emotions are biologically very basic, even babies are able to feel for example anger, happiness or fear. Feelings are more complex and the way we learn to distinguish them is influenced by our families and culture.

In the afternoon session we were exploring the emotions with abstract art. After a little scribble introduction, we had to draw happy, sad, fear and anger only by using abstract shapes, colours and lines. For us, the activity was relaxing and clearing as we were visualizing our emotions. After going through all emotions separately, we were drawing how we were feeling in this exact moment. We were going around in the room looking at the other pictures, sharing and discussing about the differences in our expression.

The second part of the afternoon was to get deeper into expressing our emotional state of the last period of our life on one half of the paper using abstract or non-abstract art. Then we had to choose teams, and our partner could interpret our drawing. If we wanted, we could explain our drawing and talk about how we were feeling doing it. After sharing about it, the other person got the chance to draw a response on the other half of the paper. It was beautiful to share about our inner world, and especially to also see the inner world of someone else, to connect and to react to each other. This part also gave us a new perspective. Sometimes we don't realize certain things until we share them with someone else. Their interpretation, response, or even a piece of advice can offer a different point of view or a helpful reminder for our lives. Sometimes, it's hard to clearly express how we've been feeling in the past few months. But through this creative process, we were really able to express what's going on in our lives. It also helped us reach conclusions about what we're going through and think about how we can improve, or what changes we might need to make in order to feel even better.

We felt that it was very easy and natural to draw the emotions, mainly because we didn't feel any pressure or strict instructions. We simply let our hearts flow with the emotions, and it turned out to be a very enriching and liberating experience. Through this activity, we were able to express things that are sometimes hard to say out loud or to explain to someone else. But through art, we managed to do it in a comfortable and transparent way.



Reconnecting with Nature and Each Other

cauliflower
predation
isolation
population
growth
noise
chords
still movement

Day 6



SESSION 1

For our morning session, we all decided to enjoy an outdoor activity in nature. At first, we split into groups to talk about topics and questions from our facilitator. We all felt that these discussions were really interesting, letting us dive deep into different topics and explore ideas beyond what was first expected.

Our first group talk was about how art helps us. We noticed that some of us found it easier to show what we felt through drawing instead of writing, while others connected with art through music and dancing. In the end, we all agreed that art covers so much and offers many ways to express ourselves.

Another important point we talked about was how socializing helps or benefits us. While some groups had different ideas, most of us agreed that we all need to connect with people. One group emphasized how important it is to meet others because we simply can't do everything by ourselves, and it gives us new perspectives on things. If we don't share our thoughts with others, we might stick to our own ideas, never hearing other views even if our own ideas aren't great. Another group also decided it's important to let out our thoughts and feelings to someone at some point, because keeping them inside can make those thoughts stronger and possibly lead to bad consequences. We felt that just talking to someone can do a lot, and that connecting with people in similar situations can be really helpful, making us realize we're not alone in our struggles and allowing us to face challenges together.

Our final group talk looked at what happens when we mix socializing and art, especially concerning the five areas of mental health: spiritual, social, thinking, emotional, and physical. We had very long and strong discussions, with everyone sharing their personal stories and examples—e.g. how dancing had helped us meet cool people and good friends. One actual benefit we identified from mixing socializing and art is enhanced overall well-being across all five areas of mental health.

SESSION 2

We went off by ourselves, wandering around the forest, connecting to nature and listening to the call of our chosen object. Objects varied from leaves and flowers to the flow of the river and the warmth of the hammock. We focused, connecting with our own object feeling its touch, listening to its sound, and looking at its colors and shapes. What does that object represent to us? How does it echo in our own mind's landscape? These were some of the questions we were meditating on.

Then we took paper and pen and let all of our emotions out, visualizing the object without focusing on the aesthetic of the artwork. By the end, we analyzed how our creations were connected to the mental health topic we were exploring earlier. We then discussed our issues with like-minded people with similar struggles, dissecting every feeling and line, until we felt vulnerable enough to start working on our challenges together.

SESSION 3

For the next session, we split into teams to work on a common land art* project that would be connected to the topics we were exploring in our teams (emotional, spiritual, physical, etc.). The task was to create any piece of art using the materials we could find in the surroundings and turn it into a kind of constellation. By the end of the session, we presented our works to the other teams, explaining the process of creating and how the result connected to the team's topic.

*Land art, also known as earth art, is an art movement where artists create sculptures and art installations directly within the natural landscape, utilizing natural materials like rocks, soil, and vegetation. This form of art often rejects the confines of traditional art galleries and museums, instead emphasizing the interaction between art and the environment.

The teams had really different experiences during the activity and interesting approaches to the task. Some completed it quickly, and the teamwork flowed smoothly from brainstorming to implementation. For others (e.g. the "social challenges" team), the whole process was a struggle finding common ground, defining the area for improvement, and reaching a solution. Nevertheless, in the end, we had many beautiful constellations: a temple of stones, a cemetery, a terrarium, a photo collage, and even motion videos. Nature stayed safe, and we were happy with our results.

AFTERNOON SESSION

In the afternoon, we also sang traditional Lithuanian *sutartinės* which is a unique form of polyphonic singing recognized by UNESCO. It was a special moment of connection, requiring us to listen closely and harmonize together, which created a calm, shared rhythm and a deeper group



Does anyone by any chance have a
spare swimsuit? :(14:41

Preferably for a guy hahaha 14:41



4

What we're taking home from MindSketch

As the sun set over the final day of MindSketch in Bansko, it became clear that this training course was more than just a learning experience, it was a deeply personal and transformative journey for each participant. We came from different countries, backgrounds, and levels of artistic confidence, but we shared a common goal: to better understand ourselves and others through art. Whether through painting, writing, movement, or conversation, every activity encouraged us to check in with ourselves, and express what often goes unspoken.

One participant reflected:

"I never saw myself as an artist. But we redefined what art could be: everything can be art if it holds intention. That realization opened so many doors. I allowed myself to feel, to create without pressure, and to explore mental health topics more freely. I'm leaving with a clearer head and a renewed sense of self."

For another, MindSketch was a return to something long forgotten:

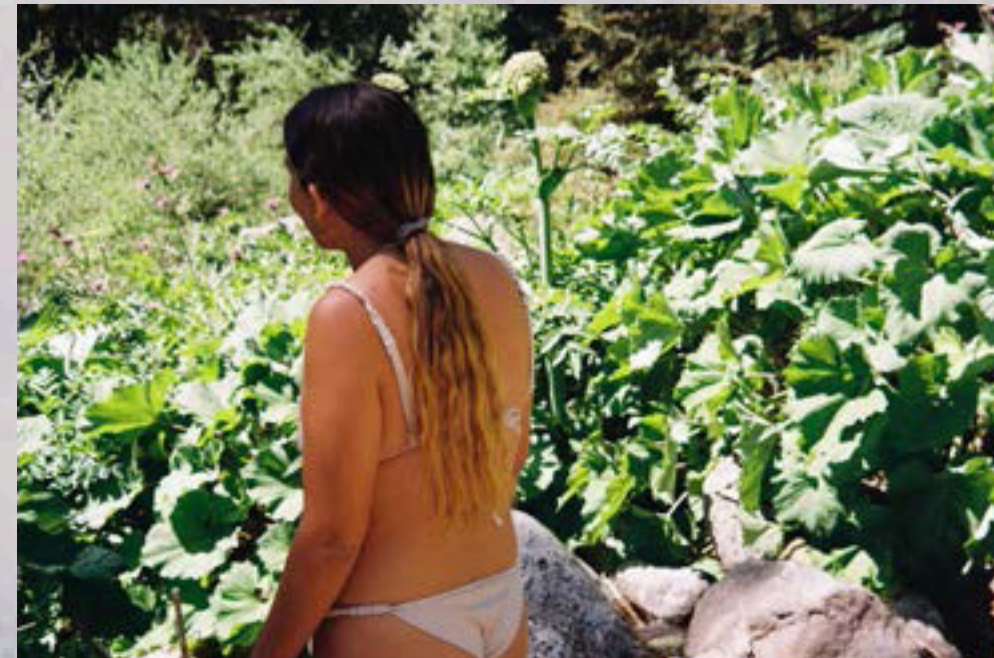
"I had lost touch with my creative side. These workshops reminded me how powerful painting can be as a way to connect with emotions that words can't reach."

And perhaps most touching was the shared sense of emotional release and belonging:

"This course helped me express my feelings in a way I never could before. I finally felt understood and safe enough to show my art and my emotions to others. It felt like lifting a weight off my shoulders."

Across all the feedback, some common threads emerged:

1. A non-judgmental environment made self expression feel safe and joyful.
2. The blend of art and mental health created space for emotional exploration that was both healing and inspiring.
3. Rediscovering creativity helped participants reconnect with parts of themselves that had been silenced, forgotten or even never allowed to be found.
4. Community played a vital role, sharing the journey with open-minded individuals fostered real connection and mutual understanding.



And as youth workers, this journey doesn't end here. It adds a powerful new layer to how we work with young people, reminding us that creativity is not a luxury but a necessity. We now return to our communities better equipped to hold space for emotional growth, to lead with empathy, and to create environments where others can also discover the healing power of expression.

MindSketch wasn't about perfect art or perfect answers. It was about giving ourselves permission to be messy, honest, vulnerable, and creative. It was about celebrating the chaos within and finding beauty in it, together.

And that, perhaps, is the most powerful sketch of all.

WORKSHOP TIMELINE & FACILITATOR GUIDE

0:00 – 2:00 | ENERGIZER:

FLASH EMOTIONS

Facilitator says: “Let’s start by standing in

a circle. We’re going to warm up quickly by expressing a series of emotions together using our voice and body.

Instructions: Each emotion will be short, but with full intensity. Express each emotion clearly, giving participants 10 seconds to express it fully.

Go quickly from one to the next.

Suggested sequence (adaptable): → Happy → Afraid → Excited → Angry → Fake crying → Joyful

Purpose:

To energize the group, break the ice, and get everyone into emotional and physical expression without overthinking.

2:00 – 7:00 | WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

Facilitator says:

“Thank you. Let’s go back to our seat for a moment.”

“This workshop is called ‘I Forgive You / I’m Sorry’. It’s about giving space to something you never got to say.

All of us, at some point, have had something heavy on our heart — something we wanted to say, but couldn’t.”

“Maybe it was too emotional, too overwhelming. Maybe the other person wasn’t ready to hear it. Maybe you weren’t ready to say it. Or maybe they just… weren’t there anymore.”

“And sometimes, even when they are, they can’t understand us. That’s okay. It’s normal.

This workshop is here to give you a safe, short space — just for that one sentence. A chance to speak what’s been unsaid. To let your body and voice say it, even if the real moment never came.”

8:00 – 23:00 | MAIN ACTIVITY: I FORGIVE YOU / I’M SORRY

Facilitator instructions:

“Now take 30 seconds to think: who do you want to speak to today? What’s one thing your heart still holds?”

“Decide if you want to say ‘I forgive you’ or ‘I’m sorry’ — and choose one person in the room to pair with.”

Clear rules:

Each person takes turns. One shares, the other listens and responds with:

“I’m sorry” if they hear “I forgive you”

“I forgive you” if they hear “I’m sorry”

The listener must NOT add anything else.

No comforting, explaining, reacting, or talking. Just hold the space and listen.

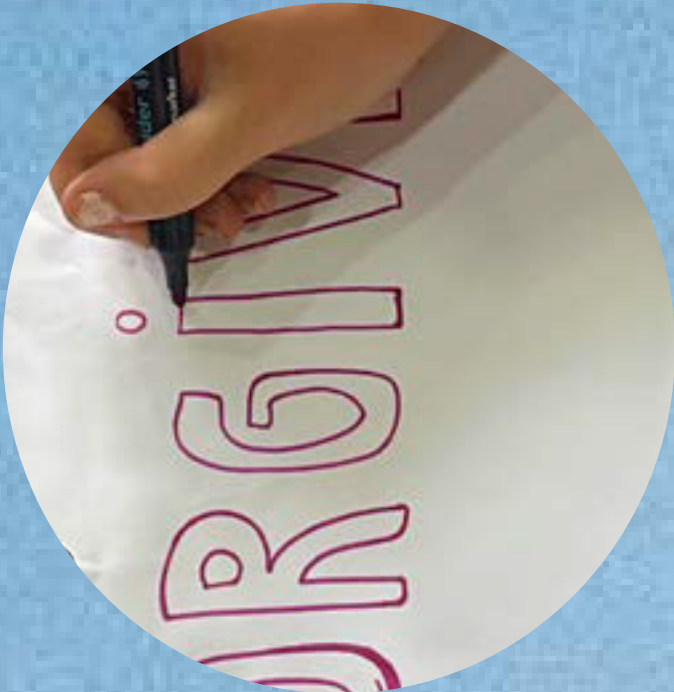
This is not a conversation.

If you want to talk more later, check in with your partner after the workshop ends.

Facilitator time cues:

At 15:30 → “Time to switch roles!”

At 22:30 → “Begin finishing your moment.”



23:00 – 25:00 | GUIDED MEDITATION: CLOSING

Facilitator leads short reflection:

“Now take a seat or find a comfortable standing posture”.

“Close your eyes if that feels safe.”

“Breathe in slowly… and exhale.”

“Notice: how do you feel?

Did something shift? Do you feel lighter, more open, maybe even tender?”

“Where in your body do you feel the difference?”

“There’s no right or wrong. Just presence. Just noticing.”

“Take a final breath… and thank yourself for being brave. When you’re ready, open your eyes.”

ACTIVITIES

Emotional timeline x Neurographics

A 25-Minute Self-Help Art Session with Neurographic Drawing

About the method:

This is a short and simple art-based self-help session that anyone can do at home. It helps you reflect on your emotional journey over the past 5 years, recognize key moments, and gently process one of them using neurographic drawing — a technique that uses spontaneous lines to transform emotional tension.

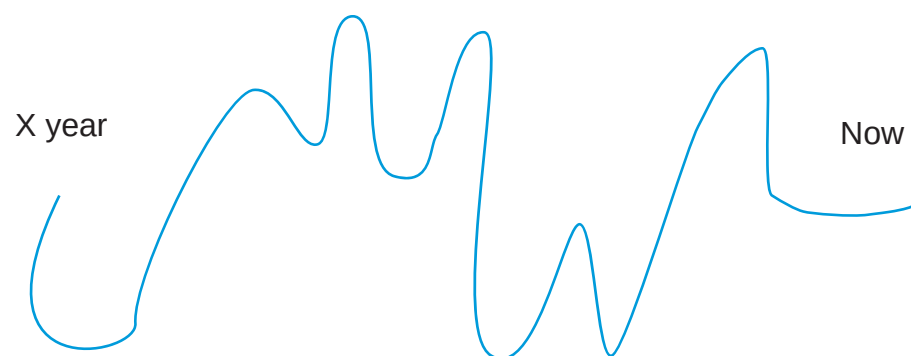
You'll need:

1. 1 sheet of paper (A5, A4 or A3, preferably landscape orientation)
2. A black pen or marker
3. Colored pencils or markers (optional but recommended)

Step 1. Draw Your Emotional Timeline (7 min)

1. Think about your past 5 years. How did you feel? Were there important moments, that affected your mood?
2. Draw a wavy line that represents how your emotional state has changed over the past 5 years.
3. Upward curves = good periods, moments of energy, joy, or growth.
4. Downward curves = difficult periods, stress, sadness, or confusion.
5. Mark important moments along the line (you can write a few words, add symbols, or just remember what they mean to you).

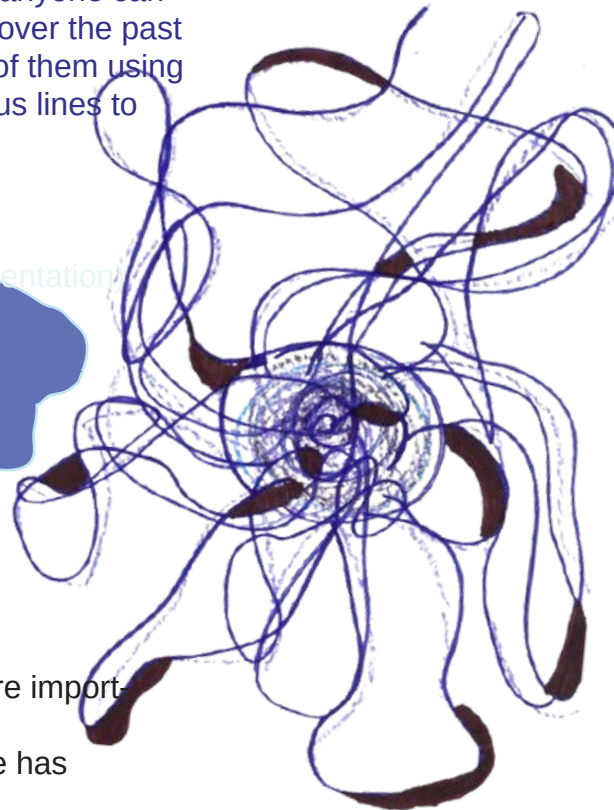
Try to name the emotions you felt in those times (you do not need to write them down, just think about it)



- Tip: This line is not about facts or exact dates. It's about how you felt.

Step 2. Choose One Moment (2 min)

Look at your timeline and choose one moment or period that feels meaningful. It could be:
A moment of personal growth or insight
A stressful or painful time you're still holding inside
A time that shaped who you are today
You will now work with that moment through neurographic drawing.



Step 3. Neurographic Drawing (10 min or more if needed)

Take your pen and draw free, wavy, flowing lines over the area of your chosen memory or time period. Let your hand move naturally.

No need to plan or control — just follow your intuition. Move slowly and consciously. As you draw, stay connected to the feeling or memory.

You can imagine:

"My hand is listening to my feelings."

"My hand is helping me move through this."

Let your hand translate your inner state into lines. This process engages the body and mind together, allowing emotional energy to shift through movement and visual form.

2. Where the lines cross and form sharp angles or corners, begin to round those intersections.

Imagine that by softening the lines, you are also softening the tension in your memory.

This is called "smoothing" in neurography, and it helps symbolically reduce inner conflict.

3.. If you want, you can now add colors:

Use colors to express how that period felt at the time. Or use colors to show how you would like to feel about it now.

It's okay if it looks messy or abstract - it's about emotional movement, not art technique.

Step 4. Reflect and Close

Take a moment to look at your drawing. You may now: Write a few words or a short sentence around the drawing.
"Back then I felt..."
"Now I choose to see it as..."
"From that moment I carry with me..."
Or simply sit in silence and notice how you feel.

Why This Helps?

Drawing your life timeline gives perspective and helps process emotions visually.

Choosing a key moment lets you focus on what matters most to you right now.

Neurographic drawing is a research-informed technique that can reduce inner tension, increase self-regulation, and support emotional transformation.

Visual expression often brings insights that words alone can't.

Blind

Materials

1. A blindfold for each participant – mandatory. 2. A variety of markers and a sheet of flipchart for

the whole group or a pen and a sheet of paper for each

participant – depending on the main goal and the format of the entire training course.

Two sets of an equal number of questions, the count of which is determined by the time limitation

(not less

than two sets of three questions).

Number of participants

An equal number of participants.

An average of 20 participants is ideal (less than 12 and more than 24 most likely would not have the intended effect and in turn would not reach the set goals).

Location

A silent, closed off room with enough space for a half of the participants to be spread out at least two meters in between each other.

A calm, closed off spot in nature where all of the participants could easily hear the prompts while being spread from each other.

Additional settings

The activity is usually practiced without any additional background noises, besides other participants' voice. While calm, silent ambience sounds may or may not add to the emotional build-up, other types of background noises would probably have a negative effect.

Objectives

To offer the participants a safe setting for expressing their vulnerability.

To create an emotionally loaded, guided experience that would encourage self-exploration and bond the group through a shared cathartic rite.

NB! Because of the vulnerable nature of the activity, it is very important to evaluate the context of the whole program, especially previous and further activities, group dynamics etc., thus the severity of the questions should be catered to the overall environment – participant relationships, their mood, attitude, the impact of the previous activities, and other similar factors.

Voices

The process

The trainer introduces themselves and sets the mood as they see fit. Experience shows that a great way to begin the process is by sharing a few vulnerable facts about the trainer themselves. The starting prompt is typically connected to the trainer's perspective on the meaning of trust or vulnerability, or honesty. (Three facts with different degrees of seriousness and emotional variety have proven to be a balanced way to incite and guide the following flow of emotions.)

NB! The introduction of the activity should include a warning about how serious and difficult the following process might be, as to let the participants decide if they would be ready to engage. If someone chooses not to participate they are asked to leave the area where the activity would take place.

The participants are randomly split in two groups, which are then asked to stand in different sides of the chosen area.

The trainer explains the further process and sets the ground rules: the participants who are on one side of the area will be blindfolded (the speakers), and the rest will not (the listeners); the activity consist of 2 parts, each of which contains a certain number of rounds (usually 3–7, depending on the size of the group and the time limitation); in each round the listeners will approach a different speaker (choosing the same speaker twice would probably hinder and spoil the listener's experience, as well); when the listeners have sat down next to their chosen speaker, they should lightly tap the speaker's hand or shoulder to let them know that they are not alone – their partner is ready to listen; the listeners will be asked a different question in every round, interpretations of which are entirely up to each listener (even turning quiet or staying silent is a part of an answer); each round lasts for a specific amount of time (usually around 2–5 minutes), which depends on time limit and participants' personality;

- The listeners must not talk or interrupt any of the speakers, or deliberately try to reveal their identity – it must remain secret even after the activity;

- The listeners may comfort the speakers by touching their hand or even by patting or hugging them, but the listener must carefully evaluate the speaker's personality and their reaction to a specific question, if it has caused a distinct emotional or physical response (some people may not want or need others' comfort while they are fighting their feelings and sensations; some might feel like they're being pitied, misunderstood etc., because of their own turmoil); when the last round of the first part has ended, the listeners are give time to step back from the speakers, so that they wouldn't be recognized; afterwards, the speakers and the listeners swap roles; nothing in process changes besides for the questions; after the last round of the second part has concluded, the speakers have to wait a while for the listeners to step back and mix with the other listeners.

The trainer answers the participants' questions. The first batch of the speakers receive blindfolds. They are asked to find a place to sit or lie where they'd feel comfortable. (It's advisable to spread out at least 2 meters in between each other.)

After the speakers have put on their blindfolds, the listeners are asked to approach any listener. The activity commences as the trainer reads the first question.

At the end of both parts the participants are asked to sit down for feedback.

Feedback

There can be many different forms of feedback depending on the trainer's observations, participants' personality, the overall emotional state and the time limit.

Associative drawing on a sheet of flip-chart – everyone visualizes their feelings in whatever way they wish (any forms, colours, materials) for about 10–30 seconds to release some of the tension and display the overall state of mind. It can also be done individually on smaller sheets of

1. Guided meditation.

2. A discussion circle.

2. 3, Raise of hands about specific statements about the participants' energy level (high/ low, positive/negative), the difference between speaking and listening (which was more difficult), the uncomfortable moments (was it uncomfortable to listen to the speakers, to not be able to speak, to not be able to touch freely, look in the eyes etc.), their interpretations of the open questions – did they choose to rather talk about their positive or negative experiences and were they able to imagine their future), their feelings towards the set goals (did they feel like they've explored themselves more, learned or realised something, become closer with the whole group, reach a state of catharsis), their attitude towards these kinds of activities being considered art (could this sort of raw, guided, shared experience be classified as performance art or storytelling, or a spoken piece), etc.

NB! Participants will need some time after this activity to recharge, release some thoughts and feelings, converse with others about their experience. Also, the next activity should not be as serious, or emotional, mainly because of how mentally exhausted most of the participants would be.

Heartfelt reminders

Consider carefully the reason for choosing to organize these kind of activities! What exactly do you want to achieve? Who would gain the most out of them at this point? Would you be able to guide your participants' emotions, to calm them, to not judge or misinterpret their responses? Would you know how to deal with your own emotions and exhaustion after leading these kind of activities? (They take a lot out of the trainer!)

Any reaction in this activity is normal!

A listener might start speaking because they're not used to releasing specific emotions in other ways; a speaker might be trembling from head to toe while talking calmly and confidently, which might be a sign of an internal conflict; someone might laugh, which is a typical response for feeling uncomfortable.

Once you open the Pandora's box, you won't be able to close it easily or at all! Meaning – not everyone can handle this kind of release, or confrontation with their own thoughts and feeling; also, you probably are not a certified therapist (see the first bullet point again!) to be able to handle what might happen if you decide to unleash more difficult, heavy questions on your participants.

Which of your life changing decisions are you the most proud of?

What is the hardest thing you've had to overcome?

What have you wanted to tell someone for a really long time, but haven't and why?

What or who has helped you when you've felt lost?

What significant event (joyous or tragic) has changed you and how?

How do you imagine your typical Wednesday in 20 years?

Examples of questions

Method used:

Guided meditation, Reflective writing and Creative group work.

Aim of the workshop:

To develop body awareness, emotional literacy, and group connection through a guided meditative and poetic process, allowing participants to hear and respond to the parts of themselves they usually ignore.

Time: 25 min

Group Size: Up to 25 (works best in groups of 4 for the creative parts)

Materials: Paper and pens for each participant
Soft background music for meditation (optional)
Timer or phone with alarm

Introduction

This workshop introduces guided meditation, self-reflection, and creative collaboration as tools to build body awareness and emotional connection. Through a short meditative practice and a poetic group process, participants will tune into overlooked parts of their body and explore the messages these parts may hold. Writing and group creativity will serve as pathways to express what is often left unspoken.

This session is suitable for beginners and anyone curious about how body and mind interact. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of their embodied emotions and a shared creative experience.

Body Poetry

Step-by-step guide:

Step 1 - Introduction

1 min

Welcome participants. Let them know they will go on a short inner journey through meditation, reflection, and creativity. The goal: to hear what the neglected parts of their bodies want to tell them — and transform those messages into poetry.

Step 2 - Guided Body Scan Meditation

5min

Ask participants to sit comfortably and close their eyes. Guide them through a slow body scan: * Start at the top of the head, slowly moving attention down to the face, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, belly, hips, legs, and feet.

- Invite them to notice sensations, tension, or numbness.
- Ask: “Which part of your body feels ignored, forgotten, or just silent?”
- Encourage them to stay with that part. Ask: “What would it say if it had a voice?” Then gently bring them back.

Suggested music: Soft ambient meditation music (optional, but it can help deepen focus).

Step 3 - Individual Reflection Writing

5min Participants now take 5 minutes to

write freely: 1. A message from the neglected body part — what does it want to tell them? 2. A reply — what would they like to say back?

Remind them not to overthink — let it flow, even

if it sounds strange. They can write it as

dialogue, a letter, or a stream of consciousness

Step 4 - Group Poem Creation

Participants form groups of 4 (nearest people). In their groups:

- Share the most powerful phrase or image from each person's writing.
- As a group, combine these fragments into a short poem (can rhyme or not). * They are free to remix, repeat, or rearrange — play with it!

Goal: Create one collective poem from your group's body voices.

Step 5 - Poem Presentation

Each group reads their poem aloud to the room. Ask for quiet, mindful listening — treat each poem as a gift.

Step 6 - Group Reflection

Bring everyone back into a circle. Reflect: 1. “How was the individual process? Was it hard to listen to your body this way?” 2. “How did it feel to co-create something poetic as a group?”

Encourage open sharing — no pressure to speak.

Facilitator Tips

- * Keep time strictly — it's a fast workshop with deep impact.
- * Create a calm and accepting atmosphere.
- * Have your own example ready if the group needs help.

* Remind: there is no right or wrong in what the body says.

Optional follow-up: Offer participants to keep their messages and revisit them later, maybe even write letters to those body parts as a regular practice.

End with: A simple thank-you and a reminder to keep listening to their bodies — not just when it screams, but also when it whispers.

Aim: Reflecting on the difference/contrast between our inner world and what we show to outside, reflect on self image, self portrait, raise self awareness

Time: 25 minutes or more

Group size: up to 20

Materials: - wax/pencil/ glue/coloured paper/ crayons/ scissors

Intro

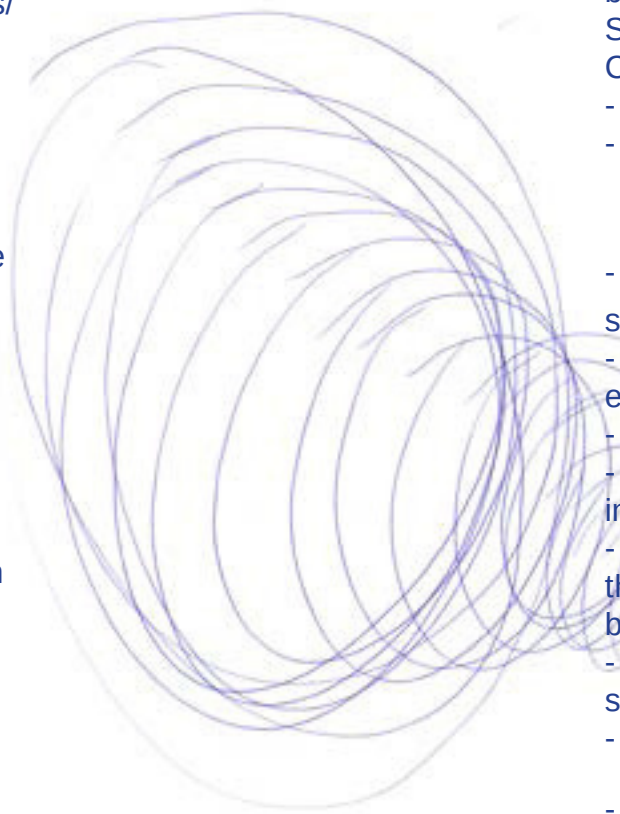
Tonight is very special night, the lights are twinkling, everybody is gathering: you are welcome to the grand masquerade!

Everyone is free to become someone. It is up to you!

You have a blank paper in front of you. This is your chance to craft how you wish to arrive to the masquerade. How do you want others to see you as you enter the room?

Create carnaval mask

- Wax/pencil/glue/coloured paper/ crayons/ scissors



Mirror Introspection

- Take your phone, open the front camera
- Close your eyes for a second?
- Breath in, breath out
- Now open your eyes and look at the screen
- What do you see on your face: probably you look a bit tired. But is there more? Stressed? Relaxed? Exited? Content?
- Do you notice anything?
- Are there any marks?

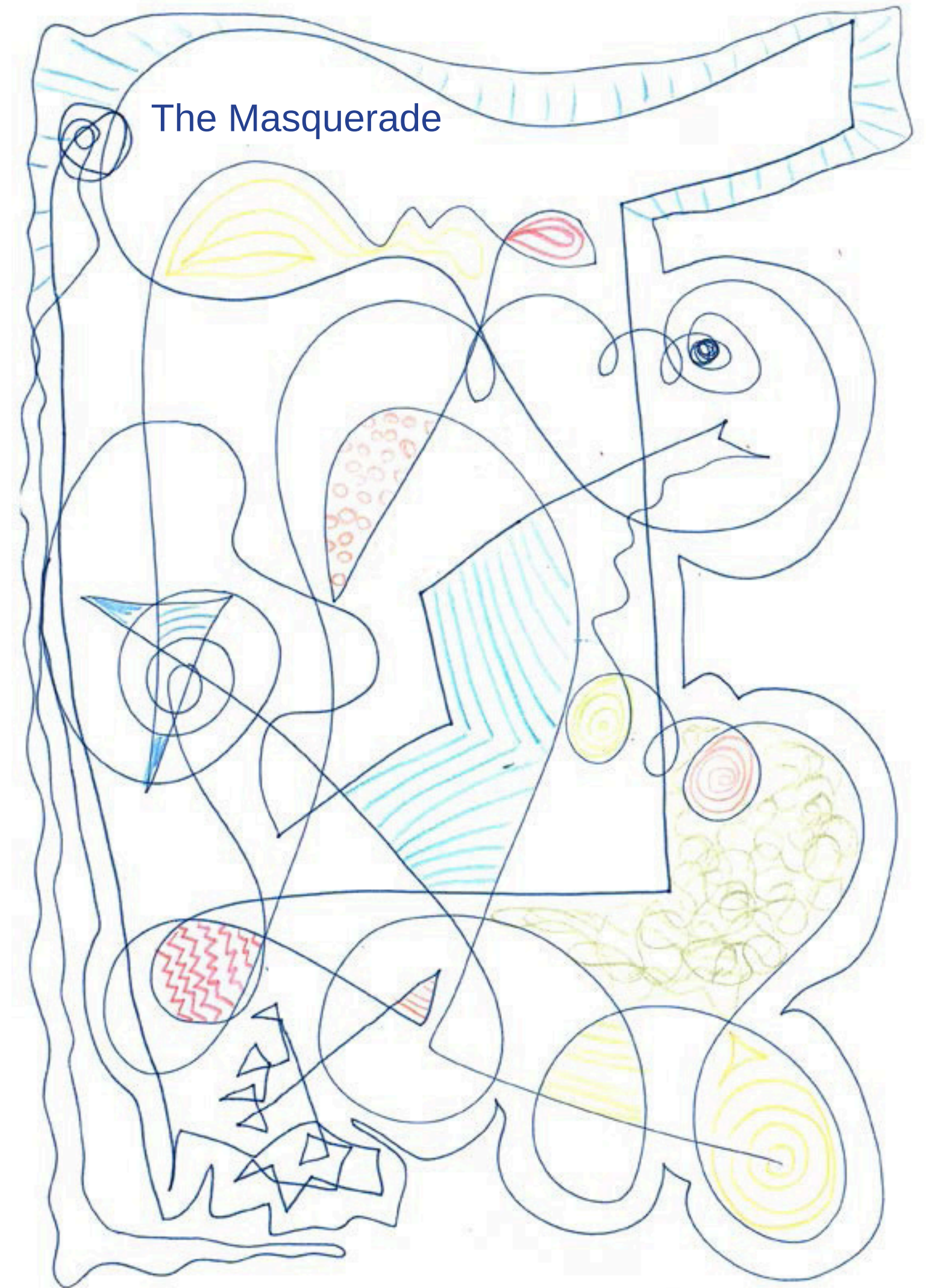
- How is it to look at this person reflected on your screen?
- Is there something that your eyes are telling you?
- What is behind your eyes?
- maybe there are strong feelings coming up?
- What thoughts are rising that you are not telling anybody else?
- Can you be honest to yourself?
- Breath in / out

- *Put your away your phone*

Creating behind the mask

- Turn your carnaval mask
- Try to reflect on the paper what you saw and felt during the meditative journey - You can use abstract forms, colors as feelings, shapes, symbols, words, scribbles

The Masquerade





Mask parade

- Now everybody get up
- Put your first masks in front of your face - Walk around, feel the room - If you meet someone, make eye contact and try to connect - Whenever you feel like it, turn your mask and if you want to turn back at any moment you can

Reflection

- How did you decide how to create your first mask? - Were there strong emotions or memories rising while looking at yourself? - Did you manage to put your inside reflection into abstract forms? - How different are the two sides of the mask? - Were you completely honest? Did you portray the deeper layer of your mind? - How was it to look at the other masks? - What inspired you to turn the mask (back)?

Were you
completely
honest?
Did you
portray the
deeper
layer of
your mind?



Guestbook

lily
x
Adam
Hemmett
Johnna
Gönce
Angel
Sally
Sally
Sally
Sally

Hey! Wanna listen to some tunes??

