



TOOLKIT





Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

PT 1_ INTRODUCTION	04
PT 2_ PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES	14
1 Awareness: ‘Mental Health Literacy’	24
2 Understanding and Managing Emotions	54
3 Empowerment and Communication	92
4 Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics	130
5 Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises	157
PT 3_ GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS	186
PT 4_ RESOURCE BANK	207

To facilitate reading the Toolkit, a click on the relevant index title will display the corresponding page, while clicking on the section title or page number will redirect you to the index.

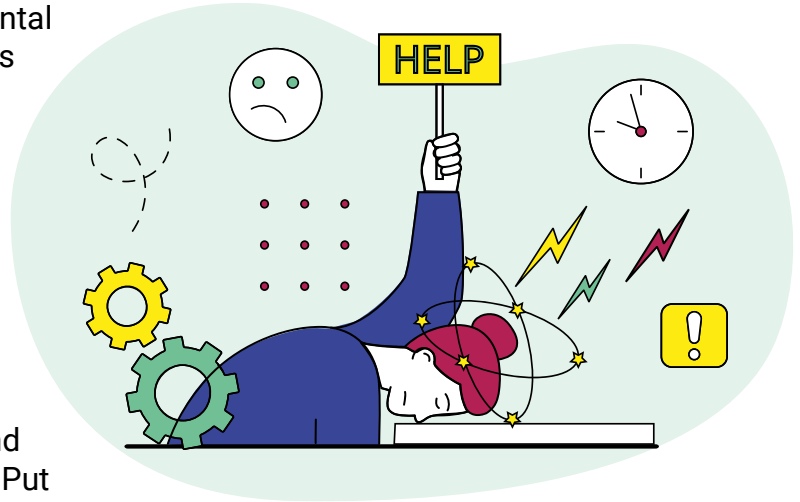


PT. 1

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH?

In recent years, the European Union has emphasized the promotion of mental health and the well-being of its citizens, especially after the effect of Covid-19 heightened the attention towards this topic. Embracing the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, mental health has come to be understood as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their capabilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can contribute to their community. Put simply: people are considered mentally healthy when they can fulfill their potential, easily adapt to different circumstances, be productive at work, contribute to life in the community, and establish positive relations with others.



However, this all-encompassing definition appears not to consider the specific needs that may accompany the specific life stages people encounter throughout their life course. Especially when dealing with children and/or young adults, it is fundamental to evaluate the impact that these stages' main characteristics and challenges may have on their mental and emotional health, as they represent a delicate and sensitive moment of their development. Therefore, we speak of youth mental and emotional health, as we deem it important to adapt prevention and support aimed at young people's well-being according to their experiences of important life stages.

One such passage is the school-to-work transition, a moment in which young people are peculiarly exposed to the disruption of the (familiar) school routine, the (new) requests of the labor market, and the (new) relations within the workplace. The tension between these two poles is often met with anxiety and fear, worrying about lacking the competencies required to successfully join a key sphere of the adult world.

To deepen the understanding of mental and emotional health among young people transitioning from school to work, we adopt a sociological approach, which allows us to understand that the concept of (mental and emotional) health/illness has evolved through time and is still evolving. Therefore, mental and emotional well-being is influenced by socio-economic, political, and cultural factors specific to a particular time and place, and as such, it is developed (and ever-changing) through the relations playing out among various actors.

THE PROJECT “MIND THE GAP”

The project “Mind the Gap” aims to enable transformation and change in the support of organizations and professionals, to strengthen and promote young people’s employability. To do so, attention to their mental health at this delicate stage of life is a fundamental prerequisite for facilitating their entry into the labor market.

In this light, partners from five European countries (Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, and Poland)



agreed to work together towards three specific objectives:

- to develop novel knowledge of young people’s mental and emotional well-being during the school-to-work transition;
- to provide professionals with an original toolkit to recognize and address young people’s mental and emotional well-being during the transition to work;
- to raise awareness within the scientific community and the general public on the mental and emotional needs of youth, contributing to their de-stigmatization.

To achieve these goals, partner organizations relied on research activities using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. First, an original survey targeting young people aged 16-29 was administered online in the 5 partner counties, to understand the awareness of mental and emotional health and needs in the broader population. There were 1464 responses gathered. Specific tests and measures were implemented to account for diverging response rates and respondents’ characteristics.

On the other hand, 93 qualitative interviews were conducted by the partner organizations targeting young people aged 16–29 during the school-to-work transition to deepen the understanding of the challenges faced and the strategies put in place by young people to cope with their emotional and mental health. Moreover, the qualitative aspect of the research also involved the realization of focus groups with professionals working with young people during the school-to-work transition. A total of 16 focus groups were carried out, with 112 professionals participating in the study and representing both the world of work (companies and enterprises) and the school (high schools, universities, and VET schools).



WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY?

68% of survey respondents identified themselves as **women**, while **27%** as **men**. Besides them, **2.2%** of respondents self-identified **as non-binary**; the remaining **2.7%** preferred to describe themselves **differently** or not to declare their gender identity.

Interview respondents were more evenly balanced:

45% self-described as women and 44% as men, while the remaining 11% self-described as gender non-conforming (Figure 1).

Interviews were conducted targeting gender non-conforming young people (10), young people in juvenile (5) and in the National Civil Service (10), with low socio-economic status (39), with migrant background (15), and living in rural areas (14).

In both cases, the average age of respondents was 21.

¹ Among survey respondents, women are over-represented in all 5 countries: 72.7% in Slovenia, 71.2% in Poland, 70.0% in Italy, 57.0% in Spain e 55.3% in Germany

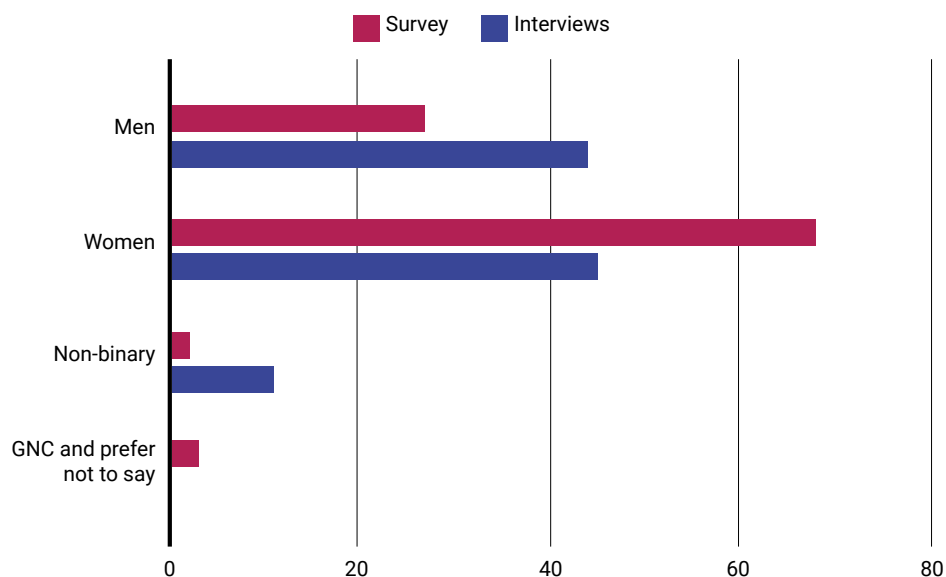


Figure 1. Participants in the survey and interviews, by gender (percentage values).

Focus groups, instead, targeted professionals dealing with young people during the school-to-work transition. Of the 112 participants:

- 34% self-identify as male and 66% as female
- 43% are more closely associated with the business world while 57% are working in education and training
- most participants are either social workers or youth workers (31), career consultants or job coaches (17), deal with HR responsibilities to various degrees (16), entrepreneurs (11), and teachers and professors (10)

THE WIDESPREAD EXPERIENCE OF MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

On average, **55%** of respondents to the survey reported **experiencing** some form of **emotional distress**. This, however, varied according to gender identity:

- non-binary respondents and those who preferred not to describe their gender identity reported the highest rates (71.9% and 76.2% respectively);
- women (57.3%);
- men (46.6%).

According to the survey, the most reported issues were stress (69.8%), followed by worries (61.2%); anxiety is also prevalent, being reported by 58.2%. Commonly reported were also depression (28.4%), panic attacks (26.2%), and eating disorders (20.0%). Less commonly, participants mentioned suffering from self-harm (12.2%) and behavioral disorders (11.1%) (Figure 2).

Among those who experienced some form of emotional distress, low socio-economic status and dropping out of school represented two of the main factors worsening young people's mental and emotional health (77.8% and 69.5%, respectively).

Alongside, respondents' gender appears to play an important role in a threefold manner: first, in terms of a higher probability of experiencing mental and emotional distress; second, in terms of predominantly associating negative feelings and fears with the school-to-work transition; finally, in terms of showing a higher likelihood of seeking help.

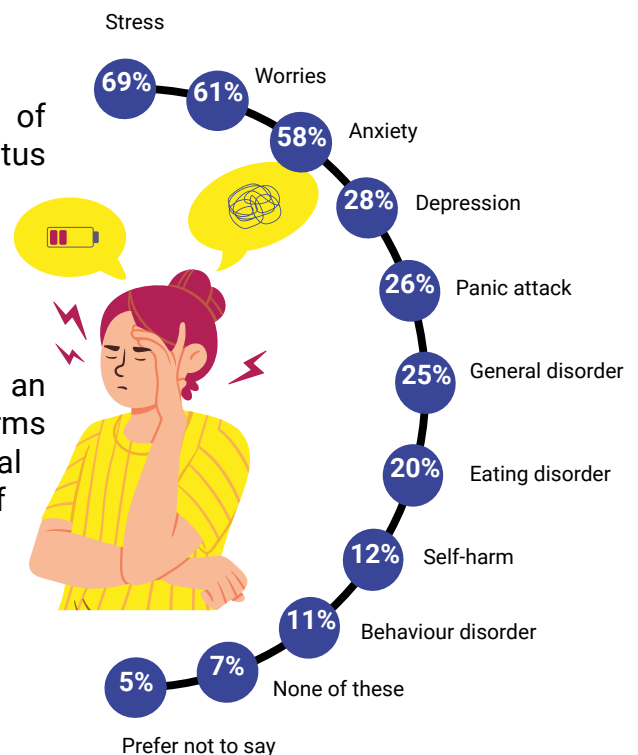


Figure 2. Forms of emotional distress reported by young people participating in the survey (percentage values).

FEELINGS ABOUT THE FUTURE AND THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

When directly asked about the feelings they associate with the school-to-work transition (but also indirectly, as reported by professionals during focus groups), young people swing between positive and negative emotions as they discuss the challenges and opportunities of this life phase. Survey respondents make a clear example of this tendency: when they were asked which words they would associate with the word “future”:

- Change was the most common answer provided (68%), followed by opportunity (61%) and hope (58%), suggesting a vision of the future as a space of transformation and possibility.
- Uncertainty, however, was mentioned by 49% of respondents, together with concern (39%) and anxiety (37%), reflecting the fears and worries afflicting young people during the transition from school to work (Figure 3).

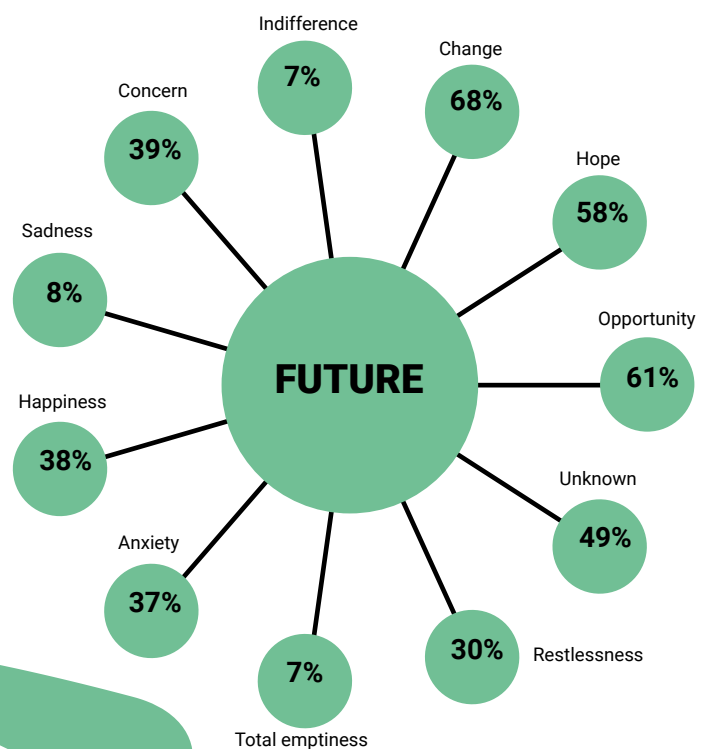
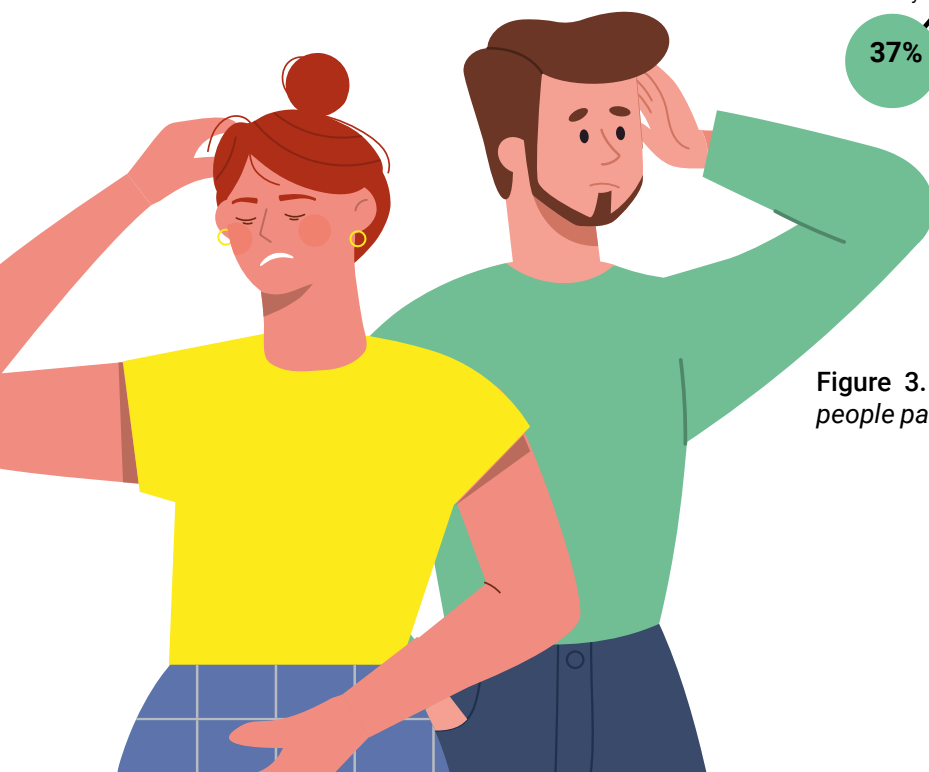


Figure 3. Words associated with “future” by young people participating in the survey (percentage values).



Therefore, on the one hand, young people positively perceive their competencies and personal value, showing an overall positive attitude toward the future, its opportunities for professional and personal growth, financial independence, and their ability to overcome almost any challenge - if they put their mind to it.

On the other hand, doubt and uncertainty stain their recounts, especially as they report feeling unprepared for the labor market and unsure about the correctness of their life choices.

Young people share an overall negative view of the working world: they especially fear “being stuck” in an unsatisfying and unfulfilling job, as well as being discriminated against because of their:

- **Age**, in terms of lacking the necessary experience for certain jobs and especially in the relations with older coworkers, generally believed to be more close-minded and unwelcoming than their peers.
- **Gender and/or sexual orientation**, with young women and gender non-conforming youth reporting direct and indirect experiences of mobbing and sexist behaviors or attitudes from both, colleagues and employers.
- **Race and/or ethnic background**, where exclusionary practices focus on the recognizable (or visible) migratory background of a person, e.g. to incorrectly assume their lack of knowledge of the national language.
- **Class**, as the region or area of origin within country in question, may sometimes be incorrectly associated with a lack of preparation.

In this scenario, most young people think that “meritocracy” is not actually at work throughout the selection process; therefore, only informal, personal connections help get a (good) job.

Moreover, young people feel exposed to the pressure to be successful - a pressure that not only comes from families and the constant comparison with their friends’ achievements but also from the heightened influence of the mainstream narrative passed through social media.

However, this strive for success clashes with a world where socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions are perceived as overall adverse: widespread is the feeling that the school system is still incapable of adequately preparing students for the working world, not providing students with “marketable” skills nor “adulting tools” required to successfully navigate and overcome new challenges and responsibilities (e.g., financial literacy).

THE IMPORTANCE OF (IN)FORMAL NETWORKS IN SEEKING HELP

Of all survey respondents, 56.8% reported asking for help, while 43.2% never did. Seeking help is more common among people who have experienced some form of emotional or mental distress:

- Women (61.5%) and non-binary people (84.4%) are more likely to have asked for help instead of men (44.3%) (Figure 4).
- While among heterosexual respondents only 52.8% asked for help, the data grows when considering homosexuals (54.5% for gays and 58.6% for lesbians), and bisexuals (76.6%) (Figure 5).

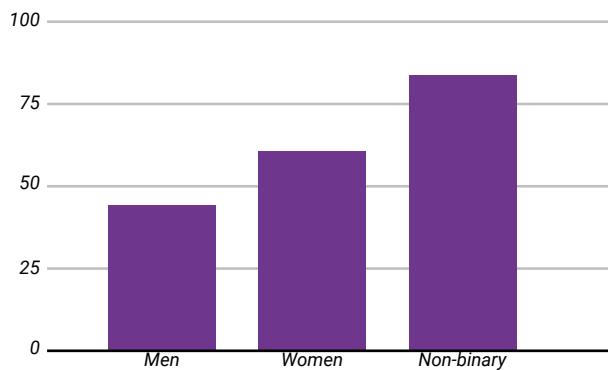


Figure 4. Young people participating in the survey asking for help, by gender (percentage values).

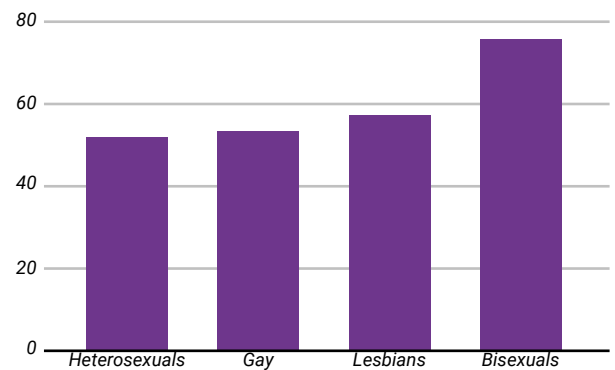


Figure 5. Young people participating in the survey asking for help, by sexual orientation (percentage values).

Most participants felt capable of establishing significant relations with others, showing good signs of social interconnections: they recognized the importance of having positive role models to draw inspiration from and seek help when needed. However, the propensity to seek help appears to increase with age.

Of the people who sought emotional and mental help:

- 68.5% asked for **professional support**, especially from (private) psychologists or psychiatrists. While sometimes described as a “luxury”, young people easily recognize the importance of seeking professional help and support during the most vulnerable moments of their lives, such as the school-to-work transition. However, when professional help is present in public facilities (e.g., at the university or school), it is often met with diffidence and worry, especially about the long waiting lists and lack of individualized guidance, as well as the outdated knowledge of such professionals.



- 59.1% reported looking for support from **friends**, especially when families do not offer or lack emotional support. Nevertheless, since speaking about emotions is still particularly hard and sensitive, respondents reported accurately selecting a few, trusted individuals to create a “safety network” or a “safe space” where to freely discuss their mental health and emotional well-being.
- 50.9% asked their **parents** for support, and only 14.3% of respondents asked **other family members**. The family is still widely considered to be supportive emotionally, financially, and in the job search (e.g., through “word of mouth” opportunities). Still, some participants also reported parents and families “railroading” their study and work choices towards opportunities thought to be more secure, even to the detriment of their mental and emotional health.
- Only 9.7% considered asking their **teachers and professors** for help, and they seem to suffer from the same critiques to which the education system is exposed – i.e., being too theoretical and detached from the actual world of work and its mechanisms. Young people tend to feel “misled” and abandoned, as institutions and schools are perceived as incapable of adequately preparing them not only for the transition into the working world, but also into adulthood. In this light, universities and schools’ orienteering activities are perceived as lacking a holistic approach, as they leave the management of the emotions associated with the school-to-work transition completely uncovered.

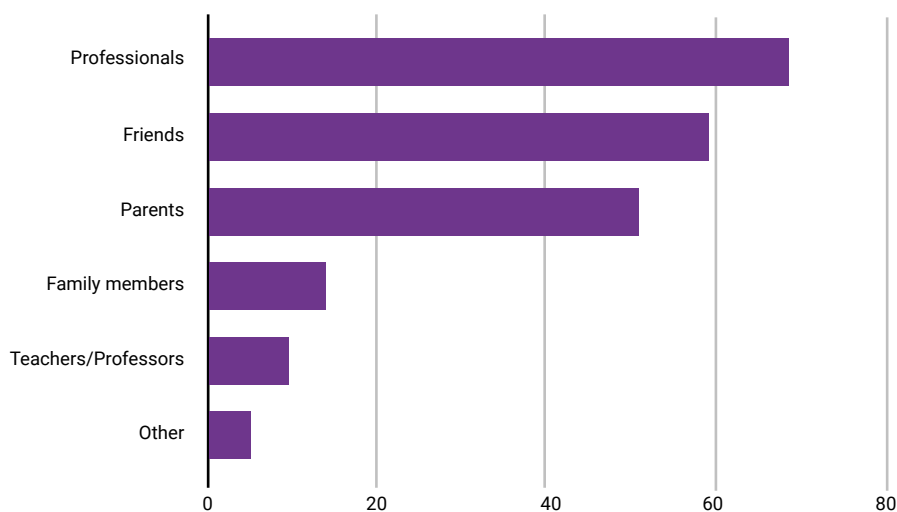


Figure 6. People whom young participants in the survey turned to for support regarding their emotional and mental health (percentage values).

Surprisingly, during either the survey or the interviews, **no respondents mentioned coworkers as a possible safety network to rely on**. This result appears to be particularly important given the stress posed by participants on the importance of the working environment as a place capable of promoting not only their professional growth, but also their personal growth. In this light, **employers and companies can play a pivotal role** in reshaping the work environment and its culture to make it more inclusive and attentive towards young people’s (but not only their) mental and emotional needs.



RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF A TOOLKIT FOR THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

- Starting from an early age, educational curricula should strive to **value the importance of emotional well-being and self-discovery**, while trying to be more closely aligned with job market demands.
- Activities targeted at the **recognition and enhancement of individual talents/skills** should also provide “adulting tools” to help them navigate the main responsibilities coming with adulthood.
- **Enhance the visibility of already existing, positive opportunities**, accompanying young people in understanding which services are available on the territory and within their everyday spaces (i.e., school, neighborhood).
- In the workplace, it is fundamental to **promote a more inclusive and respectful culture, to develop opportunities for intergenerational dialogue** (even on sensitive topics), and to **learn how to give/receive feedback**, integrating practices of continuous opportunities for professional development.
- The **promotion of informal learning opportunities** appears useful to allow young people to open up about sensitive topics such as their emotional and mental well-being.
- Young people perceive their problem-solving abilities positively but appear to lose sight of long-term goals easily. Support in the school-to-work transition should then focus on helping young people develop time management skills and dissect tasks in smaller steps while learning not to lose sight of the “bigger picture”.
- **Including playful and ludic activities in orienteering practices** may sustain young people’s participation over time and enhance their engagement.
- Actors involved in educational and job services focused on school-to-work transitions should embrace a vision of **young people as “co-creators of solutions”**, i.e., capable individuals, already possessing the necessary skills and competence to overcome the difficulties of the school-to-work transition, but may require someone guiding them in the journey towards their recognition and discovery.

The activities described in the following sections of this toolkit stem directly from young people’s requests and needs as emerged during interviews and focus groups. As young people often lament the lack of “adulting tools” to navigate the new responsibilities and relations encountered with the school-to-work transition, we aim to provide them (and professionals alike) with the necessary tools to better handle the emotional and mental health challenges they may face during this delicate phase. Embracing the idea of young people as capable individuals, the aim of this Toolkit is to help them recognize and re-direct the skills they already possess, as well as to develop healthy mechanisms to deal with stress, worries, and the challenges posed by the school-to-work transition.

PT. 2

PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND GUIDANCE ON HANDLING SENSITIVE TOPICS

Working with young people in difficult stages of their development often involves discussing sensitive and personal issues – from mental health challenges and financial stress to experiences of discrimination or self-doubt. While the activities in this toolkit are designed to support and empower, using them without careful consideration may cause discomfort, misunderstandings, or unintended harm. It is essential to be aware of your own professional limits and to remember that you are not a mental health expert. Your role is to recognise signs of distress, respond with empathy, and refer young people to appropriate professional help when needed. This means knowing where to direct them, providing only credible and evidence-based information, and avoiding involvement in matters that go beyond your competence.

This section provides practical ethical guidelines to help you apply the methods responsibly, create a safe space, and respond appropriately if problems arise.

1. Create a safe and confidential space

- When to be mindful? Any activity involving personal sharing, group discussion, or self-reflection.
- Why does this matter? Without trust, participants may hold back or feel exposed afterwards.
- How? Clearly state confidentiality rules at the start and model respectful listening.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Reassure participants, re-establish boundaries, and offer private follow-up conversations.

2. Stay neutral and non-judgemental

- When to be mindful? Career choices, personal values, lifestyle decisions, or sensitive experiences.
- Why does this matter? Imposing your opinion can reduce trust and discourage engagement.
- How? Use open-ended questions, validate diverse perspectives, and avoid moral judgement.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Acknowledge unintended bias, clarify your intent, and invite participants to share again in a safe way.

3. Respect boundaries and consent

- When to be mindful? Activities requiring physical contact, role-play, or personal disclosure.

- Why does this matter? Ignoring personal limits can create discomfort or long-term disengagement.
- How? Offer opt-in participation and alternative formats (e.g., written instead of verbal sharing).
- How to respond if things go wrong? Apologise, stop the activity if needed, and adjust future facilitation to avoid pressure.

4. Avoid giving professional advice outside your expertise

- When to be mindful? When participants disclose serious mental health issues, abuse, or legal matters.
- Why does this matter? Inaccurate or uninformed advice can worsen their situation.
- How? Listen empathetically, but direct them to relevant professionals.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Clarify your role, provide accurate referral contacts and check in later if appropriate.

5. Adapt content to cultural and social contexts

- When to be mindful? Using stories, examples, humour, or media references.
- Why does this matter? Cultural insensitivity can cause exclusion or offence.
- How? Research participant backgrounds, use inclusive language, and invite input on relevance.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Recognise the mistake, ask for alternative examples, and integrate them going forward.

6. Handle emotional triggers with care

- When to be mindful? Role-play, discussions on discrimination, failure, loss, or trauma.
- Why does this matter? Such topics can reopen painful memories.
- How? Warn participants beforehand, offer opt-outs, and monitor emotional responses.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Pause, offer breaks, and follow up privately with affected individuals.

7. Be transparent about goals and expectations

- When to be mindful? At the start of each programme or activity.
- Why does this matter? Surprising participants with sensitive topics can create mistrust.
- How? Explain aims, methods, and possible emotional challenges upfront.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Reframe the activity's purpose, seek consent to continue, or adapt it on the spot.

8. Manage group dynamics fairly

- When to be mindful? Group discussions, debates, or collaborative projects.
- Why does this matter? Dominant voices can silence others, while exclusion causes frustration.
- How? Rotate speaking turns, set ground rules, and watch for non-verbal exclusion cues.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Intervene respectfully, redistribute speaking time, and check in with quieter participants.

9. Keep personal information private

- When to be mindful? Collecting surveys, feedback, or documenting activities.
- Why does this matter? Privacy breaches harm trust and may have legal consequences.
- How? Use anonymised data, secure storage, and clear consent processes.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Remove identifying details, issue an apology, and outline steps to prevent recurrence.

10. Reflect and seek feedback regularly

- When to be mindful? After each session, especially if difficulties arose.
- Why does this matter? Reflection helps improve practice and avoid repeating mistakes.
- How? Keep a facilitator journal and request participant feedback anonymously.
- How to respond if things go wrong? Review challenges, adjust future sessions, and share learning with peers.

Awareness: Mental Health Literacy

Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Bridging Minds</u>	Role-play workplace conversations to practise talking about mental health.	Role play, group discussion	40 minutes	Pairs or small groups
<u>Levels of Mental Health</u>	Create avatars to experience workplace challenges and coping strategies.	Simulation, reflection	45–60 minutes	Flexible
<u>Mental Health – Myths and Reality</u>	Sort statements into myths or truths to address stigma.	Sorting game, discussion	45–60 minutes	10–30 participants
<u>The Six Hats</u>	Explore mental health behaviours by debating case studies from six perspectives.	Role play, debate, group discussion	60–75 minutes	6 participants (roles can double)
<u>What is Mental Health?</u>	Use photos to reflect on the meaning of health and connect it to adult/workplace life.	Photo language, reflection, discussion	35–40 minutes	Small to medium groups

Understanding and Managing Emotions

Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Adaptability to Situations</u>	Role-play scenarios to practise adapting to unexpected changes.	Reflection, role play	30 minutes	Flexible groups
<u>Balloons</u>	Keep multiple balloons in the air to simulate stress and multitasking.	Simulation, teamwork, reflection	30 minutes	~15 participants
<u>Embodying Emotions</u>	Act out and guess emotions through role-play situations.	Role play, charades	30 minutes	Small groups
<u>Emotion Commotion</u>	Identify, act, and reflect on emotions and coping strategies.	Charades, reflection	40 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Expressing Emotions with Different Tones</u>	Explore body language and communication style in role-play interviews.	Role play, body language practice	60 minutes	Pairs and groups



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Activity overview table



Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Self-Awareness and Emotional Obstacles</u>	Reflective activity to identify personal barriers to emotional regulation.	Reflection, discussion	50–60 minutes	Individual or small groups
<u>Shifting Your Response</u>	Explore how to change emotional responses to difficult scenarios.	Role play, reflection	60–75 minutes	Small groups
<u>The Exploding Balloon</u>	Balloon exercise to illustrate emotional triggers and reactions.	Simulation, reflection	60 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Where am I?</u>	Position-based activity to reflect on self-awareness of emotions.	Movement, reflection	40 minutes	Medium groups

Empowerment and Communication

Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Drawing Back-to-Back</u>	Pairs describe and draw images to practise clear communication.	Pair work, communication game	45 minutes	Pairs
<u>Effective Communication Experience</u>	Simulate conversations to practise clarity and listening skills.	Role play, reflection	60–80 minutes	Pairs or small groups
<u>My Strengths</u>	Participants identify and share their key strengths with the group.	Reflection, sharing	20–30 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>My Superpower</u>	Participants identify and share personal strengths in a creative way.	Reflection, sharing	40 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Setting Boundaries</u>	Role-play scenarios to practise saying no and maintaining limits.	Role play, reflection	50 minutes	Small groups
<u>The Communication Game</u>	Interactive activity highlighting barriers and clarity in communication.	Game, group discussion	40–50 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Theatre of the Oppressed</u>	Forum theatre activity to explore power dynamics and communication.	Theatre, role play, reflection	30–60 minutes	Medium to large groups
<u>Wants / Needs</u>	Reflect on and distinguish personal wants versus needs in communication.	Reflection, discussion	50 minutes	Individual or groups



Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics

Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Building Trust</u>	Trust-building exercises to strengthen group cohesion.	Team challenge, reflection	90 minutes	Small groups
<u>Conflict Management</u>	Simulate workplace conflicts and practise resolution strategies.	Role play, group discussion	60–90 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Egg Drop Challenge</u>	Teams design a way to protect an egg in a drop, focusing on problem-solving.	Team challenge, problem-solving	40 minutes	Small groups (4–6)
<u>Expectations at work</u>	Explore expectations and realities of workplace behaviours.	Reflection, discussion	40–45 minutes	Medium groups
<u>Strengths and Weaknesses</u>	Reflect on group and individual strengths and weaknesses in collaboration.	Reflection, sharing	40–50 minutes	Small to medium groups
<u>Team Synergy Roleplays</u>	Role-play exercises to improve teamwork and collaboration.	Role play, teamwork	60–75 minutes	Small groups

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises

Activity Name	Description	Activity Categories	Duration	Group Size
<u>Breathing Observation</u>	Focus on natural breath awareness to improve calmness.	Mindfulness, relaxation	20 minutes	Individual or group
<u>Butterfly Hug</u>	Self-regulation technique for calming emotions through bilateral stimulation.	Mindfulness, self-soothing	30 minutes	Individual
<u>Introduction to Journaling</u>	Reflective writing exercise for exploring thoughts and feelings.	Writing, reflection	45–60 minutes	Individual
<u>Mini Movements</u>	Gentle body movements for promoting relaxation and awareness.	Mindfulness, movement	40 minutes	Individual or group
<u>Nidra Yoga</u>	Deep relaxation and guided meditation practice for stress reduction.	Yoga, mindfulness	40 minutes	Individual or group
<u>Progressive Muscle Relaxation</u>	Guided exercise to release tension through muscle relaxation.	Relaxation, mindfulness	40 minutes	Individual or group

01. AWARENESS: 'MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY' FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



AWARENESS: 'MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY' FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE TOPIC

Mental health is a key aspect of overall well-being, yet it remains one of the most misunderstood and overlooked areas of health. This section of the tool-kit aims to foster mental health literacy among young people by offering a clear understanding of what mental health is and why it matters, particularly during the transition from education to work. Mental health literacy involves the ability to recognise, manage, and seek help for mental health issues, as well as reducing stigma. By promoting open dialogue and increasing awareness, we empower young people to view mental health as a priority and normalise conversations around it, contributing to its de-stigmatisation.

INSIGHT

Research in the Mind the Gap project highlights that the school-to-work transition is a particularly sensitive time for young people, often accompanied by stress (69.8% of those surveyed), worries (61.2%), and anxiety (58.2%). This highlights the critical importance of and awareness in mental health literacy, enabling young people to recognise challenges early and seek the support they need during transitional phases.

ACTIVITIES

The activities in this section aim to provide practical knowledge and encourage participants to engage with mental health topics in an approachable, interactive way. Through creative exercises, like exploring myths and realities or simulating real-life scenarios associated with the school-to-work transition, participants gain tools to better understand themselves and others. These exercises are designed to highlight the importance of seeking help and to combat the stigma that still surrounds mental health conversations.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



BRIDGING MINDS



Category:

Awareness: 'Mental Health Literacy' for young people



Overview:

The goal of the exercise is to develop skills in open communication about mental health in the workplace. Participants will practice how to support colleagues and how to ask for support in situations related to mental health.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify when and how to talk about mental health.
- Develop the ability to listen empathetically and respond to others' needs.
- Practice proactive seeking of support when necessary.



Context and participants:

This exercise can be conducted with young adults, such as students, recent graduates, or participants in career development programs.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size is from 15 to 20 participants.
- If the group does not feel confident in this task, it can be helpful to talk about one scenario together to show participants how they can talk with each other and what is important in conversations like this.
- Create a safe environment.
- Encourage participants to share their thoughts in a safe and supportive environment.
- Emphasize the importance of empathy when discussing mental health topics.
- Ensure that no one is pressured to share personal experiences.
- Focus on supporting participants in their emotional experiences rather than evaluating their feelings or suggesting what they should do.
- It can be important to explain, before the exercise begins, that we are all learning at the moment, so we may not always know what to say. Our conversation will be based on our experience, not knowledge. After this task, we will know more about how to discuss these topics and help others.
- Acknowledge that everyone engages differently, and if anyone encounters challenges with reading or understanding the scenarios, discreet support is available to ensure clarity and comfort.
- If the task is conducted in a different cultural context, it could be useful to adapt the scenarios to the difficulties that are most common in a given culture.
- It can be helpful for participants to give a short list/talk about where young people can get mental health support nearby or where they can call.

- If there is some time left after writing down ideas and strategies, it can be useful to do the Role-Playing – Conversation Simulation again, applying the new knowledge and strategies.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), the participant can do this task with the task leader.
- This task, conducted in a group with difficult experiences (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges), may trigger more difficult emotions and reactions for which the leader should be prepared. It may be helpful to first discuss one scene with the group to show participants how they can discuss among themselves, and then discuss the scenes in pairs.



Materials needed:

- Mental health conversation scenarios
- Paper and pens
- Whiteboard or flipchart to note thoughts



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Introduction

- Explain to participants why open communication about mental health is crucial in the workplace.
- Go over the rules regarding respect for privacy and empathy during the exercise.
 - » Move around the room to listen to the conversations happening in different pairs.
 - » If you notice that a pair is struggling with communication or if strong emotions arise, don't hesitate to step in. Your support can help guide them through the moment and enhance their learning experience.

Step 2: Role-Playing – Conversation Simulation

- Divide into pairs.
- Give each pair a card with a scenario describing a work situation related to a mental health issue (e.g., stress, burnout, feeling overwhelmed). Example scenarios are attached in the annexe.
- In case of any difficulties, provide assistance by reading aloud or explaining the role in more detail.
- One person acts as the employee seeking support, while the other plays the role of a colleague or supervisor offering help. After a few minutes, they can switch roles.

Step 3: Debriefing

- Gather the group and ask participants to share how they felt during the simulation. Ask what was challenging for them and what went well. Emphasize that negative feedback is not a personal attack, but is a chance for growth and learning, and we can transform our experience into a positive learning opportunity. We are all learning and making mistakes.
- Questions for One-on-One Conversations (mentoring, individual work):
 - How did you feel in the role of the person seeking support?
 - What was the most challenging part of talking about your problem?
 - What helped you feel heard and understood?
 - Which responses from the other person felt particularly helpful or supportive?
 - What would you have liked the other person to do differently?
 - What support strategies could be most useful for you in the workplace?
- Questions for Group Debrief after Role-Play:
 - What was the most challenging aspect of providing support?
 - How did you respond when you didn't know what to say?
 - What behaviours from the other person made the conversation easier?
 - How can you show empathy without giving advice?
 - In practice, how can you encourage a colleague to seek help?
 - What strategies can help you manage your own emotions during such conversations?
- Together, write down best practices for communication in situations related to mental health on the whiteboard.

Step 4: Support Strategies and Seeking Help:

- Together, think of strategies that can be used to seek support in situations related to mental health in the workplace
- Discuss how to proactively seek help and how to use available resources.
- Write down the best ideas on the whiteboard.

Conclusion/debriefing:

End the exercise by emphasizing the importance of open communication and a supportive environment in the workplace. Encourage participants to seek support when they need it and to offer help to others.

Materials/handouts used:

Mental health conversation scenarios

Annex – Case studies

1. Stress Related to Deadlines - Anna

Anna has been working for a few months as a junior data analyst at a large company. Recently, she has been given more tasks, and the number of projects keeps growing. She feels like she's struggling to cope with the pressure to meet deadlines.

- Anna (employee seeking support): She feels overwhelmed by her workload and worries about not being able to meet deadlines on time. She doesn't know how to manage her stress and is concerned that her productivity is decreasing.
- Colleague (supportive role): You've noticed that Anna is more withdrawn and anxious than usual. You want to help her find ways to manage her stress and time better.

[How can you support Anna in managing her stress and finding a better work-life balance?](#)

2. Fear of Mistakes – Mateusz

Mateusz is a new assistant in the finance department of a large company. He wants to make a good impression but is terrified of making mistakes. He feels overwhelmed before every feedback session, fearing it will reveal his shortcomings and affect his future in the company.

- Mateusz (employee seeking support): Mateusz fears negative feedback and worries that even small errors will reflect poorly on him and endanger his position. He often loses sleep over the anticipation of feedback sessions, feeling as though he'll never meet expectations.
- Supervisor (supportive role): You recognize Mateusz's potential but sense that his fear of mistakes may be hindering his development. You aim to help him see feedback as a tool for growth rather than judgment.

[How can you help Mateusz feel less intimidated by evaluations and encourage him to see feedback as a valuable learning tool?](#)

3. Remote Work Uncertainty - Karolina

Karolina recently started a remote position as a junior social media specialist. Working from home, she feels isolated and worries that her manager may think she isn't as engaged. Her anxiety around her first remote performance review has been building for weeks, as she's unsure if she's meeting expectations.

- Karolina (employee seeking support): Karolina feels insecure about her performance due to the lack of face-to-face interactions. She fears that remote feedback will be harsh and that any criticism might mean she's not fit for the role.
- Supervisor (supportive role): You want to reassure Karolina and help her see feedback as a way to align with team goals. You aim to make her feel supported and understand that feedback is a tool for her success, not a measure of failure.

[How can you help Karolina manage her anxiety around remote evaluations and see feedback as a tool for connection and growth?](#)

4. Imposter Syndrome - Adam

Adam recently joined a company as a junior data analyst. Though he's qualified, he often feels that he doesn't belong and worries that his supervisors might think he's underqualified. He is highly anxious about his first evaluation and fears that any negative feedback will confirm his insecurities.

- Adam (employee seeking support): Adam struggles with feelings of inadequacy and fears that feedback will reveal his weaknesses, potentially threatening his position. He is overwhelmed by self-doubt and feels anxiety before every feedback session.
- Supervisor (supportive role): You recognize Adam's talent but notice that his fear of criticism may be holding him back. You want to help him see feedback as a way to develop skills and build confidence rather than as a personal judgment.

[How can you support Adam in reducing his fear of feedback and help him understand that constructive criticism is a tool for personal and professional growth?](#)

5. Difficulty Adapting to a New Team - Olivia

Olivia recently joined a new team at a manufacturing company. She's having trouble adapting and feels like she doesn't fit in, which is making her feel down.

- Olivia (employee seeking support): Olivia feels excluded and believes that she is not being accepted by the rest of the team. This is affecting her motivation and increasing her stress.
- Team member (supportive role): You've noticed that Olivia is quiet and avoids team meetings. You want to help her integrate better and feel like part of the group.

[How can you support Olivia in integrating with the team and help her build relationships with her colleagues?](#)

LEVELS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Category:

Awareness: 'Mental Health Literacy' for young people

Overview:

Activity helps participants understand how everyday workplace challenges can contribute to stress and burnout, identify early signs of mental strain, and explore effective coping strategies.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Participants identify common situations in the workplace that can trigger stress and understand their potential impact on well-being.
- Participants explore and evaluate different ways of dealing with stress, recognising which strategies are helpful and which may be less effective.
- Participants reflect on their own reactions to stress, linking the avatar's experiences to their personal strengths, weaknesses, and coping habits.
- Participants understand how collaboration and mutual support in the workplace can reduce stress, prevent burnout, and improve overall resilience.

Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (18–30 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop, etc. It is important that the participants have experience in work-like situations.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 8–15 participants for active discussion and manageable sharing.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): The participant creates the avatar. The mentor takes the role of "facilitator" and presents 2–3 selected scenarios. The young person reflects on how their avatar reacts and connects it directly to their own coping in real life.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Simplify language and reduce the number of scenarios (max 3).
 - Use visual aids (icons for stress, well-being, coping strategies).
 - Keep sharing optional to avoid pressure.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Adapt workplace scenarios to familiar settings (school, volunteering, community life).
 - Be mindful of hierarchy and communication norms—e.g., "boss criticism" might be reframed as "teacher feedback."



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Materials needed:

- Paper or digital templates for creating avatars (name, age, job, workplace setting, etc.).
- A simple scoring system (e.g., points to track each avatar's mental and emotional well-being).
- A list of workplace challenges/events (can be read aloud or displayed).
- Whiteboard or flipchart for debriefing.



Duration:

45–60 minutes





PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Create Avatars

- Ask participants to create a character (an avatar) by filling out key details about themselves (see 'Materials/handouts used').

Step 2: Introduce the Challenge

- The facilitator will describe a series of workplace events representing a typical day.
- Each avatar/participant must decide how to cope with these challenges using their traits and skills.
- Participants will reflect on how their avatar feels after each event, tracking their well-being score (see 'Materials/handouts used').

Step 3: Simulate Workplace Challenges

Read out workplace scenarios one by one. After each, give participants a minute to write down how their avatar responds.

- After each event, ask participants to evaluate:
 - How their avatar feels (e.g., stressed, calm, motivated).
 - What coping strategies the avatar used (if any).
 - Adjust the avatar's "well-being score" based on their reaction.
- You can use fewer scenarios, depending on how long it takes and how participants can keep focus.

Situations:

• Missed the Bus

- **Scenario:** Your avatar missed the bus due to a last-minute delay in leaving the house, causing them to arrive at work 20 minutes late. Upon arrival, their boss makes a pointed comment about punctuality in front of colleagues.
- **Impact:**
 - Immediate stress from running late.
 - Embarrassment and frustration from public criticism.
 - Difficulty starting the day with a focused and positive mindset.

• Tight Deadline

- **Scenario:** Your avatar receives a last-minute task from their supervisor, with an unrealistic deadline requiring them to stay late or work at a hurried pace. The task is critical for the team's performance.
- **Impact:**
 - Pressure to perform under time constraints.
 - Increased stress and potential for mistakes.
 - Potential conflicts with personal plans or commitments after work.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



- **Technical Issues**

- **Scenario:** Your avatar is assigned a task requiring the use of a new digital tool or software they are unfamiliar with. They struggle to complete the task efficiently and fall behind schedule.
- **Impact:**
 - Frustration from the steep learning curve.
 - Fear of being judged as incompetent by colleagues or supervisors.
 - Delays that could affect the overall project timeline.

- **Coworker Conflict**

- **Scenario:** During a team meeting, your avatar has a disagreement with a coworker about the best approach to completing a project. The discussion becomes heated, and tensions linger even after the meeting.
- **Impact:**
 - Strained workplace relationships and reduced collaboration.
 - Difficulty focusing on the project due to lingering emotions.
 - Possible damage to professional reputation if the conflict escalates.

- **Skipped Lunch**

- **Scenario:** Your avatar is so busy with back-to-back meetings and urgent tasks that they don't have time to eat lunch. By mid-afternoon, they feel tired, irritable, and less productive.
- **Impact:**
 - Decreased focus and efficiency due to hunger and fatigue.
 - Irritability that may affect interactions with coworkers or decision-making.
 - Long-term neglect of self-care, leading to burnout.

- **End-of-Day Surprise**

- **Scenario:** Just as your avatar is preparing to leave for the day, a client sends urgent changes to a project that require immediate attention. The team is expected to respond before the next workday begins.
- **Impact:**
 - Frustration from having to stay late or delay personal plans.
 - Pressure to complete the task quickly, increasing the likelihood of errors.
 - Potential resentment towards the client or management.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Conclusion/debriefing:

- Which of today's challenges felt most similar to something you've experienced in real life? How did you handle it then?
- What signs do you notice in yourself when you feel stressed or close to burnout (e.g. tired, irritated, losing focus)?
- Which coping strategy your avatar used could you also try in your daily life?
- What is one small change you could make this week to protect your well-being (e.g. taking breaks, asking for help, planning ahead)?

Practical Application to Real-World Settings - you can incorporate these insights into a guided discussion:

1. Identify Early Signs of Burnout: Help participants recognize physical, emotional, and behavioral signs of stress, such as irritability, fatigue, or difficulty concentrating.
2. Develop Coping Mechanisms: Encourage strategies like prioritizing tasks, taking breaks, communicating needs, and asking for help.
3. Build Resilience: Reinforce the value of self-care, boundary setting, and workplace collaboration to maintain mental health.
4. Workplace Advocacy: Discuss the importance of advocating for mental health policies, like flexible schedules or employee wellness programs.

Materials/handouts used:

Avatar creation template



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



AVATAR CREATION

1. Basic Information

- Name: _____
- Age: _____
- Job Title: _____
- Workplace (e.g., office, remote, retail, etc.): _____
- Living Situation (e.g., alone, with roommates, family): _____

2. Personality Traits

- Strengths (e.g., organized, empathetic, quick learner):
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- Weaknesses (e.g., procrastination, poor time management, easily stressed):
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

3. Daily Routine and Habits

- Morning Routine: What does your avatar typically do before starting work?

- Work Style: How does your avatar prefer to work? (e.g., solo, in teams, structured tasks, creative freedom)

- Free Time Activities: What does your avatar do to relax or recharge?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



4. Emotional and Mental Health

- Stress Triggers: What situations make your avatar feel stressed?

- Coping Strategies: How does your avatar handle stress or challenges?

- Support System: Who does your avatar rely on for support? (e.g., friends, coworkers, family, mentors)

5. Workplace Goals

- Short-Term Goals: What is your avatar trying to achieve at work right now?

- Long-Term Goals: What are your avatar's career aspirations?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



SCORING SYSTEM

After each scenario, adjust the “well-being score” based on your reaction (-2 for stress, +1 for self-care), starting in the middle.



1. Scenario: Missing the bus

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

2. Scenario: Tight deadline

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

3. Scenario: Technical issues

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

4. Scenario: Coworker conflict

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

5. Scenario: Skipped lunch

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

6. Scenario: End-of-day surprise

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

7. Scenario: _____

- Feeling: _____
- Coping strategies used: _____

MENTAL HEALTH - MYTHS AND REALITY

Category:

Awareness: 'Mental Health Literacy' for young people

Overview:

This activity focuses on distinguishing myths from truths about mental health to address stigma and improve participants' understanding. Participants engage in a sorting activity followed by a guided discussion to build awareness and foster openness in discussing mental and emotional well-being.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify common myths and truths about mental health.
- Develop a more informed and empathetic perspective on mental health.
- Enhance confidence in addressing mental health topics in personal and professional contexts.

Context and participants:

This activity can be conducted in schools, workplaces, or community centres with groups of 10–30 participants. It is suitable for adolescents, young adults, or professionals who wish to increase mental health awareness.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ensure a safe, non-judgmental environment for discussions.
- Tailor myths/truths to the specific demographic of participants.
- Encourage open sharing but respect participants' comfort levels regarding personal experiences.
- In one-on-one mentoring, the sorting activity can be carried out as a reflective conversation: the facilitator introduces a few statements, and together they explore the participant's perceptions, clarifying misunderstandings.
- For vulnerable groups, simplify language on the cards, avoid overly technical explanations, and provide clear, accessible facts. Include supportive discussion to reduce stigma and be ready to redirect if the topic becomes overwhelming.
- In culturally varied or mixed educational settings, adapt examples to avoid stereotypes and ensure statements reflect different contexts fairly. Where appropriate, invite participants to contribute myths they have encountered in their own community, creating space for multiple perspectives.



Materials needed:

- Pre-prepared cards or slips of paper with myths and truths about mental health written on them.
- A sorting board or table labelled Myths and Truths.
- Markers and sticky notes for additional feedback.
- Complementary multimedia resources on the topics discussed would help to enhance the interactivity of the activity.



Duration:

45–60 minutes





PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Begin with an icebreaker to ease participants into the topic, such as asking them to share one word that comes to mind when they think of “mental health.” Briefly introduce the activity and its objectives.

Step 2:

Divide participants into small groups and provide each group with a set of cards containing statements about mental health. These cards should be adapted and tailored to suit the group, focusing on particularly relevant stigmas and issues surrounding mental health.

Ask each group to work together to sort the statements into “Myths” and “Truths” on the sorting board or table. Circulate during the activity to answer questions or provide clarification. Each Myth provided in the handout can be linked to a paired Truth.

Step 3:

Review each statement with the entire group, clarifying any misconceptions and providing accurate information. Facilitate a discussion on how these myths and truths influence attitudes toward mental health.

Step 4:

Invite participants to share any new insights or shifts in perspective they experienced during the activity. Encourage participants to consider how they can challenge stigma in their own lives and communities.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Ask participants to write or share a sentence or two about what they learned or found surprising during the session. This might include encouraging participants to contribute other myths or truths they’ve encountered in their own lives or communities.

Conclude by summarising the key points discussed and highlighting the importance of mental health awareness. This might include providing resources or contact information for further learning or support (see the Toolkit resource bank), such as local mental health services or hotlines.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



CARDS

MYTH	REALITY
Mental illnesses are something only adults suffer from.	Mental illnesses can affect anyone, regardless of age. Children and teenagers can also experience conditions like anxiety, depression, and panic disorders.
People with mental illnesses can't succeed in work, school, or life.	Mental health challenges can sometimes make things harder, but with the right support, people can achieve their goals in work, school, and personal life. Talking to others and exploring ways to relax or manage stress can be helpful.
Having a mental illness makes it nearly impossible to live independently or take care of yourself.	Many people with mental health conditions live independently, care for themselves, and maintain fulfilling lives. Every mental health journey is unique, and with the right support, individuals can thrive.
Mental illnesses last forever, and recovery isn't possible.	Recovery is possible for people with mental health challenges. Therapy, support from loved ones, and self-care strategies help many people manage or overcome their conditions.
There's no point in talking about mental illnesses; medication is the only way to feel better.	Like physical health, mental health care involves more than medication. Talking to friends, family, or professionals and practicing self-care are vital for managing and recovering from mental health challenges.
People with mental illnesses are violent, aggressive, and dangerous.	Most people with mental health conditions are not violent or dangerous. In fact, they are more likely to experience bullying or abuse than to harm others.
Certain groups of people are more likely to develop mental illnesses.	Mental health challenges can affect anyone, regardless of race, gender, religion, or background. No group is immune to mental health concerns.

THE SIX HATS

Category:

Awareness: 'Mental Health Literacy' for young people

Overview:

This activity engages participants in group discussions to explore problematic behaviours related to mental health. Each participant adopts a specific 'hat' representing a unique perspective or approach, facilitating greater understanding and destigmatization of mental health conditions.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Discuss diverse perspectives and approaches to addressing challenges related to mental health.
- Develop empathy and reduce stigma surrounding mental health conditions.

Context and participants:

This activity can be carried out in a variety of educational settings, mental health workshops, or team-building activities. It is best with groups of six and is suitable for adults or adolescents interested in mental health awareness.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ensure a safe, non-judgmental environment for discussions.
- Rotate roles to ensure participants experience different perspectives.
- Facilitate discussions actively to maintain engagement.
- If varying from those provided, ensure cases are sensitively crafted and free from bias.
- In one-to-one settings, the activity can be adapted by the facilitator taking several "hats" and asking the individual to respond to each perspective. This allows for personalised exploration of mental health issues without needing a group.
- For vulnerable groups, simplify role descriptions, avoid technical terms, and use clear, concrete examples. Provide extra support by pairing participants or giving prompts if they struggle to generate responses. Be sensitive to possible stigma or personal experiences with mental health.
- In different cultural or educational contexts, adapt case studies to reflect locally relevant issues or examples. Where literacy is a barrier, the facilitator can describe the hats and scenarios verbally or use images and symbols instead of written role cards.

Materials needed:

- Role cards ("hats") with descriptions of perspectives.
- Case descriptions for each round.
- Whiteboard or flipchart.
- Timer or stopwatch.



Duration:

60 – 75 minutes



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Introduce the purpose of the activity: to provide an opportunity to explore various common behaviours and problems tied to mental health challenges. Introduce the concept of the six 'hats', which are the roles each participant will take on when engaging in each round of debate about a case study. You can distribute the cards to each participant at this point, making sure that each one is understood:

- The Realist: Focuses on practical solutions and immediate actions to address the problematic behaviour. Tends to look for tangible fixes rather than abstract ideas.
- The Empath: Seeks to understand the emotions and underlying causes of the behaviour. Advocates for compassionate, non-judgmental approaches.
- The Sceptic: Questions the validity of explanations and solutions. Challenges others to provide evidence and think critically.
- The Optimist: Highlights potential positive outcomes and opportunities for growth in the situation. Encourages hope and resilience.
- The Rule-Enforcer: Focuses on the importance of structure, boundaries, and adherence to societal norms or policies. Advocates for maintaining order.
- The Mediator: Strives to find balance between different perspectives, promoting compromise and harmonious solutions that benefit all.

NOTE: *These can be simplified (e.g. positive, negative, doubtful) or introduced gradually if the full set is too complex. Using colour cards or small paper hats can make the roles clearer.*

The roles should not be hidden from other members of the group, and checking questions can help ensure that each one is understood before starting the activity.

Alternatively, the roles could be 'doubled up', meaning that two people are given the same role. This could provide support for participants who struggle to participate in debates and would ensure that each perspective is reflected in the debate.

Additionally, if there are other people in the group, they can observe, take notes, and share their observations during the debriefing.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Step 2:

Present the first problematic situation to the group, clearing up any doubts about the details. Allow participants a few minutes to discuss the situation from the perspective of their assigned roles/'hats', with the purpose of providing constructive advice to the individual(s) involved in the case. Encourage participants to challenge each other constructively and draw on their roles' focus.

Alternatively, the facilitator or a group member can take on the role of the individual in the scenario, ensuring this is carried out more interactively and personally.

Step 3:

After the discussion in each round, reveal the mental health condition behind the behaviour(s) exhibited and discuss how this insight shifts the participants' perspectives. Ask questions such as 'Does this shift how you'd approach the situation?' or 'What new strategies might be effective now that we understand the underlying condition?' Draw out any misconceptions related to the information provided, and answer any questions that the group might have.

Step 4:

The group can rotate their 'hats' as they discuss the next situation. Repeat the procedure of revealing the condition in question, and providing a space for follow-up discussion and questions.

Step 5:

Wrap up with a final group discussion, asking participants to share their reflections and common themes identified across cases. You may also ask: 'How would you usually react in this situation?' or 'What would you like to change about your reaction?'

Conclusion/debriefing:

Conduct a debriefing conversation, focusing on the following questions:

- What was the most challenging part of viewing the cases from your assigned role?
- How did your understanding of the cases evolve after the condition reveal?
- What broader lessons can we apply when encountering such behaviors in real life?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



The Six Hats

THE REALIST

You focus on practical, immediate solutions to address the behaviour. Your priority is finding clear, achievable fixes over abstract ideas or lengthy discussions.

THE EMPATH

Your role is to understand the emotions behind the behaviour. You advocate for compassion, patience, and a non-judgmental approach to support the individual.

THE OPTIMIST

You highlight positive outcomes and opportunities for growth. Your focus is on bringing hope and encouraging resilience in addressing the situation.

THE SCEPTIC

You question assumptions and challenge solutions. Your job is to push for critical thinking, evidence-based ideas, and clarity in every suggestion.

THE RULE-ENFORCER

You emphasize structure, boundaries, and adherence to rules. Your role is to ensure accountability, consistency, and fairness in responses.

THE MEDIATOR

You balance differing views, fostering harmony and compromise. Your goal is to guide the group toward collaborative and inclusive solutions.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



SITUATION

CONDITION INVOLVED

A person avoids social gatherings, frequently declines invitations, and often makes excuses to leave early when they do attend. Friends describe them as aloof or disinterested, and some believe they are intentionally distant.

Social anxiety disorder underlies the behaviour of avoiding gatherings. This condition involves a persistent fear of judgment, rejection, or embarrassment, making even routine interactions stressful. Avoidance is not due to disinterest but stems from significant emotional distress.

A team member is consistently late to meetings, struggles to meet deadlines, and appears unmotivated at work. Colleagues perceive them as unreliable, with some attributing this to laziness or a lack of professionalism.

Major depressive disorder explains the lateness and difficulty meeting deadlines. Depression can sap energy, reduce concentration, and make completing daily tasks overwhelming, even when the individual cares deeply about their responsibilities.

A student disrupts the classroom regularly, refuses to complete assignments, and seems inattentive during lessons. Teachers often describe the behaviour as defiant, noting that the student can occasionally excel in topics they find interesting.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often causes impulsivity, inattention, and struggles with structured tasks. The student's behaviour isn't defiance but reflects challenges with focus and self-regulation, paired with bursts of creativity when engaged.

A coworker frequently complains about physical discomforts like headaches or stomach issues and often takes sick days. Others perceive them as exaggerating or using excuses to avoid responsibilities, leading to frustration among the team.

Somatic symptom disorder may underlie this behaviour. This condition involves experiencing physical symptoms that are distressing and disproportionate to any identifiable medical cause. The symptoms are real to the individual, stemming from an interplay of psychological and physical factors, rather than being fabricated.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Category:

Awareness: 'Mental Health Literacy' for young people

Overview:

Activity helps participants understand the concept of mental health as an integral part of overall health and its connection to challenges faced in adulthood and the workplace.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understand the broader concept of health, including mental health, and its role in overall well-being.
- Recognize mental health challenges related to transitioning into adulthood and employment.
- Develop an appreciation for emotional and social resilience as tools for navigating personal and professional challenges.

Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (16–26 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop, etc.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 8–20 participants works best for sharing and group discussion.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): Select a few photos and let the young person choose one. Use it as a prompt for conversation: what does the image say about their view of health/mental health? Connect the answer directly to their personal experiences, goals, and stressors in everyday life.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Use simple language and concrete prompts (e.g. "This picture makes me feel... because...").
 - Allow drawing or choosing symbols instead of verbal explanation if expression in words is difficult.
 - Give the option to discuss in small groups rather than in front of everyone.
 - Be mindful that some images may trigger emotions—let participants skip or choose again.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Adapt photo selection so it reflects familiar, culturally relevant images (e.g. community, family, school, work).
 - In intercultural groups, encourage participants to compare perspectives and note cultural differences in how health/mental health are perceived.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Awareness Mental Health Literacy



Materials Needed:

A variety of photos depicting different scenarios - **IMPORTANT:** *prepare the materials in advance, it works even better if the pictures are laminated.*



Duration:

35–40 minutes



Activity Procedure:

IMPORTANT: Before conducting the activity, consider the age characteristics of the group and guide participants accordingly.

Step 1: Photo Exploration

- Spread the photos in the middle of a circle.
- Explain to participants: “Here, you see a variety of images showing different aspects of life. Some depict physical activity, others social interactions, and others moments of emotion or solitude. These images represent diverse experiences connected to our health.”
- Prompt participants with guiding questions:
 - “What does health mean to you?”
 - “What do you think mental health is?”
- Ask participants to each choose one (can be also two) photo that they associate with mental health.
- Once everyone has chosen a photo, have participants take turns explaining why they picked their image and what it represents to them.
- Alternatively, if you feel the participants would be uncomfortable sharing or the group dynamic is not very open: Participants get together in groups of four and discuss their thoughts - each group then presents what they talked about (because they present the opinion of the group, they might feel more comfortable and less exposed).

Step 2: Group Discussion

- Summarize the participants’ reflections, focusing on common themes:
 - Physical Health: Exercise, diet, sleep.
 - Mental Health: Emotions, stress management, positive self-image.
 - Social Health: Relationships, communication, support systems.
- Highlight any aspects that participants may have overlooked (e.g., self-care, managing stress, balancing work and personal life).

Step 3: Connecting Mental Health to Adulthood and Employment

Facilitate a discussion to connect mental health to challenges young people face during adulthood and in the workplace:

- Ask participants:
 - “How do you think mental health influences your ability to work or achieve personal goals?”
 - “What are some mental health challenges young people face as they transition into adulthood or start a career?”
- Examples to guide the discussion:
 - Stress from job searching or starting a new role.
 - Balancing personal and professional responsibilities.
 - Managing workplace relationships and expectations.
 - Coping with failures or setbacks in career development.

Step 4: Key Takeaways

- Summarize key points:
 - Mental health is as important as physical health in achieving overall well-being.
 - Social connections and emotional resilience are essential for thriving in adulthood and employment.
 - Recognizing and addressing mental health challenges is crucial for personal and professional success.
- Share a brief definition of mental health: “Mental health is a state of well-being where individuals can cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community. It includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being.”

Conclusion/debriefing:

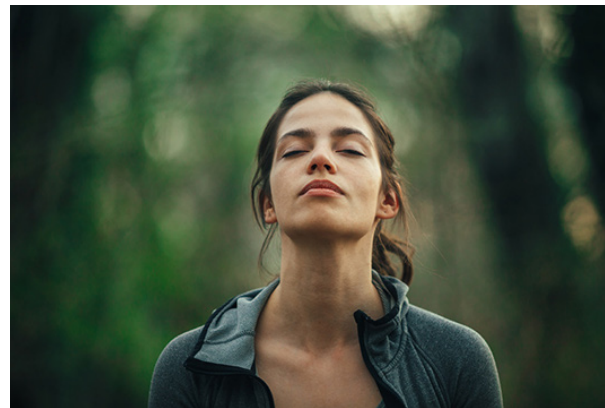
(Debriefing is already included in the steps above, but the prompts below can also be addressed):

Reflecting on the Activity.

- Ask participants to share their thoughts:
 - “What stood out to you about the photos chosen and the reasons shared?”
 - “Did any ideas or reflections surprise you?”
 - “Have you ever thought about mental health in this way before?”
 - “How did this activity help you better understand mental health?”
- Group Discussion on Workplace Challenges:
 - “How do you think mental health affects your ability to work effectively or achieve goals?”
 - “What are some challenges young people face that can impact mental health during the transition to adulthood or the workplace?”
- Skills and Strategies for Supporting Mental Health:
 - “What strategies can help you manage stress and support your mental health?”
 - “How can you advocate for mental health at work or in your community?”
- You can share with them a website link with them, where they can learn more:
 - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/> (English – you can add one that is accessible and used in your country)

Materials/handouts used:





02.

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING EMOTIONS



UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING EMOTIONS

THE TOPIC

Our emotions play a central role in shaping our decisions, relationships, and overall well-being. Yet, many young people struggle to identify and manage their emotions effectively. This section is designed to help participants develop emotional intelligence—a key skill for navigating personal and professional challenges. Understanding the triggers and physical manifestations of emotions is the first step toward managing them. By learning strategies for emotional regulation, participants build resilience and improve their interpersonal interactions.

INSIGHT

Research in the Mind the Gap project shows that emotional distress is widespread among young people, with stress, anxiety, and worry reported by the majority of respondents. By understanding and managing their emotions, young people can build resilience and maintain healthier relationships during this pivotal stage of their lives.

ACTIVITIES

Through guided activities, participants are encouraged to recognise how their emotions impact their thoughts and actions. These exercises also explore ways to respond to negative experiences and foster a deeper understanding of emotional cues in others. Equipped with these skills, participants will feel more confident in addressing conflicts, managing stress, and maintaining emotional balance. The 'Exploding Balloon' illustrates emotional triggers and 'Embodying Emotions' identifies physical signals of feelings. Others, such as 'Shifting Your Response', focus on building resilience and adapting to challenging scenarios.

ADAPTABILITY TO SITUATIONS

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

This activity is designed to help participants identify and manage their emotions, including coping mechanisms for stress and responding to unexpected situations. Using role-playing in a given real-world scenario, participants will learn the importance of adaptability in a professional environment and explore both positive and negative ways to control and express emotions

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understand the importance of adaptability.
- Define ways to develop adaptability.
- Develop stress management skills and learn to deal with unexpected situations.

Context and participants:

This activity could be conducted either in a classroom or in an office meeting room. Participants could be high school or university students or young professionals at their first work experience.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 10–20 participants. This allows enough diversity in reactions and perspectives to enrich the discussions, while still being manageable for movement-based activities.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), the trainer can present scenarios directly to the participant. Instead of physically moving across the room, the individual can point to a visual “scale” (e.g., cards laid out on a table labeled adapt easily – mixed feelings – struggle to adapt) or verbally explain where they see themselves and why.
- To adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges), the trainer should use simple, clear language and avoid culture-specific jargon. Include scenarios relevant to their lived experience (e.g., starting at a new school, communicating in a new language, adapting to new customs) and/or the trainer can simplify those scenarios (use one clear sentence or picture cards to represent each situation). Offer more time to think and respond. Always create a safe, calm environment, making it clear that participants can opt out or pass.
- To adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts, the trainer should encourage participants to share how adaptability is viewed in their own culture (e.g., is change seen as an opportunity or as a threat?). Adapt scenarios to reflect familiar situations in participants’ daily lives (school, family, workplace, community).



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Materials needed:

- Whiteboard (or paper) to note down the key words
- Felt pens



Duration:

30 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Invite the participants to change places in the room, taking all their belongings with them.

Ask participants:

- How did you feel when you were asked to change places?
- Did it make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable?
- Was it a good opportunity to move to a particular place, or would you prefer to be in your old place?

Discuss briefly the effects of change in daily life. On a whiteboard or flipchart, ask participants: *What does adaptability mean to you?* Collect keywords (e.g., flexibility, openness, stress, creativity, patience, resilience).

Step 2:

Read a scenario (e.g., You arrive at work and find the materials you need have not been delivered – see more examples below).

Ask participants to decide how they personally would react:

- If they think they would adapt well, they should move to one side of the room.
- If they think they would struggle to adapt, they should move to the other side of the room.
- If they think they would be somewhere in between, they should stand in the middle.

Once participants have placed themselves, invite them to share:

- Why did you choose this position?
- What emotions would you feel in this scenario?
- What actions would you take?

Repeat with 2–3 more scenarios. After each, briefly debrief on the differences in reactions.

Examples of situations:

- Starting to work with a new team.
- Working with new software that does not work well.
- Arriving at work and realizing that the materials you need have not been delivered.
- The company you work for goes out of business. No similar company exists in the area.
- You arrive at your office in the morning, and the telephone is not working. You were expecting important phone calls.
- You finish work after a long day and realize that the time clock is no longer working.
- You arrive at work on Monday and are given the task of dealing with a new employee who speaks your language poorly.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Conclusion/debriefing:

Bring everyone back together and discuss:

- What made adapting easier in some situations?
- What made it harder in others?
- Did you notice differences between how you reacted and how others reacted?

On the whiteboard/flipchart, brainstorm helpful tips for adaptability (e.g., keeping calm, problem-solving, asking for help, being patient, focusing on what you can control).

BALLOONS



Category:

Understanding and managing emotions



Overview:

This exercise uses simulations to handle multiple tasks in the workplace. Participants will experience how emotions affect their ability to manage them, learn how to cooperate and operate under time pressure.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify emotional reactions to managing multiple tasks.
- Develop strategies for staying calm and prioritizing in stressful situations.
- Discuss the role of communication and teamwork when facing high-pressure scenarios.



Context and participants:

This exercise is suitable for team-building sessions or emotional intelligence workshops in the workplace, with participants from any professional background. The activity is designed for 15 participants.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- This exercise can be used for different age groups.
- The recommended group size is from 10 to 15 participants. If your group has more people and you have more space, you can divide the participants into smaller subgroups and conduct the exercise in them. You will then need the appropriate number of balloons.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): Adapt the activity by reducing the number of balloons. Start by asking the person to bounce two balloons, then add two more. Add more balloons in different colors until you have a maximum of 8.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges): When discussing the exercise, emphasize that difficult experiences can affect our mental condition, which can directly impact our productivity and ability to complete assigned tasks.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts: Different people may have different approaches to task management. This may be influenced by their experiences, personality traits, environment, and culture. While some value delegation, collaboration, and collectivism, others may be more inclined to individualism and taking on more responsibility. Consider this in your discussions and conclusions. If you know the group you'll be working with, you can assign balloon colors to specific situations the participants encounter daily.
- Encourage open communication and a non-judgmental atmosphere during reflections to ensure participants feel comfortable sharing their emotions and thoughts.
- Explain to the participants that they are free to communicate, shout, and laugh—anything that helps them keep the balloons in the air is encouraged.



Materials needed:

Balloons of different colours (representing different tasks or challenges).

For example:

- Red balloon = Urgent task or crisis.
- Blue balloon = Routine task.
- Yellow balloon = Creative or brainstorming task.
- Green balloon = Long-term goal or project.



Duration:

30 minutes (10 minutes for the exercise and 20 minutes for reflection)

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Arrange the participants in a circle. Explain the task: their goal is to keep all the balloons in the air for the duration of the activity. If a balloon falls to the floor, the group will have to do as many squats as the total number of times balloons have dropped by the end of the round (if the balloons have fallen 20 times, the participants should do 20 squats). You can adapt this to another quick action, such as jumping, spinning, or clapping, depending on the group. Explain that this short “penalty” represents the effort of correcting mistakes and the weight of responsibility that affects a team’s overall performance and morale.

Start with a manageable task: use about half as many balloons as there are participants (e.g., for 10 people, use 5 balloons). The balloons can be of different colors to symbolize various tasks. Ask participants to keep them all in the air for one minute, making sure everyone participates.

Step 2:

After one minute, add more balloons gradually until there are about twice as many balloons as participants (e.g., for 10 people, use 20 balloons). Explain that these represent different types of tasks — urgent, routine, creative, and long-term. Encourage participants to keep all the balloons in the air for another two minutes. Increase the pace slightly to simulate a more demanding, high-pressure environment.

Step 3:

Reflect on the group’s emotional experience while managing multiple tasks. Discuss feelings of stress, teamwork and prioritisation. Explain that, at work, when we make a mistake, we often have to face the consequences.

- What emotions did you experience during the exercise?
- How did you feel at the beginning, how did you feel in the middle and how did you feel at the end of the task?
- How did you feel when the balloons fell to the ground, and you knew you would soon have to suffer the consequences?
- What helped you deal with your emotions, such as anger and frustration?

Step 4:

Final reflection.

- Encourage participants to discuss how they experienced different emotions in each scenario:
 - How did you deal with the distraction? Did it cause frustration or stress?
 - How did you feel when you tried to deal with everything at once?
 - How do these feelings relate to your experiences in the workplace?
- Discuss strategies for managing these emotions in real work situations:
 - What techniques can help you stay calm under pressure?
 - How can you effectively communicate with your team when you feel overwhelmed?
 - What strategies can you use to prioritize tasks in high-stress situations?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Conclusion/debriefing:

The participants become more aware of their emotional reactions in different scenarios, understand how emotions can influence their behaviour at work, and explore strategies to better manage these emotions. This exercise will also highlight the importance of teamwork, clear communication, and emotional intelligence when handling multiple tasks or challenges in a workplace setting.

EMBODYING EMOTIONS

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

This activity is designed to help participants identify emotions and their physical signs, in order to develop their emotional intelligence. Using role-playing scenarios and charades to express emotions in different contexts, the activity will foster greater awareness and empathy among participants.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Recognize emotions perceived in others.
- Improve the way to talk about and analyze emotions.
- Develop one's emotional intelligence.

Context and participants:

This activity could be conducted in a classroom with a small group of high school or university students.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 6–15 participants. This ensures there are enough perspectives and role plays to keep the activity dynamic, while still allowing everyone to participate without feeling rushed.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work) the trainer can act out an emotion, and the participant tries to identify it. One-on-one use is especially effective for building trust, enhancing self-awareness, and encouraging the mentee to share personal experiences linked to emotions.
- To adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges) the trainer can use simple, clear language for situation cards and/or provide visual aids (emoji cards, pictures, or short comic strips) instead of written scenarios. Emphasize inclusivity and respect by acknowledging that emotional expressions can differ across cultures. Ensure a safe, non-judgmental space, making it clear that participants can “pass” if they feel uncomfortable.
- To adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts, the trainer should recognize that body language, eye contact, and expressions of certain emotions (e.g., anger, sadness) vary widely between cultures. Invite participants to share how emotions are typically expressed in their own culture. Include more physical acting and less abstract discussion. For formal settings (schools, training), the trainer can link the activity to existing curricula (e.g., social-emotional learning, communication skills) while for more informal educational contexts, the trainer should keep it playful and flexible, encouraging creativity alongside reflection.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Materials needed:

- A series of photographs of people expressing emotions
- Whiteboard
- Markers



Duration:

30 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Give each participant a description of a situation (e.g., someone arriving late to a planned meeting, someone appreciating the work you have done, someone forgetting the call you had scheduled a few days earlier...). For older youth, you could describe a situation that is more relatable with emotions from their current life (burnout, stress before a university/work presentation, or feeling disappointed after not getting a job).

Step 2:

Ask each participant to act out the emotion they might feel in that context, one at a time.

Step 3:

Then, invite the rest of the group to guess the emotion based on body language and facial expressions.

Step 4:

After they identify the emotion, ask the participant in question to read the situation aloud, thus adding another layer of interpretation.

Step 5:

Invite the next participant to act out the situation they received and then read it aloud. Continue in this way until everyone has had a turn.

Conclusion/debriefing:

After the role-play activity, gather the group in a circle and create a safe, open space for discussion. Highlight that there is no single “correct” emotion for each situation—our experiences and interpretations are personal and diverse. For instance, in response to someone being late, one person might express anger, another sadness, and yet another relief.

Suggested Debriefing Questions:

- As an observer, what helped you identify the emotions shown by others?
- Why do you think two people might feel very different emotions in the same situation? What does this tell us about the uniqueness of emotional experiences?
- In everyday life, do you find it easy or difficult to express what you are really feeling?
- Can you think of a time when someone misunderstood your feelings because you didn’t (or couldn’t) express them clearly? How did that affect the situation?
- What are some risks of keeping emotions hidden? What are some benefits of expressing them openly?
- How can recognizing emotions in ourselves and others help us in friendships, school, or work?
- What strategies could you use when you feel emotions that are hard to express (e.g., stress, sadness, frustration)?

EMOTION COMMOTION

MASTERING EMOTIONS FOR SUCCESS



Category:

Understanding and managing emotions



Overview:

The participants discuss how to recognize emotions in others as well as how to manage their own emotions.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

To help participants recognize, understand, and manage their emotions and the emotions of others in a workplace context.



Context and participants:

People of all ages.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

Create a trusting atmosphere. If the participants engage well with exercise, it can be used for different topics as well: My resilience (questions about my inherent resilience strategy), working experiences, and so on. It is important to notice if anyone struggles with the activity, as it might trigger unpleasant memories or feelings of inferiority, etc.

Recommended group size: 7 to 20.

How to use this activity in a one-on-one setting: Print pictures with people expressing different emotions (for younger people) or print short workplace stories where these emotions are shown. Let the participant talk about what they see and how they interpret the situation.

How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:

- Some cultures value emotional restraint, while others encourage open expression. Adjust the level of sharing and role-playing accordingly. Always state at the beginning that sharing is voluntary.
- Adapt the language to the language skills of the participants.
- In cultures or classrooms where discussing personal feelings is unusual, spend more time on icebreakers before moving on to emotional sharing.
- If you have multilingual participants, provide translations or examples in the local language, especially for emotion vocabulary (some emotions may not translate directly).



Materials needed:

- Sticky notes (various colours)
- Markers or pens
- A whiteboard or flip chart



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Introduction

Briefly explain what emotional intelligence (EQ) is and its importance in the workplace. Discuss how managing emotions can affect communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Write down the bullet points.

Step 2: Emotion Charades

Divide participants into small groups (3–5 people). Each group takes turns picking a sticky note with an emotion written on it (e.g., happiness, frustration, anxiety, excitement). One member of the group acts out the emotion without speaking, while the others guess what it is. After guessing, discuss briefly how that emotion might manifest in a workplace setting. (E.g., “What might it look like if someone feels frustrated at work?” or “Which situations are the ones you identify as the ones that make you (naming the emotion)?”)

Step 3: Identifying Emotions

Hand out sticky notes and pens to each participant. Ask them to think of a recent situation where they felt a strong emotion (positive or negative) related to school, work, or personal life. On one sticky note, they should write down the emotion they felt. On another, they should write down the situation that triggered that emotion. Invite participants to share their experiences in pairs. Encourage them to ask what they learned from this experience.

Step 4: Managing Emotions

Regroup and ask for volunteers to share insights from their pair discussions. Encourage them to discuss how they managed those emotions or how they want to manage them in the future.

Talk about strategies for managing emotions in the workplace, such as:

- Deep breathing techniques
- Taking breaks
- Seeking support from colleagues
- Using positive self-talk
- Good preparation

Write down these strategies on a whiteboard or flip chart for everyone to see.

Step 5: Applying EQ Skills

Ask participants to think of one specific strategy they can use the next time they encounter a strong emotion in a work or school situation.

Have them write this down on a sticky note and keep it as a reminder.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Ask the participants how they are feeling now and whether they think they can use some of the exercises to manage their emotions in a healthier way.

Encourage participants to practice their chosen strategies and remind them that developing emotional intelligence is a continuous process.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS WITH DIFFERENT TONES

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

The activity aims to help participants recognize the impact that tone and communication style can have on delivering a message and how different tones (passive, aggressive, assertive) can influence the way the message is received.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understanding nonverbal communication.
- Practicing assertive communication.
- Applying skills in professional contexts.
- Developing empathy and awareness.

Context and participants:

The activity could be conducted in high schools, youth organizations, NGOs, or during workshops. Participants could include high school students who are preparing for the transition into higher education or the workforce; recent graduates who have recently completed their education and are actively seeking employment; youth in employment programs such as internships.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

Create a safe and supportive environment. Set rules that emphasize respect and make it clear that there's no right or wrong way to express emotions. Explain that the activity is about learning, not judgment.

Recommended group size: 10-15 people.

Briefly explain what nonverbal communication means for those who might not be familiar with the term. Then, demonstrate a couple of examples with exaggerated gestures and postures to reduce confusion. If the participants are still confused, consider providing visual aids such as emotion cards with suggested gestures or postures for those participants who really struggle with conveying emotions.

Promote observation: encourage participants to closely observe the physical cues others use and think about what they communicate. It should also be noted that cultural differences with regard to non-verbal communication may carry different meanings.

In individual sessions, the activity can be simplified to focus on reflection and personalized practice.

1. **Exploring emotions** – The participant expresses an emotion through posture or gestures; the mentor and participant discuss what signals were most noticeable.
2. **Roleplay practice** – Conduct a short mock interview or workplace scenario. The mentor gives feedback on nonverbal cues (eye contact, posture, expressions) and the participant repeats the exercise.

3. **Reflection** – Discuss what felt natural, what can be improved, and set one or two small goals to apply in real life.

When working with vulnerable groups, it is important to ensure that the activity feels safe, inclusive, and accessible.

- **Simplify instructions:** Use clear, simple language and demonstrate tasks step by step.
- **Provide visual aids:** Emotion cards, pictures, or short roleplay prompts can help participants who struggle with abstract concepts.
- **Offer choices:** Allow participants to opt out of acting in front of the group and instead contribute as observers or through drawing/writing.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Be mindful that nonverbal communication can vary across cultures; invite participants to share examples from their own backgrounds.
- **Extra support:** If needed, work in smaller groups or pairs and check in regularly to make sure everyone feels comfortable and included.

Materials needed:

- Spacious area with chairs for participants to sit comfortably or move around.
- Notepads and pens for participants to take notes while observing or during discussion.
- Roleplay scenario handouts with different roles (interviewer or candidate).
- Optional cards on body language and emotions.

Duration:

60 minutes



Activity Procedure:

Part 1: Understanding emotions through body language

- Form a circle, ensuring that everyone can see each other.
- Introduce the topic by explaining the importance of body language in expressing emotions.
- Invite one participant at a time to step into the center. Each one chooses an emotion (joy, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, confusion, etc.) and represents it using only posture and gestures, without speaking. The rest of the group will observe and guess the emotion.
- After several representations, lead a group discussion and reflection on the signals noticed, interpretations of body language and gestures or postures that were effective.

Part 2: Roleplay – applying body language in a professional context

- Explain that participants will apply what they learned about body language in a professional context, specifically in a job interview setting.
- Divide participants into pairs, one person is the interviewer and the other is the candidate, explain their role and hand out common interview questions (for example, “Tell me about yourself” or “Why do you want this position”, etc.).
- Participants conduct mock job interviews for about 10 minutes, focusing on the candidate’s body language (maintaining eye contact, good posture) and the interviewer’s role (observing and interpreting the candidate’s nonverbal cues and asking questions). Then, switch roles.

The activity can also be done with other scenarios, such as conflict resolution or teamwork.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Debrief and reflect on the experiences during the role play. Some discussion questions could include:

- How did you manage your body language during the interview?
- What nonverbal cues did you notice from the interviewer/candidate?
- Were there moments when you felt unsure about what the other person’s body language meant?
- Did the role of interviewer or candidate feel more natural for you? Why?
- How do you think your body language might affect someone’s interpretation of what you’re saying in a professional setting?
- What are some small steps you can take to be more mindful of your body language in everyday interactions?

Thank the participant for their engagement, summarize key points on body language and its impact on communication and provide any additional resources.

Materials/handouts used:

Sample interview questions:

- “Tell me about yourself and your background.”
- “Why are you interested in this position?”
- “Can you describe a challenging situation you’ve faced and how you handled it?”
- “Where do you see yourself in five years?”

Guidelines for each role

CANDIDATE:

Focus on demonstrating professional and confident body language that communicates interest and attentiveness.

- **Eye Contact:** Make steady eye contact to show engagement and confidence, but avoid staring. Break eye contact occasionally to appear natural.
- **Posture:** Sit up straight with shoulders relaxed. Avoid slouching, crossing your arms, or fidgeting.
- **Hand Gestures:** Use open and controlled hand movements to emphasize points, but avoid excessive movement.
- **Facial Expressions:** Smile when appropriate, showing friendliness and positivity. Nod occasionally to indicate understanding and interest.
- **Listening:** Lean slightly forward when the interviewer is speaking, showing active listening and interest in the conversation.

INTERVIEWER:

Focus on observing the candidate’s body language to assess their level of confidence, interest, and professionalism. Also, maintain open, friendly, and encouraging body language to help the candidate feel comfortable.

- **Eye Contact:** Make consistent eye contact with the candidate to convey attentiveness and professionalism.
- **Open Posture:** Sit with an open posture, keeping arms uncrossed and shoulders relaxed to appear approachable.
- **Listening Cues:** Nod occasionally and use small affirming gestures to show you are actively listening.
- **Facial Expressions:** Keep a neutral but friendly facial expression, smiling occasionally to encourage the candidate.
- **Pauses:** After asking a question, give the candidate time to respond fully. Avoid interrupting or making impatient gestures.

SELF-AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL OBSTACLES

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

Activity helps participants reflect on their goals, identify personal obstacles, and explore strategies for self-support, fostering emotional intelligence and self-awareness as they navigate adulthood and employment challenges.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Reflect on personal goals and aspirations in the short and long term.
- Identify strengths, resources, and obstacles that influence the path toward these goals.
- Practice active listening and empathy by sharing and hearing each other's reflections.

Context and participants:

With young adults (18–26 years old), in non-formal settings/workshops (for example, in school, university, training and workshops, etc.). Since the activity requires a considerable amount of self-reflection and trust within the group, it is suitable for individuals who have known each other for a long time and feel comfortable and safe within the group. We recommend that it is not used as a standalone activity but rather as part of a series of activities on a specific topic, as it works better when placed in context and participants have the opportunity to reflect on related themes before and after the activity.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: Ideal for 10–20 participants to allow dynamic movement in round one and meaningful sharing in pairs.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): The participant creates their Journey Map with the facilitator guiding the steps and then also practices active listening and later invites gentle reflection.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Offer drawing templates (path outline, symbols for obstacles/supports) for the Journey Map to lower the barrier.
 - Allow more time for explanation and sharing in pairs, ensuring participants can use their preferred language or symbols.
 - Remind participants that they can skip any sharing part if they feel uncomfortable.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - In intercultural groups, emphasize respect for different aspirations and highlight that “obstacles and supports” may look different depending on background.
 - Adapt example statements and mapping goals to the participants' realities (e.g., school success, family goals, migration experience).



Materials needed:

- A printed or digital question set for each pair.
- A3 papers.
- Coloured markers, stickers, post-its, magazines, stickers, etc. – for creating a map
- Timer or stopwatch to manage conversation flow.



Duration:

50–60 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Setting the Tone

- Facilitator intro: *"This activity will help you explore your personal and professional goals, the challenges you face, and the strengths and supports you can use to reach them. We will also practice active listening and empathy."*
Emphasize that sharing is voluntary and the space is safe.
- Put chairs into a circle, one fewer than the number of participants.
- Facilitator reads out statements one at a time.
- Participants stand up and switch places if the statement applies to them.
- Example statements:
 - Change places if you want to live in another country at some point in your life.
 - Change places if you expect yourself to always keep learning new things.
 - Change places if you dream of creating something that will outlast you.
 - Change places if you want your life to have a strong balance between work and personal time.
 - Change places if you value deep, long-term relationships over meeting many new people.
 - Change places if you want to challenge yourself with something completely new this year.
 - Change places if you believe helping others is one of your biggest priorities in life.
 - Change places if you want to feel proud of yourself every day for living according to your values.
 - Add more, if necessary...

Step 2: Creative Mapping – My Journey Map

Purpose: Reflect on goals, obstacles, and supports through a visual method.

It is important that you guide participants through this drawing method. First, explain what they will be doing, so they can anticipate the end product. Then guide them through specific steps. If you deem it useful, you can pair or group them, so they can talk to each other about the important questions and share their opinions – for example, they can share their goals or discuss what they will write about.

Instructions:

1. Draw a path from left to right on an A3 paper (it can be straight, winding, steep, cross a river...).
2. On the right side of the paper, you will write your destination – your goals and aspirations (for 2 months, 1 year, 5 years). You can use symbols or short words.
3. Along the path – draw obstacles (rocks, walls, storms, etc.) and label them (e.g., "lack of time," "self-doubt").
4. On the left side (start point), add your current strengths and resources (skills, people, habits) as supportive images (e.g., bridges, tools, helping hands). Next to each image, you can write down the skills or qualities it represents.
5. Somewhere near the start, write down one small step you can take this week.

Step 3: Partner Conversations – Listening and Reflection

- Form pairs: one starts as the speaker, the other as the listener.
 - Speaker: Explains their map, reflecting on each part.
 - Listener: Practices active listening – no interruptions, advice, or personal opinions; they may only ask clarifying questions if needed.
- Switch roles after ~5 minutes.

Conclusion/debriefing:

After the pair discussions, gather participants for a group reflection (15 minutes). Tell the participants to focus on their role as speakers.

- On the experience:
 - “How did it feel to share your thoughts openly?”
 - “Does this reflect real work situations or conversations that you have? Which aspects would you like to transfer to real-life situations, and what did you miss?”
- On insights:
 - “What surprised you about your own answers or thoughts?”
 - “Did seeing your goals and challenges visually help you think differently?”
 - “Did hearing yourself speak out loud change your perspective on any obstacle or goal?”
- On application:
 - “How can reflecting like this help you in navigating adulthood or employment challenges?”
 - “What’s one insight from this activity that you can apply to your real-life goals?”

In the end, you can also focus on the role of the listener:

- “What was it like to have someone just listen without interrupting?”
- “How did it feel to listen to another person’s thoughts and experiences? Was it hard to empathize with the other person and not give advice/your perspective – why?”

Materials/handouts used:

PAIR DISCUSSION

- Goals and Aspirations:
 - “What do you want to achieve in the next 2 months, one year, or five years—personally or professionally?”
 - “What excites you the most about these goals?”
- Obstacles:
 - “What obstacles—internal or external—are preventing you from achieving these goals?”
 - “How do you feel about these obstacles?”
- Self-Support:
 - “What strengths do you have that can help you overcome these challenges?”
 - “What external resources or people could support you?”
 - “What small step can you take this week toward one of your goals?”

SHIFTING YOUR RESPONSE

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

This activity guides participants in rethinking their responses to common frustrations and conflicts in social and professional settings. By reflecting on case studies and exploring alternative interpretations of negative experiences, participants will learn skills to improve emotional control and enhance problem-solving skills.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify common frustrations and conflicts in their environment and how they currently respond to them.
- Explore alternative interpretations and responses to negative experiences using guided techniques.
- Develop emotional control and problem-solving skills to manage complex events more effectively.

Context and participants:

This activity can be carried out in a variety of educational settings, mental health workshops, or team-building activities. It works with groups of six and is suitable for adults or adolescents interested in mental health awareness.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ensure a safe, non-judgmental environment for discussions.
- Adapt the case studies, using realistic and relatable examples to encourage engagement.
- Provide clear instructions and examples when introducing techniques to help participants connect theory to practice.
- When working one-to-one (mentoring or individual reflection), replace group discussions with guided dialogue or written self-reflection, encouraging participants to connect examples to their personal challenges.
- For vulnerable groups, simplify case studies and focus on shorter, concrete examples, offering reassurance and positive reinforcement throughout. Pair verbal explanations with visual or written aids to support different learning needs.
- In multicultural or mixed educational contexts, adapt role-play or examples to avoid culturally biased assumptions, and invite participants to suggest cases that feel authentic to their realities.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Materials needed:

- Printed or displayed case studies (see below).
- Flip chart or whiteboard for group brainstorming.
- Writing materials (notebooks and pens).



Duration:

60–75 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Begin by introducing the purpose of the activity: to help participants rethink how they respond to frustrations and conflicts, focusing on emotional control and effective problem-solving. Explain that while situations may not always change, their responses can. Discuss how this shift in perspective can lead to healthier emotional outcomes and improved interactions.

Step 2:

Provide a brief overview of techniques for reframing negative experiences and managing emotions, such as cognitive reframing (1), mindfulness (2), or assertive communication (3).

1. Identify your initial reaction to a situation and ask yourself, 'Is there another way to interpret this?' Replace negative assumptions with neutral or positive alternatives. Focus on what you can control in the situation.
2. Pause and take a few deep breaths to centre yourself before responding to a challenging situation. Observe your emotions without judgement, acknowledging them without letting them dictate your actions.
3. Clearly express your feelings and needs without blame or aggression. Use "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory (e.g., 'I feel frustrated when my contributions are overlooked').

Use examples to illustrate how these techniques can be applied to real-world situations.

Step 3:

Present participants with two or three case studies (see handout) representing common frustrations or conflicts. Read the first case study aloud or display it for everyone to see. Facilitate a group discussion, asking participants:

- What assumptions are being made in this situation?
- How might this person feel and why?
- What alternative interpretations could be considered?

Encourage participants to brainstorm possible ways to respond to the situation, highlighting the application of techniques introduced earlier.

Alternatively, the group could be asked to take on the roles that are described in each case study and act these out. This would make the activity more interactive and fun.

The following case studies can be looked at in smaller groups, or all together.

Step 4:

After the cases have been discussed, ask participants to reflect on a personal frustration or conflict they have experienced recently. Provide a few minutes for silent writing where they can describe the situation, their initial reaction, and its outcome. Encourage them to consider how they might apply what they have learned to interpret and respond differently to the event.

Step 5:

Invite volunteers to share their reflections (optional) and facilitate a discussion about insights gained from the exercise.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Ensure a reflective and inclusive debriefing discussion, focusing on the following topics and questions:

- Were there any situations that felt particularly relatable to you?
- Did any new perspectives emerge that challenged your usual way of thinking about conflicts or frustrations?
- How easy or difficult do you think it is to reframe a situation in the moment? What might help make this easier?
- What communication strategies do you think could help resolve conflicts more constructively in your own life?
- What is one change you'd like to make in how you respond to frustration or conflict, and how do you plan to put that into practice?

Case Studies:

Sarah and Tom are colleagues working on a group project. Sarah believes Tom is ignoring her ideas during team meetings, leading her to feel undervalued and frustrated. Tom, on the other hand, feels Sarah has been dismissive of his contributions. As tensions rise, their collaboration becomes increasingly strained, affecting the project timeline.

Questions for Reflection:

- What assumptions might Sarah and Tom be making about each other?
 - How could either party reframe their perspective on the situation?
 - What steps could Sarah or Tom take to resolve the tension constructively?
-

Emma overhears a teammate, Mike, making a joking remark about her work habits during a lunch break. Though Mike insists he was joking, Emma feels hurt and believes her efforts are not respected by her team. She starts avoiding team discussions and collaboration.

Questions for Reflection:

- What assumptions might Emma and Mike be making in this scenario?
 - How could Emma approach Mike to address her feelings in a constructive way?
 - What steps could Mike take to rebuild trust and improve team dynamics?
-

Lila works hard on a presentation for a team project. After presenting, her manager provides detailed feedback, focusing mostly on areas for improvement. Lila interprets this as harsh criticism and feels undervalued despite her efforts. She becomes discouraged and questions her abilities.

Questions for Reflection:

- How might Lila be interpreting the feedback?
 - What alternative perspectives could she consider about her manager's intentions?
 - How could Lila respond constructively to the feedback while maintaining her confidence?
-

During a team meeting, Alex is interrupted multiple times by a colleague, Kim, who offers their own ideas before Alex can finish speaking. Alex feels disrespected and grows increasingly frustrated, leading to a tense exchange. After the meeting, Alex avoids interacting with Kim, and the atmosphere becomes strained.

Questions for Reflection:

- What assumptions might Alex and Kim be making about each other's behaviour?
- How could Alex reframe their feelings about the interruptions to approach the situation more calmly?
- What strategies could Alex use to communicate their concerns to Kim constructively?

THE EXPLODING BALLOON



Category:

Understanding and managing emotions



Overview:

This activity is designed to teach participants about managing their emotions, particularly frustration and anger. Using the analogy of an exploding balloon, participants will learn the importance of recognising their emotional triggers and explore both positive and negative ways to control and express these emotions.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify personal triggers that lead to feelings of frustration and anger.
- Understand the impact of not managing anger effectively.
- Practise techniques to manage and express anger in a positive and constructive way.
- Evaluate personal strategies for handling anger and make plans for improvement.



Context and participants:

Suitable for young people in non-formal learning settings such as youth groups or workshops. Works best in small or medium-sized groups that allow open discussion and reflection.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ensure participants feel comfortable before introducing the balloon exercise, as some may find the loud noise unsettling. Provide the option to step out or use an alternative activity if needed.
- Give clear step-by-step instructions and check understanding, especially as the task involves both physical and emotional elements.
- In one-to-one mentoring, the activity works well as a guided reflection: the young person can complete the balloon exercise individually and then discuss their triggers and coping strategies in a more private, personalised way.
- For vulnerable groups, consider replacing popping the balloon with letting the air out slowly to avoid distress. Use visual aids, simplified instructions, and supportive prompts to help participants identify emotions. Focus on positive coping strategies and ensure encouragement throughout.
- When working in different cultural or educational contexts, adapt examples of “triggers” to reflect situations participants are more likely to encounter. Where literacy levels vary, participants can draw symbols or images on balloons instead of writing.
- Allow sufficient time for debriefing, encouraging participants to connect the metaphor with their own experiences and reinforcing the importance of healthy coping strategies.



Materials needed:

- Balloons (one per participant)
- Markers
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Post-it notes
- Pens
- A needle or pin (to pop the balloon)
- Handout: 'Coping Strategies for Managing Anger'



Duration:

60 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Start with a brief discussion on emotions. Ask participants:

- What are some common emotions we all experience?
- How do you usually feel when you're frustrated or angry?

Set the scene by introducing the concept of the activity by explaining that anger can be like a balloon. When we don't manage our emotions, they can build up until they explode just like a balloon.

Step 2:

Give each participant a balloon and a marker. Ask them to think about situations or triggers that make them feel frustrated or angry.

Instruct participants to:

- Write or draw their triggers on the balloon using the marker.
- Each time they write down a trigger, they should blow air into the balloon (but not tie it off).
- Share these triggers with the group if they are comfortable doing so. These will provide additional triggers for each balloon.

Step 3:

Once the balloons are filled with several breaths of air, ask: 'How does the balloon feel now?' 'What do you think will happen if we keep blowing more air into it?'

Discuss how, just like the balloon, when we keep filling ourselves with frustration and anger without releasing it, we're bound to 'explode' at some point.

Step 4:

Take one balloon (maybe your own) and continue to inflate it until it bursts.

Beware the level of noise that this produces. Ask how it felt when the balloon exploded.

Discuss the analogy: When we let our emotions build up without addressing them, we may 'explode' in ways that can harm ourselves and others.

Step 5:

Introduce the list of coping mechanisms (see below). These can be discussed one by one. Ask participants to let out air from their balloons for each coping mechanism that they have used or think might be useful for them.

Explain that these are ways of releasing anger in healthy ways. Discuss what it felt like to release the air slowly. Connect this to releasing frustration and anger through healthy coping strategies.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Step 6: (Optional)

On a flipchart or whiteboard, create two columns: 'Negative Ways to Express Anger' & 'Positive Ways to Express Anger'. Encourage participants to share their ideas and experiences, writing them under the appropriate column.

Conclusion/debriefing:

- How do you currently manage your anger? Are these methods helpful or harmful?
- Can you think of a situation where someone exploded? How could it have been handled differently?

Hand out post-it notes and ask participants to write down one healthy coping strategy they can use the next time they feel frustrated or angry. Invite volunteers to share what they wrote and why they think it will help.



COPING MECHANISMS

<p>Deep Breathing</p> <p>Time-Out</p> <p>Physical Activity</p> <p>Journaling</p> <p>Talking it Out</p> <p>Mindfulness</p> <p>Creative Expression</p> <p>Problem-Solving</p> <p>Meditation</p> <p>Counting to Ten</p> <p>Reframing Negative Thought</p>	<p>Using a Stress Ball</p> <p>Positive Self-Talk</p> <p>Taking a Walk</p> <p>Practising Gratitude</p> <p>Petting an Animal</p> <p>Visualisation or Guided Imagery</p> <p>Engaging in a Hobby</p> <p>Connecting with Nature</p> <p>Grounding Techniques</p> <p>Humour or Laughter</p>
--	--

WHERE AM I

Category:

Understanding and managing emotions

Overview:

This exercise can help participants understand their own experience with mental challenges. It helps them realise that such challenges are a common part of human experience and can affect anyone.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

Become aware that mental challenges are universal and help reduce the stigma around mental health problems.

Context and participants:

16–20 years old.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

This is a sensitive activity. It demands clear instructions and guidance throughout the exercise. If possible, it should be carried out under the supervision of an experienced specialist to ensure its effectiveness and avoid dismissal.

If this is an exercise the participants engage well with, it can be used for different topics as well, such as resilience strategies, working experiences, and so on. Depending on the level of engagement with the topic of mental health, it may be useful to preface this activity with others concerning mental-health literacy as proposed in this toolkit.

Recommended group size: 5–30

How to use this activity in a one-on-one setting: This activity is not recommended to be done in a one-on-one setting.

How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups:

- **Explicitly emphasize choice:** Remind participants that they can step back, pass, or leave at any time without explanation.
- **Provide a “safe word” or signal** for the group to pause or stop the activity if someone is overwhelmed.
- **Avoid singling out individuals:** Do not ask participants to explain their steps or share details unless they volunteer.
- **Use anonymous reflection:** After the activity, allow participants to write down their thoughts anonymously and collect them for discussion.
- **Avoid triggering language:** Replace potentially triggering words (e.g., “anxiety,” “hopelessness”) with softer phrasing (e.g., “felt very worried,” “felt down for a while”).
- **Provide resources:** Have a list of local mental health resources or counselors available for participants who may need support after the activity.

How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



- **Use simple, clear language:** Avoid jargon or complex terms.
- **Collectivist vs. individualist cultures:** In collectivist cultures, emphasize group reflection and shared experiences. In individualist cultures, focus on personal reflection and autonomy.
- **For children or teens:** Use age-appropriate language and examples (e.g., “felt really sad” instead of “depression”).
- **For adults with low literacy:** Use oral explanations and avoid written handouts. Focus on verbal reflection and discussion.

Be aware that this exercise might trigger some participants. Observe carefully during the activity, stop where needed and offer assistance. Have support materials ready.



Materials needed:

A place with enough space that the participants can stand comfortably side by side in a line, outdoors works well.



Duration:

40 minutes





PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Ask the participants to stand side by side next to each other.

Step 2:

Explain the rules: Everyone chooses for themselves if they want to participate. They can drop out at any time if they feel uncomfortable. Make it clear that everything shared is confidential: What is said within the group stays within the group! Then tell them: You will now hear a series of questions. If your answer to a question is yes, take a step forward. If not, stay where you are.

Step 3:

Move a few meters away from the participants.

Step 4:

Read the statements one by one. After each statement, give participants enough time to take a step forward if they wish.

Step 5:

After the questions are finished, debrief together with the participants.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Step 6: The group reports how they felt.

Step 7: Ask who wants to share a personal experience.

Possible debriefing questions:

1. *"Looking around the room during the activity, what did you notice about how many people stepped forward for each statement? How did that make you feel about your own experiences?"*
2. *"Before this activity, how did you think or talk about mental challenges? Has your perspective changed after seeing how many of us have had similar experiences?"*
3. *"How did it feel to step forward—or to stay in place—during the activity?"*
4. *"What is one thing you think our school, community, or society could do to make it easier for people to talk about mental challenges? How can we contribute to that change?"*

Step 8: Discuss with the group whether they think that mental health problems are addressed enough in our society and what can be done to improve this.

Materials/handouts used:

Handout

Handout Where am I (My mental health experiences)

Questions about my experiences with mental health problems

1. Have you observed people in your close circle who have increasingly withdrawn or whose behaviour have changed significantly?
2. Do you have people in your environment who frequently miss work or school, and you don't know why?
3. Have you ever experienced symptoms such as anxiety or panic in certain situations?
4. Have you noticed signs of emotional distress or stress in yourself in the last few months?
5. Have you ever felt feelings of sadness or hopelessness that lasted more than two weeks?
6. Have you experienced periods in your life where you felt isolated or alone?
7. Have you ever felt significantly burdened by the mental health problems of a close relative?
8. Have you ever noticed behaviours in yourself during a stressful situation that concern you?
9. Have you ever talked about your own mental challenges with someone?
10. Have you or someone in your close circle ever sought professional help for mental health issues in the past?

03.

EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION





PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION

THE TOPIC

Empowerment is the ability to advocate for oneself, make confident decisions, and establish meaningful connections. Effective communication is at the heart of empowerment, enabling individuals to express their needs clearly and build positive relationships. This section focuses on fostering assertiveness, self-awareness, and the ability to communicate effectively in diverse situations.

INSIGHT

Young people often express fears of being unable to communicate effectively in professional settings, citing lack of confidence and fear of discrimination. Improving communication skills empowers young people to express themselves authentically and navigate professional challenges more effectively.

ACTIVITIES

Participants will learn how to recognise their strengths and limitations while developing strategies to overcome challenges. By exploring non-verbal cues, tone of voice, and boundary-setting techniques, they will build the skills needed to express themselves with confidence and empathy. These abilities are not only vital for personal growth but also critical for navigating professional environments and resolving conflicts constructively.

DRAWING BACK-TO-BACK



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

This activity is focused on building communication skills. By working out how to draw what is being described by words without being able to see the source image, the participant understands the importance of clear and unambiguous communication and the difficulty of communicating without the ability to monitor the non-verbal component.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understand the importance of providing clear and understandable information.
- Recognize the indispensable role of non-verbal and visual signals in communication.
- Practice techniques to improve one's verbal communication skills and express feedback in a positive and constructive way.



Context and participants:

This activity could be conducted either in a classroom or in an office meeting room. Participants could be high school or university students or young professionals at their first work experience. Problems can occur for people with a hearing disability and as well as for people with a reduced vocabulary.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: the number of participants should depend on the size of the available space and should be limited to a number that allows each pair of people to choose a comfortable place and talk between them (optimally, 12 participants).
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), one participant can do this task together with the trainer.
- This activity, carried out with vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges), should not cause any particular difficulties. It is advisable to choose neutral images that do not evoke contexts or experiences that could trigger negative emotions in participants.
- In the case of mixed cultural and linguistic groups, it is advisable to use neutral images that do not evoke negative meanings in a particular culture, and participants can be paired so that at least one common language is spoken in each pair.
- You can prepare two different images for each pair so that each member has the opportunity to experience both roles, giving instructions and drawing.
- The group can choose the pair that has managed to reproduce the picture with the highest accuracy and reward them with a small prize.
- Repeating the activity with partners switching roles can increase engagement. Discussion

in pairs can also improve involvement, as one person may share more openly, but it is important to debrief together afterwards, since pairs may have very different experiences of the activity.



Materials needed:

- Worksheets with pictures
- Blank paper
- Writing materials (pencils, crayons, erasers)



Duration:

45 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Divide participants into pairs. They sit with their backs to each other on the chairs sufficiently apart so as not to be too distracted by the other pairs. Hand each pair one picture and one blank paper. Make sure that only one participant of the pair sees the picture.

Step 2:

Ask the participants to start working by having the participant who has been given the picture explain to their partner what to draw on the blank sheet of paper. They have 10 minutes to complete the drawings.

Ask participants not to use any other means of communication than the spoken word. It is essential that only the participant who has the picture in their hand can speak. Their partner is not allowed to ask any questions.

Meanwhile, monitor the progress of the activity in each pair.

Step 3:

When the time is up, ask participants to flip or fold their pictures in half and wait for their turn. Ask each pair to present both the original picture and the one created during the activity to the whole group. They will compare the two images, presenting the difficulties they encountered in drawing what they were guided to and the aspects that worked well or not so well in the communication between the two.

Step 4:

Present a general overview of the issue of the interrelationship between verbal and non-verbal components of communication.

Give examples from practice when misunderstandings occur in the absence of one of the components of communication, such as:

1. ENCODING ISSUE:

- Scenario: A doctor explains a complex medical diagnosis to a patient using highly technical jargon.
- Missing Component: Effective encoding of the message. The doctor failed to translate the information into a language the patient could understand.
- Result: The patient leaves the appointment feeling confused and anxious, with little understanding of their condition or treatment plan.

2. DECODING ISSUE:

- Scenario: A customer service representative sends an email apologizing for a service

disruption, but the customer interprets the formal tone as insincere and dismissive.

- Missing Component: Accurate decoding of the message. The customer misinterprets the tone and intent due to their own preconceptions or experiences.
- Result: The customer remains dissatisfied and may escalate the complaint, damaging the relationship with the company.

3. FEEDBACK MISSING:

- Scenario: A teacher assigns a complex homework task but doesn't provide an opportunity for students to ask clarifying questions or receive feedback on their progress.
- Missing Component: A feedback mechanism. Students are unable to check their understanding or seek guidance, leading to potential errors and frustration.
- Result: Students may struggle with the assignment, leading to poor performance, decreased motivation, and a lack of understanding of the subject matter.

4. CONTEXT MISUNDERSTANDING:

- Scenario: A colleague sends a joke via instant messaging that is considered offensive by another colleague who is unaware of the sender's typically humorous communication style.
- Missing Component: Understanding of the context of the message. The recipient lacks the information to interpret the message within the sender's usual communication style.
- Result: The message is taken seriously, leading to hurt feelings, offense, and potential conflict in the workplace.

For the activity to be more interactive, you can ask participants to give examples of miscommunications and misunderstandings that have occurred in their daily lives.

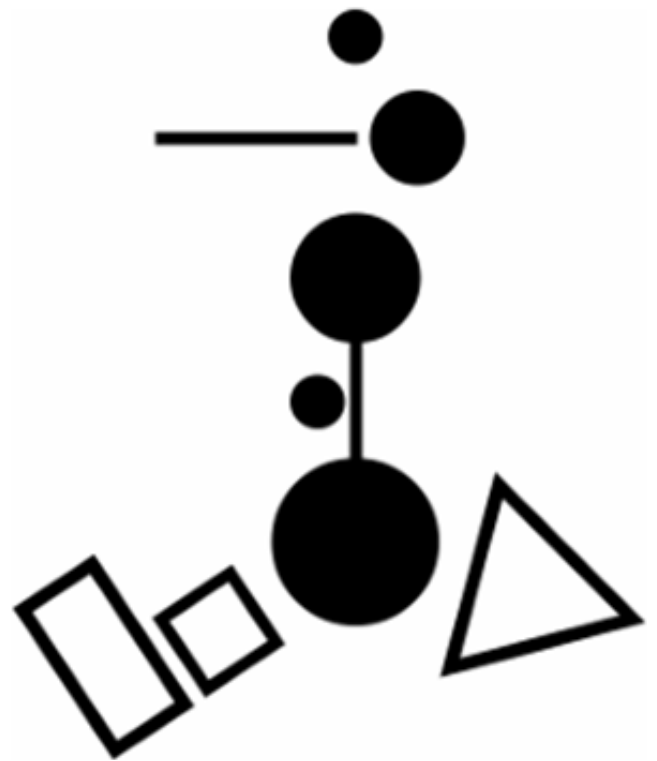
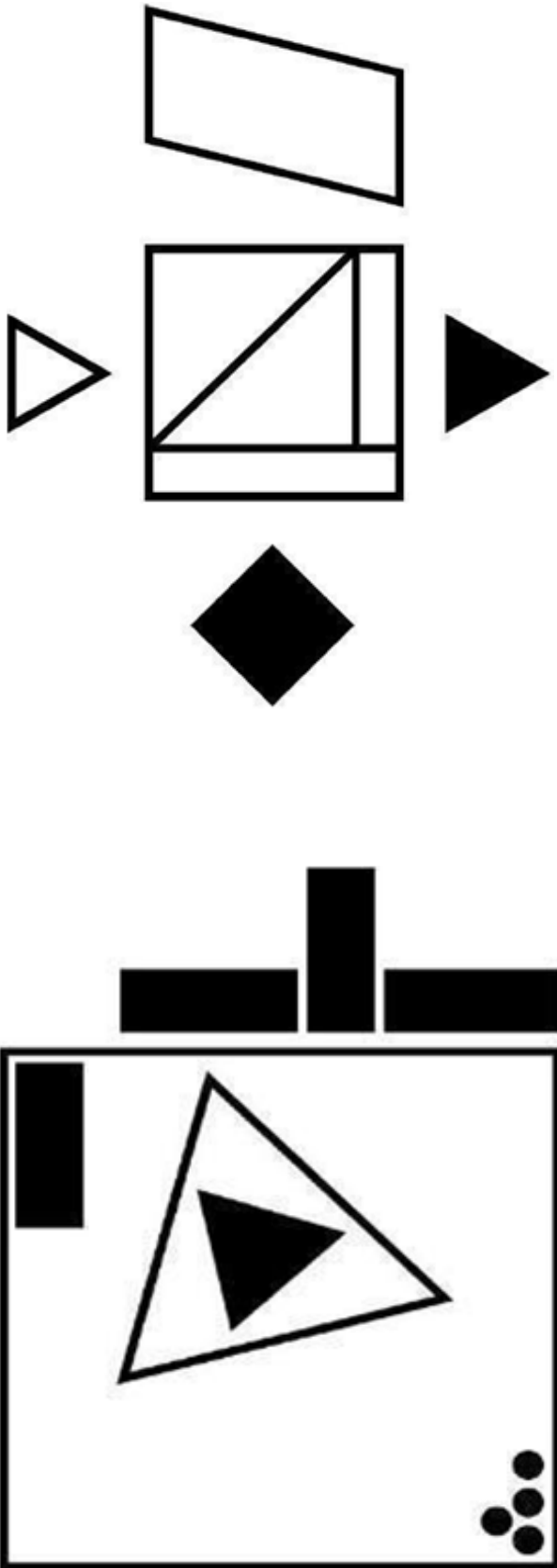
Conclusion/debriefing:

End the activity by evaluating the work in pairs and emphasizing the need for clear communication. Stress once again the importance of non-verbal communication and visual information.

Ask participants the following questions:

- How did you work without the possibility of talking?
- What did you like and dislike about your partner's instruction?
- How do you see the benefits of this activity for you personally?
- What steps do you think need to be taken during the dialogue to avoid mutual misunderstandings?

Materials/handouts used:



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

This is an effective communication empowerment exercise designed for small groups. It focuses on role-playing in stressful or high-anxiety situations to help participants develop coping mechanisms. Led by a trainer, young people can explore “what if” scenarios in a controlled setting. They will be supported by peers in discussing and discovering more effective communication strategies and actions.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify communication breakdowns in high-stress or high-anxiety situations.
- Develop more efficient and effective communication strategies and tools.
- Discuss causes of stress and anxiety and identify exit strategies.



Context and participants:

Possible Settings:

- School
- Workplace

Target Audience:

- Small class or topic course group (up to 10 students)
- Small project or office teams (up to 10 participants)



Recommendations for successful implementation:

About the Setting:

- The activity needs an informal setting that feels different from the participants’ usual formal experience.
- In a school, a classroom could be used as activity setting, but it is better if it is not the target group’s regular classroom, so they can feel a difference in the environment.
- The same applies to an office setting.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work) the activity can be adapted to focus entirely on the individual’s experiences. Instead of drawing from a shared deck, the trainer and participant can co-create scenarios based on the participant’s real-life challenges (e.g., test anxiety, job interview stress, conflict with a friend). Role-play options in one-on-one:
 - The participant acts as themselves while the mentor plays another role (teacher, peer, boss, etc.).
 - The mentor models an adaptive or maladaptive response, and the participant reflects on it.
 - The participant can “freeze” the role-play and brainstorm alternatives before continuing.

About the Target Audience:

- Recommended group size: 8–15 participants. This number allows for a variety of scenarios and ensures there are enough observers and actors without leaving anyone idle for too long.
- It is essential that participants can discuss and act out common, relatable, stressful, or anxiety-provoking situations. This makes the activity more effective and easily transferable to real-life scenarios.
- To adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges), the trainer can simplify the role cards—use short, direct sentences or symbols to indicate roles and objectives. Offer extra guidance or pair participants with peers for support.
- Create a safe environment, especially for youth with emotional or behavioral challenges, by clarifying that participation is voluntary and “passing” is always an option. Encourage role-switching so participants can explore different perspectives (e.g., being the stressed person vs. being a supporter). Highlight coping strategies during debriefing, such as deep breathing, seeking help, or re-framing negative thoughts.

About the Trainer:

- The trainer should have effective communication and pedagogical skills.

About the Role-Playing Scenarios:

- Scenarios should be relevant to the participants (e.g., related to job interviews, school tests, or evaluation interviews).
- It is best if they involve high-stress or high-anxiety situations (e.g., discussions with parents, conflicts with teachers or tutors).

Materials needed:

- “What If” card deck

Prepared by the trainer, in accordance with the teacher or office manager. These cards are used to start the role-playing.

The cards should include the following information about the scene:

- A short story describing the setting (using the 5Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why)
- Short descriptions and characterizations of the actors’ roles

Cards can be prepared in advance or created in real time with the participants. In this case, stationery will be required.

- Notepads or paper for observers (optional)
- Pens or pencils

Duration:

60 minutes (without card creation during the session)

80 minutes (with card creation during the session)



Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Activity Presentation

- Welcome participants and explain the activity's structure, purpose, and outcomes.
- Establish a group agreement: participation is voluntary, anyone can leave at any time, respect all opinions. Both participants and the trainer are responsible for maintaining a safe, respectful environment.

Step 2 (Optional): "What If" Card Creation

- Explain that the group will create a deck of "What If" cards. Each card describes a stressful or challenging situation relevant to their experiences.
- Give an example: "A 17-year-old student has a math test tomorrow. Math is difficult for him. After two hours of studying with his best friend, he starts to panic, believing he is not prepared."
- Ask each participant to write **one scenario** on a card.
- Collect the cards and compile them into a deck.

Step 3: Setting Up the Scene

- Draw a card from the deck and read the scenario aloud (but do not reveal role details yet).
- Ask for volunteers to act in the scene and select one observer.
- Give private instructions:
 - *Each actor receives their role description.*
 - *The observer receives observation guidelines.*
 - *No one knows the others' roles.*
 - *Help actors set up the scene (props, chairs, or small adjustments).*

Step 4: Role-Playing the "What If" Scenario

- Ask participants who are not acting to take notes on key moments or behaviors.
- Run the role-play once, without interruptions.
- Run the role-play a second time, but now the observer can freeze the action up to 3 times (for 5 seconds each) to highlight important points.

Step 5: Individual Feedback

- Reveal the full card information, including roles and objectives.
- Invite the actors and observer to share:
 - How they felt in their role.
 - What they noticed about communication and emotions.
 - What worked well and what was difficult.

Step 6: Group Discussion

- Open a group discussion guided by questions such as:
 - "What communication problems did you notice in this situation?"
 - "How do you think each person in the scene felt?"
 - "If you were in this situation, what would you do differently?"



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



- Encourage participants to suggest strategies for reducing stress or improving communication.
- Add trainer input: summarize good ideas and introduce effective communication tips if needed.

Step 7: “What If” Replay

- Ask new volunteers to act out the same scenario again, but this time applying the group’s suggestions.
- After the replay, ask the new actors and the group:
 - What changed?
 - Did communication and emotions improve?
 - What strategies worked best?

Step 8: Final Considerations and Feedback

- Summarize the activity: highlight the importance of adaptability, emotional awareness, and communication.
- Invite participants to share one key learning point or takeaway.
- Thank everyone for their participation.

Conclusion/Debriefing:

- Remind participants: the quality of the “What If” cards strongly shapes the activity. Scenarios should feel realistic and relevant.
- Emphasize that this activity can be adapted for different topics, age groups, and learning goals.
- Invite reflections on the dynamics:
 - What helped characters achieve their goals?
 - What made it harder?
- Encourage participants to explore their emotional experiences:
 - How did you feel during the role-play?
 - Which emotions resonated most with you?
 - How might you handle similar emotions in real life?

Materials/Handouts Used:



"What If" Card	
Title	The Internship Interview
Story	<p>A sterile, modern office. Sunlight streams through the large windows, highlighting the dust motes dancing in the air. Sarah sits nervously on the edge of her chair, fidgeting with her resume. Across from her, the interviewer, Ms. Johnson, maintains a neutral expression as she reviews Sarah's application.</p> <p>Ms. Johnson unexpectedly challenges Sarah's qualifications or asks a question that throws her completely off guard.</p>
Characters	<p>Sarah: A recent college graduate with excellent grades but limited practical experience. She is eager to land this internship at a prestigious marketing firm. <u>Objective:</u> To project confidence and competence despite her nerves.</p> <p>Ms. Johnson: A senior marketing executive with a reputation for being direct and intimidating. She is assessing Sarah's suitability for a fast-paced internship. <u>Objective:</u> To determine if Sarah has the skills and resilience to thrive in the demanding environment.</p>



"What If" Card	
Title	The First Day
Story	<p>A bustling open-plan office, filled with the sounds of ringing phones and keyboard clicks. New employee, Chris, sits at his unfamiliar desk, feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what to do. His colleagues seem busy and preoccupied, and he hesitates to interrupt them with questions.</p> <p>Chris is asked to complete a task he doesn't understand.</p>
Characters	<p>Chris: A recent graduate starting his first full-time job. He is eager to make a good impression but feels lost and intimidated by the new environment.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To navigate his first day, understand his responsibilities, and begin to build relationships with colleagues</p> <p>Alex: A friendly and approachable colleague who has been with the company for several years.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To help Chris feel welcome and comfortable in his new role.</p>



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



"What If" Card	
Title	The Performance Review
Story	<p>A small meeting room. Michael, a young employee in his first six months on the job, sits nervously across from his manager, Sarah. Sarah has called this meeting to discuss Michael's performance and provide feedback.</p> <p>Sarah begins the review with a negative comment and Michael becomes defensive and struggles to accept the feedback.</p>
Characters	<p>Michael: Unsure of how he is performing and anxious about receiving criticism. <u>Objective:</u> To receive feedback openly and demonstrate a willingness to learn and improve.</p> <p>Sarah: Wants to provide constructive feedback and set clear expectations for Michael's development. <u>Objective:</u> To deliver feedback effectively and motivate Michael to improve his performance.</p>

MY STRENGTHS



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

The participant recognizes their own strengths based on a short self-profiling activity.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify the personal strengths
- Strengthening self-esteem and developing self-awareness and confidence in presenting their strengths to others.



Context and participants:

Suitable for participants aged 16–24 who are unsure about their strengths.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ask participants to name three of their personal strengths. Some will find this easy, while others may struggle. If the participants already know each other, you can begin with a short introductory exercise: Place an envelope for each participant, labelled with their name, on a table. Give everyone as many small slips of paper as there are participants minus one (for example, with 10 participants, each person receives 9 slips). Ask them to write one positive characteristic about each of the other participants — one per slip — and place the notes into the corresponding envelopes. When everyone has finished, give each participant their own envelope. Inside, they will find several positive attributes that can help them identify and reflect on their personal strengths.
- When the materials and the pencils are distributed, the trainer should make rounds and help with the understanding where needed.
- Once the exercise is finished, participants should write down every strength where they received two or three marks. They should also write down at least one situation where they demonstrated this strength.
- Variation for creative and artistic participants: Draw an androgynous figure on paper and draw symbols to represent their strengths.
- Recommended group size: from 1 to 30.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): This exercise can be easily conducted in a one-on-one-setting. First, brainstorm with the participant what typical strengths are valued in a work environment.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges): Simplify the language and use pictures.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts: In some cultures, openly talking about personal strengths may be seen as boastful. Adapt by framing it as “skills that help the group” or “qualities you bring to the team.”

- For participants with limited literacy, make it more visual (pictures, symbols, or role-play examples instead of written questionnaires).
- Build safety first — self-reflection can feel vulnerable. Start with group brainstorming before moving to personal sharing.
- Use simple terms for strengths (e.g., “kind,” “hardworking,” “good listener”) and explain with concrete examples.



Materials Needed:

- Questionnaire “Me and my strengths”
- Pencil
- Paper sheet
- Envelopes and smaller paper slips, if you deem the preliminary exercise useful



Duration:

20–30 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

The trainer asks the group for the definition of personal strengths. They write the definition down and ask the participants to name different strengths, writing them down as well.

Step 2:

The participants are asked to write down three of their own strengths.

Step 3:

The trainer hands out the questionnaire and explains the task: Read each example of a strength and the three options describing different behaviours carefully. For each strength, mark all (or none) of the options that you feel describe you.

Step 4:

While the participants fill out the questionnaire, the trainer makes the rounds and helps with understanding where needed.

Step 5:

When participants are finished, they identify the strengths where they marked at least two boxes.

Step 6:

Participants write these strengths down as their personal strengths. For each one, they add a short example of when they demonstrated it (e.g., Taking responsibility: I took responsibility when I looked after my younger siblings in the afternoons.).

Conclusion/debriefing:

Follow up with a discussion about which strengths participants identified and whether they discovered any new ones.

Materials/handouts used:

Questionnaire "Me and my strengths"

Questionnaire “Me and my strengths”

1. Helpfulness

- I offer to carry heavy shopping bags for someone struggling in my neighbourhood.
- I support a colleague or classmate by discussing ideas or working together on a project.
- I volunteer at events like food donations or park clean-ups.

2. Effective Communication

- I am good at explaining a new game’s rules clearly to my friends at a gathering.
- When I have a problem with a family member, I address it and try to find a compromise with them.
- If a customer at my job makes an unfair complaint loudly, I am able to stay calm and speak respectfully but clearly state my point of view.

3. Problem-Solving Skills

- The faucet at home is leaking. You watch tutorials and use available tools to repair it.
- The venue where your best friend wanted to celebrate their birthday cancelled. So, you call around and find an alternative place.
- You have a presentation at work, and the presentation software doesn’t work. You find a solution and present with a different software or without one.

4. Adaptability

- Your family wanted to visit the swimming pool, but it is raining now. Quickly you reorganize and plan something different instead.
- You expect a visit of somebody with a dietary restriction (gluten or lactose intolerant, vegan ...) So, you learn to cook a new dish respecting the dietary restrictions.
- Your coworker got sick, and your boss asks you to stay longer. You change an appointment to do so.

5. Time Management

- Next week, you have two exams and one presentation. You create a schedule that outlines when to prepare for each task and stick to it.
- You want to bake cakes for a friend and a grandparent who share the same birthday. Then your neighbour asks for help. You finish baking first and help your neighbour afterwards.
- Your boss asks you to man the cash register. You notice that someone has spilled milk in the aisle, so you clean it up promptly.

6. Teamwork

- You coordinate a surprise party with friends and divide responsibilities, so the work is distributed fairly.
- You volunteer to organize a community clean-up event with neighbours.
- Your colleague has a deadline but is sick. You finish the task for him, even if it means working overtime.

7. Attention to Detail

- You want to cook dinner using a new recipe. You read the instructions carefully and check that you have all the necessary ingredients.
- Before sending the important invitation, you notice a typo and correct it before printing.
- You review a financial report to ensure there are no discrepancies.

8. Emotional Intelligence

- You comfort a friend going through a tough time by listening and offering support.
- You help a child manage their frustration by calmly discussing their feelings.
- You mediate a team discussion so that all voices are heard, and tensions are eased.

9. Dependability and Reliability

- One of your friends isn't feeling well. You make sure they get home safely.
- You always do your assignments, be it homework or household chores.
- Your boss asked you to prepare an important presentation for next week. You deliver it on time, fully prepared with all the necessary materials.

10. Analytical Thinking

- You want to travel somewhere for vacation. You compare travel options to find the most cost-effective route.
- You want to buy a new car. Therefore, you analyse your monthly expenses to identify areas where you can save money.
- You want to improve sales numbers at your company, so you review customer feedback to identify trends and propose product innovations.

MY SUPERPOWER

Category:

Empowerment and communication

Overview:

This exercise helps the participants build self-belief and inner strength by identifying and embracing a unique skill that boosts their confidence. By imagining this strength as a “superpower,” they can better understand and use it in real-life situations.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify key strengths of the participants.
- Develop a positive mindset by focusing on these strengths rather than weaknesses in a relaxing atmosphere that encourages creativity and imagination.

Context and participants:

It is ideal for people in transition periods of their lives, who might need to identify strengths to overcome initial insecurities. Age is not relevant.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

Observe the participants carefully throughout the exercise. If individuals seem to have problems identifying their strengths, go to them and ask them what positive things other people would say about them.

You can use the exercise “My strengths” activity from this toolkit, available on page 106.

It may be helpful to repeat this activity regularly, as it gradually builds confidence and shifts the focus from what’s missing to what each person does well.

Recommended group size: 1 to 20.

How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work):
This exercise can easily be applied in one-on-one settings. It is particularly well received by children and artistically inclined people

How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):

- In some cultures, visualization and imagination-based exercises are very familiar (e.g., mindfulness, guided meditation); in others, participants may prefer practical, concrete approaches.
- This exercise works well with younger or less literate participants as they may respond better to drawing writing explanations.
- Provide clear, simple examples of “superpowers” (e.g., “being a good listener,” “always finishing tasks,” “bringing humor”).
- Use visuals (cards, images, symbols) for inspiration.

How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:

- Talking about “superpowers” might feel childish in some professional contexts. Adapt to terms like “inner strengths,” “core qualities,” or “professional powers.”
- Some may be uncomfortable closing eyes in group settings. Offer the option to keep eyes open and just focus inward.



Materials Needed:

- Comfy chairs or mats where the participants can lie down
- Tables
- Paper
- Colored pencils
- Board with pens



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1

Beforehand, the trainer creates a calm and pleasant environment, for example, by dimming the lights, using LED candles, or playing relaxing music.

Ask the participants which soft skills are helpful in a work environment and write them down on a board. Let the participants discuss which skills they possess and how they have helped them in a concrete situation.

Explain the purpose of the following exercise: to explore and amplify a personal and unique quality or trait that gives confidence and strength to the participants, visualized as a “superpower.”

Step 2

The trainer asks everyone to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths to center themselves. They can use phrases like:

“Imagine yourself in a place where you feel completely safe and at ease. This could be a real place you’ve been to or one you’ve created in your mind. What does it look like? Take a look around. What do you hear? Focus on your center and feel the warmth.”

Step 3

Now the trainer encourages participants to focus on a personal strength or quality that they feel proud of or rely on during tough times. It could be:

- Their ability to stay calm under pressure.
- Talent for solving problems.
- Their kindness, determination, creativity, courage, optimism or resilience.

The trainer asks the participants to feel this “superpower” and visualize how this superpower manifests: as a glowing aura, a specific tool, a symbol, or even an outfit that transforms them into their superhero self. They can be guided with the following instructions: “Picture yourself standing tall, with a strong posture. You feel a powerful energy radiating from within you. This is your own and unique superpower – something that makes you capable, strong, and ready to take on challenges.”

Step 4

After a few minutes, the trainer guides the participants back to the present moment with gentle cues:

“Slowly bring your attention back to the room. Take a deep breath and open your eyes when you’re ready.”

Now the trainer asks them to paint their superpower self on paper.

Step 5

The participants are asked to share and explain their superpower self with the group.

They can describe it in terms of:

- What the superpower is.
- Why they chose it.
- How it makes them feel.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Facilitate a discussion about how these superpowers can be applied in real-life situations. For example:

- "How can your superpower help you in your next challenge at work or school?"
- "What situations in your life would feel more manageable with this superpower in mind?"
- Encourage participants to take their superpower picture with them to draw strength from it.

Materials/handouts used:

You can use the following examples.



Created with Dall-E through ChatGPT

SETTING BOUNDARIES



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

In this interactive boundary-setting exercise, participants pair up, with one person wearing a blindfold and standing still while the other slowly approaches them. The blindfolded participant's task is to say "Stop" when they begin to feel uncomfortable, helping them identify and assert their personal boundaries. This activity fosters self-awareness, encourages assertive communication, and teaches respect for others' limits, all in a safe and supportive environment.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understanding the concept of personal boundaries.
- Identifying personal comfort zones.
- Practising assertive communication.
- Respecting others' boundaries.
- Enhancing self-awareness.
- Applying boundary-setting in real life.



Context and participants:

This activity is designed for young adults, such as recent graduates and students who are preparing to enter the job market. The activity is particularly beneficial for youth support groups, such as counselling programs and peer mentorship initiatives, where it can help build self-awareness and communication skills.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size is from 15 to 20 participants.
- Highlight that boundaries can be both physical and emotional.
- Mention that everyone's boundaries are different, and it's essential to respect them, even if they differ from our own.
- Discuss how this exercise translates to real-life situations where verbal communication of boundaries is necessary.
- Offer support if someone appears uncomfortable or confused.
- Consider the participants' previous experiences with darkness or blindfolds. If you notice signs of discomfort, offer them the option to simply close their eyes instead, or do this exercise with their eyes open.
- Pairs can do both versions of the exercise: first blindfolded and then with open eyes. After the exercise, it's worth asking whether the participants feel the difference between the two versions.

- Open the floor for any last questions or comments from participants.
- Thank everyone for their participation and share any additional resources on boundaries if available.
- If the task is conducted with a group with difficult experiences (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges), it may trigger more difficult emotions and reactions for which the leader should be prepared.
- If the task is conducted in a different cultural group, it could be useful to change the “stop” signal to a word in their language. It can also be useful to add a gesture for the “stop” signal.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), the participant can do this task with the task leader.



Materials Needed:

- Space
- Blindfolds



Duration:

50 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1

Introduction of the topic.

- Define personal boundaries.
- Brainstorming about *why boundaries are important?*
- Ask participants about challenges connected with the topic (information available in the annexe).

Step 2

Explanation of the exercise.

- Divide the participants into pairs and ask them to choose one person who will wear the blindfold.
- The person with the blindfold will give the “Stop” signal when they begin to feel uncomfortable as the approacher moves closer.
- Instruct the approachers:
 - Go around the person with the blindfold.
 - Move slowly towards the blindfolded person when they say, “Come to me”.
 - Remember to be respectful and attentive, stopping immediately when the blindfolded person says, “Stop”.
- Instruct the blindfolded participants:
 - Focus on your feelings and notice any changes in your comfort level.
 - Say “Stop” when you feel you need to set a boundary.

Step 3

Start the exercise and allow pairs to work through it. The exercise should last around 5 minutes per person, then have the pairs switch roles so each participant experiences both positions (blindfolded and approacher).

Step 4

Reflection time. Encourage the participants to share their thoughts and feelings.

- How did it feel to say “Stop” when you were blindfolded? Was it easy or difficult?
- How did it feel to be the approacher and respect the other person’s boundary?
- Did anything surprise you about your personal space or comfort level?

Step 5

Final thoughts:

- Reiterate the importance of boundaries in maintaining healthy relationships and self-respect.

Encourage participants to practice setting boundaries in their daily lives.

Conclusion/debriefing:

This boundary-setting exercise is tailored for young individuals preparing to enter the job market. By focusing on self-awareness, assertive communication, and mutual respect, participants will gain essential skills that will aid them in navigating complex social and professional environments, ultimately fostering healthier relationships and enhancing their well-being as they embark on their career journeys.

Materials/handouts used:

n/a

Annexe

How to Set Boundaries?

1. Establish Your Standards

Begin by reflecting on what is beneficial and valuable to you. Consider your personal preferences, needs, and values. Identify what you want to include in your life and, equally important, what you are not willing to tolerate. Clarity on these aspects provides the foundation for healthy boundaries.

2. Communicate Your Boundaries

Once you have defined your boundaries internally, it is crucial to express them to others. This doesn't mean calling a summit of friends and family to announce, "From now on, I'll say NO!" That's not the point. Instead, address boundary violations as they occur. For example, if someone crosses a line, simply state, "I won't tolerate this," or "I'm not going to do that." Calm, direct communication helps others understand where you stand.

3. Reinforce Your Boundaries

As you start asserting boundaries, expect discomfort from those around you. Why? First, because they are unaccustomed to these limits. Second, because it inconveniences them by preventing them from achieving their goals at your expense. Some may attempt to manipulate you with guilt or blame.

Remember, you are not responsible for how others feel or react to your boundaries. Their emotional responses are their own, often triggered by ingrained patterns of emotional reaction. Your primary responsibility is to take care of yourself. Think of the guideline on airplanes: "Secure your oxygen mask first before assisting others." This principle isn't rooted in selfishness but in practicality. Taking care of your well-being ensures you can be effective and supportive for others when needed.

By setting and upholding boundaries, you respect both yourself and those around you, fostering healthier and more balanced relationships.

THE COMMUNICATION GAME



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

Develop verbal communication skills, the ability to accurately convey and receive information, active listening, and discuss barriers to communication.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify the impact of non-verbal communication on team dynamics.
- Discuss how subtle cues can empower or influence others in decision-making processes.
- Develop skills in observation and interpretation of non-verbal signals in a collaborative setting.
- Enhance participants' ability to make strategic decisions based on incomplete information.



Context and participants:

This activity is suitable for workplace training sessions, team-building, or professional development workshops, especially designed for young individuals who are just entering the job market. It can be conducted with groups of 6-15 participants, making it ideal for team members who need to improve communication and collaboration skills.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Encourage participants to think creatively and pay attention to details.
- Emphasize the importance of strategic problem-solving and group discussions when drawing figure data.
- Create an environment that supports active participation and critical reflection during debriefing.
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), the participant can do this task with the task leader.
- This task conducted with a group with difficult experiences (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges) may trigger more difficult emotions like irritation, resignation, and reactions for which the leader should be prepared. If the leader observes difficulties in completing the task, it may be helpful to support the person describing figures.



Materials Needed:

- A blank sheet of paper and a pen for each participant
- Cards with geometric figures: CARD A, CARD B



Duration:

40 - 50 minutes



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

The facilitator explains the exercise to the participants, emphasising the importance of precise verbal communication. At this stage, participants are not yet familiar with the content of the cards provided in the appendix.

Step 2:

The facilitator chooses one participant to be the “describer.” This person describes what they see on Card A, focusing on details like the size, shape, and position of the figures, as well as any other important features of the drawing.

The other participants listen to the description and try to recreate the drawing. The describer cannot repeat their instructions, and participants are not allowed to ask questions or ask for clarification.

Step 3:

For Card B, the process is similar, but this time participants are allowed to ask questions to clarify the instructions and ensure greater accuracy in reproducing the pattern. The describer must respond to these questions but is not permitted to revise or repeat earlier instructions.

Step 4:

Once both drawings are completed, participants compare their reproductions to the original templates of Card A and Card B from the appendix. The group evaluates which approach—description without questions or description with questions—proved to be more effective.

Step 5:

The exercise concludes with a discussion, focusing on the challenges of accurate communication and the mechanisms of nonverbal interaction. Participants reflect on the importance of clear, precise language and explore how questioning and feedback improve understanding.

Step 6:

Individual reflection:

- Ask participants to close their eyes for a moment and think about what they felt during the exercise. What were their initial reactions? Did they feel confident listening to the instructions, or were they nervous and unsure?
- Overlooked elements and mistakes: Start by discussing the differences between the original cards and what the participants drew. What elements of the drawings were most often omitted? What mistakes were most common? Were there moments when participants were confident in their drawing, but found they had made a mistake?
- The role of active listening: Emphasize the importance of active listening in communication. Did participants notice a difference in the quality of their drawing when

they had the opportunity to ask questions? Did the questions help them understand the instructions better?

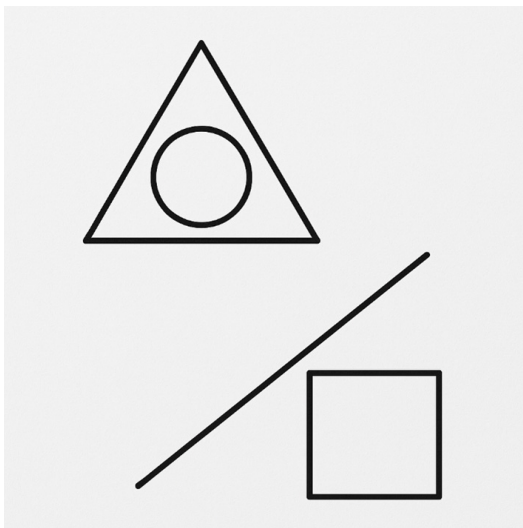
- Challenges in one-way communication: Discuss the difficulties of one-way communication when the recipient does not have the opportunity to ask questions. What feelings accompanied the participants during this part of the exercise? Did they feel more under pressure?
- Adjusting communication: Discuss the importance of tailoring your communication to the needs of the recipient. Did the person describing the drawing try to adapt his way of speaking to the group, or did he speak in the same way regardless of the situation?
- Lessons learned and application in the workplace: Encourage participants to think about how the lessons from this exercise can be applied in the workplace. Where else might they encounter similar communication challenges? What strategies can they use to improve the quality of their communication to improve the quality of their tasks?

Conclusion/debriefing:

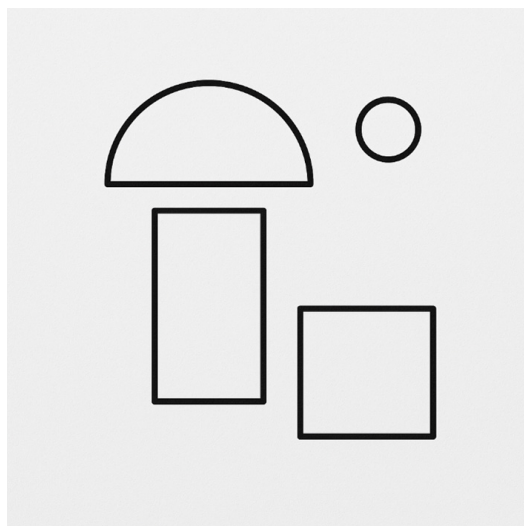
Participants gain increased awareness of verbal communication, which enhances team dynamics and their ability to observe and respond to others' signals. The exercise improves decision-making skills in complex situations, fostering critical thinking. It helps to understand the importance of verbal communication, asking questions and answering properly.

The debriefing session allows for critical reflection, connecting experiences to real-life scenarios, which enhances participants' communication effectiveness.

Materials/handouts used:



Card A



Card B

THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED

Category:

Empowerment and Communication

Overview:

Use role-play to explore and address common challenges young people face during the transition to adulthood and employment, including interpersonal conflicts, workplace dilemmas, and decision-making. Participants will reflect on how their actions and perspectives can influence outcomes in real-life scenarios.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Practice handling real-life challenges through role play.
- Explore and test different strategies for problem-solving and communication.
- Build confidence in dealing with conflict and workplace stress.
- Reflect on emotions and develop empathy by stepping into another role.

Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (18 - 30 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop etc.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 5–10 participants is ideal, to allow active participation and safe discussion. Larger groups can be split into smaller subgroups, each exploring a different scenario.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): The activity cannot be done on one-on-one settings, but you can encourage the participant to act out the situation they are facing – they can play themselves or some other role, but try to put them in a position that is comfortable for them, and in which they feel confident. It can help if you, as a facilitator, play them, so they can see different response, but be mindful to discuss that.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Use simple, relatable scenarios (school, friendships, daily challenges) instead of complex workplace conflicts.
 - Provide clear role descriptions and, if needed, use visual aids or written prompts.
 - Allow participants to be observers if acting feels too stressful; reflection can be equally valuable.
 - Always keep the “safe word” option visible and remind them they can step out at any time.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Adapt scenarios to real-life situations participants face in their context (e.g. teacher-student conflict instead of manager-employee).
 - Be mindful of cultural norms about authority, gender roles, or communication styles.
 - Encourage comparison: “How might this situation look in your culture/community?”



Materials Needed:

- A list of workplace-related scenarios (optional, for inspiration).
- A timer to manage role transitions (optional).
- A spacious room to allow for movement and role-playing.



Duration:

30 - 60 minutes (depending on the number of scenarios played)

Activity Procedure:

**** Take into consideration before the beginning of the activity:** Discuss and introduce a 'safe word', so that the participants know they can pause or step out of a role if it becomes too uncomfortable. It is important that the participants feel safe and in control during the activity.

0. Warm-up activity

Round 1 – Copy the Move

- Play upbeat, funky music in the background to boost the atmosphere.
- Participants stand in a circle.
- One person makes a simple movement (e.g., raising arms, spinning, clapping in rhythm).
- Everyone else copies it together.
- Continue around the circle until everyone has shared one move.

Round 2 – “Yes, Let’s!” Actions

- A participant calls out an action starting with “Let’s...” (e.g., “Let’s fly like birds!”).
- Everyone responds loudly: “Yes, let’s!” and performs the action for about 10 seconds.
- Anyone can then propose the next action (e.g., “Let’s pretend we are late for the bus!”, “Let’s act like sloths!”).

Round 3 – Funny Characters

- If the group still feels stiff, add a playful twist: actions should now include being a funny character.
- Examples: “Let’s be Jack Sparrow running!”, “Let’s be Kung Fu Panda when the mantis pinches his nerve!”
- Encourage exaggerated, silly movements.

1. Introduce the Activity

- Briefly explain the concept of Theatre of the Oppressed:
 - “This activity allows us to explore real-life challenges through role-playing. By stepping into different roles, we can test strategies for handling difficult situations and reflect on how our actions influence outcomes.”
- Emphasize that this is a safe space for experimentation, and there are no wrong answers – connecting this to the establishment of a ‘safe word’ and ‘rules’ for the activity.

2. Set the Scene

- Choose or ask participants to suggest a workplace or adulthood-related scenario. The participants will feel more involved if they brainstorm examples and one is chosen by the group, so it is important to take time for this phase.

Examples, with which you can start the brainstorming, can be:

- Workplace Conflict: A disagreement between two colleagues over task responsibilities.
- Job Interview: A candidate faces a challenging interviewer.
- Unreasonable Workload: An employee is asked to take on extra work without prior notice.
- Discrimination: A subtle instance of bias in a team meeting.
- IMPORTANT - balance scenarios: Not all should be conflict-heavy. Include at least one positive challenge (e.g. negotiating for support, asking for feedback).
- Assign roles to two or more participants to act out the situation (e.g., employee, manager, interviewer, coworker).

3. Role Play Begins

- The chosen participants start acting out the scenario.
- Any participant watching can say “Stop!” at any time if they think the situation could take a different or better turn.
 - When “Stop” is called, the participant jumps into the role of one person in the scene and continues the interaction.
 - The goal is to explore alternative approaches and strategies.
- Repeat this process as many times as necessary to explore different outcomes.
- Note: with many “Stop!” interruptions, the activity can get long—set a limit (e.g. 2–3 interventions per scenario) or even give out three ‘Stops’ per round to specific participants.

Conclusion/debriefing:

After the role play, lead a group discussion with the following prompts:

- On the Scenario:
 - “What did you observe about the dynamics of the situation?”
 - “What strategies worked well, and why?”
 - “What approaches made the situation worse or didn’t resolve the conflict?”
- On Real-Life Application:
 - “Have you faced a similar challenge in your life or work? How did you handle it?”
 - “What could you do differently in the future if faced with a similar situation?”
- On Emotions and Communication:
 - “How did it feel to step into a role and try to navigate the scenario?”
 - “What role did communication play in resolving the challenge?”

WANTS / NEEDS



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

Activity helps participants identify the difference between their aspirations and needs in the job-seeking process, reflect on strategies to meet both, and explore the emotional impact of pursuing employment goals.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Differentiate between wants and needs when planning for employment or career choices.
- Reflect on personal priorities and emotions by hearing their own lists read aloud.
- Practice self-awareness and decision-making about balancing aspirations with practical steps.
- Explore strategies and resources that can help turn wants and needs into realistic goals.



Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (20 - 29 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop etc.

** Since the activity requires considerable self-reflection and introspection, as well as a sense of safety within the group with whom you share, it is suitable for an already established group of individuals who have been working on the topic for a longer period and feel comfortable with one another.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: Best for 9–18 participants (3–6 triads).
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): The facilitator can alternate between reading the wants and needs and then leads a guided discussion or deeper conversation with the participant.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Keep the triad role-play gentle: if reading aloud feels too exposing, participants can just share in pairs or with the facilitator.
 - Ensure plenty of reassurance that “wants” are valid, not unrealistic.
 - The activity needs to be adapted if working with a group of individuals with a specific disability (e.g., hearing impairment) – in such cases, it is necessary to involve the assistance of professional staff, etc.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Adapt job-related prompts to participants’ realities (school projects, volunteering, internships instead of employment).
 - In formal education, connect to career guidance or CV preparation.
 - In intercultural groups, highlight how wants/needs may differ between cultures and encourage respectful sharing.



Materials Needed:

- A4 paper and pens for participants
- Timer or stopwatch
- Space for movement and interaction



Duration:

50 minutes

Activity Procedure:

1. Warm-Up – Change Places If...

- Chairs are arranged in a circle, with one less chair than there are participants (or just enough space for moving).
- Facilitator reads statements such as:
 - “Change places if you would like a job that allows you to travel.”
 - “Change places if you prefer working in a team.”
 - “Change places if you value job stability over flexibility.”
 - “Change places if you want a job that lets you work from home.”
 - “Change places if you want to earn a high salary.”
 - *Add more, depending on the group...*
- If participants agree with the statement, they stand up and switch seats with someone else.
- Continue for several rounds, mixing both value-based and practical job aspects.

2. Individual Reflection – Wants vs. Needs

The purpose of this activity is to clarify personal aspirations vs. practical steps for finding a job.

- Give each participant two separate sheets or sticky notes: one labelled Wants, the other Needs.
- *Wants = Personal goals/aspirations for a job (“I want a job that aligns with my passion,” “I want to work remotely”).*
- *Needs = Practical or essential actions required to get a job (“I need to write a CV,” “I need to network”).*
- Participants write 3–5 items on each sheet.
- Encourage them to be honest and specific.
- Optional creative version: draw a heart or circle divided into two sections and illustrate their wants and needs.

3. Triad Role-Play – Wants / Needs Reading

Purpose: Hear their own wants/needs from an outside perspective, notice emotional reactions, and gain deeper insight.

- Form groups of three – each person will take turns in each role.
- For the round, one participant is the listener (the “owner” of the wants/needs). They give their *Wants* sheet to one group member and their *Needs* sheet to the other.
- For the next two minutes:
 - One group member reads the *Wants* list aloud.
 - The other reads the *Needs* list aloud.

- When the time is up, the listener reflects:
 - How did it feel to hear your lists read aloud?
 - Did anything sound different than when you wrote it?
 - Do you want to change, add, or remove anything?
 - (Optionally, they can write down their feelings or insights.)
- Rotate roles so everyone gets to be the listener, the *Wants* reader, and the *Needs* reader.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Facilitate a group discussion with the following prompts:

- On Emotions:
 - “How did it feel to hear someone else read your wants and needs?”
 - “Did you notice any patterns in your emotions or priorities?”
- On Strategies:
 - “What strategies could help you balance what you want with what you need?”
 - “How do you prioritize between the two when making decisions about your career?”
- On Real-Life Application:
 - “How can this exercise help you take actionable steps toward your employment goals?”
 - “What support or resources do you need to turn your wants and needs into achievable goals?”
 - Did the exercise make you rethink your priorities?



04.

COLLABORATIVE SKILLS AND MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS





PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



COLLABORATIVE SKILLS AND MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

THE TOPIC

The ability to collaborate effectively is essential in today's interconnected world. Whether in educational settings, the workplace, or social environments, teamwork requires trust, communication, and an understanding of group dynamics. This section equips participants with tools to build these skills, preparing them to navigate collaborative situations with confidence and empathy.

INSIGHT

Many young people feel unprepared for teamwork, often citing workplace conflicts as a source of stress. Building collaborative skills addresses these concerns, fostering confidence in participants' ability to work effectively with others.

ACTIVITIES

The activities in this section allow participants to address conflicts, embrace diverse perspectives, and work toward shared goals. The activities are designed to simulate real-world challenges, providing participants with practical strategies to enhance group performance and foster mutual respect.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



BUILDING TRUST



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

This activity is focused on building communication skills and collaborative skills. By working in teams on building a tower made of building blocks, participants gain an understanding of the importance of clear communication, trust and collaboration among team members in order to achieve a common goal.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Understand the importance of trust in leadership.
- Learn how to build trust among team members.
- Develop effective communication skills.



Context and participants:

This activity could be conducted either in a classroom or in an office meeting room. It could be conceived as a team-building exercise for young professionals at their first work experience with new colleagues. Alternatively, participants could be high school or university students.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: 3-4 people per team.
- For individuals with physical disabilities who may face challenges in tower-building or wearing blindfolds, the trainer could offer alternative materials like magnetic blocks or verbal-only tasks.
- It is recommended that the trainer provides clear instructions, which may vary according to the training aims or the team's characteristics (for example, participants must not talk during step 2 of the activity; in step 5, all teammates are blindfolded except one, who guides the team throughout the activity). The trainer's specific skills and knowledge are very important in order to adapt the training activity to the participants.
- The trainer should allow participants to work independently to build their towers.
- Take photos or videos of the towers and play them back during the debrief to help participants visually see the outcomes of their communication and trust strategies.



Materials needed:

- Building blocks
- Blindfolds



Duration:

90 minutes



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Divide the team into groups of 3-4 members.
Provide each group with a set of building blocks.

Step 2:

Ask each group to build a tower as high as possible.

Step 3:

After approximately 20 minutes, ask each group to explain how they built their tower and what challenges they faced during the process.

Step 4:

Discuss the importance of trust in building a successful tower and how trust can be built among team members.

Step 5:

Ask each group to build another tower in 25 minutes, but this time with blindfolds on.

Step 6:

When time is up, ask each group to explain how they built their tower and what challenges they faced during the process.

Step 7:

Discuss how effective communication and trust played a role in the success or failure of the tower building with blindfolds on.

Conclusion/debriefing:

- Can you think of a real-life situation—at school, work, or in your personal life—where trust played a key role, and how does this activity help you approach that situation differently?
- Did you learn any new strategies for building trust in your personal or professional life?
- Did the activity help you identify any areas where you may need to work on building trust?
- How did the activity impact your ability to communicate and collaborate with others?
- Did the activity provide a safe and supportive environment for discussing issues related to trust?
- Would you recommend this activity to others as a way to improve their trust-building skills?

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

The activity focuses on teaching conflict management skills in a professional context. Participants will practice separating personal opinions from the issue, using assertive communication and working collaboratively to find a compromise.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Recognizing the dynamics of conflict in professional settings.
- Identifying how personal biases and opinions can influence conflict and learning to separate these from the main issue.
- Developing assertive communication skills, such as using “I” statements, active listening and clear expression of viewpoints.
- Identifying areas of potential compromise in conflicting positions.



Context and participants:

The activity could be conducted in classrooms, youth workshops with 4-5 participants per group, consisting of high school students, recent graduates, or vocational training students.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Begin the session by setting rules that emphasize respect, reminding participants that the goal is to learn, not to win the debate. The rules can be set with/by participants, to further encourage thoughtfulness to them.
- Briefly discuss the principles of assertive communication, providing examples of assertive versus passive or aggressive communication to give a concrete understanding of what is expected during the role play.
- Remind participants to focus on their assigned role and avoid letting personal beliefs dominate their arguments.

Recommended group size: 20/30 people

In individual sessions, the activity can be adapted to focus on practicing assertive communication and conflict management through guided roleplay.

1. **Choose a scenario** – The mentor presents a simplified version of the issue (e.g., economic benefits vs. environmental risks) or another relevant conflict situation.
2. **Role reversal** – The participant first argues one side of the issue, while the mentor takes the opposite role. Then, they switch roles, allowing the participant to experience and understand both perspectives.
3. **Identify compromise** – After the discussion, the mentor and participant work together to find a balanced solution, highlighting shared concerns and areas of compromise.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



4. Reflection – Briefly discuss what strategies felt effective, what challenges arose, and how these skills could be applied in real-life conflicts (school, work, personal life).

Tip: Keep the focus on respectful communication (using “I” statements, active listening) and encourage the participant to separate personal feelings from the assigned role

When working with vulnerable groups, ensure the activity is simplified and supportive.

- **Simplify language:** Use clear, concrete words and provide short written prompts or visuals for each role.
- **Offer flexible participation:** Allow participants to express their arguments in different ways (speaking, writing, or drawing) and give them extra preparation time.
- **Create safe scenarios:** Choose neutral or less controversial topics if the main scenario feels too sensitive, while keeping the focus on practicing assertive communication and compromise.
- **Encourage collaboration:** Pair participants or form smaller groups so they feel more supported.
- **Cultural awareness:** Be mindful of different cultural perspectives on conflict and encourage participants to share their own experiences where they feel comfortable.



Materials needed:

- Space for participants to be able to divide into two groups.
- Notepad and pens for participants for brainstorming ideas for the issue.



Duration:

60-90 minutes



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Activity Procedure:

Part 1: Introduction and setup

Step 1:

Introduce the topic and set the tone for a respectful and engaging environment, discussing the importance of understanding different viewpoints.

Step 2:

Provide context for the roleplay activity and introduce the topic: "A government decision on a new fossil energy resource could boost the economy but has severe environmental impacts" (the topic can be changed; it can address any issue).

Part 2: Group formation and role assignment

Step 3:

Divide participants into small discussion groups (4-5) and assign roles within each group, designating some as "pro-economy" and others as "pro-environment".

Step 4:

In their groups, participants start brainstorming about their role and discuss their viewpoints, identifying potential compromises and formulating their approach to the discussion.

Part 3: Role play discussion

Step 5:

Each group engages in the role-play and presents their arguments and discusses using assertive communication and active listening.

Each side will have 2 minutes to present or counter an argument, while the other listens actively. They should speak calmly and clearly, without raising their voice. They should use "I" statements, such as, "I believe that..." or "Our perspective is..." to express their views without blaming.

Step 6:

After the initial discussion, pause to identify shared concerns or areas where both sides might agree, and let groups work to find a compromise that addresses both economic and environmental concerns.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Group sharing and debriefing (20 min): Give participants some time to reflect on the activity by themselves. Reform the larger group and invite each small group to share their experiences and the compromises reached.

The facilitator could guide the debriefing with questions such as:

- "What strategies helped you communicate your viewpoint?"
- "What challenges did you face during the discussion?"
- "How can these skills apply to real-life situations?"
- "What emotions did you experience?"

Finally, summarize the key concepts of assertive communication and compromise, discussing the importance of these skills in professional contexts, especially as participants in transition from school to workplace.

Materials/handouts used:

Scenario brief handout:

Written or spoken overview of the scenario, explaining the government's proposal for the new fossil energy resource, its potential economic benefits, and the long-term environmental risks.

Integrating Mental Health Awareness

During the conclusion and debriefing, facilitators can emphasize the connection between managing conflict and mental wellbeing:

1. **Reflect on emotions.** Ask participants:

- "What emotions did you experience during the discussion?"
- "How did these emotions influence the way you communicated?"

This helps participants recognize how conflict and emotions affect mental health.

2. **Link stress and communication.** Discuss briefly how conflict situations can generate stress, and how assertive communication and compromise can help reduce tension and support well-being.

3. **Self-awareness check.** Encourage participants to notice their own emotional state before and during the role-play, and how this might affect their responses and interactions.

4. **Highlight coping strategies.** Provide practical tips such as taking a deep breath, pausing before responding, and recognizing emotions before reacting, reinforcing that these strategies support both effective communication and mental health.

5. **Reflection questions**

- "How did managing your emotions help you during the discussion?"
- "What strategies could you use in future conflicts to protect your mental wellbeing?"

Handout:

The government has announced a proposal to develop a new fossil energy resource. This decision has sparked widespread debate due to its potential economic benefits and significant environmental risks.

Economic Perspective:

- Create thousands of jobs, boosting local and national employment rates.
- Stabilize energy costs and reduce dependency on foreign energy sources.
- Generate significant revenue, which can be reinvested into infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

Pro-Economy Team:

Your focus is to emphasize the economic benefits and societal advantages of the proposal. Develop strong arguments about why the project is essential and propose ideas to mitigate environmental concerns.

Environmental Perspective:

- Accelerate deforestation, disrupt wildlife, and destroy ecosystems.
- Increase greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to climate change.
- Cause pollution that affects air, water, and public health.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Pro-Environment Team:

Your focus is to highlight the environmental and health risks of the project. Advocate for sustainable energy alternatives and explain their importance for long-term ecological and societal well-being.

Additional scenarios for discussion (optional):

- A company proposes cutting costs by reducing employee benefits, which may affect staff well-being.
- A school considers extending study hours to improve academic results, but this reduces students' free time and extracurricular opportunities.
- A workplace team must decide whether to adopt a new technology that improves efficiency but may lead to job cuts.
- Using social media before 18 years old or not.

EGG DROP CHALLENGE



Category:

Collaborative skills and managing group dynamics



Overview:

The Egg Drop Challenge is an exciting game where a group works together to solve a construction task: building a structure to protect a raw egg from breaking when dropped from a height.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Recognize the importance of teamwork, roles, and responsibilities in achieving group goals.
- Explore how group decision-making affects success in workplace tasks.
- Develop transferable skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication.



Context and participants:

- Frame the activity as a workplace simulation where participants must collaborate to “deliver a project” (protect the egg).
- Position the observer as a “team coach” who provides feedback, akin to a manager evaluating team dynamics.
- Highlight parallels between limited resources in the exercise and workplace constraints such as budgets, time, and materials.
- Stress the importance of clear communication to ensure all team members understand the plan and contribute effectively.
- Focus on adjusting plans based on testing outcomes, akin to iterative problem-solving in a professional setting.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

There should be enough space for each team to build their structure. Choose a location where the eggs can be dropped from different heights, for example, from a ladder. Teams must understand that they will not receive extra materials. The eggs should be dropped outside to avoid making a mess in the conference rooms. Participants usually appreciate it if the different heights are measured with a tape measure.

Recommended group size: 4 to 30 people.

How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work):

As this is a collaborative exercise, it is not recommended for a one-on-one setting.

How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):

- Some groups may see breaking the egg as “failure” → reframe it as an opportunity to analyze strategies rather than “losing.”
- With younger or less experienced participants, simplify instructions and allow more time.
- Provide visual examples of materials to reduce confusion.



How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:

- In cultures that value collectivism and harmony, competition may feel uncomfortable --> reframe as a shared learning experiment instead of a contest.
- In highly hierarchical cultures, participants may defer to the "leader." The trainer can explicitly encourage equal participation.
- For advanced groups (professionals, engineers, university students), make the task more complex (add constraints like limited time, budgets, or design presentations).



Materials needed:

For each team:

- One roll of tape
- One raw egg (variations: a water bomb, a fragile Lego construction)
- A pair of scissors
- 10 sheets of paper A4 (alternative: 4 sheets of a big newspaper)
- Paper and pen for the observer
- (tape measure)



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1

The trainer divides the participants into construction teams consisting of 3-5 people and one observer.

Every team receives the same materials: one roll of tape, one raw egg, a pair of scissors, and 20 sheets of paper.

The observer receives a paper, a pen and the following instructions: Observe the different teams. How do they work together? Who gives constructive input? Who works? How do they deal with differences and frustrations? Take notes.

Step 2

The trainer explains the challenge: Each team must design and build a protective structure for their egg. The goal is to prevent the egg from breaking when it is dropped. Teams have 25 minutes (or more, depending on the situation) to create their designs after receiving their materials and instructions.

Step 3

Once the construction phase is complete, all teams head outside to test their designs by dropping their eggs from different heights, starting from the arm's length of the trainer. The team whose egg doesn't break from the highest chosen point wins.

Conclusion/debriefing:

The trainer encourages discussion about the methods and the decision-making process of the groups. The observer can give invaluable input. The focus should be on which strategies are important for a good work result, and which behaviors impede good teamwork.

Questions for the groups:

1. How did your team decide on roles (e.g., leader, builder)? Was it planned or did someone naturally take charge?
2. How did your team ensure everyone's ideas were heard, especially from quieter members? Did anyone feel left out?
3. How did your team brainstorm and choose a design? Did you build on each other's ideas or follow one person's plan?
4. How did your team handle disagreements or moments when someone's idea was dismissed?
5. Did your team test your design before the final drop? Why or why not?
6. How did your team react to mistakes or setbacks? Were they seen as learning opportunities or failures?
7. What's one thing your team did well, and one thing you'd improve if you did this again?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Questions for the observer:

1. Did you notice the team struggling with decision-making? What behaviors contributed to that?
2. What specific actions stood out?
3. Did you see one person dominating the decision making? How did that affect their outcome?
4. Were certain members ignored? How did that impact their process?

Questions for everyone:

1. How does this activity relate to teamwork in your workplace/school/community?
2. What behaviors from this activity do you think are most important for successful collaboration in real life?
3. How can you apply what you learned today to improve teamwork in your daily life?
4. What qualities made someone a good leader in this activity? How can those qualities be developed?
5. How can teams ensure that everyone's strengths are utilized, even in high-pressure situations?

Tips for Facilitating the Debrief

- **Encourage Honesty:** Remind participants that the goal is to learn, not to criticize.
- **Use the Observer:** The observer's notes can provide an objective perspective and spark deeper discussion.
- **Focus on Behaviors:** Keep the conversation about actions and strategies, not personal attributes.
- **Time Management:** Allocate enough time for everyone to share, but keep the discussion focused.

EXPECTATIONS AT WORK



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

This activity helps participants explore the dynamics of managing expectations in professional settings, including understanding their own expectations and aligning them with others' to achieve a shared goal.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify personal expectations and roles in a shared project.
- Practice aligning different perspectives to create a common plan.
- Develop teamwork and negotiation skills by managing conflicting ideas.
- Understand the importance of clear communication for successful collaboration.



Context and participants:

With young adults (20–29 years old) in non-formal settings or workshops, etc. If participants have not previously worked on group projects at work or in other settings, it can be challenging for them to reflect on the scenarios. It is recommended that the facilitator leads a short brainstorming session about work situations in general before conducting the activity, or asks participants about challenges they have faced when working on group projects.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: Best with 9–18 participants (3–6 groups of three).
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): Instead of group work, the mentor plays the “team members.” The young person first defines their own expectations, then discusses with the mentor how these might align/conflict with others in a real team. Focus on reflection: “How would you adjust if someone else had a different priority?”
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Use simplified and concrete workplace scenarios (school project, group trip, event planning).
 - Allow extra time for sharing ideas, especially if language or confidence is a barrier.
 - Encourage more guided facilitation during the discussion to ensure everyone's voice is heard.
 - People with hearing impairments or limited vocabulary may experience difficulties participating in the activity. In such cases, we suggest involving a person who can assist them in engaging in the conversation.



- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Adapt workplace scenarios to participants' reality (e.g., volunteer projects, student assignments, family responsibilities).
 - In cultures with strong hierarchy, clarify that all voices are equally important during the activity.



Materials needed:

- Scenarios for each group (see below)
- Papers and pens



Duration:

40 - 45 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Form Groups

- Each group receives a brief description of their assigned workplace project – it is IMPORTANT to read the situations described below in the material handouts:
 - Goal: What needs to be achieved.
 - Available resources: People, time, budget.
 - Challenges: Specific constraints or misunderstandings that need to be resolved.

Step 2: Individual work

- Each participant is given two tasks to complete (based on what they would do in the given situation with their personality/skills etc.):
 - Write down their personal goals and expectations for the project.
 - Propose how they would contribute to the project (e.g., roles, tasks, timeline).

Step 3: Group Discussion

- Group members share what they wrote individually.
- Together, they discuss:
 - How do your expectations align or differ from each other?
 - What challenges do you foresee in balancing these expectations?
 - How they can merge ideas into one realistic project plan?

Step 4: Presentation of Results

- Each group presents their finalized project plan and reflects on the process of aligning their expectations.

Step 5: Debrief and Reflection

- Instead of separate debriefs, facilitate one joint discussion with all participants.
 - How did it feel to express your own expectations and then adjust them to the group?
 - What differences or conflicts came up, and how did you deal with them?
 - What helped your group reach an agreement?
 - How does this process reflect teamwork and expectation management in real workplaces or schools?
 - What skills were most useful today (e.g., listening, compromise, communication), and would they also be useful in real-life situations?

Conclusion/debriefing:

Individual Experience

- How did it feel to identify your own expectations and share them with your team?
- Did you find it easy or challenging to express your ideas? Why?

Team Dynamics

- How did your team manage differing expectations or conflicting ideas?
- Were there any compromises made? How did you decide on them?
- Did you notice any unspoken assumptions within your group? How did they influence the discussion?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Relevance to the Workplace

- How do you think managing expectations applies to real-world workplace scenarios?
- What strategies can you use to align expectations with others in professional settings?
- How can poor communication or unclear expectations affect a team's performance?

Skills for Success

- What skills did you use during the activity (e.g., active listening, negotiation, teamwork)?
- How can you improve these skills to be more effective in managing expectations?

Materials/handouts used:

Scenario 1: Organizing a Team-Building Event

Goal: Plan and organize a half-day team-building activity for 15 employees to strengthen teamwork and communication.

Available Resources:

- People: Your team of 3 organizers and an HR assistant for support.
- Time: Two weeks to finalize and execute the plan.
- Budget: €300.

Challenges:

- Not all employees want to participate—some feel it's a waste of time.
- The event must align with the company's values of sustainability and inclusivity.
- A senior manager has expressed dissatisfaction with previous team-building events.

Scenario 2: Designing a Workplace Wellness Initiative

Goal: Create a simple wellness initiative to improve employee well-being and morale in your workplace.

Available Resources:

- People: Your team of 3 and a wellness budget coordinator for consultation.
- Time: Three days to draft and present your proposal to the management team.
- Budget: €150 for materials or activities.

Challenges:

- Team members have different ideas for the initiative (e.g., fitness classes, mindfulness sessions, healthier snacks).
- Not all employees are enthusiastic about wellness programs, and participation must be voluntary.
- The proposal must be cost-effective and have clear benefits for employee satisfaction.

Scenario 3: Launching a Social Media Campaign

Goal: Create and execute a 2-week social media campaign to promote a new reusable water bottle targeted at young adults who value sustainability and style.

Product Details:

- Name: AquaPure Eco Bottle
- Features:
 - Made from stainless steel, BPA-free.
 - Keeps drinks cold for 24 hours and hot for 12 hours.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



- Comes in three trendy colors: Ocean Blue, Forest Green, and Sunset Orange.
- Compact, leak-proof design suitable for everyday use.

Available Resources:

- People: Your team of 3 members with varying social media experience and a freelance graphic designer for visual content creation.
- Time: Campaign must launch in one week.
- Budget: €500 for advertisements, tools, and external resources.

Challenges:

- Team members have conflicting ideas about the tone of the campaign (e.g., professional vs. playful).
- Limited time to test the effectiveness of the campaign strategy.
- The client expects the campaign to reach at least 5,000 engagements within two weeks but has not provided clear guidelines.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

Activity helps participants identify their strengths and weaknesses, recognize the value of collaboration, and understand how leveraging others' strengths can address individual weaknesses in professional settings.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Get to know your own strengths and weaknesses.
- Learn how to use your strengths to deal with challenges.
- See how different strengths in a group can support each other.
- Feel more confident about what you are good at.



Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (18 - 26 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop etc.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: The ideal group size is 10–20 participants. This allows for diverse sharing during Bingo and circle discussions, while still keeping the atmosphere personal and safe.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): The facilitator can guide the visualisation and then invite the young person to describe their moment of strength in detail. Instead of Bingo, we can use a list of situations and ask the participant to mark which apply to them. Together, we identify 2–3 strengths and one weakness, and then reflect on how the strengths can balance or support the weakness. Questions are used (about when the weakness appears, how it affects them, and how strengths can help) as prompts for deeper conversation.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Focus on creating safety first – allow participants to share only what they are comfortable with (weakness-sharing should always remain optional).
 - Use simplified language and visual aids (icons, symbols, drawings) instead of written Bingo where literacy may be a barrier.
 - Offer the artistic alternative (drawing strengths on a human shape) as a main option, not just as a side choice, since it supports expression beyond words.
 - For emotionally vulnerable groups, facilitators should be trained to notice discomfort and redirect focus back to positive strengths if needed.
 - Encourage peer-support pairing so no participant feels isolated when talking about weaknesses.



- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - In cultures where discussing personal weaknesses may feel too exposing, place stronger emphasis on strengths first, and introduce weaknesses only as “areas for growth” or “things I want to get better at.”
 - Adapt the examples in the Bingo sheet to reflect culturally relevant experiences (e.g., situations from school, community, family, or work life).
 - In formal educational contexts, connect the activity to career readiness or teamwork skills, so it resonates with academic or professional goals.
 - In informal or youth work settings, keep the tone playful and creative, allowing more time for drawing, storytelling, and group movement.



Materials needed:

- Bingo list for each participant
- Pencil
- Paper sheet



Duration:

40 - 50 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Guided Visualisation – Discovering a Moment of Strength

The purpose is to create a relaxed and safe atmosphere so participants can open up about personal strengths. The facilitator leads a short guided visualisation: *“Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Think of a moment in your life when you felt truly strong, capable, or proud of yourself. It might have been something small or something big. Imagine the situation in detail – where you were, what you saw around you, who was there, what you were doing, what you were feeling. Focus on the specific actions you took that made this moment meaningful to you.”*

- After one minute of silence and reflection, participants open their eyes and keep the memory in mind. They are invited to share the memory, if they want, but it is not obligatory.

Step 2: Strengths Bingo

This activity will help participants explore personal strengths in an interactive and fun way.

- Each participant receives a Bingo sheet with many different situations that point to various strengths (“Helped someone solve a problem”, “Stayed calm under pressure”, “Came up with a creative solution”, “Organised an event”, “Listened to someone who needed support”) – see materials below.
- Participants move around the room, talking to each other and finding people who have experienced these situations.
- When they find someone, that person signs the box for that situation.
- Important:
 - Each participant must strive to collect signatures for every activity.
 - Each participant should sign at least five different situations.
 - Participants should also mark the boxes that apply to themselves (so when they sign a box, they mark it in their own bingo).

Step 3. Understanding Personal Strengths

- Before starting to work in pairs, the facilitator introduces the concept of personal strengths: *Personal strengths are positive qualities, abilities, and patterns of behaviour that help you achieve goals, overcome challenges, and contribute positively to yourself and others.*
- As a group, participants name different strengths (empathy, creativity, leadership, persistence, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability). The facilitator writes them down so they are visible to all.
- The facilitator also introduces strengths and weaknesses as two sides of self-awareness. Weaknesses are not failures, but areas for growth or where collaboration helps.
- Then the participants divide into pairs.
 - Participants look at their marked Bingo boxes and choose three situations to name at least three strengths they believe they have. *They might have difficulties naming strengths, so be mindful and aware of that and help the participants.*
 - They write down the strengths and add a specific example of when they demonstrated each one.
 - Then they also think about one weakness that they have and, if they feel comfortable,

share it with the other person – why do they think it is a weakness, when they notice it, etc. They can use the questions below when talking in pairs:

- *When you think about the weakness you have named, in what kind of situations does it show up most often?*
- *How does this weakness usually affect you – your work, relationships, or confidence?*
- *Can you remember a time when one of your strengths helped you manage or reduce the impact of this weakness?*
- *Which strength from today's activity could support you when this weakness appears?*

** Alternative for creative and artistic participants: they draw a human figure on a sheet and add symbols inside it to represent their strengths, while working in pairs.*

Step 4: Sharing in the Circle and Grouping by Strengths

- Each participant shares one of their strengths with the group.
- The facilitator asks participants to form groups based on similar strengths (all who mentioned “creativity” form one group, all who mentioned “empathy” form another). Participants may also choose a group they identify with, even if they did not mention that strength when sharing. Groups should consist of 3-5 people.
- In these groups, they discuss:
 - How this strength could help them in a situation where they feel stuck, uncertain, or weak.
 - How it could serve as a counterbalance to a personal weakness – they talk about the weaknesses they named in pairs and discuss how their specific strength can help them to navigate this weakness. The facilitator can hand out the following questions for guidance:
 - Which of your weaknesses could this strength help you with?
 - How can this strength support you when that weakness shows up?
 - In what way could you use this strength as a counterbalance to that weakness in the future?
 - What small step could you take to turn this weakness into a learning opportunity?

Step 5: Closing Circle

- Each group briefly shares one insight from their discussion with everyone.
- Closing reflection prompt:
- *“Think of one way you can use one of your strengths in the coming week to help yourself or someone else.”*



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Conclusion/debriefing

You can guide participants through below questions:

- How did it feel to think about and share both your strengths and your weaknesses today?
- Did you discover any strengths or weaknesses you weren't fully aware of before?
- How can your strengths support you when a weakness shows up or when you face a challenge?
- Can you think of a recent situation where applying one of your strengths could have made a difference?
- Did you notice any patterns or similarities in the strengths shared by others?
- How can we combine our strengths as a group to support one another?

Materials/handouts used:

Bingo sheet

BINGO - PERSONAL STRENGTHS

In the last week, I helped a friend or classmate solve a problem.	Recently, I stayed calm when things didn't go as planned.	In the past month, I found a creative solution to a challenge.	I helped organise a meeting, event, or group activity.	In the last two weeks, I listened to someone who needed to talk.
This month, I learned a new skill or piece of knowledge on my own.	I often motivate others when they feel discouraged.	I took responsibility for something that others didn't want to do.	Recently, I adapted quickly when plans suddenly changed.	I frequently work well in a team to achieve a goal.
In the past month, I helped resolve a disagreement or misunderstanding.	I took initiative to start a project or task without being asked.	In the last week, I did something kind for a stranger.	I finished a task or project earlier than the deadline.	I often explain things clearly so others can understand.
Recently, I stood up for someone or defended an idea I believe in.	I fixed or figured out a technical or practical problem.	I helped organise materials, people, or tasks for a group.	Recently, I showed patience in a frustrating situation.	I taught or demonstrated a skill to someone else
In the past month, I turned a mistake into a lesson learned.	I have been working consistently toward a personal goal.	Recently, I included someone who was feeling left out.	I accepted feedback and used it to improve.	I shared an idea recently that was accepted or used by others.
I helped someone feel more confident in what they were doing.	In the last week, I solved a problem under time pressure.	I encouraged others to share their ideas in a discussion.	In the past month, I tried something completely new.	Recently, I supported a friend or family member through a tough time.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



TEAM SYNERGY ROLE-PLAYS



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

This activity uses role-play to simulate workplace challenges such as miscommunication, group conflicts, and problem-solving. Participants act out realistic scenarios, followed by group discussions to explore strategies and best practices for addressing these challenges.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Identify common workplace challenges and their causes.
- Develop communication, teamwork, and conflict-resolution skills.
- Develop confidence in addressing workplace issues effectively.



Context and participants:

This activity is designed for young people aged 16–20, particularly those entering vocational training, or transitioning into the workforce. It can be conducted with 10–20 participants in a classroom, community centre, or training programme setting.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Ensure all participants feel supported and avoid singling anyone out for criticism during role-plays.
- Provide clear instructions and offer examples to help participants understand the scenarios.
- Use scenarios that reflect participants' likely experiences in entry-level work environments.
- In one-to-one settings, the role-plays can be simplified by taking on roles with the facilitator, or by asking the individual to describe how they would respond in each situation, followed by guided reflection.
- With vulnerable groups, keep scenarios shorter and less complex, focus on clear communication rather than performance, and reassure participants that there are no right or wrong answers. Encourage supportive feedback from peers to build confidence.
- In different cultural or educational contexts, adapt scenarios to reflect familiar workplace environments and cultural norms so that the examples feel realistic.
- After each role-play, allow extra time for reflection and discussion, emphasising transferable lessons for teamwork and communication.



Materials needed:

- Six pre-prepared role-play cards describing workplace scenarios
- Pens and paper for participant notes
- A whiteboard or flipchart to summarise discussion points and strategies



Duration:

60–75 minutes



Activity Procedure:

Step 1

Start with a warm-up discussion. Ask participants to share examples of challenges they think employees might face in a workplace. If this is possible, participants can share experience they have themselves. Facilitate a brief conversation, highlighting themes such as miscommunication, teamwork issues, and stress management.

Step 2

Divide participants into groups of 3–4 and assign each group a role-play scenario. Allow them five minutes to read their scenario, discuss roles, and decide how they will act it out. Explain that they will firstly need to incorporate the problem and then a possible solution in their performance.

Step 3

Groups perform their role-play one at a time. After each performance:

- Facilitate a group discussion on what happened in the scenario.
- Ask participants to identify the key challenges in each case and suggest strategies for resolving them.
- Write effective solutions that emerge in the discussion on the whiteboard for reference.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Conclude by summarising key learnings, emphasising the importance of clear communication, empathy, and teamwork. Encourage them to reflect on how they might apply these skills in future work environments. Example questions:

- What communication strategies worked best in resolving the conflict or misunderstanding during your role-play?
- How did it feel to take on different perspectives within the team, and what did you learn about teamwork from this experience?
- What approaches from today's scenarios could you apply in real-life situations where you need to work with others under pressure or resolve disagreements?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



<p>The team receives instructions from their supervisor, but each member interprets them differently. This leads to problems in completing work. How can this be resolved?</p>	<p>Two team members are upset because they feel one person is not contributing their fair share to a group task. How can you mediate the situation?</p>
<p>A customer has received the wrong product and is upset. At first, one team member is defensive. How can the team collaborate to calm the customer and resolve the issue professionally?</p>	<p>During a team meeting, two participants argue about who should take the lead on an important project. The disagreement might delay progress. How can the team manager resolve the issue?</p>
<p>A new team member is having difficulty adapting to the group and feels excluded from discussions. How can the team create a welcoming environment and help the new employee integrate successfully?</p>	<p>A team member makes a mistake that causes delays in a project. The rest of the team is frustrated, and tension is rising. How can the team address the mistake constructively and find a way to get the project back on track?</p>
<p>During team meetings, one individual frequently interrupts others, leading to frustration and preventing productive discussions. How can the team address this behaviour respectfully and ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute?</p>	<p>One team member is struggling to meet deadlines because of personal issues outside of work. Other team members are unsure how to approach the situation without overstepping boundaries. How can the team offer support while respecting privacy?</p>



05.

MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION EXERCISES



MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION EXERCISES

THE TOPIC

Mindfulness is a powerful tool for managing stress, improving focus, and fostering self-awareness. In the fast-paced transition from education to work, mindfulness practices provide young people with techniques to help to maintain balance and well-being. This section introduces exercises that promote relaxation, reduce anxiety, and encourage reflection.

INSIGHT

With nearly 60% of young people surveyed experiencing anxiety, mindfulness offers a practical approach to reducing stress and fostering a sense of control during times of transition.

ACTIVITIES

These exercises allow participants to explore a variety of techniques, from breath awareness to progressive muscle relaxation, allowing them to discover what works best for their needs. These practices are designed to be accessible and easily incorporated into daily routines, offering lifelong tools for stress management and self-care.

BREATHING OBSERVATION EXERCISE

Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises

Overview:

Participants engage in a breathing observation exercise to enhance their awareness and focus. The activity involves sitting in a comfortable but upright position and observing the natural flow of breath without trying to alter it. The aim is to cultivate mindfulness by redirecting attention back to the breath whenever distractions occur. This exercise also helps participants reflect on how mindful breathing can support them in daily life and in navigating challenges such as entering the work environment.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Develop awareness of natural breathing patterns.
- Practice mindfulness by focusing attention on the present moment.
- Enhance the ability to recognize and manage distractions.
- Reflect on how this practice can help in daily challenges, such as improving focus and managing stress.

Context and participants:

This activity can be conducted in a quiet room with minimal distractions. It is suitable for individual practice or in group settings, such as workshops, meditation classes, or team-building exercises. The exercise is designed to accommodate both beginners and experienced participants.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Begin by explaining the purpose of the activity: to cultivate mindfulness, manage distractions, and improve focus.
- Introduce the concept of mind-wandering. Explain that it is natural for the mind to drift and that the exercise aims to gently train attention.
- Suggest that participants should approach the exercise with curiosity and without judgment.
- Suggest to participants maintain a gentle focus on their breath, and be kind to themselves if their attention wanders.
- Inform participants that the goal is to observe, not control the breath. Encourage them to treat the practice as an opportunity to learn about themselves.
- Create a calm, comfortable setting. Use cushions, chairs, or mats for seating.
- Ensure the room is quiet and free of interruptions.
- Recommended group size: the number of participants should depend on the size of the available space and should be limited to a number that allows each person to choose a comfortable place (optimally, 15 participants).



- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): this exercise has been designed so that it can also be used in one-on-one situations, so conduct it according to the presented instructions.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges): emphasize that in this task, thoughts may wander towards unpleasant memories and it is especially important to consciously return to focusing on the breath and not immerse yourself in these thoughts.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts: The cultural and educational context should not influence the course of this exercise.



Materials needed:

- Chairs or cushions for comfortable seating.
- A timer to keep track of the duration (optional).
- (Optional) A brief handout explaining the benefits of mindful breathing and how it impacts focus and stress management.



Duration:

20 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Instruct participants to sit in a comfortable but upright position, either on a chair with their feet flat on the floor or on a cushion with their legs crossed. Explain to the participants *that this practice is about observing your breath and training your focus. It's natural for your mind to wander, and each time it does, you have an opportunity to gently bring your attention back to the breath. This helps develop concentration and calmness.*

Step 2:

Ask them to close their eyes or soften their gaze and bring their attention to their breath. Encourage them to notice the natural rhythm of the breath without trying to control it. *Take a moment to simply observe the sensation of your breath. Notice where you feel it most vividly: the nostrils, the chest, or the abdomen.*

Step 3:

Guide them to focus on the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils or the rise and fall of the abdomen. *If your mind begins to wander, gently notice what has distracted you, let it go, and return your focus to the breath.*

Step 4:

During the exercise, acknowledge that the wandering mind is a normal part of the process. *It's okay for your mind to wander. Each time you bring your attention back to the breath, you are strengthening your focus.*

Step 5:

Conclude the exercise by inviting participants to share their experiences. Discuss how they felt during the practice, what they noticed about their breath, and how often their mind wandered. *Take a moment to reflect on how this practice might help you in your daily life. How could noticing distractions and gently refocusing help with challenges at work or home?*

Conclusion/debriefing:

Participants develop greater awareness of their thought patterns and distractions. They improve their ability to focus on the present moment without judgment and gain a practical tool to manage stress. Through breath observation, they experience a sense of calm and centeredness. This practice can be a valuable resource for managing distractions and enhancing focus in personal and professional life.

Materials/handouts used:

n/a

Annex

Mindful breathing is a simple yet effective practice that can enhance focus, reduce stress, and support overall well-being. This technique engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps counteract the body's stress response by lowering heart rate, reducing blood pressure, and calming the mind. By directing attention to the breath, individuals can interrupt automatic emotional reactions and create space for thoughtful responses.

Practising the act of returning focus to the breath strengthens the brain's ability to maintain attention and minimizes susceptibility to distractions. Recognizing moments of mind-wandering and redirecting focus builds self-awareness and concentration.

This approach to breathing assists with stress management by offering a practical way to calm both the mind and body during challenging moments. Routine practice enhances attention span and cognitive performance, making it easier to stay focused on tasks. Additionally, mindful breathing fosters a sense of calm and perspective, allowing individuals to navigate emotional fluctuations more effectively. It also alleviates muscle tension and promotes overall physical relaxation, which contributes to better health. By cultivating present-moment awareness, individuals can reduce mental clutter and make clearer, more impactful decisions.

There are many ways to incorporate mindful breathing into daily life. For instance, it can be used before significant meetings or presentations to establish focus and improve performance. During moments of stress, pausing to take a few mindful breaths can help regain a sense of control and mental clarity. Including mindful breathing as part of a bedtime routine can support relaxation and enhance sleep quality. In personal relationships, it can help individuals remain grounded during difficult conversations, leading to better communication.

BUTTERFLY HUG

Category:

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises

Overview:

The Butterfly Hug is a self-soothing mindfulness technique designed for young people entering the job market. It alleviates anxiety, builds resilience, and promotes calmness during stressful transitions. The activity focuses on managing job search-related stress and cultivating self-love through self-compassion.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Offer a simple yet effective technique to reduce tension and foster relaxation.
- Develop a better understanding of coping strategies.
- Strengthen self-acceptance and self-compassion to enhance confidence and mental well-being.

Context and participants:

This activity is designed for young people aged 18-25 who are preparing to enter the workforce. It can be conducted in various settings, such as career development workshops focused on job readiness and interview preparation, high schools and colleges as part of counselling services or student workshops, and community centres that support youth in building essential employment skills. Additionally, it can be implemented in internship programs to help manage stress during placements and facilitated through online platforms for virtual mindfulness exercises.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Create a calm and supportive atmosphere where participants feel safe to express themselves.
- Encourage participants to be open and engaged, fostering a sense of community and trust among them.
- Remind participants to focus on their breathing and the rhythmic tapping during the exercise to maximize its calming effects.
- Allow sufficient time for guided visualization and mindful reflection, as these components are essential for reinforcing the exercise's benefits.
- Finally, consider following up with participants after the session to see how they are applying mindfulness techniques in their job search or workplace experiences.
- Recommended group size: the number of participants should depend on the size of the available space and should be limited to a number that allows each person to choose a comfortable place (optimally, 15 participants).
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): this exercise has been designed so that it can also be used in one-on-one situations, so



conduct it according to the presented instructions.

- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges): emphasize that in this activity, thoughts may wander towards unpleasant memories and it is especially important to consciously return to focusing on the breath and not immerse yourself in these thoughts.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts: The cultural and educational context should not influence the course of this exercise.



Materials needed:

- Speaker
- Sticky notes
- Pens



Duration:

30 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Choose a quiet, distraction-free space and enhance the calming atmosphere with soft music (no lyrics, just melody) or nature sounds - you can ask the group what their preferences are. Once the environment is prepared, guide the participants through mindful breathing exercises to help them focus on their breath and centre their attention.

Step 2:

Ask the participants to sit comfortably on the ground, close their eyes, and take deep, slow breaths, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth. Guide them to focus on their breath, allowing their minds to relax and settle into the present moment.

Here you have some examples of communication:

- Focus on your breath.
- Close your eyes and picture a place that brings you peace and safety.
- Feel how the air enters your lungs and leaves them.
- Feel how your body becomes more relaxed with each breath you take.
- Imagine that with every breath, you let go of everything that is stressing you.
- Feel a wave of warmth fill your body, bringing comfort and relaxation.

Step 3:

Instruct participants to cross their arms over their chest, placing their hands on their shoulders to form a “butterfly” shape with their arms. Encourage them to gently tap their shoulders or arms alternately, in a rhythmic motion, mimicking the fluttering of butterfly wings.

Step 4:

Ask participants to visualize a place where they feel safe and peaceful, such as a quiet beach, a serene forest, or their favourite cosy spot. Invite them to fully immerse themselves in the experience, imagining the sounds, feeling the wind and sunlight, and sensing the distinctive smells of the place. While maintaining this visualization, guide them to repeat affirmations like “I am capable,” “I deserve success,” or “I am embarking on this new journey with confidence.”

Step 5:

After 5–10 minutes of tapping and visualizing, gently guide participants back to the present moment. Encourage them to take a few deep breaths and spend some time reflecting on their feelings.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Encourage participants to share their thoughts and feelings.

- How did you feel during the Butterfly Hug exercise?
- What sensations did you notice while tapping your shoulders?
- What emotions came up for you during the visualization?
- Did you find it easy or challenging to focus on positive affirmations? Why?
- How do you think practising mindfulness can help you in your job search or workplace?
- Can you share a moment when you felt particularly calm or relaxed during the exercise?
- How can you apply the techniques you learned today in your daily life?
- What strategies can you use to manage stress before job interviews or networking events?
- What is one takeaway from today's activity that you found particularly meaningful?
- How do you feel about yourself and your abilities after this exercise?
- Would you be interested in incorporating mindfulness exercises into your routine? Why or why not?
- What other mindfulness or relaxation techniques would you like to explore in the future?

** choose those which are the most relevant for your group.

Materials/handouts used:

n/a

Annex

Mindful breathing is a simple yet effective practice that can enhance focus, reduce stress, and support overall well-being. This technique engages the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps counteract the body's stress response by lowering heart rate, reducing blood pressure, and calming the mind. By directing attention to the breath, individuals can interrupt automatic emotional reactions and create space for thoughtful responses.

Practising the act of returning focus to the breath strengthens the brain's ability to maintain attention and minimises susceptibility to distractions. Recognising moments of mind-wandering and redirecting focus builds self-awareness and concentration.

This approach to breathing assists with stress management by offering a practical way to calm both the mind and body during challenging moments. Routine practice enhances attention span and cognitive performance, making it easier to stay focused on tasks. Additionally, mindful breathing fosters a sense of calm and perspective, allowing individuals to navigate emotional fluctuations more effectively. It also alleviates muscle tension and promotes overall physical relaxation, which contributes to better health. By cultivating present-moment awareness, individuals can reduce mental clutter and make clearer, more impactful decisions.

There are many ways to incorporate mindful breathing into daily life. For instance, it can be used before significant meetings or presentations to establish focus and improve performance. During moments of stress, pausing to take a few mindful breaths can help regain a sense of control and mental clarity. Including mindful breathing as part of a bedtime routine can support relaxation and enhance sleep quality. In personal relationships, it can help individuals remain grounded during difficult conversations, leading to better communication.

INTRODUCTION TO JOURNALING



Category:

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



Overview:

This activity introduces participants to journaling as a reflective practice to enhance self-awareness and stress management. Participants will explore the benefits of journaling through discussion and work on prompts that encourage mindful reflection on workplace stressors, emotional triggers, and strategies for thoughtful responses.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

Participants will identify the benefits of journaling for self-reflection and stress management, discuss emotional triggers and stressors in workplace scenarios, and develop personalised strategies for mindful responses to stress.



Context and participants:

The Introduction to Journaling is suitable for professional development workshops, team-building sessions, or mental health training programmes. It is ideal for workplace settings, but also for labour insertion courses. It is best carried out with small to medium-sized groups of five to fifteen participants, and can be adapted for online environments.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Create a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental environment.
- Encourage mindfulness and remind participants that journaling is a personal process, with no right or wrong way to approach it!
- Offer a variety of prompts and styles, making space for participants to try writing, drawing, or even short spoken reflections if that helps them engage.
- In individual or mentoring contexts, journaling can become a regular shared practice: a mentor might provide prompts, review entries if invited, and help the participant notice patterns and insights over time.
- For vulnerable groups, keep prompts simple and open-ended, offering alternative formats (pictures, keywords, mind maps) for those with language or literacy challenges. Emotional check-ins before and after the writing can provide extra support.
- In diverse cultural or educational settings, adjust prompts so they reflect familiar stressors or experiences, and encourage participants to choose a style (storytelling, poetry, lists, sketches) that resonates with their background.



Materials needed:

- Journals or notebooks (one per participant)
- Pens or pencils
- Journaling prompts



Duration:

45–60 minutes



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Introduce the purpose of the activity: to explore journaling as a tool for self-reflection and stress management. Briefly discuss the benefits of journaling, such as increased self-awareness, emotional regulation, and mindfulness. Ask if members of the group have any experience of the practice, or similar strategies.

Step 2:

Facilitate a group discussion about emotional triggers and, if this is the focus of the activity, workplace stressors, asking open-ended questions:

- 'What are common stressors in your workplace?'
- 'How do you usually respond to stressful situations?'
- 'What strategies do you use?'

Step 3:

Introduce the practice of journaling by outlining its key benefits in a way that resonates with the group:

Why Journal? Explain that journaling creates a private space for self-reflection, helping individuals process their thoughts, identify patterns, and enhance emotional awareness. Tell the group that it's a proven tool for reducing stress, improving mindfulness, and boosting problem-solving skills.

How to Journal? Emphasise that journaling is not about perfect grammar or structure. It's a personal tool for honest self-expression. There's no 'right' way to journal; it's about exploring what works best for them.

Fitting Journaling into Daily Life Encourage participants to think about how journaling could fit into their day-to-day routines:

- Morning Practice: Spend five to ten minutes setting intentions or brainstorming priorities for the day.
- Evening Reflection: Use journaling to review challenges and successes or to offload lingering thoughts before bed.
- On-the-Go Moments: Carry a notebook or use a digital app to jot down quick reflections during breaks or downtime.

These reflections could be carried out as a reflection in pairs or small groups.

Step 4:

Distribute journals and pens to participants. Provide one or more journaling prompts as a starting point (shared in print or displayed visibly). Explain that these prompts are guides, and participants are free to adapt them to suit their needs. Encourage them to write freely, without worrying about perfection, and focus on capturing their authentic thoughts and responses.

Alternative: Some participants might benefit from other approaches to the reflection encouraged within journaling, so drawing or spoken reflections could better cater to some individual needs.

Step 5:

Allocate 20 minutes for writing (or alternatively to other forms of producing reflective ideas), ensuring the environment is quiet and supportive. Consider playing soft instrumental music or maintaining silence to help participants concentrate. Let them know they are welcome to revisit their journals after the session and continue reflecting as part of their personal growth journey.

Step 6:

Invite participants to share their reflections if they feel comfortable doing so, emphasising that sharing is optional.

(Optional) Step 7:

After the in-person session, you can follow up with participants via email, including additional journaling prompts designed to encourage continued practice.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Conduct a debriefing conversation, focusing on the following questions:

- How did you feel while journaling today?
- Was it easy or challenging to put your thoughts into words?
- Did any patterns, emotions, or thoughts stand out to you as you wrote?
- What did you learn about yourself through this process?
- Did journaling help you see any of your stressors or challenges in a new light? If so, how?
- Can you see journaling fitting into your daily routine?
- If yes, when and how might you integrate it? If not, what might make it easier for you to start?



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



Materials/handouts used:

Topic	Journaling Prompts
Stressors and Emotional Impact	What are the top three stressors you face in your day-to-day, and how do they affect your emotions and productivity?
Stressors and Emotional Impact	Describe a specific situation at work that caused you stress. What triggered your reaction, and how did you feel in the moment?
Current Coping Strategies	How do you typically respond when you feel stressed? Are these responses effective in reducing your stress?
Current Coping Strategies	What are some positive coping strategies you already use? How could you enhance these strategies?
Mindful Reflection	Think of a time when you successfully managed a stressful situation. What did you do, and why was it effective?
Mindful Reflection	What are some ways you could approach stressful situations more mindfully in the future?
Understanding Emotional Triggers	Identify three things that often trigger strong emotions for you. How do you currently respond to these triggers?
Understanding Emotional Triggers	How can you prepare yourself to handle your triggers with greater self-awareness?
Personal Strengths and Resources	What strengths or personal resources do you rely on to manage stress? How can you leverage these more often?
Personal Strengths and Resources	Who or what in your life provides support when you're feeling overwhelmed?
Gratitude and Positivity	Write about three things you are grateful for in your personal/professional life.
Gratitude and Positivity	Reflect on a positive moment you experienced. How can you create more of these moments?

MINI-MOVEMENTS



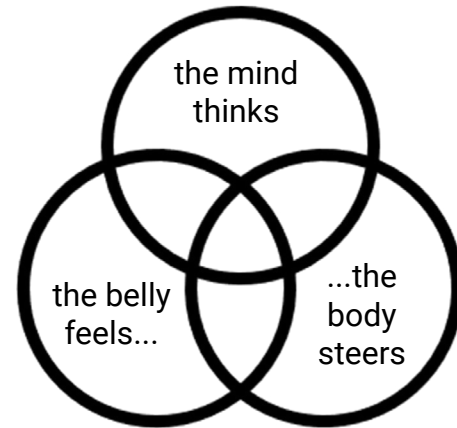
Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises



Overview:

This exercise can give confidence in stressful work-related situations, such as a job interview or a meeting with higher-ups. Participants will learn mini-movements, which will give them extra strength to cope with difficult situations.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Develop skills to cope with emotions like stress, insecurity or aggression.
- Learn from each other's experiences and discover new ways to manage negative emotions.
- Foster a supportive group dynamic.
- Practice coping tools in realistic contexts.



Context and participants:

Young people aged between 16-29 years old.

Every quiet location is suitable. It is important to create a trusting atmosphere.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

Allow participants all the time they need to find their mini-movement. If they seem to be stuck, give them examples: taking deep breaths, finger snapping, knee snapping, head nodding and so on.

You could start with an ice-breaker, so participants get to know each other.

Encourage participants to actively listen to one another, promoting mutual respect and understanding.

- Recommended group size: 1 - 16
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings: Prepare the exercise carefully by discussing and exploring with the participant in advance how they feel in certain situations (stress, conflict, challenge, joy, pride, etc.). Work together to identify which small movements feel comfortable for them, and allow plenty of space for experimentation.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups:
 - **Safety First:** Ensure the environment feels safe and non-judgmental. Avoid physical contact or movements that might trigger discomfort (e.g., avoid eye contact if culturally inappropriate or triggering). Slow down the activity and allow breaks. Repeat instructions as necessary.

- **Choice and Control:** Let participants opt out of any step or suggest alternative movements. Emphasize that there's no "right" way to move.
- **Simplify Language:** Use clear, simple language and avoid jargon. Provide visual aids or demonstrations for those with cognitive or language barriers.
- **Adapt Materials:** Use larger print, braille, or audio instructions for the handout. Allow verbal responses instead of writing if needed.
- **Professional Backup:** If working with trauma survivors or individuals with mental health challenges, have a counselor or support person available.
- How to adapt the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - **Language and Metaphors:** Use local idioms or examples to explain the connection between emotions and movement.
 - **Group Dynamics:** In collectivist cultures, emphasize group sharing and support. In individualistic cultures, respect privacy and personal space.
 - **Oral Instructions:** Replace written handouts with verbal explanations, storytelling, or demonstrations.
 - **Peer Modeling:** Encourage participants to share their movements with the group to build confidence and community.



Materials needed:

- For each participant one sheet of paper
- One pencil
- Handout which explains the scientific background of the "mini-movements"



Duration:

40 minutes



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Explain the connections between feelings, thoughts and our movements. You can use the handout provided as a reference.

Step 2:

Ask the participants to concentrate on their bodies (pay attention to their breathing, how their feet are resting, how the seat feels, their back, neck, etc.).

Step 3:

Invite the participants to try out which small movement feels good for them. Show three or four examples here (snapping their fingers, bouncing their leg, putting their hand on their stomach, stretching, etc.).

Step 4:

Ask the participants to write down their movement.

Step 5:

Ask the participants to think of a recurring situation in which they feel stressed, insecure or aggressive and write it on the back of the piece of paper.

Step 6:

Invite the participants to re-enact their situation with other volunteers out of the group and use their mini-movement in the role play.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Step 7:

Ask the group to report how they felt and what the mini-movement did to them.

Step 8:

You point out that the mini-movement can be used at any time in negative situations in order to feel better.

Materials/handouts used:

Handout to the activity: Mini-movements

Many studies confirm that our emotions not only affect our body posture (such as crossed arms when defensive, or an unsteady gaze when uncertain), but that our physical movements can also influence our feelings. Sitting up straight and looking forward before an interview, for example, can foster greater self-confidence.

This principle is also utilized in coaching and self-management training to help people achieve their goals. It's based on the understanding that emotions, thoughts, and bodily processes are interconnected in a network. Altering one aspect, like body posture, can positively affect emotions.

The concept known as "embodiment work", a part of the psychological theory of "embodiment cognition", leverages these interactions intentionally. Through body checks, specific postures, and movements, positive sensations are activated within the body, which boosts motivation and readiness to take action. These methods are particularly helpful in shifting from negative states or maintaining positive moods for longer periods.

Although working with posture and movement is a personal practice that requires a high level of body awareness, it offers a practical way to harness the mind-body connection for personal well-being.

The mini-movements of the Zurich Resource Model (ZRM) are small, targeted physical actions that act as "physical anchors." They help activate and reinforce desired emotions and states, consciously guiding one's actions and thoughts toward a specific goal.

In the ZRM, physical movements are used to establish a connection between body and emotions based on the concept of embodiment. This means that posture and movement can impact mood and motivation. Mini-movements help stabilize positive emotional states and facilitate access to resources (such as self-confidence or calmness).

One example could be a small gesture like stretching the arms, repeated regularly to activate a certain feeling or goal. These movements are tailored to the individual and applied purposefully in various situations.

Sources:

For an overview of Embodiment cognition: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Embodied_cognition

The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience by Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, pages 172–173.

For ZRM: Embodiment and self-management according to the Zurich Resource Model (ZRM) by Maja Storch and Wolfgang Tschacher, in book: Textbook of Osteopathic Medicine (pp.709-716)

NIDRA YOGA SHORT PRACTICE

Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises

Overview:

Under the guidance of the trainer, participants will practice some yoga asanas, which are stationary poses, combined with deep breathing.

This short routine emphasizes slow, steady movement, deep breathing, and gentle stretching, which are best for stress relief.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Develop coping skills to stress and anxiety and reach a more positive outlook on life.
- Encourage self-exploration and self-discovery.

Context and participants:

This activity can take place in a school or university gymnasium with students or in a company meeting room, free of tables and chairs, and large enough for participants to move around and lie on the floor.

Participants could be a class or a small topic-based course group (up to 10 students) or a small project or office team (up to 10 participants).

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: the number of participants should depend on the size of the available space and should be limited to a number that allows each person to move in a comfortable place (optimally, 10 participants).
- To use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work), the participant can do this task with the trainer.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges): emphasize that, during this activity, when negative or stressful thought intervenes, notice this, acknowledge the thought, consciously release it, and return to the present moment.
- Mindfulness and yoga can both be adapted and tailored to accommodate a range of abilities, so they are accessible to people with disabilities. Examples include:
 - Guided meditation and yoga for those with visual or auditory impairments.
 - Chair yoga for those with limited mobility.
 - Tools and aids to assist with stability and balance.

For example, at the following link, you can access additional resources for yoga:

<https://getyourselfactive.org/guide/top-4-yoga-videos-for-disabled-people/>

- The trainer, using their voice, guides and accompanies the practitioner throughout the practice, thus favoring the release of tensions of all kinds, at a muscular level (which can easily arise if we have incorrect postures or make wrong movements, perhaps for work), at a mental level (anxiety and restlessness) or at an emotional level.

- For the relaxation to be complete and deep, special attention must be paid to the environment, which must absolutely guarantee calm and tranquility.
- Whether indoors or outdoors is of little importance: it is enough that it is well ventilated, clean and has a mild temperature.
- Since distractions of any kind must be avoided, if appropriate, remove or add objects according to the situation, switch off your mobile phone (and ask participants to do the same) and light some incense.
- Relaxing music in the background can also help considerably during the practice.

Materials needed:

- Yoga mat
- Clothes that are as comfortable as possible, facilitating your movements without hindering them
- A blanket to cover yourself with: this will help you feel more protected and will not make you feel cold while lying still, especially in winter



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1:

Invite participants to sit on the mat in a position they are comfortable with.
Invite them to close their eyes and concentrate on their breath.

Step 2: “Sukhasana” Yoga asana

- For this first asana, invite participants to cross their legs and rest their hands on their knees.
- Ask them to put their thumb and index finger together with palms facing upwards.
- Now, invite them to close their eyes and pay special attention to their own body, while trying to keep their torso straight and erect.
- Ask participants to breathe quietly and deeply, keeping their chin pointing just towards their sternum.
- Remind them to relax their shoulders and neck, avoiding stiffness.
- Hold the position for 5 minutes or as long as each one finds it comfortable.

Step 3: “Balasana” Yoga asana

- For this asana, invite participants to kneel on the mat and sit on their heels.
- Ask them to bend forward with their torso until their forehead touches the ground.
- Ask participants to extend their arms and relax them along the sides of their body.
- Remind them to concentrate on their breathing, calibrating each inhalation and exhalation while relaxing.
- Invite them to hold the position as long as they like; the important thing is that they feel relaxed both mentally and physically.

Step 4: “Tadasana” Yoga asana

- Before beginning, emphasize that this position, although very simple, is very important because it is the basis for all the others. Share the fact that this asana allows you to feel your body well aligned, to become aware of it by standing in the right way, equally distributing your weight on both feet. Promote its benefits: it relaxes, calms your mind, brings physical and mental balance, stretches the spine and the muscles of the abdomen and intestines.
- Bring participants back to a standing position and ask them to spread their legs slightly until their feet are at the same distance from their hips.
- Remind them that the arms should be kept extended and relaxed at the sides of the body.
- Ask them to contract their whole body, starting from the heels, passing through the buttocks and ending with the nape of the neck.
- Invite participants to evenly unload all their weight onto their feet, concentrating on the feeling and listening to the breath.
- Invite them to hold the position for 2 minutes or as long as they like; the important thing is that they feel relaxed both mentally and physically.

Step 5: “Marjariasana+Bitilasana” Yoga asana

- For this asana, ask participants to kneel again on the floor and put their hands on the floor in front of them.
- Ask them to keep their hands shoulder-width apart and their knees directly below their hips.
- Invite participants to inhale deeply while curving their lower back and bringing their head up, tilting their pelvis up like a “cow”.
- Then, invite them to exhale deeply and bring their abdomen in, arching their spine and bringing their head and pelvis down like a “cat”.
- Invite participants to repeat this sequence (at least) 5 times at their own speed and following the rhythm of their breath.

Step 6: “Shavasana” Yoga asana

- For this last relaxation asana, invite participants to lie on the floor on the mat, with their arms at their sides about 20 cm from their body, palms facing upwards.
- You can suggest to participants that if they feel uncomfortable with their head on the floor, they can place a thin pillow or a folded blanket under their head.
- Invite them to separate their feet slightly in a comfortable position and close their eyes.
- Guide participants with your voice in becoming aware of their right hand and relax it, then their right wrist, elbow, armpit, right hip, right buttock, right thigh, right knee, calf, heel, sole of foot and relax them one by one.
- Guide them with your voice to repeat the process with their left side of the body, then with their head and trunk area.
- Invite them to make sure that each body part is completely relaxed, as if merging with the floor.
- Tell them that they can repeat the process several times, this way they eliminate any tension.
- Make sure participants have their head and spine in a straight line, make sure their head does not fall to the side or back, and that they keep their chin towards their sternum.
- Invite them to become aware of their natural breathing and allow it to relax. To help keep their minds from wandering and focused on their breath, suggest that they count their breaths.
- Tell them to start counting breaths from 27 to 0. Mentally repeat ‘I am inhaling 27’, ‘I am exhaling 27’, ‘I am inhaling 26’, ‘I am exhaling 26’, and so on to zero.

Conclusion/debriefing:

At the end of your class, after Shavasana, bring students back to their seated meditation. Ask them to reflect on

- 1) How do you feel?
- 2) What was difficult during their practice?

Then, you can introduce a brief session about the concept of stress and mindfulness.

What is stress? Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



and threats in our lives. Stress affects both the mind and the body. A little bit of stress is good and can help us perform daily activities. Too much stress can cause physical and mental health problems. Learning how to cope with stress can help us feel less overwhelmed and support our mental and physical well-being. (WHO definition)

Mindfulness is a key element in stress reduction. It is the practice of purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment.

There is more than one way to practice mindfulness, but the goal of any mindfulness technique is to achieve a state of focused relaxation by purposely focusing your attention on the present moment—and accepting it without judgment, as you did it today with this short practice of Nidra Yoga asanas.

Materials/handouts used:

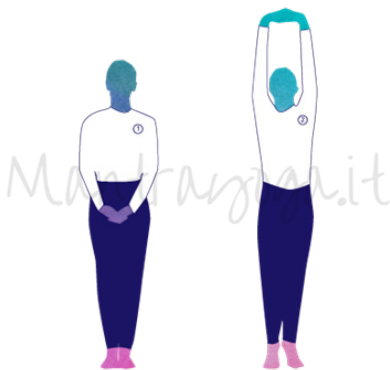
Step 2: "Sukhasana" Yoga asana



Step 3: "Balasana" Yoga asana



Step 4: "Tadasana" Yoga asana



Step 5: "Marjariasana+Bitilasana" Yoga asana

Video of the sequence [HERE](#)

Step 6: "Shavasana" Yoga asana



If you would like to practice mindfulness in your daily life, here are some simple examples:
<https://www.mindful.org/take-a-mindful-moment-5-simple-practices-for-daily-life/>

If you would like to learn more asanas, here you can find some yoga poses for beginners:
<https://www.health.com/yoga-poses-7568541>

Here you can find more intermediate yoga poses:
<https://yogapose.com/poses-by-level/intermediate-yoga-poses/>

Here you can find more advanced yoga poses:
<https://www.yogabreezebali.com/advanced-yoga-poses/>

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises

Overview:

Activity helps participants learn a practical relaxation technique to manage workplace stress and improve focus and well-being during challenging transitions into adulthood and employment.

Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Learn a practical relaxation technique for reducing physical tension and stress.
- Increase awareness of body signals, noticing the difference between tension and relaxation.
- Develop strategies for stress management that can be applied in daily life and workplace settings.
- Improve focus and emotional regulation by practicing calmness and self-control.

Context and participants:

With adolescents and young adults (16 - 30 years old), in a non-formal setting/workshop etc. A quiet room with the possibility of lying down and a comfortable setting.

Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Recommended group size: Works well for any group size (5–20+), since the exercise is guided individually. Works best in smaller groups (up to 15) if you also want to include sharing afterwards.
- How to use this activity in one-on-one settings (e.g. mentoring, individual work): As it is individual, adaptation is not necessary.
- How to adapt the activity for vulnerable groups (e.g. young migrants, youth with learning or emotional challenges):
 - Use simple, slow language with clear pauses.
 - Demonstrate the tension/relaxation briefly if needed (without forcing eye contact).
 - Allow participants to keep their eyes open if closing them feels unsafe.
 - Keep the exercise shorter (e.g., just hands/arms + shoulders) to avoid overwhelming them.
 - Ensure quiet, comfortable space with minimal distractions; optional soft music or dim lighting.
- How to adjust the activity for different cultural or educational contexts:
 - Frame the technique as a universal stress management tool, not therapy.
 - In schools: link to exam stress, concentration, or calming before presentations.
 - In workplace/career programs: connect it to handling pressure before meetings, deadlines, or interviews.
 - In intercultural groups: emphasize that the method is practical, not spiritual or religious, to ensure inclusivity.



PT. 2 PARTICIPATIVE ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



Materials needed:

- Comfortable chairs for all participants
- Quiet room with dim lighting (optional, to enhance relaxation)
- Calm background music (optional)
- A timer or stopwatch for precise intervals



Duration:

40 minutes

Activity Procedure:

Step 1: Setting the Scene

- Ask participants to sit comfortably with their feet flat on the floor and hands resting on their lap or thighs. Encourage them to close their eyes or lower their gaze to avoid distractions.
- Begin with a few guided breaths:
 - “Inhale deeply through your nose for 4 counts... hold for 2 counts... and exhale gently through your mouth for 6 counts.”
 - Repeat 3–4 times to help participants focus and relax.
 - You can encourage them to keep their focus on their breath, but if they lose it, it is not a problem, as you will gently remind them during the exercise to bring their attention back to their body and what they are feeling.

Step 2: Muscle relaxation

- Instruct participants to focus on their lower body muscles: toes, feet, calves, thighs, and glutes.
 - Guide them to tense: “Now, slowly tense all the muscles in your lower body as much as you can—curl your toes, tighten your calves, clench your thighs and glutes. Hold the tension for eight seconds: 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8 “. Then guide them to relax their muscles: “Now, release all the tension and feel your muscles soften and relax. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.”
 - Repeat this cycle 3–5 times, reminding them to focus on the warm, relaxed feeling after each release.
- Move to the upper body: hands, arms, shoulders, chest, and back.
 - Guide them through tensing and relaxing their body - tense: “Now tighten your hands into fists, tense your arms, push your shoulders up to your ears, and squeeze your chest and back muscles as tightly as you can. Hold for eight counts.” Then relax: “Release the tension and notice how your upper body feels lighter and more relaxed.”
 - Repeat this cycle 3–5 times.
- Focus on the neck, jaw, and face muscles.
 - Once again guide participants to tense: “Now tighten your jaw, scrunch your face as if you’re frowning, and gently tense your neck muscles. Hold the tension for eight seconds.” Then relax: “Now let your face soften, unclench your jaw, and let your neck relax completely. Feel the calm spreading across your face.”
 - Repeat this cycle 3–5 times.
- You can see this video for help: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1h-zizAGsc

Step 3: Ending the session and connecting relaxation with real-life situations

- Gently guide participants back to the present moment: “Now, take a deep breath in and slowly exhale. Begin to notice the weight of your body on the chair, the sensation of your feet on the floor, and the sounds around you. When you’re ready, slowly open your eyes.” Allow a minute or two for participants to stretch lightly if needed.
- Facilitator can connect the activity with everyday situations (at this point or connected to the answers of the participants in the discussion phase): “Now that you’ve experienced the process of progressively relaxing your muscles, take a moment to notice how your body

feels compared to when we started. This relaxed state is a tool you can use whenever you feel stress or tension building up. By pausing and intentionally relaxing, you give yourself the opportunity to reset and respond to challenges with greater clarity and control, rather than reacting impulsively. Think of this as a way to build resilience. Each time you practice, you're training your body and mind to handle stress in a healthier, more constructive way. As you move through your day or week, I encourage you to try this whenever you feel overwhelmed or need to refocus."

Conclusion/debriefing:

Prompts for Discussion

1. Feelings and Experience:
 - "How did you feel during and after the relaxation exercise?"
 - "Was it difficult to tense or relax any specific muscles?"
2. Applications to Real Life:
 - "How can you use this technique to manage stress in your daily life or workplace?"
 - "When could this technique be most helpful (e.g., before a big meeting, during a busy day)?"
3. Emphasizing Benefits:
 - Highlight the connection between physical relaxation and mental clarity, improved focus, and stress reduction.
 - Reinforce how PMR can help with common workplace stressors like deadlines, conflicts, and job uncertainty.

PT. 3
**GUIDANCE FOR
EMPLOYERS**

SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSITIONING FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

INTRODUCTION

The transition journey from school to the labour force, as revealed by various research, is a critical and challenging phase for young people. A principal player during this critical phase is the employer, whose role is fundamentally important to ensuring a smooth, supportive, and healthy transition that will positively contribute to the emotional and mental well-being of young people. This section of the toolkit offers guidance for employers on how to ensure a successful labor market integration that fosters a positive atmosphere that supports the emotional and mental resilience of young people. The following strategies can help improve the work environment for youth in transition:

1. UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSITION JOURNEY

Research conducted within the Mind the Gap project revealed significant challenges confronting young people during the transition phase. Understanding these challenges is relevant for mitigating them and their effects. Some of the challenges, as revealed by the research, include but are not limited to the following:

- **Uncertainty and pressure:** New employees, especially young people in transition, as revealed by research, often feel anxious about meeting expectations, fitting into the work culture, and navigating the professional world. This leads to significant stress and pressure to perform well, impress employers, and adapt quickly to the workplace culture.
- **Loss of structure:** Compared to the work environment, school culture and structure are often much more organized, with clear and defined guidance for students regarding their roles and responsibilities. Limited guidance within the work environment often exposes young employees or new hires to dilemmas, as they are unsure of their responsibilities or boundaries, leading to struggles in adaptation.
- **Lack of self-confidence:** As revealed by various research, many new hires, especially those going through the transition journey from school to work, are often confronted with the question of self-competence, resulting in the feeling of not belonging to their positions or fitting into the roles assigned to them, a situation referred to as Imposter Syndrome. This self-doubt often leads to undue pressure to perform and fit in, which can affect the mental well-being of these employees.
- **Loss of network and social isolation:** Leaving familiar school settings, friends, networks, and even family can be emotionally draining for young people transitioning, resulting in the feeling of loneliness and its associated effects, especially if they find it difficult to build new social connections at work.
- **Reaching a work-life balance:** Adjusting to a new working life and environment, the

journey to and from work, as well as the overall pace of professional life, can lead to stress and fatigue for young people transitioning from school to work.

WORKPLACE MENTAL WELL BEING



6 STEPS TO ENSURING WORKPLACE MENTAL WELL-BEING



STEP 1

Regular
Assessment and
identification of
employee needs



STEP 2

Develop a mental
well-being roadmap
to set goals and
track progress



STEP 3

support and be
involved in mental
well-being
initiatives



STEP 4

Choose suitable
initiatives* to
implement



STEP 5

Create a plan for
awareness and
participation



STEP 6

Review the
initiatives regularly

2. THE NEED TO CREATE A SUPPORTIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

This begins with taking the initiative to create a mentally healthy workplace and environment where young employees feel valued, supported, appreciated, and heard. Measures that could contribute to achieving this include:

- **Establish and provide an effective and clearly defined onboarding process and training:**

Onboarding is the process of introducing and integrating a new hire into their role in an organization. It is not a one-time event but a series of activities and phases that can last from a few weeks to several months. Providing clear and efficient onboarding that offers guidance regarding the job, expectations, workplace culture, and available resources, among others, will not only relieve young new hires from feelings of uncertainty but also reduce pressure, build their self-confidence, and support smooth integration into the work environment. An effective onboarding process consists of the following phases:

Pre-Onboarding: This consists of preparations for the new employees' arrival and ensuring they feel welcomed before their first day, providing necessary information, and initiating the bond between the employee and the organization. It's the preliminary work that ensures a smooth transition.

Onboarding and welcoming new employees – orientation: This entails the new employees' first day and week in the organization. It includes welcoming the new hire, making introductions, providing a tour of the office, and conducting initial or general training sessions. This is intended to create a comfortable atmosphere and make new hires feel welcome and part of the team from the very start.

Role-specific training: This is an ongoing process that entails role-specific training, compliance training, and providing additional resources the new hire might need. Supervisors and mentors or buddies play a key role during this phase to ensure that the new hire understands their responsibilities and expectations.

Integration: This phase is continuous and goes beyond the initial weeks. It entails regular check-ins by supervisors and mentors, feedback sessions, as well as performance reviews.

Ongoing Support: This phase is a continuous process in which employees are offered regular feedback, opportunities for development, and reinforcement of their role in the organization. This is meant to ensure long-term engagement, development, and growth.

5 PHASES OF EFFECTIVE ONBOARDING

WHAT IS ONBOARDING?

Onboarding entails all activities initiated to introduce and integrate a new employee into a role in an organization.



Onboarding Template:

EMPLOYEE ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

Employee

[Insert employee name]

Start date:

[Insert employee start date]

Manager:

[Insert manager name]

People involved in the onboarding process

[Insert name 1]

[Insert name 2]

[Insert name 3]

[Insert name 4]

[Insert name 5]

[Insert name 6]

[Insert name 7]

BEFORE FIRST DAY			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

FIRST DAY			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

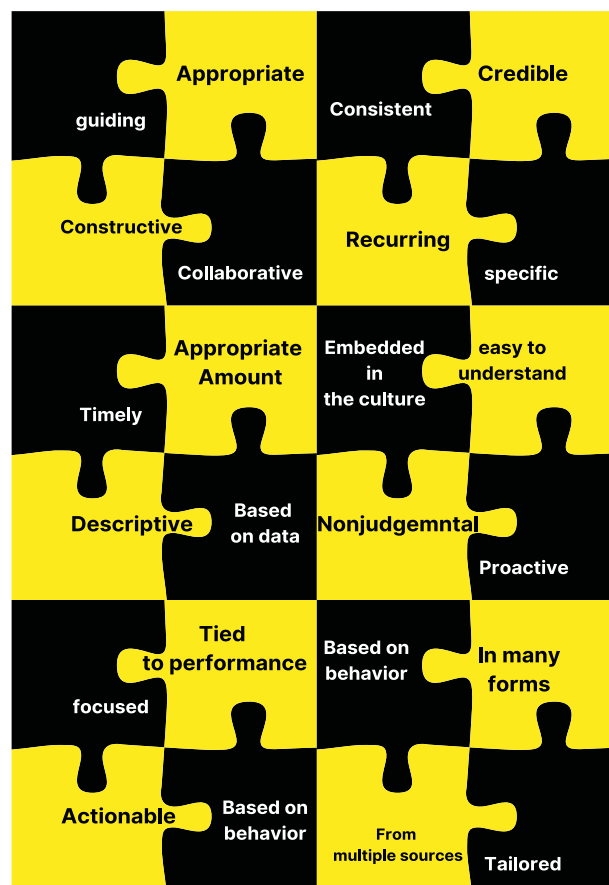
FIRST WEEK			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

AFTER FIRST WEEK			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

FIRST 4–8 WEEKS			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

AFTER 6 MONTHS			
Task	Deadline	Responsible	Completed?

- Establish mentorship and buddy systems for new hires:** Pairing new employees, especially those making the transition from school to work, with mentors or “buddies” to help them navigate their new environment can contribute not only to providing social support but also to addressing uncertainties and offering additional guidance to help the navigation process for new employees. The relevance of the buddy system can be mutually beneficial for both the new hire and the mentor. The new hire benefits from one-on-one support, which ensures smooth onboarding, whilst the mentor or buddy, on the other hand, gains the opportunity to enhance their leadership and communication skills, as well as recognition as a team player. Among other things, the buddy is expected to perform the following tasks:
 - Teaching, guiding, and explaining unfamiliar tasks.
 - Guiding on how to use office equipment, software, etc.
 - Socializing the new hire on the organization’s guidelines, norms, culture, and values, among others.
 - Sharing insights from experience about procedures in the organization (both formal and informal).
 - Involving the new hire in informal activities such as breaks or group events, etc.
- Conduct check-ins and offer support and feedback:** By conducting regular check-ins and individual meetings with new hires, superiors gain the opportunity to assess performance and an avenue to discuss and offer support on the emotional and psychological well-being of new staff. An effective feedback system that promotes workplace efficiency and positively impacts the integration of new employees into the world of work should take the following into consideration:



- **Specificity:** Feedback must be tangible, relate to a specific performance goal or situation, and indicate clear organizational expectations for the new hire and their performance over time.
- **Appropriateness (well-packaged):** The intention of feedback is to improve performance, boost motivation, increase productivity, and help overcome a challenge. As such, feedback should be delivered in a positive and non-threatening manner for employees, especially for new hires.
- **The use of descriptive language:** Contextualizing a particular incident and indicating how the employee's behavior affects performance, focusing on behavior rather than personality, will help foster better understanding and lead to improved performance.
- **Avoid using judgmental language to communicate feedback:** The use of judgmental language often results in defensive responses. Avoiding such language will lead to a better understanding of the objectivity of the feedback and greater acceptance of it.
- **Continuity:** Feedback sessions must be ongoing and occur at regular intervals, especially for young employees. These could, for example, take place monthly during performance reviews. However, it is also encouraged that daily informal reviews have a positive impact on performance.
- **Feedback must be reasonable in number:** The amount of feedback offered to an employee should be reasonable, as too much feedback could be overwhelming and could be negatively interpreted negatively, especially by new employees. The amount should therefore be measured and sufficient to effect change.
- **Understandability:** Feedback is meant to communicate ideas that drive change, and must therefore be clearly conveyed to ensure the recipient's understanding, as misunderstanding or misinterpretation could result in deviation from the desired outcomes.
- **Mutuality and Collaboration:** Superiors should create space for employees, especially new hires, to actively participate in the feedback process. Encouraging open dialogue helps them feel heard and involved, increasing their ownership of the feedback and motivation to work toward shared goals.

An effective feedback process will contain many (or all) of the aforementioned features. Superiors seeking to increase performance and ensure emotional stability, especially for new employees, should incorporate these elements into their feedback processes.

- **Provide various work options:** Advancements in technology have made remote work and flexible working hours possible. Offering opportunities for flexible schedules or remote work, where feasible, can significantly support young people transitioning into the labor force by helping them integrate smoothly and steadily into the work environment.

It can also boost productivity and help maintain a healthy work-life balance, which is fundamental to ensuring the emotional and psychological well-being of employees.

- **Establish and offer an inclusive work environment and culture:** The feeling of belonging to a group or environment contributes significantly to one's integration process, especially at work. To build an efficient team and strong workplace relationships that enhance both productivity and employee satisfaction, it is strongly encouraged to promote a work culture that values diversity and inclusivity through team-building activities. This will not only help break down social barriers and strengthen workplace relationships, especially for new hires, but also reduce social isolation and foster the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals.

3. PROVIDE AND ENSURE ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

The importance of mental health in relation to the productivity and well-being of employees, especially new hires, cannot be overemphasized. Investing resources and making mental health a visible priority through the provision of support and access to resources for young people in transition can contribute positively to maintaining emotional balance and mental stability during this critical phase. The following resources can help support this goal:

Employers should include and emphasize mental health awareness in onboarding processes and offer regular mental health training to employees. This equips them with the knowledge and skills to recognize signs of stress, anxiety, and burnout, and to know where to seek help. It also helps break the stigma surrounding mental health by fostering open conversations on the topic.

Establish an efficient Employee Assistance Program (EAP): By establishing confidential counseling and support systems through an EAP, new employees, especially young people transitioning from school to work, can be made aware of the relevance of such services and how to access them. The following strategies can positively contribute to promoting the emotional and mental well-being of new hires:

- Create safe spaces for conversations.
- Encourage self-care.
- Set up a peer support system.
- Use digital mental health tools.
- Set clear expectations for after-hours communication.

Encourage and offer resources for mindfulness and well-being activities: Promoting and supporting employees' engagement in activities that enhance mental well-being, such as sports, meditation, and workshops for individuals and teams, can contribute positively to fostering self-care among employees. These may include subsidies for gym memberships, yoga classes, workshops, and other related initiatives.



AREA	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	GOAL OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Mental Health Awareness creation	Focus on equipping employees with knowledge on mental health and its relevance.	Interactive workshops	Foster open discussions, awareness, and understanding among employees on emotional and mental well-being.	Organize interactive workshops on emotional and mental well-being with professional facilitators in safe spaces. The sessions should include real experiences and relatable examples, such as everyday stress at work or how burnout feels, and provide coping strategies. This will equip participants with useful tools to ensure emotional and mental stability. This also helps develop a sense of connection among employees through open conversations.
		Anonymous well-being surveys	Collect feedback on employee well-being to enable employers to design support programs based on specific needs.	Anonymous well-being surveys are valuable tools that provide employees with the opportunity to give feedback regarding their well-being, stress, and workload, among other factors, and to suggest improvements at work without the fear of being judged. Simple questions and open-ended responses will help gather employees' feedback without making them feel put on the spot. These responses can help identify which workplace aspects need to be improved to enhance employees' well-being..
		Leadership training on emotional and mental well-being	To provide managers and other superiors with the skills to recognize and address mental health concerns within the work environment.	Leadership training on emotional and mental well-being should be provided to managers and other team leaders to equip them with the skills to recognise when a team member is struggling and to offer support without neglecting their own well-being. The training can cover areas such as how to start open conversations, encourage a healthy work environment, and connect staff with the right resources.
		Weekly "Mental Health Moments" check-ins	To foster open communication, normalize discussing mental well-being, recognize challenges, and offer support.	Dedicate a few minutes during team meetings, ideally at the very beginning, to check in with employees, let them describe their moods and rate their week from 1 to 10, and offer encouraging words afterward.



PT. 3 GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS



PT. 3 GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS



AREA	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	GOAL OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Mental Health Team Building Initiatives	Promote teamwork and collaboration within the work environment while fostering health and well-being.	Escape room competitions and similar challenges	To foster collaboration, problem-solving skills, as well as effective communication in teams, thereby promoting closer bonds among team members through an enjoyable and mentally engaging experience.	Escape rooms and other similar challenge-based activities can be a fun way to encourage employees to work together. This strengthens mental well-being and teamwork in workplaces.
		Appreciation workshops and a “Wall of Gratitude” in the workplace	To promote team bonds and foster a positive workplace culture that encourages gratitude and boosts self-confidence, thereby building an inclusive environment that supports emotional and mental well-being.	Create a shared space (wall) where employees can post words of gratitude and appreciation about their colleagues.
		“Positive Highlight Circle” during team meetings	Promote understanding among employees beyond work roles, strengthen empathy, and promote team bonding.	Conduct a rotating spotlight segment during team meetings, especially at the end, for team members to share positive personal stories about recent happenings in their lives.
		Storytelling circles for sharing challenges and experiences	To create a sense of shared experiences, foster communication, and provide new hires with valuable insights.	Organize monthly “storytelling” sessions where employees take turns sharing their difficulties in the workplace and how they managed to overcome those challenges.
		Superior-led Q&A sessions - “What do you want to know”?	To support young employees in feeling seen and grant them access to leadership insights, thereby building trust, self-confidence, and reducing anxiety at work.	Organize monthly sessions for new hires, giving them the opportunity to ask managers questions directly about work. Managers can then answer questions related to the organization’s culture, career growth and development paths, internal procedures, and other relevant topics.
		Team wellness retreats	Create a team-building strategy that combines team-building exercises with activities promoting mental and emotional well-being, such as outdoor activities and workshops on stress management.	This can be organized with the help of a professional in a serene environment, such as a park, away from the usual work routines. These events take employees out of their everyday setting and immerse them in activities designed to improve their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. They include team-building games that foster trust and cooperation, along with simple wellness activities such as yoga, mindfulness, nutrition seminars, or stress-management workshops, as well as other activities like hiking, jogging, and sports. A group reflection at the end allows participants to share experiences and take away practical tools for managing stress.
		Peer-support circles	To create a safe space for young employees to engage with each other, share experiences and advice, and build connections within the work environment.	Create small groups within the team, made up of young and new employees, and support them in meeting regularly to discuss their individual and collective experiences, challenges, and successes.



AREA	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	GOAL OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Mental Health Group Engagements	Encourage group participation in mental health-enhancing activities	Group mindfulness activities (professionally-led)		With professional support, this activity can foster collective awareness, enhance connection, and reduce work-related stress among employees. It provides a platform for teaching young employees guided relaxation techniques, such as meditation or body awareness practices, in a group setting. Participants should be taught how to manage stress, which helps them build self-awareness and emotional resilience. They not only learn skills to use in their daily work but also strengthen collective well-being, build trust, and contribute to a healthier workplace culture.
		Group fitness sessions		Group fitness events offer a unique blend of physical challenge, motivation, and social interaction. These can be organised by bringing young employees together for fun, guided physical activities like aerobics, dance, yoga, or circuit training. Group exercises help release stress, improve mood, and create a sense of teamwork and connection, making them a simple way to boost both physical and mental health.
		Random Acts of Kindness days at work		From time to time, on specific days during the month, encourage employees to perform small acts of kindness toward one another, for example by giving small gifts or leaving positive notes for co-workers to acknowledge a helpful gesture or well-done task.



AREA	FOCUS	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES	GOAL OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Emotional wellness strategies	Initiate activities that foster emotional intelligence and balance, helping employees manage stress.	Expressive arts therapy, such as painting, drawing, music, etc.	Create a platform to enable employees to process and communicate their emotions through art.	Organize quarterly art therapy sessions that allow employees to express their emotions through art, such as painting, pottery, music, and drawing, among others.
		Wellness walks as part of team meetings	Foster physical activity, reduce stress, and encourage more creative conversations while walking and discussing work and other topics.	Organize and conduct some team meetings as walking meetings. These should ideally take place outdoors in a serene environment.
		Emotional resilience training for young employees	Equip young employees with skills to overcome challenges and ensure emotional and mental well-being.	Equip young people with practical skills, through a trainer, to deal with stressful situations at work and develop the ability to cope with unexpected situations and crises, thereby ensuring mental and emotional stability. The focus will be on short coping activities, group discussions to share experiences, and role-play exercises that allow participants to practise real-life scenarios. These activities will equip participants with the techniques needed to overcome workplace stress and pressure, thereby ensuring well-being.
		Mindful breathing exercises	To teach participants ways to improve concentration, gain focus, reduce pressure, enhance performance, and overcome stress during difficult moments at work.	Young employees will be taught breathing techniques by an expert to release tension, regain focus, and overcome pressure in difficult situations. This helps employees to relax and stay focused in daily work situations to ensure mental well-being.

4. SUPPORT NEW HIRES TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

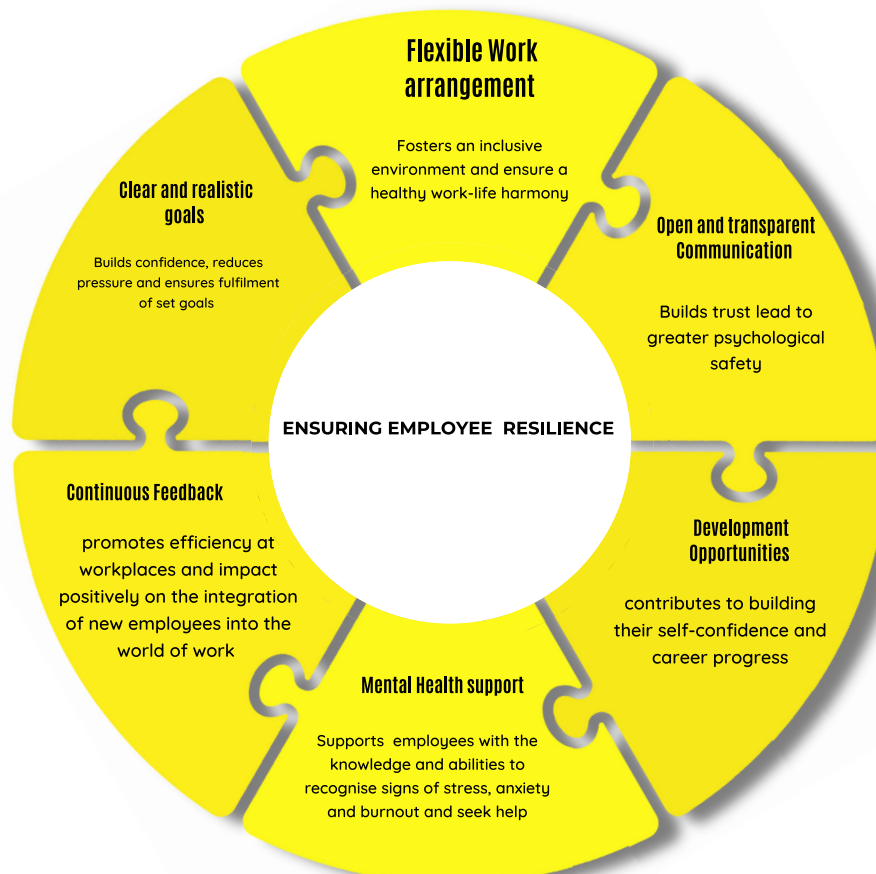
Supporting young people to proactively develop measures to ensure stable mental health through building resilience will contribute to shielding them against emotional and mental health challenges. This can be achieved through some of the following strategies:

Establish support mechanisms for growth and development: Guide young employees to set realistic goals for their career and personal growth and development. Additionally, provide feedback, adopt motivational strategies, and show appreciation by recognizing their achievements, as this will contribute to building their self-confidence and career progress.

Offer stress management training: Provide training that equips individuals with stress management strategies and skills, such as time management, relaxation techniques, and maintaining a healthy diet, among others. Giving employees access to these tools will positively contribute to building resilience, especially among young “transitioners,” thereby ensuring their emotional and mental stability.

Establish an environment that fosters open communication:

Providing employees with the ability and opportunity to openly ask questions and request support when necessary can help reduce the pressure that new employees, especially those in transition, experience in the workplace. By creating this kind of environment, employers not only ensure the emotional and mental stability of their employees but also contribute positively to overall productivity.



5. PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT ADAPTATION ACTIVITIES

Social networks within the workplace are relevant for individuals' emotional well-being, especially for new hires who are transitioning into a new work environment. Encouraging Team-building measures to foster connections among employees, within the work environment such as social and team-building events that encourage interaction across different departments and levels of seniority will ensure building of support systems within the work environment and offer young employees the opportunity to seek assistance thereby fostering a smooth integration into work life. Quite apart, encouraging the formation of peer support networks where young employees have the platform to share their experiences and offer advice as well as help others at a similar stage of their careers will also go a long way to smoothen the transition process and integration of new hires into the world of work.

6. OFFER AN ATMOSPHERE THAT SUPPORTS HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is fundamental for preventing stress and burnout and for maintaining the emotional and psychological well-being of employees. Ensuring that employees achieve a satisfactory work-life balance through measures such as monitoring the workload of young employees to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed, and ensuring that expectations align with their competencies and capacities, helps stabilise the emotional and mental well-being of young and newly recruited employees. Their responsibilities and expectations can then be monitored to ensure steady progress in their tasks, which fosters self-confidence. Encourage breaks and vacations whenever possible: Encourage employees to take time off, such as paid annual leave and mental health days, especially young employees who are often under pressure to prove themselves and meet expectations. This helps reduce work overload. In addition, young employees should be encouraged to establish and respect boundaries between work and personal time, including evenings, weekends, and holidays. These practices contribute significantly to maintaining the emotional and mental well-being of young people, particularly those in transition.

7. ADOPT AND SUPPORT ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES

Discrimination in the workplace has been found to occur, often as a result of race, sexual orientation, sex, and other factors. It can take various forms, both overt and subtle, and can negatively impact people's lives, especially new employees and those transitioning from school to work. This may lead to feelings of isolation, stress, and anxiety.

To address this, employers should implement anti-discrimination policies that provide security for employees and attract more diverse talent. These may include establishing standardized diversity and inclusion procedures for recruitment and employment to prevent unconscious



bias and the persistence of discriminatory practices. Additionally, such measures should include clear procedures for reporting misconduct and discouraging retaliation against employees who report discrimination. Anti-discrimination training programs can also help ensure that employees remain informed about workplace policies, thereby contributing significantly to the prevention of discriminatory incidents.

In general, supporting and ensuring the mental, emotional, and psychological well-being of young hires during their transition from school to work is crucial for their long-term personal development and progress, as well as for the overall health, stability, and success of the organization. By fostering a supportive work environment, promoting mental health resources, and strengthening emotional resilience, employers can help ensure that young people's transition journeys are successful both personally and professionally.



PT. 4
RESOURCE BANK
INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



Title of the resource	Type of resource	Description	Category of Resource	Language(s) Available	URL or Access Details
ReIntegra - ReIntegrate	Local services	Provides resources for improving employment opportunities, including a Job Seeker Area with tools for individuals seeking work, and information about Mental Health.	2. Support Services		https://reintegralleida.portalemp.com/
Ocell de Foc (Ponent) - Firebird	Local services	The regional programme aimed at supporting young people aged 16-30 with mental health challenges, helping them build independence and personal autonomy. It offers free activities and services such as mentorship, project creation support, mutual aid, and stigma reduction, with collaboration from Catalonia-based non-profits experienced in mental health, training, and job placement.	2. Support Services	Catalan	https://www.instagram.com/ocelldefocponent/?hl=en
Noves Oportunitats - New Opportunities	Local services	New Opportunities is a free programme for young people aged 16-24, offering tailored guidance, mentoring, and training in fields like mechanics, hospitality, and commerce. It helps participants gain qualifications, work experience, and access further education or employment opportunities.	2. Support Services	Catalan and Spanish	https://novesoportunitatslleida.cat/
Plataforma para la Salud Mental y la Empleabilidad Juvenil _ Platform for Mental Health and Youth Employability	Website	Free online space aimed at supporting unemployed or precariously employed young people aged 16-35 through individual psycho-emotional guidance, group sessions, and professional webinars.	3. Resources for Young People	Spanish	https://plataformasaludmental.es/la-plataforma/
Boletín de Recursos sobre Salud Mental - Mental Health Resources Bulletin	Bibliography document	Bibliography of Mental Health resources and scientific literature for professionals working in the youth sector	4. Resources for Professionals	Spanish	https://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2022/03/boletin-recursos-documentales-salud-mental-y-juventud.pdf
"GenCat Canal Salut: Salut Mental - GenCat Channel Health - Menatl Health"	Website	Information and useful links related to Mental Health services operated by the Regional Government of Catalunya	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Catalan and Spanish	https://canalsalut.gencat.cat/ca/vida-saludable/salut-mental/
Incorpora Fundació la Caixa	Website	Information about the services provided by Incorpora supports people at risk of social exclusion in accessing the labour market or through personalized guidance, training with company internships, and entrepreneurship advice.	3. Resources for Young People	Catalan and Spanish	https://incorpora.fundacionlacaixa.org/ca/per-a-persones
Incorpora Fundació la Caixa	Website	Free courses and resources for employment insertion professionals, including in the field of mental health. These include practical virtual training on sector-specific topics and a curated selection of tools, documents, and videos to support job preparation, execution, and evaluation.	4. Resources for Professionals		https://incorpora.fundacionlacaixa.org/ca/per-a-professionals
Som Salud Mental - 360	Website	Platform with resources for aiming to foster collaboration among professionals, families, and support networks through an inclusive approach based on hospitality, respect, and solidarity. It includes various interactive and multimedia resources	4. Resources for Professionals	Spanish	https://www.som360.org/es
La transició de l'etapa educativa al món laboral - The Transition from Education to the Working World	Article	Article outlining the principle challenges and some important strategies regarding the transition phase from school to the workplace.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Catalan and Spanish	https://www.som360.org/ca/blog/transicio-letapa-educativa-mon-laboral





PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



Title of the resource	Type of resource	Description	Category of Resource	Language(s) Available	URL or Access Details
This is Me: What can I do for my mental health?	Handbook for youth	The handbook guides individuals through skills, techniques, and support resources when experiencing mental distress. It is a practical handbook that gathers different techniques for battling mental health.	3. Resources for Young People	Slovenian	https://live.editiondigital.com/e/221cpqgsc/prirocnik-kaj-lahko-naredim-da-mi-bo-lazje#!page1
Maturing Through This is Me	Handbook for youth workers, teachers, other professionals	The handbook for preventive work with adolescents was developed as part of the mental health program for youth This is Me from National Institute of Public Health, with support from the Ministry of Health. The comprehensively designed model includes a set of 10 workshops that address the development of social and emotional competencies and the strengthening of psychological resilience, all based on professional foundations. The handbook serves as a valuable resource for teachers and school counselors in planning preventive work with classes or groups of adolescents.	4. Resources for Professionals	Slovenian	https://www.tosemjaz.net/assets/Prirocniki/tsj_prirocnik_e_objava_koncna_27_6_2019.pdf
MIRA: Nacional mental health programe	Website (includes different written materials, workshop and trainings offers, library etc.)	The MIRA Program is the National Mental Health Program aimed at strengthening mental health, preventing mental distress, and providing comprehensive care for mental health issues. It focuses on connecting existing services and establishing new ones to create a supportive environment across all areas of mental health protection in Slovenia. The knowledge and skills gathered are intended for use in the field of public health. The MIRA Program does not have the authority to address specific cases.	2. Support Services	Slovenian	https://www.zadusevnozdrazve.si/na-delovnem-mestu/storitve-za-delovne-organizacije/
The monograph Emerging Adulthood: Current Trends and Research	Book	The book focuses on the characteristics of the developmental period of emerging adulthood and presents contemporary insights into the universal characteristics and intercultural differences in the lives of emerging adults. It serves as a theoretical ground and gives insight into understanding the young people in emerging adulthood and their challenges (employment being one of them).	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Slovenian (a part also in English)	https://ebooks.uni-lj.si/ZalozbaUL/catalog/view/305/445/6689
Not okay? Say it out loud.	Website (articles, publications, handbooks and techniques, portals etc.)	The campaign Not Okay? Say It Out Loud. is the first national campaign against mental health stigma in Slovenia. Its main goal is to reduce the level of mental health stigma and encourage people to seek help. Through various activities, the campaign aims to reach as many people as possible, with a special focus on young people.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Slovenian	https://nisiokajpovejnaprej.si/
EuroHealthNet Magazine	Web magazine	EuroHealthNet Magazine is an online publication by EuroHealthNet, a European network of public health organizations, agencies, and institutes. The magazine highlights innovative initiatives, projects, and policies aimed at improving health and well-being across Europe. It serves as a platform to showcase examples of good practice, share knowledge, and promote collaboration in addressing public health challenges.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	English, Slovenian, French, German, Spanish etc. (many different languages)	https://eurohealthnet-magazine.eu/si/
Applied Developmental Psychology	Website	Platform on which studies on the fundamental areas of psychological development within the paradigm of lifelong development are gathered.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Slovenian and English	https://uporabna-razvojna.si/
Young individuals and the transition into employment	Article / bachelor thesis	In the qualitative research, interviews with ten individuals who had completed at least an undergraduate degree and had already obtained their first job were conducted. The goal was to find out why they chose certain colleges, how long it took them to get their first job, what are their experiences with education and employment, and what they wish for the future.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Slovenian	https://repozitorij.uni-lj.si/Dokument.php?id=192473&lang=eng
"Mental Health Literacy in Youth Information Work"	Publication	This guide is an indispensable tool for youth workers, information professionals, and anyone interested in the welfare of young people in the field of youth information work. Six chapters that cover everything from understanding mental health to empowering youth voices are included, which focuses on the crucial intersection of youth information services and mental health.	4. Resources for Professionals	English	https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63e63a0eebdc006803f20644/t/65eb01f87662f045fe140bcc/1709900283635/YIMinds_GUIDE_FINAL.pdf
Emotional training guide for professionals	Training guide, publication	Publication, contributing to the professional training aimed at fostering emotional connections with young people.	4. Resources for Professionals	English, Spanish, Catalanian, Basque	https://redproem.es/guia-de-la-formacion-proademo-de-capacitacion-emocional-para-profesionales/
Triage tool	Training guide, publication	Support for experts, working with at-risk youth - tools for battling mental health.	4. Resources for Professionals	English, Spanish, Catalanian, Basque	https://redproem.es/herramienta-de-triaje/
Practical tools aimed at professionals in the healthcare, education, and youth sectors	Training guide, publication	Ways to provide emotional support to adolescence vulnerable to experiencing emotional difficulties.	4. Resources for Professionals	English, Spanish, Catalanian, Basque	https://redproem.es/guia-proademo-herramientas-practicas-destinadas-a-profesionales-del-ambito-sanitario-educativo-y-de-la-juventud/





PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



Title of the resource	Type of resource	Description	Category of Resource	Language(s) Available	URL or Access Details
Children and youth social work at schools by Caritas	local service	The idea is to support children and young people on their personal and educational journey and to help them with questions and problems when they visit schools.	2. Support Services	German, English, other languages depending on the social workers	Beratungsangebote für Kinder, Jugendliche, Paare und Familien
Addiction Help Center Wildhof	local service	They offer information and help for poeple with addiction and their families.	2. Support Services	German, English	Offenbacher Arbeitsgruppe Wildhof e.V.
Psychosocial contact and advice center / access management by Lebensräume Offenbach	local service	The Psychosocial Contact and Counseling Center (PsKB) clarifies the current need for help , provides information about local psychiatric and social help services, informs about assistance under social law and arranges appropriate help.	5. Other	German, English	Lebensräume Offenbach: Beratung und offene Angebote
Social psychiatry service	local service	The SPDI has a multi-professional team to inform, support, advise and accompany those affected from the age of 18 who are functionally impaired, ill or disabled as a result of a mental disorder or who show signs of being so, as well as their relatives seeking help.	2. Support Services	German, English	Sozialpsychiatrischer Dienst / Kreis Offenbach
What does mental health mean?	video	This video gives a short overview of the concept mental health	3. Resources for Young People	German	Was bedeutet psychische Gesundheit?
I feel - with Lina Larissa Strahl by Radio DasDing	podcast	Every Thursday, Lina shares her personal experiences on the topic of mental health, sheds light on the preconceptions of mental health and reflects on the challenges of growing up with experts and exciting celebrity guests.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	German	Fühl ich - mit Lina Larissa Strahl · Neue Folgen - Jetzt Podcast anhören!
Working group for child and youth welfare	website	The Working Group for Child and Youth Welfare - AGJ is the forum and network of national associations, organisations and institutions of independent and public child and youth welfare in Germany.	2. Support Services	German	https://www.agj.de/
SINUS Youth Study 2024	website	How do young people "tick" in 2024? In addition to findings that apply to teenagers as a whole, the study aims to identify differences between the various adolescent lifeworlds. This is because the 14 to 17-year-olds surveyed can be divided into different 'groups of like-minded people' with different values and lifestyles.	2. Support Services	German	https://www.sinus-institut.de/media-center/studien/wie-ticken-jugendliche-2024
BRAVE TOGETHER	website	A global initiative to support people living with anxiety and depression. Working with our community of mental health experts, we have developed tools ranging from recognising the signs to self-care and finding resources.	3. Resources for Young People	German	https://www.maybelline.de/brave-together/sprich-darueber
BRAVE TOGETHER			3. Resources for Young People	German	https://www.maybelline.de/brave-together/erkenne-die-anzeichen https://www.maybelline.de/brave-together/self-care
RoOF Richtig orientiert im Kreis Offenbach	local service	The right orientation in Offenbach - that's RoOF! RoOF is a youth counselling office and a partner for all questions about the future. Whether it's about school, an apprenticeship, your first job or simply personal concerns - RoOF is there to listen and provide all kinds of support.	3. Resources for Young People	German	https://www.roof-kreis-offenbach.de/
Deutsche Depressionshilfe	e-learning	We all experience stress, pressure and bad moods from time to time. But how do I recognise that I can no longer cope on my own and need help - and where can I find it? How does a bad phase differ from a mental illness such as depression? What can I do if I'm worried about a friend? And how can I support someone who is suffering from depression?	3. Resources for Young People	German	https://www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de/files/cms/unsere%20Angebote/alles-gut/articulate/schueler/index.html#/
FIDEO	website	FIDEO provides information about depression in young people, educates people and breaks down prejudices.	3. Resources for Young People	German	https://fideo.de/
Deutsche Depressionshilfe	Video	"Find out more about depression in young people What is depression and how is it treated? How can I help someone with depression? Here you will find five short video clips on the most important questions about depression. "	3. Resources for Young People	German	https://www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de/unsere-angebote/fuer-betroffene-und-angehoerige/videoreihe-fuer-jugendliche
Deutsche Depressionshilfe	e-learning	"Teachers play a central role in supporting affected young people. They are often the first to notice changes and therefore play a key role in ensuring that affected pupils receive help. Teachers play a central role in supporting affected young people. They are often the first to notice changes and therefore play a key role in ensuring that affected pupils receive help. The free course offers you important basic knowledge and practical tips for dealing with affected pupils "	5. Others	German	https://www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de/files/cms/unsere%20Angebote/alles-gut/articulate/lehrkraefte/index.html#/
FIDEO	toolbox for teachers	The free school box on depression can serve as the basis for your teaching units. It is suitable for pupils in year 7 and above.	5. Others	German	https://fideo.de/schule





PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



Title of the resource	Type of resource	Description	Category of Resource	Language(s) Available	URL or Access Details
WELL-FARE Well-being and health status of young people from an individual, relational and social perspective	Publication	"This WELL-FARE Index is promoted by the Italian National Youth Council and it integrates the four dimensions of Individual Wellbeing, Relational Wellbeing, Spatial Wellbeing (environment, safety, quality of living) and Social Wellbeing. The research, conducted on a representative sample of young people between 15 and 35 years of age, offers a detailed overview of the status of well-being of the new generations, highlighting both positive and critical aspects."	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Italian	https://consigliunionalegiovani.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/EURES_REPORT-INDICE-DI-WELL-FARE_02.pdf
+PARI-PARE, peer support and group discussion	Local services	"+PARI-PARE is an experimental service of the Municipality of Milan dedicated to the psychological well-being of young people aged between 18 and 35.It consists of 3 peer support and listening groups, which meet in informal locations in the city. Young people can choose to act as facilitators of the peer support groups or participate in the meetings."	2. Support Services	Italian	https://www.comune.milano.it/giovani/gruppi-di-ascolto-e-supperto-tra-pari
Mental health at school: a manual	Handbook for teachers	This handbook is intended as a guide for teachers to best meet the mental health needs of their students and implement practical mental health promotion strategies suitable for the school context. Designed as a concise and practical guide, the manual is divided into modules that can be used separately.	4. Resources for Professionals	Italian	https://www.iss.it/-/progetto-iss-salute-mentale-1
Health comes by talking A video-podcast with young people for young people	Video	In the five episodes of the video-podcast 'Health comes by talking' boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 22 talk about and discuss various topics they consider important for promoting mental health and well-being.	3. Resources for Young People	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzb55ZFZ6HBnzhXlb89itimDR0TmmK8gt
Ending the silence	Local services	Ending the Silence is a programme aimed at parents of young adolescents and high school staff. Face-to-face or online meetings are organised, creating a welcoming, open and positive space for dialogue and providing tools to detect warning signs and respond effectively.	2. Support Services	Italian	https://progettoitaca.org/projects/ending-the-silence/
Youth Survival Manual	Handbook for youth	In this Survival Manual, young people will find helpful tips to keep their mental well-being as fit as it can be. They will also find resources for self-help, as well as for professional help. This resource has been created under the European project "RAY - Resilience and Adaptability in Youth".	3. Resources for Young People	Italian, English	https://ray4youth.com/the-survival-mannual/
Youth Worker's Toolkit	Handbook for youth workers	This toolkit's aim is to enhance the youth workers' role in promoting mental health in the youth. This resource has been created under the European project "RAY - Resilience and Adaptability in Youth".	4. Resources for Professionals	Italian, English	https://ray4youth.com/the-toolkit/
"Can You See Me?"	Video	The short film 'Can you see me?' is part of the adoleSCIENZE project, an initiative that stems from the need to inform, raise awareness and create awareness of mental illnesses in young people, with a special focus on depression, a disorder that has increased significantly since the pandemic.	1. Awareness and Mental Health Literacy	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP9U7eeK09M&ab_channel=LundbeckItalia
The Wellbeing Workshop	Website	The website aims to raise awareness on issues related to psychophysical wellbeing through the collection and dissemination of multidisciplinary material (games, activities, insights and useful tips) aimed at strengthening prevention factors and targeting adults (teachers, educators, parents) and young people.	4. Resources for Professionals	Italian	https://benessere.savethechildren.it/





PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



PT. 4_RESOURCE BANK INFORMATION



Title of the resource	Type of resource	Description	Category of Resource	Language(s) Available	URL or Access Details
IMPROVE BY MOVE	Handbook for youthworkers/ Videos	The "IMPROVE BY MOVE Manual" supports young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in enhancing their emotional and social well-being through dance and movement. It provides a detailed program of workshops combining non-formal education with creative dance activities, designed to foster self-acceptance, communication skills, and emotional management. The manual offers practical tools for youth workers to help young individuals in their personal and professional development.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL, EN, FR	https://linktr.ee/improvebymove
Developing Social Competencies: A Handbook for Youth Workers	Handbook for youthworkers	This publication is a practical guide designed for individuals working with youth to develop their social and psychosocial skills. It contains workshop structures and exercises aimed at building self-awareness, emotional regulation, communication, and interpersonal relationships, important for young people navigating their transition into adulthood but also the labor market.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://www.datocms-assets.com/36998/1608567928-kszaltowanie-kompetencji-spolecznych.pdf
School for Mental Health Promotion	Handbook for youthworkers and teachers	The publication includes comprehensive workshop scenarios and exercises for youth, covering topics such as building self-esteem, promoting a healthy lifestyle, managing stress, time management, and preventing peer violence. Through practical guidance, activities, and interactive methods, young people can better understand their needs and emotions while developing social skills and interpersonal abilities.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://www.datocms-assets.com/36998/1624957120-scenariusze-2021.pdf
Anti-Discrimination Education Association	Website	The website provides a library of educational resources, including lesson plans, publications, and guides, to support young people transitioning from school to the labor market. These materials focus on anti-discrimination education, promoting equality and preparing young people for diverse workplace environments.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://tea.org.pl/biblioteka/
HOW DOES THE WORKSPACE AFFECT OUR WELL-BEING?	Podcast	Podcasts about mental health issues for youth	3. Resources for Young People	PL	https://www.moznazwariowac.pl/podcasty/podcast 150"
Turning Point	Website	The "Punkt Zwrotny" initiative, featured on the website wsparciorowiesnicze.edu.pl, is Poland's largest participatory educational project focused on the mental health of young people. It provides expert-prepared educational materials, including lesson plans, aimed at fostering peer support and early intervention in mental health crises among students.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://wsparciorowiesnicze.edu.pl/
Forum Against Depression	Videos for youth	Videos about mental health education, depression prophylaxis and seeking support	3. Resources for Young People	PL	https://forumprzeciwdepresji.pl/nastoletnia-depresja/strefa-nastolatka
Forum Against Depression	Handbooks and videos for teachers	Scenarios about mental health education and depression prophylaxis	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://forumprzeciwdepresji.pl/nastoletnia-depresja/strefa-nauczyciela
"MŁODZIEŻOWY KWESTIONARIUSZ ZAINTERESOWAŃ ZAWODOWYCH – MŁOKOZZ"	Questionnaire	The resource emphasizes mental health as a critical factor. It provides insights into recognizing and addressing depression among young people, offering tools and strategies for educators and mentors to support students during this challenging phase. By fostering emotional resilience and awareness, the material aims to equip young individuals with the psychological strength.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://static.zpe.gov.pl/
"PSYCHOLOGY OF PREFERENCES AND CAREER INTERESTS A Review of Theories and Methods"	Publication	The document "Psychology of Career Preferences and Interests" explores various psychological theories and methods related to career choices. It presents different conceptual frameworks for understanding career interests, including structural theories and developmental models. The resource aims to provide insights into the factors influencing career development and decision-making, particularly as young people transition from education to the workforce.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL	https://e.kul.pl/files/10244/public/psych_pref_zaw.pdf
Let's Support	Website	Supporting the mental health of young people.	4. Resources for Professionals		https://polecmyzewsparciem.pl/materialy
Let's Talk about Children	Website of LTC project founded byHealth4Europe	The "Let's Talk about Children" project focuses on a child-centered psychosocial intervention to promote mental health and prevent intergenerational transmission of issues. It aims to support children/youth (up 18 yo.), parents, and teachers by offering tools to better understand and address children's psychosocial needs.	4. Resources for Professionals	PL, EN, IT, FI, CS, PT, GR, RO, ET	https://letstalk.utu.fi/
Child Advocacy Centres Network	Website	Free interdisciplinary support for children and youth (0-18 yo) who experienced abuse and trauma	2. Support Services	PL	https://centrapomocydzieciom.fdds.pl/





