



WARM UP ACTIVITIES



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Awareness_ 'Mental Health Literacy'



ACTIVITY 1: OPINION THERMOMETER



Category:

Awareness_ 'Mental Health Literacy'



Overview:

A movement-based warm-up where participants physically position themselves along an imaginary “thermometer” in the room according to how much they agree or disagree with prepared statements about mental health. The goal is to stimulate thought and personal reflection without open debate.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Encourage participants to reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions about mental health.
- Promote active participation and engagement from the start of the session.
- Set the tone for an open and reflective learning environment.



Context and participants:

Works well with groups of 8–25 participants.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Choose short, clear, and varied statements (mix of more obvious and more thought-provoking).
- Avoid overly sensitive or triggering statements at the very start.
- Emphasise that there is no right or wrong answer and no discussion will follow.



Materials needed:

- List of 10–15 prepared statements about mental health (from which you can choose depending on the group)
- Space in the room to create a visible “agree–disagree” line or scale



Duration:

10 - 20 minutes

Activity Procedure:

1. Explain the “thermometer” concept: one end of the room represents “strongly agree,” the other “strongly disagree,” and the space in between shows varying degrees of agreement.
2. Read the statement aloud and give participants a few seconds to think. Statements below:
 - Talking about mental health makes people weaker.
 - Stress is always bad for you.
 - You can tell if someone has a mental health problem just by looking at them.
 - Taking care of mental health is just as important as taking care of physical health.
 - Once someone develops a mental health condition, they can never fully recover.
 - People my age often struggle with their mental health.
 - Exercise can have a positive effect on mental health.
 - Social media has more negative than positive effects on mental health.
 - It is a sign of strength to ask for help when struggling with mental health.
 - Only professionals can help improve mental health.
 - Everyone feels anxious sometimes — it’s a normal part of life.
 - Talking about your problems makes them worse.
 - Friends can play an important role in supporting someone’s mental health.
 - Mental health problems are less common in young people than in adults.
 - Good sleep habits can improve your mental health.
3. Ask participants to position themselves along the thermometer according to their opinion.
4. Observe for a moment, then move on to the next statement. If you deem it necessary, you can address some opinions regarding specific statements, but otherwise the goal is to do this with more in depth activities.
5. Repeat with all statements.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Thank participants for their openness. Emphasise that this activity is about self-reflection and awareness, not judging others’ positions. Highlight that mental health is diverse and perspectives can differ.

ACTIVITY 2:A THE WELL-BEING SCALE



Category:

Awareness_ 'Mental Health Literacy'



Overview:

Participants work in two groups to brainstorm factors that influence mental health – one group focuses only on positive influences, the other only on negative influences. Each factor is written on a sticky note and placed on the corresponding side of a “scale” drawn on a board. The group with more items at the end wins, followed by a short discussion.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Raise awareness of different factors that can positively or negatively influence mental health.
- Encourage teamwork and creative thinking.
- Build a visual representation of mental health influences.



Context and participants:

Ideal for 8–20 participants, but can be adapted for larger groups.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Keep the pace energetic – encourage quick idea generation.
- Use a visual and simple “scale” to make the activity dynamic and fun.
- Ensure the debriefing connects the brainstorm to participants’ own lives.



Materials needed:

- Sticky notes and pens (one set per group)
- Whiteboard, flipchart, or large paper to draw the scale
- Markers for drawing the positive and negative sides



Duration:

12 - 15 minutes



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Awareness_ 'Mental Health Literacy'



Activity Procedure:

1. Split participants into two groups.
2. Assign one group to focus only on positive influences on mental health, the other on negative influences.
3. Give each group sticky notes and pens.
4. Explain that they should write one influence per sticky note as quickly as possible.
5. As they write, they place the notes on their side of the scale (you can draw the scale on the whiteboard).
6. After the set time (5 minutes), count the notes to see which group generated more.

Conclusion/debriefing:

- Which factors were most common?
- How do these factors show up in our daily lives?
- Which of these factors do we have the power to change or influence?



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



ACTIVITY 3: COLOUR YOUR MOOD



Category:

Understanding and managing emotions



Overview:

A quick reflective warm-up where participants choose a colour that best represents their current mood and briefly explain their choice. The activity helps develop emotional awareness and encourages self-expression in a safe, low-pressure way.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Improve participants' ability to identify and articulate emotions.
- Increase emotional vocabulary and self-awareness.
- Build empathy by hearing others' perspectives.



Context and participants:

Works well with 6–20 participants, if we have fewer participants it can be adapted to also state in which part of the body one is feeling the emotion or we can focus what colour and where the emotion would be felt, if we would experience it.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Allow participants to pass if they do not want to share.
- Encourage creative connections between colours and emotions.
- Model the activity by going first and giving a personal example.



Materials needed:

- Coloured paper swatches, markers, printed body silhouette (optional).



Duration:

10 - 12 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Activity Procedure:

1. Introduce the idea that colours can reflect our emotional states.
2. Ask participants to choose a colour that best matches how they feel right now.
3. Invite each participant (voluntarily) to share their colour and briefly explain why.
4. If participants are shy, allow them to simply name the colour without explanation.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Highlight the variety of moods and how emotions can differ even within the same group. Reinforce that all feelings are valid and that recognising them is the first step in managing them.



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



ACTIVITY 4: NAME IT, CLAIM IT, SHARE IT



Category:

Understanding and managing emotions



Overview:

A guided sharing activity where participants identify a current emotion, say it out loud, and briefly state the reason behind it. The focus is on recognising and communicating emotions clearly – a key step in emotion regulation.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Enhance skills in identifying emotions in the moment.
- Practise expressing emotions verbally in a safe environment.
- Increase understanding of the link between events and emotional responses.



Context and participants:

Works best with 6–15 participants for more intimate sharing.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Make participation voluntary – some may choose to listen rather than share.
- Create a calm and respectful atmosphere before starting.
- Use simple emotion vocabulary examples to support participants who struggle to find words.



Materials needed:

- Optional emotion wheel or list of common emotions for inspiration



Duration:

10 - 15 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Understanding and Managing Emotions



Activity Procedure:

1. Explain that the aim is to recognise, name, and communicate an emotion you are currently feeling.
2. Model the process: "I feel nervous because I'm starting a new project today."
3. Invite each participant to:
 - Name it (state the emotion).
 - Claim it (acknowledge it as their own).
 - Share it (briefly explain the reason).
4. Listen without interrupting or commenting after each share.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Point out the diversity of emotions and the importance of linking them to specific experiences. Encourage participants to practise this "Name it–Claim it–Share it" approach in daily life as a tool for healthy emotional communication.



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



ACTIVITY 5: COMPLIMENT RELAY



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

A fun and uplifting activity where participants write positive messages or compliments on papers attached to each other's backs. At the end, everyone reads their own paper and experiences a boost in confidence and group connection.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Encourage positive communication and peer support.
- Build self-esteem and a sense of belonging.
- Foster a friendly and encouraging group atmosphere.



Context and participants:

Suitable for youth aged 12+, in group sizes from 6 to 20 participants. Works well as an energiser or closing activity.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Encourage genuine and specific compliments.
- Remind participants to keep their comments kind and appropriate.
- Allow time at the end for silent reading before optional sharing.



Materials needed:

- A4 sheets of paper (one per participant)
- Tape
- Markers or pens



Duration:

10 - 12 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



Activity Procedure:

1. Attach a blank sheet of paper to each participant's back.
2. Give each participant a pen or marker.
3. Invite participants to walk around the room, writing compliments or positive observations on each other's papers.
4. After about 6–8 minutes, ask everyone to remove their paper and read it silently.
5. Optionally, allow volunteers to share a favourite compliment they received.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Highlight how positive feedback can empower and motivate us. Encourage participants to notice and acknowledge positive traits in others more often.

ACTIVITY 6: “STOP” – PRACTISING BOUNDARY SETTING



Category:

Empowerment and Communication



Overview:

An active exercise where one participant slowly approaches another, and the second person practises clearly saying “Stop” at the point where they feel their personal space is being crossed. The focus is on recognising and asserting physical boundaries in a safe environment.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

1. Help participants become more aware of their personal space.
2. Practise clear verbal and non-verbal signals to set boundaries.
3. Promote respect for others’ comfort zones.



Context and participants:

Suitable for youth aged 13+, in group sizes from 6 to 20 participants. Works well in open spaces.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Explain and model the exercise first to show both roles.
- Encourage slow, respectful movement – no sudden gestures.
- Make participation voluntary; allow anyone to opt out if uncomfortable.



Duration:

10 - 12 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Empowerment and Communication



Activity Procedure:

1. Ask participants to pair up, standing several metres apart.
2. Partner A slowly walks towards Partner B.
3. Partner B says “Stop” clearly at the exact point where they feel their personal space boundary begins.
4. Partner A stops immediately and takes a step back.
5. Switch roles and repeat.
6. Optional: repeat with different partners to experience varied comfort zones.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Discuss how everyone’s personal space is different and influenced by culture, mood, and relationships. Emphasise that respecting boundaries — both physical and emotional — is a key part of healthy communication and mutual respect. Talk about if it was hard for them to say stop and how they felt. Is this feeling known to them from real life situations?



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



ACTIVITY 7: STORY BUILDING



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

A collaborative storytelling game where each person adds one sentence to create a shared story. The story must include certain pre-selected key words or themes related to the challenges of adolescence and the transition to employment, or follow an intriguing pre-set title.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Practise active listening and building on others' ideas.
- Foster creativity while staying focused on a shared theme.
- Promote group cohesion and cooperative problem-solving.



Context and participants:

Suitable for youth aged 15+, in groups of 6–20 participants.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Choose words/themes relevant to participants' life stage (e.g., "first job interview," "leaving school," "facing a challenge").
- Ensure everyone has a chance to contribute.
- Keep a playful, light tone.



Materials needed:

- Pre-prepared list of 5–8 key words OR a few interesting story titles.
- Whiteboard or flipchart (optional) to note the story as it unfolds.



Duration:

10 - 12 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Activity Procedure:

1. Explain that the group will create a story together, one sentence at a time.
2. Present either the list of required words/themes OR the chosen title.
3. The first participant starts with a sentence; the next continues, and so on.
4. Encourage creativity while ensuring the required words/themes are included.
5. Finish when all participants have contributed at least once.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Highlight how listening and adapting are essential in both storytelling and teamwork. Connect this to real-life communication and collaboration in school, work, and social situations.



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



ACTIVITY 8: SILENT LINE-UP – TRANSITION EDITION



Category:

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Overview:

A silent communication challenge where participants must arrange themselves in a specific order (e.g., by the year they want to start working, their dream job difficulty level, or their “most to least confident about finding a job” scale) without speaking.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Practise non-verbal communication and problem-solving.
- Increase self-awareness through reflection on personal goals and feelings about the future.
- Foster group cooperation without verbal negotiation.



Context and participants:

Suitable for youth aged 15+, in groups of 8–20 participants.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Choose an ordering category that sparks reflection but is safe to share.
- Watch for participants who may struggle – offer them an “opt-out” position if needed.



Duration:

10 - 12 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Collaborative Skills and Managing Group Dynamics



Activity Procedure:

1. Explain that the task is to line up in a particular order without speaking.
2. Give the category (e.g., “the year you think you’ll have your first job” or “how confident you feel about finding a job on a scale from most to least confident” etc.).
3. Participants communicate using only gestures and body language.
4. Once in place, invite them to share their position and reasoning (optional).

Conclusion/debriefing:

Discuss the importance of non-verbal communication and the different comfort levels people have about the future. Link this to workplace communication and self-awareness in career planning.



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



ACTIVITY 9: FIVE SENSES GROUNDING



Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises



Overview:

A simple grounding technique where participants focus on their senses to bring awareness to the present moment and reduce stress.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Increase mindfulness and reduce mental clutter.
- Provide a quick mental reset during or after intense activities.



Context and participants:

Suitable for all ages, in any group size. More appropriate for outside natural settings.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Guide slowly and calmly.
- Encourage participants to notice small, often overlooked details.



Duration:

5 - 8 minutes



WARM UP ACTIVITIES

Mindfulness and Relaxation Exercises



Activity Procedure:

1. Invite participants to sit comfortably and focus on their surroundings.
2. Ask them to silently notice:
 - things they see
 - things they hear
 - things they feel
 - things they smell
 - thing they taste
3. Allow a few moments between each sense.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Encourage participants to use this technique whenever they feel stressed or distracted to bring themselves back to the present.

ACTIVITY 10: GUIDED VISUALISATION – “YOUR CALM PLACE”



Category:

Mindfulness and relaxation exercises



Overview:

A short mindfulness exercise where participants imagine themselves in a peaceful, safe environment of their choice. This guided visualisation helps reduce stress, promote relaxation, and boost positive emotions.



Learning and Participation Objectives:

- Support participants in developing stress-management strategies.
- Encourage imagination as a tool for emotional regulation.
- Provide a quick reset that can be used before challenging situations.



Context and participants:

Suitable for youth aged 12+, in any group size. Works well as a closing activity or a reset during a busy programme.



Recommendations for successful implementation:

- Use a calm, steady voice.
- Allow participants to choose their own “calm place” so the experience feels personal.
- Keep it short to fit the warm-up/short-activity time frame.



Materials needed:

- None (optional: soft background music).



Duration:

8 - 10 minutes

Activity Procedure:

1. Ask participants to sit comfortably and close their eyes if they feel safe doing so.
2. Guide them to imagine a place where they feel completely calm, safe, and happy (e.g., a beach, forest, favourite room).
3. Prompt them to notice details:
 - What do you see?
 - What sounds can you hear?
 - What can you smell?
 - How does the air feel on your skin?
4. Encourage them to “stay” in this place for 1–2 minutes, breathing slowly.
5. Gently guide them back by asking them to take a deep breath, move their fingers and toes, and open their eyes.

Conclusion/debriefing:

Explain that this visualisation can be used any time they need to calm their mind — before an interview, exam, or difficult conversation — and that regular practice can make it easier to access the calm state quickly.

