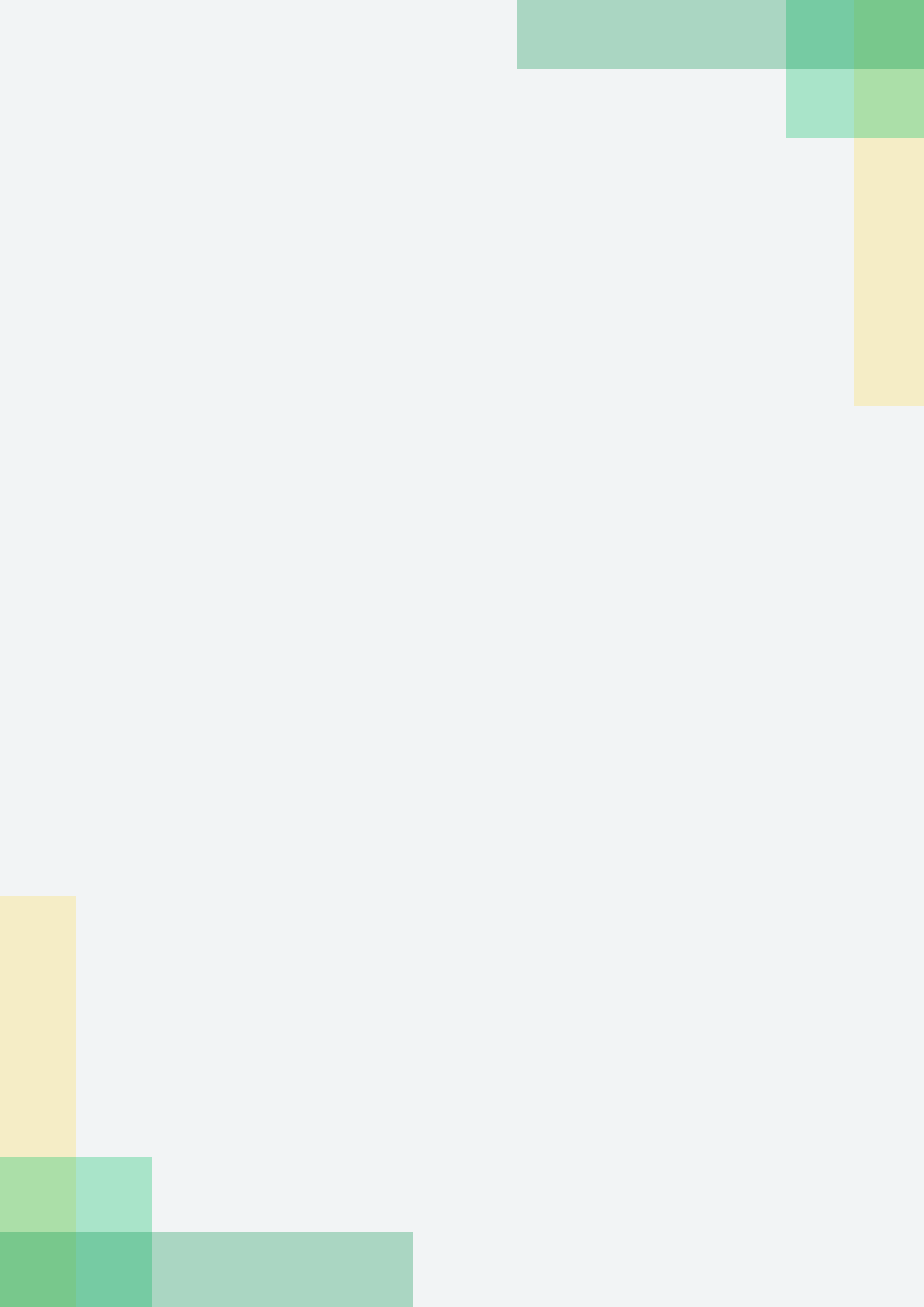


I.O.2: HANDBOOK OF GOOD PRACTICES



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Introduction

This handbook was the second Intellectual Output of the Project **MINDful Theatre**, *I.O.2: Handbook of Good Practices*. The Handbook gathers the sessions, workshops, games and activities created by the Partners of the Project. These sessions have the aim of initiating an open and candid dialogue about mental health with young people, employing non-formal artistic methodologies. They have been designed in a manner that makes them accessible for any group of young people.

The Handbook offers youth workers, facilitators, mentors, teachers, etc. new ways and tools to approach the young people and initiate an open and safe conversation about their mental health. Additionally, it includes instructions, tips and guidelines for youth workers to implement the activities with a group of young people.

It is available in English, Spanish, Italian and Swedish; for its free use.

Inside the Handbook you will discover:

- **5 Games** designed to help participants get to know each other, foster a safe and open environment, alleviate fear and shame, relieve tension and kick start the conversation about mental health.
- **3 Introductory Sessions** that will bring the subject to the young people and will start a dialogue with them about mental health.
- **4 In-depth Workshops** to delve deeply into the topic, provide them with a secure space to talk openly about mental health, encourage participants to express their concerns and issues related to mental health and equip them with emotional management tools.

All sessions have been designed through non-formal artistic methodologies such as plastic arts, art exploration, body expression, storytelling and theatre.

Project Summary

MINDful Theatre is a 2-year KA2 project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme. It was initiated by ON&OFF, the coordinating entity, after recognizing the profound impact the pandemic has had on mental health, particularly among young people. The primary objective of this project is to enhance the way young individuals engage with mental health by leveraging non-formal artistic education. Through MINDful Theatre, we aim to foster a more positive and informed mindset towards mental well-being among young people by means of non-formal artistic education.

Specific objectives:

- To identify the needs of European young people when it comes to mental health
- To explore the existing initiatives, programmes, projects, entities, organisations and associations that support the youth's mental health in the 3 partnered countries
- To develop a programme of activities that initiate an open conversation with young people about their mental health and delve into the issues that concern them
- To offer pedagogical tools in non-formal youth work through different approaches
- To challenge the societal barriers, taboos and stigmas associated with mental illness
- To use theatre and art as catalysts for social action, advocating for the inclusion and integration of young people with mental illnesses while also raising awareness on the topic
- To give young Europeans a voice

The project has 3 Partner Organisations: **Asociación Juvenil Teatral ON&OFF** - Coordinator (Spain), **Calypso** (Italy) and **Caprifolen Voltigeklubb** (Sweden).

MINDful Theatre is set to produce 4 Intellectual Outputs throughout its 2 year development:

- **I.O.1: A study on mental health in youth**, to analyse the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our mental health, as well as to identify the current needs of young people.
- **I.O.2: Handbook** of sessions, activities and workshops that, through an artistic methodology, initiate an open conversation with the youth about their mental health.
- **I.O.3: Educational Videos** of the sessions previously developed, in order to make them more accessible for youth workers. The videos will include instructions, tips and guidelines for youth workers to implement the workshops with a group of young people.
- **I.O.4: FESTIVAL**, in which 3 groups of young people will perform 3 dramatic pieces about mental health.

Identity of the Project

The project is co-funded by the EU Programme: Erasmus+ Key Action: Cooperation partnerships in youth.

Number of reference of the project:

2022-1-ES02-KA220-YOU-000085923



Artistic Methodologies for Mental Health

The project, **MINDful Theatre**, is a KA2 funded by Erasmus+ that defends the use of artistic methodologies, such as scenic and plastic arts, for the well being of young people.

Art has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness in engaging young people and offering them a safe and creative space for sharing and expressing their concerns. The field of arts has gathered increasing evidence that links it to health outcomes. Numerous reports and medical literature reviews underscore the mental health advantages of artistic engagement for individuals and communal well-being. For instance, the following article concludes:

*'Study participants reported arts activities as an important resource for managing negatively perceived emotions, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and sadness. The management of these emotions can occur in different ways, because arts activities help either to transform these emotions, to vent or express them or to distract from them.'*¹

For young people, being involved in such activities promotes positive growth, including improved social skills and positive changes in behaviour. Engaging in artistic activities also boosts self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, empowerment, and social adaptability. These qualities collectively contribute to their development and resilience. Beyond individual impact, the influence of arts radiates to the community level. The engagement fosters connections that effectively counteract feelings of loneliness and isolation. While it doesn't replace treatment art can complement therapy and self care practices by offering an satisfying avenue for enhancing mental health.

¹ Gómez-Restrepo, C., Casasbuenas, N.G., Ortiz-Hernández, N. et al. Role of the arts in the life and mental health of young people that participate in artistic organizations in Colombia: a qualitative study. BMC Psychiatry 22, 757 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-022-04396-y>

Glossary of Methodologies

This glossary is a resource for youth workers, facilitators, and educators seeking to understand the range of methodologies that are mentioned and employed in the sessions.

Art Exploration

The method of art exploration makes use of artistic practices as a way to uncover and delve into a certain topic. Participants express themselves through a safer method of expression, while developing some important life skills and competencies and creating something meaningful.



Art exploration allows for significant and effective emotional work and serves as a universal language capable of transcending all barriers, making all participants equal. Through scenic and plastic arts, participants will engage in **introspection** and **reflection**, which helps them develop their self-awareness and emotional regulation while also reducing levels of distress and anxiety.



Body Expression

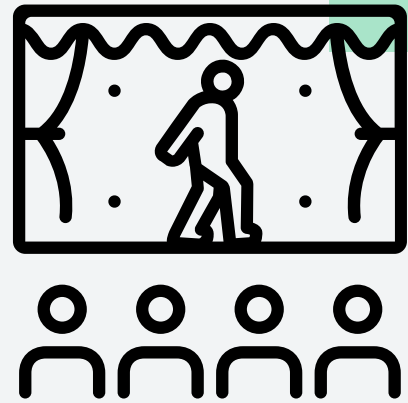
Body expression enables individuals to release suppressed emotions through physical movement, offering a cathartic way to manage stress, anger, sadness, or anxiety. This type of expression is especially helpful for those who struggle with verbal communication, as it allows them to convey feelings through gestures, posture, and facial expressions, creating deeper connections with others.

Practicing body expression can also help individuals become more aware of their bodies and emotions. Additionally, it strengthens the connection between mind and body, which helps them develop their emotional regulation.

Improv

Improv methodology relies on key principles:

- "Yes, And": Accept and build on your scene partner's ideas.
- Listening: Actively listen to cues for collaboration and authenticity.
- Support: Teamwork is crucial for lifting each other up.
- Commitment: Stay committed to the scene's reality.
- Embracing Mistakes: View mistakes as opportunities for growth.
- Physicality and Space Work: Use body language to enhance storytelling.



Overall, the methodology behind improv emphasizes collaboration, spontaneity, creativity, and adaptability. It encourages performers to trust their instincts, support each other, and embrace uncertainty, resulting in dynamic and engaging performances.



Movement

Movement practitioners focus on body awareness, vocabulary, expressive techniques, physical conditioning, emotional expression, improvisation, choreography, collaboration, cultural context, and performance presence. This holistic approach combines physicality, expression, technique, creativity, collaboration, and cultural awareness to tell stories and express art through the body's language.

The methodology behind movement-based performance encompasses a blend of physicality, expression, technique, creativity, collaboration, and cultural awareness. It offers a rich and versatile approach to storytelling and artistic expression through the language of the body.

Storytelling



Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination. It is an ancient art that has always had a social aim, like gathering people from the community and encouraging discussions, sharing of personal and social beliefs, reflection about issues and so on.

Storytellers are creating narratives using the essential components of a story (McAdam 1993; Ganz 2010) like: character(s); a plot – beginning middle and end; a challenge; a choice; a resolution.

In training activities, learning and reflecting through storytelling refers to a process in which learning is structured around a narrative or story as a means of 'sense making'. It involves the use of personal stories and anecdotes to engage learners and share knowledge.

Stream of Consciousness

Stream of Consciousness is a narrative technique that seeks to capture the thoughts and emotions flowing through a narrator's mind. It is a literary figure that portrays the natural thought process of the human mind, resulting in text that often lacks coherence or cohesion. In the sessions, we employ the Stream of Consciousness technique to explore the inner monologue of participants.



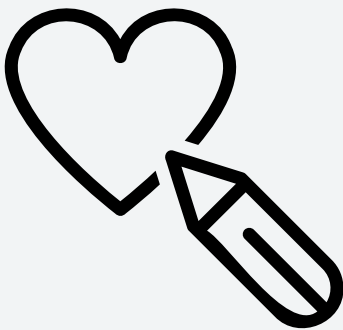
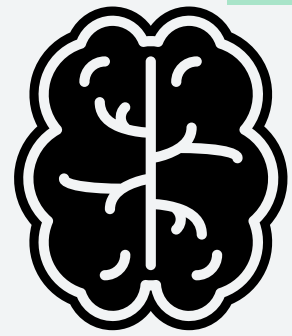
They will engage in continuous, unfiltered writing about their feelings and emotions, which will later be explored and analyzed throughout the session.

This writing method is beneficial in mental health practices, as it helps with overthinking. It serves as a way to release, and upon later reflection, it provides an external perspective on our concerns.

Synesthesia

Synesthesia occurs when your brain processes sensory information through multiple unrelated senses, causing you to experience more than one sense. Some examples include tasting words or associating colors with numbers and letters.

Synesthesia can enhance cognitive abilities, such as creativity and memory, by facilitating connections between different concepts. In the sessions, participants will be prompted to forge connections between emotions and other sensory experiences, such as colors, smells, etc. They will also try to locate the emotions in the different parts of their body. This exercise aims to deepen their understanding of emotions.



Visual Poetry

Visual poetry mixes writing and illustrations, so that both images and words have the same importance in creating meaning, suggestions and rhythm. A visual poem has to be seen to be fully understood, where the verbal and visual draw strength from each other to produce greater meaning.

As such, visual poetry invites us to consider not just the typographic elements of verse—the shape of letters, the spaces between words, the overall composition of a page—but also the poetic potential of images. This way of composing poems can be very inclusive and nourishing in training activities, because it is open to different languages and ways of expression.

Sessions

The sessions have been developed by the Project Partners with the main objective of providing non-formal tools and practices for youth workers to approach young people about their mental health. It aims to start an open conversation with them about this topic, in which the participants are free to express.

The sessions have been divided into the following categories:

- **Games** designed to help participants get to know each other, foster a safe and open environment, alleviate fear and shame, relieve tension and kick-start the conversation about mental health.
- **Introductory Sessions** that will bring the subject to the young people and will start a dialogue with them about mental health.
- **In-depth Workshops** to delve deeply into the topic, provide them with a secure space to talk openly about mental health, encourage participants to express their concerns and issues related to mental health and equip them with emotional management tools.

This categorization was established to enable youth workers to apply these materials with a group of young people. The concept is to incorporate at least one session from each category to ensure a gradual progression with the group, though the sessions can also be implemented independently.

Games

Designed to help participants get to know each other, foster a safe and open environment, alleviate fear and shame, relieve tension and kick start the conversation about mental health.



‘WHAT DO YOU NEED?’

Method: Improv

Time Needed

15-20 minutes.

Resources and Materials

N/A.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. The session will commence with all participants forming a circle. Positioned at the center, the facilitator will start by selecting an emotional state. For example, anxiety.
2. One participant will step into the center of the circle and will ask the facilitator: **‘What do you need?’**
3. The facilitator will then communicate what they need in said emotional state. *For example, I need to listen to music when I'm anxious.*
4. Both will enact the stated action, and the facilitator will exit the center.
5. Next, another participant will enter, pose the same question, and enact the action. This sequence will continue until all participants have taken part.

6. Afterward, the facilitator, with the help of the participants, will choose another emotional state, and the same process will repeat.

7. The activity can be extended for any desired duration, using different emotional states.

Objectives

- Identify our needs in different situations/ emotional states.
- Learn to communicate our needs to others.
- Learn to ask for the other's needs.
- Get to know each other's needs.
- Teambuilding.

Assessment Activities

In order to bring closure to the session, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

- *Was it difficult for you to identify what you need when you feel bad?*
- *Did you identify with the other participants' needs?*
- *Do you find it difficult to communicate what you need?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

The facilitator should highlight the importance of communicating one's needs, as well as asking for another person's when you do not know how to offer your help.

Sometimes it's better to ask for their needs rather than assume that you know what will help them.

Handouts

Possible emotional states for the activity:

- Anxiety
- Anger
- Sadness
- Disappointment
- Embarrassment/insecurity

EXPRESSIVE CHARADES

Method: Mimics and body expression

Time Needed

25 minutes.

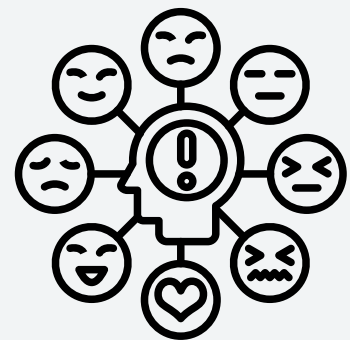
Resources and Materials

31 Flashcards (attached in the Handouts), with the following emotions on them:

Boredom, Acceptance, Admiration, Joy, Relief, Love, Disgust, Awe, Confusion, Guilt, Disappointment, Discouragement, Enthusiasm, Envy, Euphoria, Frustration, Gratitude, Hostility, Delusion, Insecurity, Anger, Irritation, Fear, Nostalgia, Pride, Remorse, Satisfaction, Serenity, Tension, Sadness, Shame.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. One participant will stand before the group and randomly select a flashcard.
2. The participant will enact the emotion depicted on it using their body and facial expressions.



3. The rest of the participants will attempt to guess the portrayed emotion, and the first person to correctly guess will take their turn.
4. This sequence will be repeated until the group has gone through all the flashcards.
5. After all the flashcards have been used, the facilitator will provide definitions for any emotions participants don't understand.
6. The facilitator can introduce an additional rule to the game to take this activity further. The participants can do a second round to try to convey the emotion only through their bodies, without using facial expressions.

Objectives

- Acquire an understanding of emotional vocabulary and its definitions.
- Expand the repertoire of words to articulate and describe various emotional states.
- Practice body expression.

Assessment Activities

In order to bring closure to the activity, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

- *Did you know all the words that came up during the activity?*
- *Can you think of any other emotions that didn't come up during the activity?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

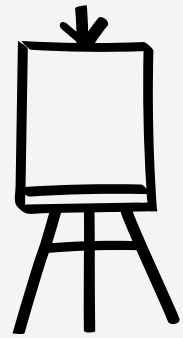
Provide all explanations and examples required for the participants to understand each word in the flashcard. Make sure everyone understands each concept.

Handouts

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| SADNESS  | CONFUSION  | BOREDOM  | ACCEPTANCE  |
| GUILT  | DISSAPOINTMENT  | ADMIRATION  | JOY  |
| DISCOURAGEMENT  | ENTHUSIASM  | RELIEF  | LOVE  |
| ENVY  | EUPHORIA  | DISGUST  | AWE  |
| SHAME  | FRUSTRATION  | IRRITATION  | TENSION  |
| GRATITUDE  | HOSTILITY  | FEAR  | NOSTALGIA  |
| DELUSION  | REMORSE  | SERENITY  | PRIDE  |
| INSECURITY  | ANGER  | SATISFACTION  | |

EMOTIONAL CANVAS:

Painting your inner landscape



Method: Reflection, Synesthesia

Time Needed

25 minutes

Resources and Materials

- As many copies of the Handout as participants in the activity.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. The facilitator distribute copies to the participants. The group will take a look at it together and define each word, making sure everyone comprehends the meaning.
2. The facilitator will ask the participants to assign a color to each emotion.
3. Afterward, the participants will reflect on how they personally experience these emotions, identifying the specific part of their body where they feel them and painting it on the paper.
4. The group will then share the result and engage in discussion.

Objectives

- Reflect and identify the way we feel.
- Introspect to discover the physical symptoms of the different emotional states.
- Locate the emotions in our body and find out where we feel them most.
- Get to know each other.
- Become familiar with the different emotions and acquire new vocabulary to refer to them.

Assessment Activities

In order to bring closure to the activity, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

- *Do you find it difficult to identify your emotions?*
- *Was the activity hard for you? Why?*

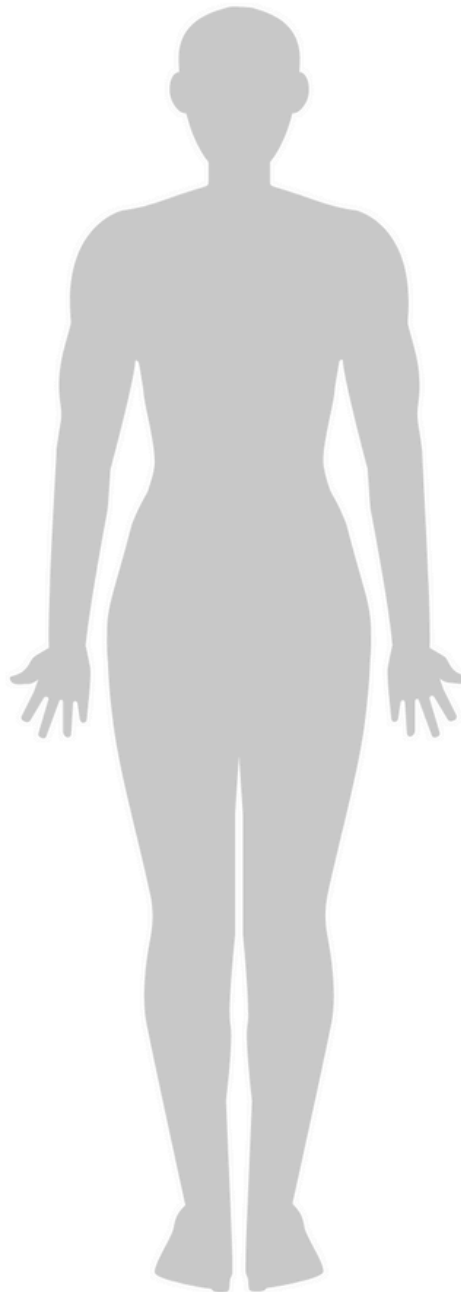
Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

Provide all explanations and examples required for the participants to understand the activity. Make sure everyone understands each concept.

Synesthesia is not easy for everybody, if the participants struggle the facilitator can conduct a meditation or visualization for them to connect with each emotion.

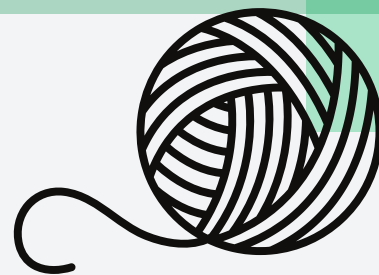
EMOTIONAL CANVAS

- Happiness
- Love
- Sadness
- Anger
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Shame
- Guilt
- Disgust
- Panic
- Surprise
- Nerves



THE YARN:

Untangling the Mind



Method: Improv and mindful reflection.

Time Needed

15-30 minutes

Resources and Materials

- A ball of yarn

Cognitive distortion and negative psychological cycles can create a complex web of thoughts, affecting one's mental well-being. This internal struggle often makes it challenging to seek help, leading to prolonged issues. Stress, self-doubt, frustration, overwhelm, and fear can entwine our minds, contributing to cognitive distortion.

The metaphorical exercise "Untangling the Mind" represents this interconnectedness. Participants form a circle, symbolizing the collective experience of negative thoughts. Using a yarn ball as a metaphor for the mind, the facilitator initiates the process, passing the yarn to create a visual representation of interconnected challenges.

This visual metaphor illustrates how cognitive distortion weaves a web of negativity. However, the transformative aspect of the exercise occurs as participants introduce positive thoughts, actions, or coping mechanisms. Each positive contribution symbolizes the untangling of the yarn, portraying the journey from negative to positive thinking.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. Participants form a circle.
2. The facilitator introduces the concept of "Untangling the Mind" using a yarn ball as a metaphor for the interconnectedness of thoughts in the brain.

3. The facilitator starts with one end of the yarn and shares a brief personal experience or thought that can be challenging or negative.
4. Holding onto the yarn, the facilitator tosses the yarn ball to another participant, who shares another negative thought or challenge, holding onto the yarn and connecting it to the previous strand.
5. This process continues, with each participant adding their negative thoughts to the growing web.
6. As the yarn web visually represents the interconnected bad thoughts, the facilitator guides a transition to a positive phase.
7. Participants, one by one, share a positive thought, action, or coping mechanism that helps untangle the negative thoughts. Each positive contribution is represented by untangling the yarn.
8. The activity continues until the entire yarn web is untangled, symbolizing the transformation from negative to positive thoughts.

Objectives

- Exploring the interconnected nature of negative thoughts.
- Identifying and sharing personal challenges or negative thoughts.
- Introducing positive thoughts and coping mechanisms to untangle the negative web.
- Encouraging a shift from negative to positive thinking.
- Promoting mindfulness and reflection.

Assessment Activities

In order to bring closure to the activity, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

- *How did it feel to share and visually see the interconnected negative thoughts?*
- *What positive thoughts or actions resonated with you during the untangling process?*
- *How can you apply the concept of untangling in your daily life?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

- Encourage a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere during the sharing of negative thoughts.
- Emphasize the power of positive thinking and coping mechanisms.
- Discuss the importance of mindfulness in recognizing and transforming negative thought patterns.

Handouts

Possible themes or negative thoughts for the activity:

- Stress
- Self-doubt
- Frustration
- Overwhelm
- Fear

ONCE UPON A TAROT

Tarot, mirrors and mysterious symbols



Method: Drawing and storytelling.

Time Needed

60 minutes

Resources and Materials

Tarot deck (at least Major Arcana), papers, drawing and painting materials.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. After having scattered the Major Arcana deck on a table or on the floor, the facilitator will give the participants some time to have a look at the cards and to choose one they feel more connected to. Some slow music can support. (5 mins).
2. After a brief explanation about what the Tarots are and about their strong symbolic dimension, the facilitator asks participants to draw their own Tarot, starting from the one they chose. They can copy it or just be inspired by, they can draw details or just main lines, they can create a character or just an atmosphere. After drawing and filling with colors, participants are invited to create some symbols for the tarot, choosing elements that they consider relevant for the meaning of the picture. It's important that the pictures are anonymous. When everybody has finished, they can hang their Tarots on a wire - or scatter them on the floor (30 mins).
3. Participants are invited to explore others' Tarots. Then they are invited to concentrate on how they feel looking at each of them. Were there something you can connect to? What would you call the atmosphere in the picture? Are there sentences or song lyrics that fit for images? Participants can stick post it on the drawing with words (10 mins).

4. Each participant goes back to his/her own Tarot and reads all the notes. Now they can give a title to their Tarot and eventually share with the group a story about their card (10 mins).

5. Short evaluation circle about the activity (5 mins).

Objectives

- To express feelings and values with the support of creativity and symbols
- To connect with others through art and develop sense of empathy
- To take a bit of a distance from personal stories and background, being able to share them with the filter of the cards.

Assessment Activities

- *How were you able to make a choice among the different cards?*
- *Which elements did you choose from the card? Were you able to transform them into symbols?*
- *How was it to create a kind of character or a story from the card you connected with?*
- *Have you ever felt that telling a story about some difficult moment helped to face it and sometimes to let it go?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

Music can be very supportive in this session. We suggest soft and gentle music. We suggest using the Marseille tarot deck. Some of the Major Arcana can be quite tough. It's important to explain they were created in the 15th century, so they refer to a very different imaginary where death and diseases were more common in the social representation.

For the sharing phase, it could be useful to have some sentences or poem's lyrics that can be cut out and used to interact with others' tarots. It's important that each participant choose his/her own title at the end of the activity.

Introductory Sessions

Mid-length workshops that bring the subject to the young people and start a dialogue with them about mental health.

Sculpting Thoughts



Method: Stream of consciousness, art exploration, meditation.

Time Needed

1 hour 20 minutes

Resources and Materials

- Paper, post-its, pens, markers, coloured pencils, coloured papers, scissors.
- As many materials as you can offer: cardboard, rope, recycled materials (milk cartons, boxes, paper rolls, paper clips, objects that no longer work: clocks, light bulbs, etc.), coloured tape, newspapers, clay, paint...

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. The facilitator will distribute the paper sheets and pens among the participants. The session will start with 10 minutes of **Stream of Consciousness**, a literary technique aiming to capture the writer's thought process.

The participants will be given a prompt: *'How do I feel today?'*; and they will write about it for 10 minutes, without stopping.

The objective of these 10 minutes is not to make sense or create something rich but to let their minds flow, without judgement. It is okay if the outcome text does not have coherence or cohesion. Remind the participants they will not have to share this text; it will be only for themselves.

2. With the help of the text they wrote, and some additional reflection, the participants will try to identify which voice is the most preeminent on their minds. Once they have identified this voice, the facilitator will ask them to reflect on what sentences it usually says. For example, *'I'm not enough'*; *'Everyone hates me'*; *'I can't do it'...*

3. The facilitator will conduct a visualization to help the participants personify their inner voice: find out what color it is, what texture, what shape, what temperature, etc.

4. The participants will now take the provided materials, and they will create a sculpture from recycled materials that represents their inner voice and how it makes them feel.

5. Once everyone has finished it, the participants will place their sculptures on a table, and they will walk around the room, paying attention to the others, and placing some comments around them with post-it notes. The notes can be feelings, emotions, words, animals, colors, smells, etc., that they connect with the sculpture. They can also give each sculpture a title.

6. Finally, the participants will present each of their sculptures, explaining the process they have undergone and the meaning they give to it.

Objectives

- Identify our inner dialogue, and what we most often say to ourselves.
- Personify the voice; give it a name, a shape, a colour, a temperature...
- Realize the true intentions of this voice, thank it for trying to help us, release it, and give it less importance.

Assessment Activities

The facilitator can also conduct a final assessment activity to ask the participants to evaluate the session.

- *'How did you feel during the session?'*
- *'Did you discover something new about yourself and your inner voice?'*
- *'Is your inner voice loud? Was it easy for you to identify it?'*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

As a facilitator, emphasize the importance of the 10 minutes of Stream of Consciousness. Remind the participants that this text will not be shared; let them express themselves. Allow them to let their minds flow and not think about what to write.

Provide some guidance on the inner voices: everyone has them. When faced with a stressful situation, it's present most of the time:

When you're taking an important exam, it tells you you're going to fail, you're not enough, you're not smart, etc.

When you're making new friends, it tells you that you're being awkward and weird, that they probably think you're boring and uninteresting, etc.

This voice comes from rooted insecurities/trauma/fears. The fear of abandonment, of not being liked, of failing... But the voice is trying to protect us, by making us expect the worst. This does not mean we should listen to what it says, but we should **identify** what it says, accept it and thank it for its good intentions; while dismissing it, letting go and giving it less importance at the same time.

Handouts

N/A

BEPPO ROADSWEEPER

Sweeping away stress with Beppo Road sweeper



Method: Mindfulness and Creative Expression

The workshop blends mindfulness practices with creative expression. Participants engage in Beppo's mantra for present-moment focus, followed by a broom choreography that encourages individuality. The session emphasizes experiential learning, fostering camaraderie and empowering participants to develop personalized stress coping strategies.

Time Needed

60 minutes.

Resources

The term 'mantra' originates from the Sanskrit words 'man,' meaning mind, and 'tra,' meaning release. The essence of a mantra lies in its repetitive chanting, aimed at quieting the mind's incessant chatter. By silencing this inner dialogue, practitioners hope to alleviate negative or intrusive thoughts that contribute to psychological distress. A study by Lynch et al. (2018) underscored the correlation between mantra meditation and reduced rates of anxiety, depression, and stress.

Building upon this foundational understanding, 'Sweeping away stress with Beppo Road sweeper' endeavors to cultivate a mantra in an engaging and inventive manner. Through incentivized active meditation, the game seeks to foster healthy and sustainable habits. By presenting these concepts in an enjoyable format, the aim is to showcase how meditation and mindfulness can serve as dynamic tools for enhancing mental well-being.

Materials

- Brooms for each participant
- Excerpt from "MOMO," Chapter 4
- Music player for choreography activity
- Handouts on stress management and well-being

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. **Distribute Brooms and Introduce the Activity** (5 minutes):

- Distribute brooms to participants.
- Briefly introduce the concept of Beppo Road sweeper and the importance of mindful approaches to stress.

2. **Mindfulness with Beppo's Mantra** (10 minutes):

- Instruct participants to spread out and practice Beppo's mantra, emphasizing present-moment focus.
- Discuss experiences and insights as a group.

3. **Broom Choreography Demonstration** (15 minutes):

- Leader demonstrates choreography with the broom.
- Participants mimic the demonstration and create personal choreographies with four movements.

4. **Performance and Sharing** (15 minutes):

- Participants use their choreography to move from one side of the room to the other, accompanied by music.
- Group splits into pairs to teach and share choreographies.

5. **Discussion on Experiences** (10 minutes):

- Facilitate a discussion on the impact of Beppo's mantra and the creative choreography on participants' stress management.
- Reflect on the importance of finding personal strategies for tackling challenges.

Objectives

- Encourage physical activity and creativity in dealing with stress.
- Highlight the significance of breaking down challenges into manageable steps.
- Foster a sense of camaraderie through shared experiences.
- Empower participants to discover personal mantras for coping with stress.

Assessment Activities

- Ask participants to share how practicing Beppo's mantra impacted their approach to challenges.
- Discuss lessons learned about breaking down tasks into smaller steps.
- Explore how the choreography activity might be applied to real-life situations where stress and challenges arise.

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

- Create a supportive atmosphere for open communication.
- Encourage participants to share their experiences and insights.
- Emphasize the personal nature of finding unique mantras for stress coping.

Create a lively and inclusive atmosphere. Encourage active participation, emphasizing the fun in both mindfulness and creative expression. Foster a non-judgmental space for open sharing, allowing young participants to explore and embrace their unique approaches to stress management.

Handouts

Handouts on stress management and well-being for further resources.

THE VOID

The quest for the missing piece



Method: Physical theatre, storytelling and creative writing

Time Needed

75 minutes.

Resources and Materials

Pen and stripes of paper. Candles or music to create a cozy atmosphere. Books can be useful, like Ana Llenas '*The void*' or Shel Silversten '*The missing piece*'.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. Facilitator will ask participants to walk randomly in the room. When the facilitator gives the instruction Stop! participants have to stand still where they are. After some time, facilitator can give different suggestions about the still moments, like to stand occupying little space/big space/with many angles/being round/shaping capital letters (10 mins)
2. Facilitator gives same instructions for pairs and little groups, eg. write small words, create geometrical shapes and so on. Final suggestions are for half of the group: some will create statues with holes, some will get close and try to fill them. (15 mins)
3. Starting from this suggestion, the group will take some minutes to create a choreography. It could be that they work in two smaller groups. Participants who are watching can take smaller strips of paper and write words or short lines inspired by what they see (20 mins)
4. After a short break, the facilitator will propose a story about the void. We suggest Ana Llenas '*The void*' or Shel Silversten '*The missing piece*', but they can be any. Participants can find some stripes of paper on the floor.

Some are blank, some have kind of opening words on them, like *It felt empty like- it's cold when* - or short sentences taken from the shared stories. Everybody can take some time on their own to fill the lines or to write more on the blank stripes. In the end, the group can compose a collective poems combining the lines as they like best (30 mins)

Objectives

- Fostering sharing and discussion about inner needs and negative feelings
- Exploring with participants awareness and acceptance about frailty and crisis moment
- Promoting discussion about strategies about how to include negative moments in our lives and consider them as temporary.

Assessment Activities

- Negative feelings, are they common? How does everybody cope with them?
- Can you observe in your life moments you were trying to fix the hole with rash/unhealthy behaviors? Do you find it useful where they come from?
- Do you think there are activities that can help in finding more balance about these awareness?

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

The activity is divided mainly into two different parts, the first more active and the second more quiet and reflective. For the quiet one it would be useful to create a cozy setting, and encourage participants to write freely. Maybe some opening words can be taken from poems. It could also be interesting to ask them to bring with them tearable copies of some poetry they like and prepare the stripes together.

The topic can be quite huge and somebody can go into trauma sharing. Invite them to make some room for this and eventually offer individual support if it's needed.

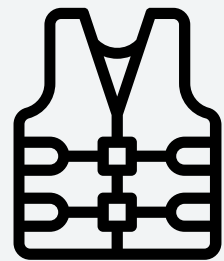
In-depth Workshops

Long workshops to delve deeply into the topic, provide them with a secure space to talk openly about mental health, encourage participants to express their concerns and issues related to mental health and equip them with emotional management tools.

EMOTIONAL LIFE VEST

Navigating Stressful Waters with Resilience

Method: Art exploration, reflection, body expression.



Time Needed

~2 hours 30 minutes.

Resources and Materials

- Each participant should bring an old t-shirt they don't mind modifying, that they will cut in the shape of a life vest:



There should be one safety vest per participant.

- Cloth markers of different colors, rope, colored tape, other materials to customize each life vest.
- Speaker.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. The facilitator will introduce the session with a short meditation/relaxation activity to make the participants feel comfortable and safe. While playing some calming music, the facilitator can for example conduct:

'Imagine you are in a place where you feel comfortable. Your childhood bedroom, the beach, with friends... Focus on the details. Are you alone? Are you with someone? What can you see around you? What can you touch around you? What does it smell like? What do you hear? Do you have any worries? If your mind wanders, make it come back to this place without judgment.'

The facilitator will now ask the participants to open their eyes and stay in this state. If the participants feel anxious or uncomfortable during this activity, they can always reconnect with this place again. (10 minutes)

2. The facilitator will give each participant a blank **life vest** and ask them to think about the things / people / actions / situations that make them feel at ease. For example, their teddy, best friend, favorite song, favorite activity... The participants will write, draw, or paint a representation of these items in their life vests, using the cloth markers. (30 minutes)

3. Once the participants have finished their life vests, the facilitator will explain the metaphor:

'Imagine you are on a boat about to sink. You see how little by little the boat fills up with water, and no matter how hard you try to get water out, it just keeps coming in. You put on your life vest and feel safe.

This life vest is made of the things that make you feel at ease, so when you have to confront a stressful situation, these are the things that keep you safe.'

4. The group will engage in a short discussion for the participants to share the things they have chosen, and talk about whether it was easy or difficult for them to identify these elements that make them feel at ease.

5. Next, the facilitator will narrate a series of events or situations that cause stress, anxiety, or discomfort— for example, an important exam, an argument with your parents, or a breakup. The participants will act out each situation, trying to connect to the feeling they induce.

Afterward, the facilitator will instruct the participants to put on their life vests, take deep breaths, and try to confront the same situations, from a different perspective.

The facilitator will explain to the participants that even if they don't have their life vest physically, it is a resource that is always available for them when confronted with stressful situations. Remember to always put on your life vest. (25 minutes)

Objectives

- Find emotional management tools through the metaphor of the life vest.
- Establish the life vest as a resource they can resort to when they face stressful situations.
- Reflect on the things that make us feel calm and at ease, identifying them.
- Reflect on how they feel/react when posed against a stressful situation.
- Find a healthier and safer way to confront these situations.

Assessment Activities

The facilitator can close the workshop by asking them:

- *How did you feel?*
- *Did you discover anything new about yourself?*
- *Was it easy to find the things that make you feel at ease? Do you usually struggle to focus on the good things?*
- *Did something change in the way you confronted stressful situations after you put on your life vest?*

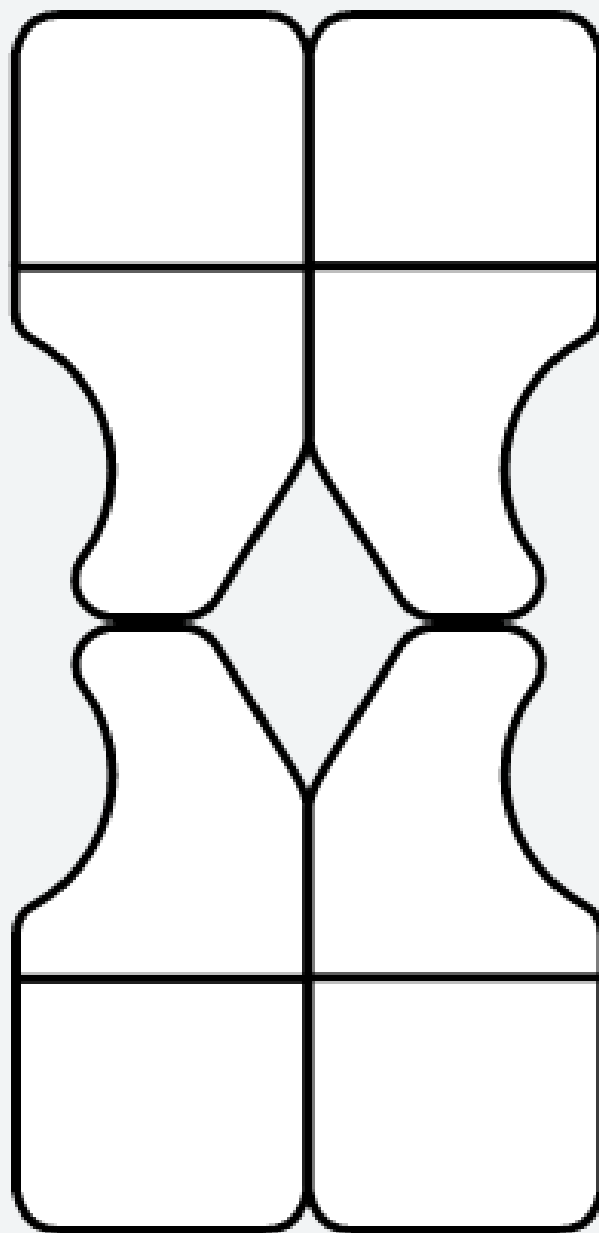
Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

Creating a safe environment for the participants to express and share freely is very important. This activity should only be implemented after the group has worked together and already knows each other.

In order for the activity to be safe for them and not intrusive, do not force them to share if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

Handouts

Life vest cutout for the old T-shirts:



THE MENTAL HEALTH CLOCK

Sharing Stories



Method: Creative expression, community engagement, and Empathy

The workshop employs creative expression through crafting, encouraging participants to visually represent their life journeys. The Vernissage experience fosters community engagement, allowing participants to interpret and share their visual representations. The inclusion of fictional storytelling adds a layer of uncertainty, emphasizing the challenge of understanding others' struggles. These methods aim to promote creative expression, community building, and empathy in the context of mental health discussions.

Time Needed

90 - 120 minutes.

Resources

The concept of "*The Mental Health Clock*" is rooted in the belief that sharing one's experiences can foster open communication and strengthen community bonds. By providing a safe space for participants to share their stories non-verbally, the game aims to underscore the importance of withholding judgment until one understands another's experiences. Furthermore, through the incorporation of fictional storytelling, the game highlights the significance of avoiding judgment based on appearances and encourages meaningful discussions about mental health experiences.

Materials

- Crafting items (e.g., colored paper, markers, glue, scissors, etc.)
- Printed numbers 1 - 12. A round circle (that symbolizes the center of the clock). All pieces of the clock can be taped to the floor.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. **Introduction:**

- Frame the workshop around the theme of mental health journeys, emphasizing the importance of sharing and understanding each other's experiences.
- Introduce the idea of incorporating a watch, symbolizing the passage of time.
- Mention the twist: participants will be sharing fictional stories about each other's creations, and they won't know if the stories are accurate.

2. **Crafting Preparation:**

- Provide participants with crafting materials.
- Encourage them to use the materials to craft visual representations of significant moments, transitions, or movements in their life journeys.
- Participants will start from one time position on the clock and create a line from there into the middle of the clock. The leader will give the group time to work on their visual representation.

3. **Vernissage:**

- Invite participants to move clockwise around the clock, stopping at each piece to look at each participant's time journey.
- When they arrive at the number before theirs (e.g., 11 if they started at 12), they will stop there.
- Fictional story: Participants will now be given extra time to explore the piece in front of them and come up with a story about the piece in front of them. Some might be close to the truth, and some stories will be totally false, illustrating the challenge of understanding someone's struggles without them sharing it.

4. **Revelation and Mental Health Discussion:**

- Participants will now return to their time journey. The leader will introduce the clock as a symbolic representation of the collective passage of time and encourage participants to share experiences related to mental health in their life.

- Facilitate a discussion about the experience, emphasizing the importance of not judging based on appearances and the complexity of personal stories.
- Participants, while sitting at their designated hour, can if they want to share their story and movement, connecting it to the central theme of mental well-being.

Objectives

- Encouraging creative expression and reflection on personal mental health journeys.
- Fostering a sense of community as participants share their mental health experiences.
- Symbolising the interconnectedness of individual mental health journeys through the central mental health clock or watch.
- Creating a shared and interactive vernissage experience with the added twist of incorrect mental health storytelling, followed by the revelation of the real stories.

Assessment Activities

In order to bring closure to the session, the facilitator may ask the following questions:

- *How did the twist (the fictitious stories about someone else's time journey) impact your perception of mental health storytelling and sharing within the group?*
- *What did you learn about effective communication in the context of mental health?*
- *How might this experience influence the way you approach mental health discussions and assumptions in the future?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

- Foster a safe and non-judgmental space for participants to share their mental health experiences.
- Provide resources or information on mental health support options after the session.
- Encourage open dialogue about mental health, reducing stigma, and building a supportive community.

Handouts

N/A

THE ANGER BOOK

Creating delicates from filthy rags



Method: Stream of Consciousness writing, Drawing.

The activity wants to connect anger destructive energy with creativity, supporting participants in taking a step back from this emotion in order to observe it and reflecting on how to cope with it.

Time Needed

90 - 120 minutes.

Resources and Materials

Blank papers (they could be white and at least one more color), pages from old books (they can be any kind and genres, from handbooks to novels, it's important there's printed text on them), markers, glue, colored pencils.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. Introduce the workshop as an individual session, divided into 3 parts: soak and spin, soap and rinse, hang and dry. Each participant will initially work on his/her own, and needs: sheets of papers of different colors, one page from a book/text, glue markers and broad chisel black markers. (5 minutes)

2. **Soak and spin:** the participant will be given 10 minutes to write on the papers about their anger. They can start thinkin about a situation that makes them feel angry and they can continue with others. It's important they never stop writing for 5 minutes. At the end of the 10 minutes, participants are invited to stand and to crumple up all the writings. After the crumpling, each participant will tear the writings in strips of papers. It's a good moment for a short break, each participant will leave the strips on one side for a while. (15 minutes)

3. **Soap and rinse:** after the break, participants will use the old text page. They are invited to look at it, and read it. Then they can erase words and entire lines with broad chisel markers, choosing words they want to be visible, and leaving them out of the black lines. They are invited to consider these word as a poem, and to create decoration or illustration around it with colored markers. (30 minutes)

4. **Hang and dry:** everybody is invited to create a collage with ripped papers from the automatic session writing, on a new sheet (of a different color) and to decorate or illustrate the collage with colors and elements, connecting to the page with the poem. Now everybody can combine the two pages on the table/floor. (30 minutes)

5. **Iron and fold:** everybody can take some time to have a look to other people pages, and then the group can decide how to combine the pages all together in a book, discussing about sequence and title, and eventually pages to add. (30 minutes)

Objectives

- Creating a safe space where to express anger and negative feelings
- Promoting the idea that creativity can turn negative thoughts and feelings into something else
- Supporting participants in taking some distance from their negative feelings, and eventually becoming aware that they are common to many people
- Fostering a sense of community as participants share their mental health experiences.
- Sharing strategies about anger emotions and how to cope with it

Assessment Activities

- *How did it feel to express your anger? How do you express it (or not) in everyday life? Can you identify situations that trigger you and pin down some strategies to cope with these?*
- *How might this experience influence the way you approach mental health discussions and assumptions in the future?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

To start the automatic writing session the facilitator can give some suggestions, like to think about a situation that makes you angry and so on. In the case for the group it's difficult to start, the facilitator can help with cards (dixit or others). For the crumpling and tearing moment, the facilitator can support the group with energizing music.

It can be hard to create a collective book from all the individual pages, so this doesn't have to be mandatory.

On the other hand, this collective conclusion would give the entire activity a different meaning, so the facilitator can support the group in this direction, supporting them in choosing a title and a red line throughout all the individual works.

Handouts

An idea for ripped papers collage:



LEARNING HOW TO FALL

Try again. Fail again. Fail better.



Method: Slapstick and acrobatic, physical theatre.

The session proposes to explore different ways to fall in sports and in theatre, and to connect them to everyday life, where people are scared from falling/failing.

Time Needed

90 - 120 minutes.

Resources and Materials

Comfortable clothes, soft floor or gym mats, supporting illustrations.

Instructions & schedule of the session activities

1. Ask participants to share some stretching exercises in a circle (10 mins).
2. After the group is ready, ask them to move around and choose a spot in the room, where to stop and explore their own balance and unbalance. After they have been exploring the range of possibilities between balance and unbalance, ask them to identify three positions in this movement flow and set them as statues (maybe giving titles to each of them). Everybody can take some minutes to create a sequence of movements to pass from one position to the other in a cheap way, and then to rehearse it (20 mins). Ask participants to define their sequence the best they can, and to remember it (30 mins).
3. After a short break (if the group needs it) go back in a circle and start a discussion about how familiar are we with the idea of falling when we do some sport? Name some falling techniques (borrowed from sports, yoga and dance) like frontal and side roll, backwards falls. Take time to show them and then try them together, with the support of some illustration (20 mins).

4. Ask each participant to go back to their spots and to review and possibly combine their own sequence with these new elements. Who wants can show his/her own sequence to the whole group (could be solo moments of more people doing at the same time). Music can support (20 mins).

5. If the group feels like more exercises, the facilitator can propose some technique from slapstick comedy, about stumbling and bumping, or even about objects that fall or roll or whose content spill out on the floor. Explore reactions with gestures of the body and the face, giving the possibility to create solo or small improvs for the audience, combining all the elements (40 mins).

Objectives

- Getting familiar with the idea of falling/failing as a part of the process, in order to reduce the stress and the panic about it
- Reflecting on the process of trial and error as a model for learning (for children, for athletes, for scientist etc)
- Promoting sharings about the concept of mistake and failure, and to share strategies to cope with them
- Fostering empathetic and non-judgmental relationships
- Reflecting about personal identity and ego and observing how it's affecting our everyday behaviour

Assessment Activities

At the end of the activity, the facilitator can ask participants if their idea of falling/failing has somehow changed during the activity and if they felt it was useful to share techniques.

- *How do you feel when you think you did something wrong? Is this reaction useful to get over it?*

Tips for Facilitators/ Trainers/ Mentors

For the exploration of the balance/unbalance, if the group needs it the facilitator can guide them with more detailed explanations (starting with feet parallel, deep breaths, connecting with body center of gravity, and create progressive oscillations until the balance is lost; then get back to the balance and keep on exploring in this range of possibilities).

For the explorations of falling techniques it could be useful to watch some video before or to practices with skaters/skiers/dancers etc. who can give tips and suggestions.

Handouts

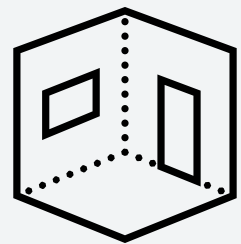


Instructions, tips and guidelines for facilitators

To effectively conduct group activities, it is imperative for the facilitator to establish a safe, open, and inclusive environment. By cultivating a secure space, participants can openly share and discuss their mental health, fostering a climate where everyone feels at ease expressing themselves and engaging fully. This environment ensures individuals can participate without the fear of facing attacks, ridicule, or dismissal of their personal experiences.

This is a set of things to take into consideration when creating a safe environment:

The space must be safe and adequate at the physical level. It must have accessibility for people with mobility problems, appropriate dimensions and distribution, and basic physical safety aspects, avoiding some specific risks.



On the other hand, professionals should demonstrate respect towards youngsters, their backgrounds, and diverse cultures.

It is also important to take conscious care in the planning and development of all the sessions, with special attention to the beginning and concluding phases.



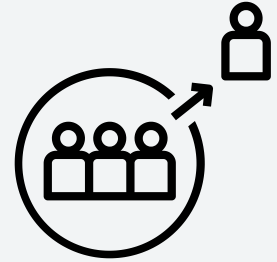
The facilitator must establish a plan of action and conflict resolution. Conflicts should be addressed through positive discipline, without resorting to any form of physical or emotional violence.

Practices to establish a Safe Environment

Within this segment, you'll discover a range of techniques that you can apply to guarantee the engagement and comfort of young individuals.

Respect their comfort zones

Reinforce that it is not mandatory if the participants feel uncomfortable or choose not to participate in a certain activity. Emphasize their freedom to withdraw from an activity without the need for an explanation if they are feeling uneasy, upset, or anxious.



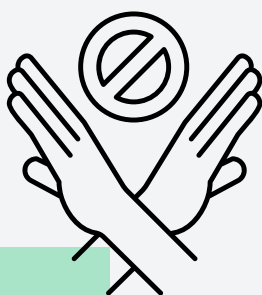
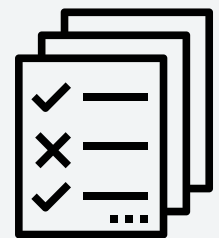
Ensure that active participation is optional, avoiding intrusive or forced activities. Avoid situations that may make participants uncomfortable or exposed, such as speaking alone in front of the group.

Establish supportive dynamics within the group



Fostering the use of safe words, and promoting respect and active listening will create a safe atmosphere among the participants. Promote open communication for addressing concerns or conflicts. Address and prevent discrimination or harassment. Act as a mediator in situations where individuals may not know how to resolve issues independently.

Compile a set of rules collectively established by the group on the initial day. Write them down and display them in the workspace for easy recall and reference in the case of conflict.

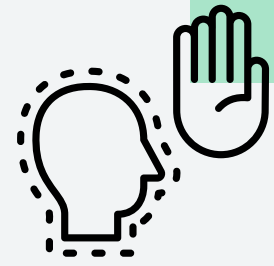


Establish Boundaries

Encourage participants to communicate when something feels uncomfortable or distressing. For instance, if someone is uneasy with physical contact, they should establish a boundary, and it is essential for others to respect it.

Professional Boundaries

Acknowledge that as a facilitator, you are not a therapist or psychologist. Recognize situations that are beyond your control and delegate them to medical professionals when necessary.



Supply resources to support mental health, including books, articles, hotlines, organizations, TV shows, websites, and more. Present various options to aid individuals dealing with mental health issues.

Session Explanation

Some participants may feel insecure if they do not know what will happen during the session. Prior to each session, provide a detailed explanation of the agenda to alleviate participants' unease. Ensure that all aspects of the session are transparent and predictable for a safe experience.

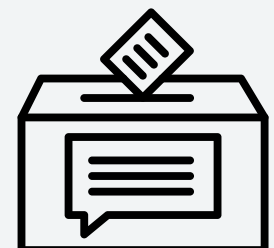


Closing and Evaluation

Conclude each session by offering participants various opportunities to express their feelings, comfort levels, and suggestions for improvement. When dealing with such a serious and important topic as mental health, it is crucial to bring closure to the session. This can be done through a final discussion, an exercise to release physical tension, or a meditation.

Suggestion and Feedback Box

To offer participants another method of expressing themselves anonymously and safely.



We greatly appreciate your access to the *I.O.2: Handbook of Good Practices*. This Handbook is the second Intellectual Output of the project **MINDful Theatre**.

You can also access the *I.O.1: A Study on Mental Health in Youth*, that analyzes the overview of mental health before and after the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain, Sweden and Italy.

If you want to explore the complete range of the project's products, make sure to follow us on social media:



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The logo for MINDful theatre features the word "MINDful" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Above the letter "d" is a stylized green leaf icon. The word "theatre" is written in a lighter, grey, sans-serif font to the right of "MINDful".

MINDful theatre

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